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DESERT RETREAT

A hip hideaway hits the spot

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camp David, it is said, is the “perfect retreat.” At least that is how homeowners Jan and David Brandon see it.

While their residence in north Scottsdale bears the name of the Maryland site famed for hosting intense political meetings, the similarities end there. This Southwestern “Camp David”—named for the man of the house—is anything but high-pressured and stressful. “It’s all in fun,” explains David with a laugh. “That’s what this whole place is about.”

Looking for an escape from their hectic lives in Michigan, the Brandons wanted a getaway for themselves and their four grown children. With the help of interior designers Janet Brooks, ASID, and Angelica Henry, ASID, architect Bing Hu and builders at Platinum Homes Inc., a refuge is exactly what the couple got. Perched on a hill above the 18th hole of a golf course, the residence offers numerous patios, a pool overlooking the green, and spectacular views of nearby mountains and, at night, the distant lights of Phoenix. Jan notes that with all of this so accessible, it was only logical to bring the outdoors in. “You feel like you’re a part of this beautiful landscape,” she says.

Natural materials integrated throughout the residence, from limestone flooring and

stacked-stone walls to rift-cut oak panels and custom furnishings dressed in granite, highlight the connection to the outdoors. Muted, earthy hues complement the materials and the brightly colored accessories and artwork found in nearly every room.

The relaxed ambience continues outside. An intimate alfresco kitchen sports a two-way fireplace and cozy seating, and the pool features both zero and negative edges, plus a beach entry and a spa. In the center of the pool sits a raised “island” that is accessible from the patio by a series of elevated steppingstones

that rise above the water. An outsized double lounge chair on the island is flanked by a miniature cactus garden on one side and an agave-shape fire feature on the other.

Why did the Brandons pick the Southwest for their home-away-from-home? Jan explains that her husband spent time here early in his career and fell in love with the Sonoran Desert. “Blink your eyes, and it’s 20 years later,” she says.

Today, they enjoy the natural allure that the desert has to offer together. “We sit out on the island and count the stars as night falls—it’s perfect,” Jan comments.

David agrees: “I don’t know if it gets any better than that.” □

Jan and David Brandon wanted their home to showcase natural materials both indoors and out. Arizona artisan Alan Hochman designed a water feature at the entry (opposite) made up of Vista Grande onyx columns; each represents a member of the family. Stacked stone clads the residence’s exterior and reappears in the dining room (this page). Black granite and fossil-topped dining tables were custom-built on casters so they could be moved apart for intimate meals or rolled together for family gatherings.



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Interior designer Angelica Henry explains that materials such as granite and glass were selected for their durability. For example, in the living room (this page and opposite), which adjoins the dining area, the lower portion of the fireplace wall is dressed in a glossy black granite. A pop-up television is hidden within

the wall. Laminated art glass, African mahogany and Macassar ebony wood form the cocktail table; the side table is African mahogany. A granite-topped console mirrors the shape of the curved custom sofa. A glass wall accords open to link the room to a series of patios beyond.







A water feature, beach entry and raised island with canopied double lounge chair accent the serpentine-shape pool. Jan Brandon says that she and her husband wanted the area to be a "destination," which prompted the design of the island. Stacked-stone columns support the curved overhang.



A thick granite bathtub and pebble rug take center stage in the master bathroom (this page). The large glass shower enclosure features multiple fixtures and walls of edge-set river rock, which also covers the wall of the outdoor shower beyond (opposite). The space is equipped with a giant rainhead for rinsing off after a swim.







Opposite: The master bedroom is finished in a neutral palette that includes chocolate-brown walls, bedding in earthy tones, and a dramatic taupe leather headboard that continues across the ceiling.

Above: Porcelain makes an elegant statement in a guest bathroom, where it appears in rows of wall tiles that are separated by steel banding. The material also covers the floor. A soaking tub and glass-walled shower underscore the minimalist approach. Two windows capture picturesque views.

Left: The soothing palette is carried outside on all-weather synthetic wicker furnishings dressed in outdoor fabrics. Candle lanterns accent the alfresco setting.

See Sources.