

To Grandmother's House We Go

Over the high desert and through the Tonto woods is grandmother's house. Jan has been described as the most grandmotherly grandma, an icon, even. With an apron cinched around her waist, always ready to offer visitors warm cookies or a slice of pie, this modern-day granny shows her old-fashioned values for quality time with family. However quaint life inside her cozy bunk may seem, the home itself is anything but homely.

Jan and her husband Steve wanted a welcoming place where their three grown children and their families could visit. With that goal in mind, designers at Est Est Inc. created impressive family-friendly spaces.

Tumbled pavers form a path leading to the 7,000-square-foot home in Lone Star Village at Desert Mountain. From the outside, it looks Italian with cedar frame windows and concrete stucco exterior, but behind the front doors is a French-country style villa. The ends of the floorplan fold in, forming a U and gateless main entrance.

Sitting on the Chiricahua Golf Course with views of the greens and downtown Phoenix and Scottsdale, this home is the definition of laid-back living in luxury. "The whole house is more like a French country or Italian villa," says interior designer Julie White with Est Est Inc., a full-service interior design firm in Scottsdale. The company did the furnishings, drapery, area rug selection, faux finishing, carpeting and floor finishes.

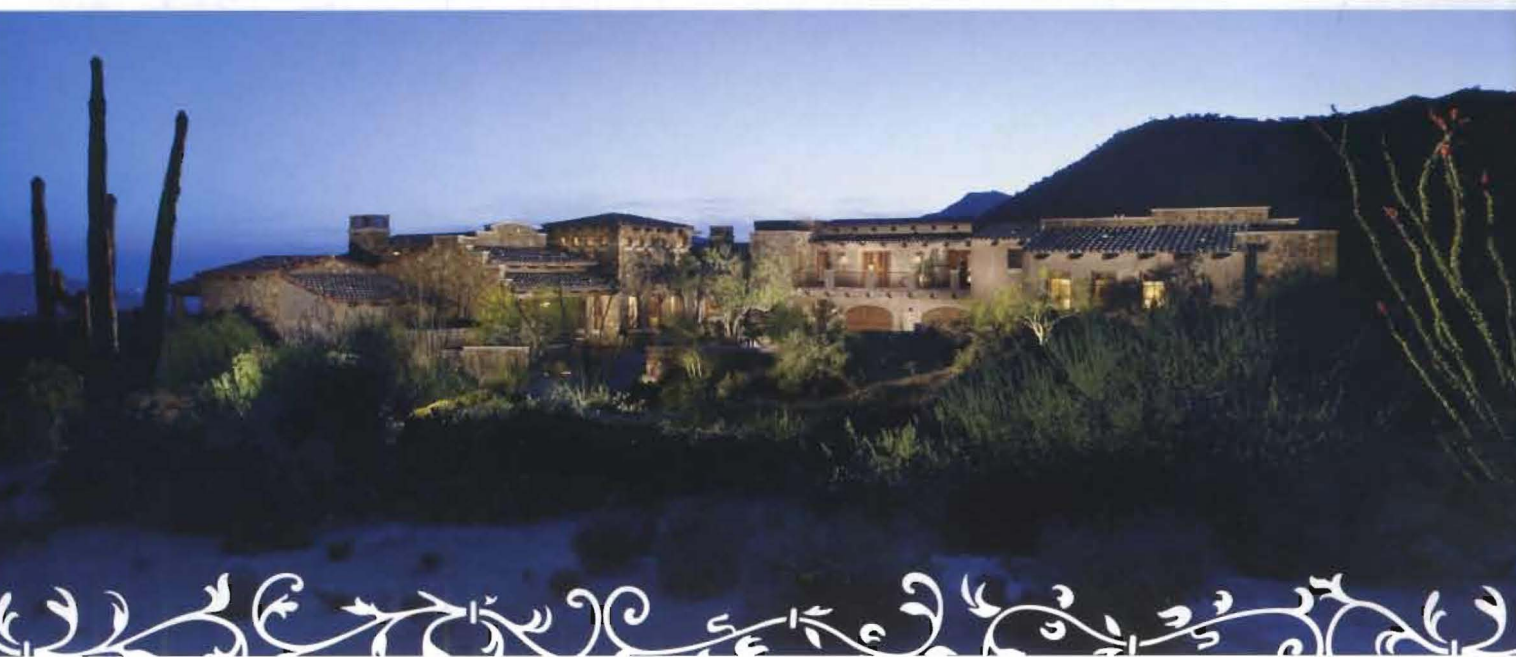
An Italian-French country villa at Desert Mountain is a cheery abode for quality time with family

By Echo Surina

Photography by Jerry Portelli

Below: The home's Old World cottage exterior has a casual ambiance, setting it apart from neighboring mansions with significantly more formal architectural touches. "The best award I'll ever get is when the homeowners say, 'This is just what I wanted.' They pretty much said that," says architect Jim Hann of James Hann Design AIA.

Opposite page: Natural light floods the living room, giving it a warm glow. Creamy interior colors, wide planked flooring and a stone fireplace give the room a comfortable, cozy ambiance.







Above: Heavy interior features like flagstone flooring and wood beamed ceiling contrast well with French-inspired fabrics and accessories.

At right: Baskets line built-in shelving above the dining room. Distressed wood chairs with floral-patterned cushions, along with a dried floral centerpiece, add to the French country interior.

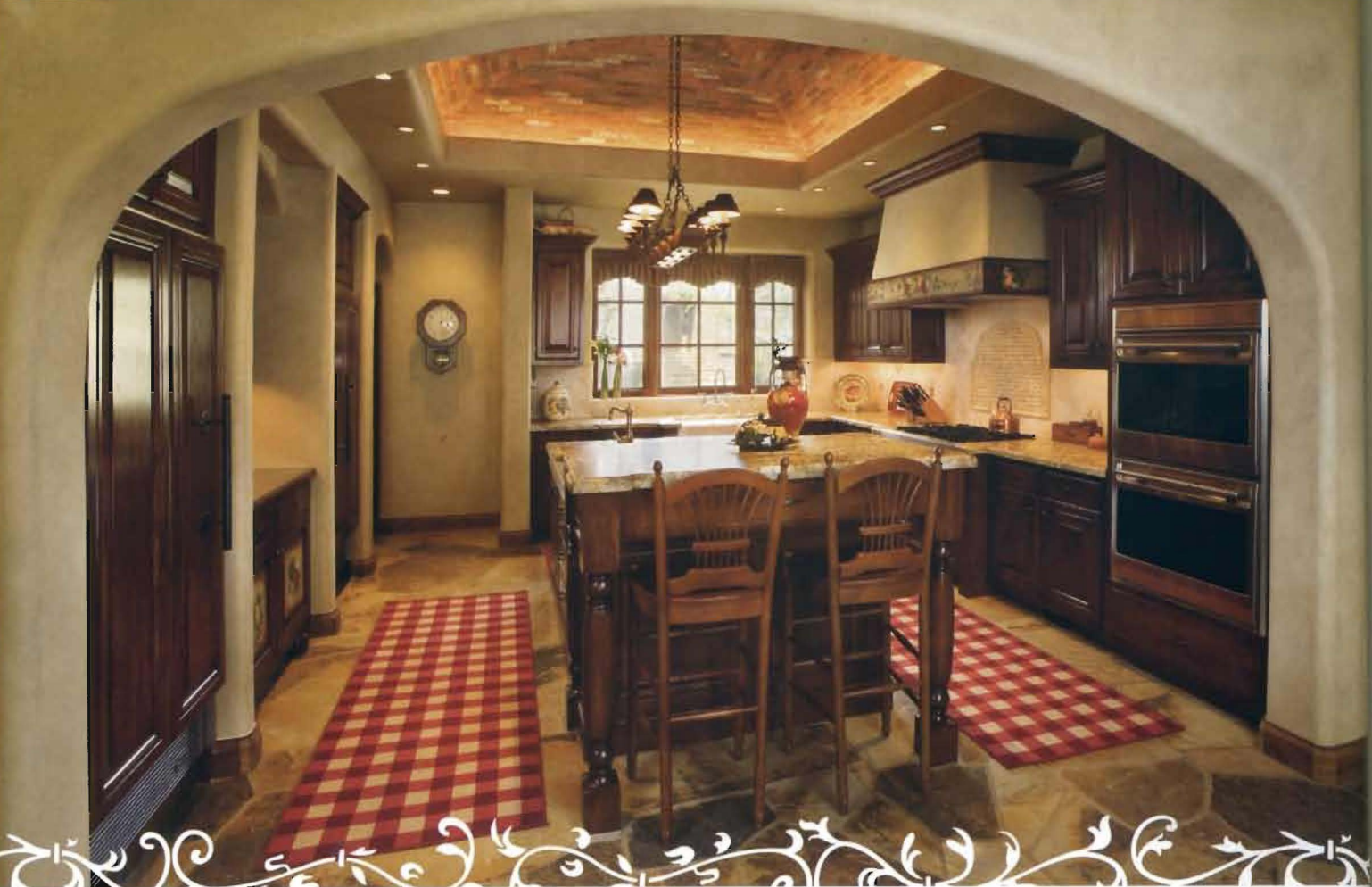


As the project's interior evolved, its look became increasingly French opposed to its initial Italian direction. "How I interpreted it at the beginning and end were very different," White says. The resulting casual ambiance is more rustic than the formal Tuscan-style mansions nearby.

"We introduced unique materials on the house as far as plaster and stone to give it an Old World look, which is something I feel we do very well," says Dan Couturier, owner and partner of Madison-Couturier LLC. "The reason I was selected as the builder is my ability to achieve an Old World feel."

Toys and books in the grandchildren's room are ready for afternoons of make-believe. Hanging over three trundle beds, an intricate collage for each of the homeowners' children and their respective families. "Family is a big, big part," White says of the residents' priorities. Even the pool features a one-foot deep wading area where adults can lounge in lawn chairs and grandchildren play—many design and architectural details promote family time.

"There's not really hallways," says White. "Walking from one space to the next, you have to walk through the office to get to the



Above: The kitchen's recessed ceiling cove lined with bricks draws the eye upward. Red and white checkered runners in a pattern reminiscent of picnic basket liner along with dark stained cabinetry make the room just as scrumptious to the eyes as it is to the nose when Grandma Jan's pies are baking.



grandkids' room or guest bedroom. It's kind of like a journey to get to all the spaces. You're meandering throughout the house to get to where you want to go." The floorplan naturally brings people together.

Hand-painted sunflowers on the stairwell's treads was an idea of Jan's that Est Est Inc. incorporated into their work. Framed oil paintings of fields complement the French-country motif. Other touches include flagstone and wood flooring along with double beam work and uplighting on vaulted ceilings.

Special areas give guests plenty of room to relax. An attached guest house with living area, kitchenette, bedroom and bathroom and junior master bedroom maximize privacy and comfort for guests.

With all the thoughtful design touches to make visitors feel welcome, the grandchildren are kissed goodbye and left with a parting thought—My, what a big heart Grandma has. All the better to love them with. 


www.estestinc.com
www.jameshamndesign.aia.com
www.madisoncouturier.com
