

MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

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RETROSPECTIVE: NANCY KITCHELL

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Photos by Luca Trovato

Interior designer Nancy Kitchell poses in her eclectic Scottsdale home with her dog, Tryphina. Creating residences for others, like the Taylor home featured in this story, is a team effort with architectural, construction and other design pros, she comments. "I have always worked in a collaboration with other professionals, and enjoyed the process."

in this magazine as well as national publications. The European Transitional-style north Scottsdale house that appears on these pages is testimony to her talent, says its jubilant homeowner, Pat Taylor. Of its mix of family antiques and Kitchell's special touches, she comments, "It's amazing the way it all worked together."

The designer's understanding of both architectural and construction principles has won Kitchell the respect of professionals in allied trades. "She knows our side of the business," says architect Jon Poetzl. "She has a long history and great exposure to some of the best materials and ideas, and is great at listening to the client's needs." Builder Ram Gangadean says, "Nancy will always present you with a solution to a design request that is unexpected, engaging and anything but ordinary." He liked her work so much, he says, "We had her do our own house."

Interior designer Billi Springer, also a Master of the Southwest, says of Kitchell: "Nancy Kitchell has always taken her work to the highest possible expression of pure design, and always with a sophistication that speaks of her exacting professionalism."

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1990 MASTER OF THE SOUTHWEST

DESIGNING WOMAN: INTERIOR DESIGNER NANCY KITCHELL TAKES HER BELOVED PROFESSION TO LOFTY HEIGHTS

Nancy Kitchell has been in the interior design field since 1966. But the Scottsdale woman's designing ways started surfacing when she was a young girl growing up in Omaha, Nebraska. "I drove my mother crazy," she recalls with a smile. "She would go to the grocery store and come home, and the furniture would be moved around."

With the idea of creating beautiful, livable spaces in mind, Kitchell enrolled at Arizona State University in 1964 and studied fine art and architecture for two years; she chose to leave school early to launch her design career.

Recognized as a Phoenix Home & Garden Master of the Southwest in 1990, she has designed many homes that have appeared



An antique chest in the foyer gained importance with the addition of a Venetian mirror. The lamps and wall arrangement of plates are part of the

Kitchell says she learned her skills from fine designers right from the start. Her first design-related job was working in the library of Warner's Interiors in Scottsdale, where she says she "learned volumes" from designer Jerry Ebbett. Two years later, in 1968, she joined another Scottsdale firm, Est Est. "The majority of my training came through my 12 years working with two fantastic designers, William Benner and Patrick Maas, the original owners of Est Est," she says. "That experience was my degree." Business alliances with other talented designers followed, and in 1983 Kitchell went solo, founding Kitchell Interior Design Associates.

homeowners' antiques collection.

She is delighted that most of her clients have become good friends as well as repeat customers over the years. "The best houses are never really done," she explains. "Things are always evolving with most homes, and change is constant. Kids grow up. Rooms change use. It is all part of the process." That was the case with Phoenix resident Marilyn Seymann, who recently downsized her living accommodations and kept furnishings Kitchell had chosen nearly three decades ago. Noting the designer's "unlimited creativity," she says that Kitchell re-covered some pieces, and the furniture looks as fresh today in her new residence as it did in the old.



Kitchell personalized the home's entry with a coat of arms bearing the family name. The idea came from the design on a locket Pat Taylor had purchased in a small country town in France. The designer had the locket concept magnified and crafted in pewter.

What captivated Kitchell about design years ago still fascinates her. "The most interesting space is the one you just love to be in and can't quite put your finger on why. It is an amalgamation of the architecture and all the things that have come together inside the space," she reflects.

Recently, her company's name was changed to Kitchell • Brusnighan Design Associates—a nod to interior designer Christopher Brusnighan, who has been with the company for more than eight years. She describes him as "one of the most capable people in the industry," and he says she taught him everything he knows about the interior design business.

As passionate about her chosen field as ever, Kitchell says, "We are focused on the future, with all its many changes. We enjoy helping clients rethink what they have; re-cover, resale and replace. I think our long suit is rearranging things, and we can bring refreshment to any room. We love the challenge."





Photos - Clock-wise from top left: The kitchen radiates a welcoming European mood with its custom wood cabinets and antique furnishings. The table, from England, is paired with 16th-century Dutch chairs. Hanging above the island is a pot rack Kitchell had made from old pieces of iron. • Windows that came from a 16th-century monastery grace the doors of the dining room's custom-designed china cabinet, which is topped with a collection of glass demijohns. Dining takes place at an old French farm table, above which hangs a vintage multi-armed chandelier, also from France. • Serenity reigns in the master bedroom, where a soft palette of cream and blue and a French attitude prevail. • "Comfort is a rather new concept in the history of interiors, but it is of the greatest concern today," says interior designer Nancy Kitchell. Comfort mixed with a cozy European elegance defines the Taylor home's living room. Here, plump-pillowed sofas invite relaxed conversation. The textile used for the sofas and draperies—a soft-hued print—tied this room and its mix of old and new furnishings together perfectly, says homeowner Pat Taylor. "I told Nancy I wanted something French-looking and old-looking, as if it had been there for years. The next day she came over with a perfect fabric."

Serenity reigns in the master bedroom and adjacent bath (pictured here), where a soft palette of cream and blue and a French attitude prevail.



In the family room, a TV hides behind a wood panel on the fireplace's high overmantel. Neutral wall and fabric colors provide contrast to dark wood pieces.

Set under a stone-clad barrel-vaulted overhang, this loggia setting carries the home's European sensibility outdoors.

