

# az-lifestyle

STYLE | DINING | PEOPLE | FITNESS | TRAVEL

OCTOBER 2010

the  
**INTERIOR  
DESIGN**  
issue

OCTOBER 2010 \$3.95  
[www.azlifestyle.com](http://www.azlifestyle.com)



Nancy Kitchell &  
Chris Brusnighan  
Experience and Artistry

Nancy Kitchell and Chris Brusnighan, photo by Christiaan Blok.  
Design photos by Christiaan Blok.



“Focus on quality, avoid isms, maintain an open mind, ask, don’t tell — and listen,” says Nancy Kitchell, who founded Scottsdale-based Kitchell Interior Design Associates in 1983.

Nancy’s style ranges from opulent to simple, but always compelling. “We do traditional, transitional, telepathic, contemporary, contemplative, sometimes mixing styles depending on the client, the architecture and place,” she says.

“Our work is less about current trends and more about the client. We are tailors,” she explains. “We perhaps make more of an effort to personalize a space to the client’s request. We enjoy real people with real lives and everything that entails.”

She adds: “Working with clients’ own possessions can be daunting for some. We love the challenge of making houses reflect the owner as a portrait — in 4-D.”

Colors and materials are carefully selected — as much guided by the architecture as by

the space. “There are times to squander color and times to use a very light hand,” she says. So, too, some projects require a heavier hand with materials.

Nancy started working in design as an assistant in the library at Warner’s Furniture in 1966. Gerry Ebbett was the senior designer: “I studied and loved everything he did.”

She also worked for Tracey Fow and George and Roz Schoenberger. In 1969, she joined William Benner and Patrick Maas, for whom she worked for 12 years. “Theirs was then the finest design studio in this part of the country,” she says. “I adored them and attribute my success and most of my education to those two great designers.”

In 1980, she opened a studio with a great friend and talent, Brad Newlon. This became Kitchell Newlon, followed by Kitchell Thomas with a friend and designer, Jerry Thomas.

Today, she depends on Jessica Burns, bookkeeper, Merrily Romero, receptionist, and Christopher Brusnighan, for eight

years her “enormously capable and talented” design associate.

“Nancy ‘found’ me, or should I say we ‘found’ each other,” says Christopher, referring to a design showroom business where he had worked before joining with her. Before that, he was a high school educator, but friends and family encouraged him to follow his passion for interior design.

“Coming into this dynamic and challenging industry was the best decision I ever made,” he says. “More importantly, having the opportunity to work and mentor with Nancy Kitchell has been the most invaluable learning experience I could imagine.”

An associate such as Christopher makes the quality difference at Kitchell’s studio and with her clients. Nancy: “We just care. We have tons of experience with all sorts of fabulous people, places and things, and we are fearless, frank — and fun!” ▶