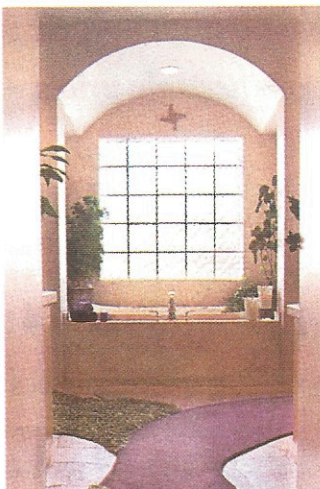


Homeowner and rug designer Marlie Morin created the rugs throughout her contemporary Carefree home. "I just wanted to find a rug that was different, not the standard square," says Morin.



Walls of windows in the living room and master bedroom (top right and above), natural light in the master bath (right) and a stone fountain (top) keep the contemporary look of the Morin's interior down to earth.



hometour



## Contemporary comes down to earth

Photos by  
David Moore/Artisan Captures  
Special for The Republic

By Suzanne Pickett Martinson  
Special for The Republic

**F**or some people, creativity comes naturally. Ideas emerge and art is made. These same people tend to attract other creative-types. And when talented people all get together, there is no limit to what can be achieved.

Such is the case with Carefree residents Marlie and Marty Morin. After attending a conference at the Carefree Inn several years ago, it didn't take long for the Ohio couple to realize that Arizona was the place they wanted to live. So three years ago, when they finally made the decision to retire, they settled on a spacious newly-built custom home in the Carefree desert with gorgeous views of blue skies and mountains.

"We just fell in love with the area," explained Marlie, an artist, former teacher and current reading and math tutor. "And, it just so happened that I am allergic to cut grass. Everything just fell into place."

While Marty was closing up his radiology practice in Ohio, Marlie began working on getting the house ready, "although things were basically done," she said. This is when the creative energy began to flow.

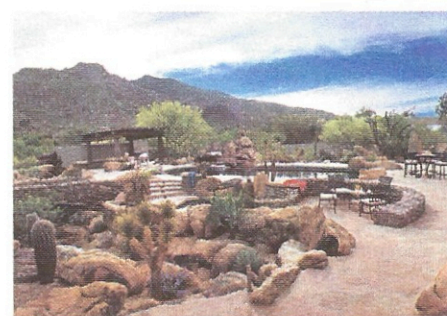
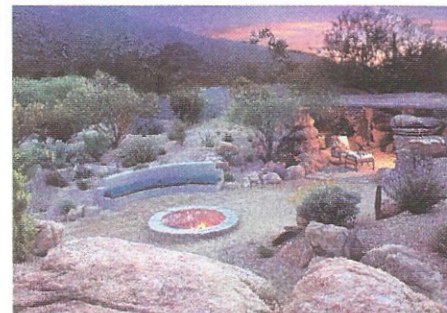
"I just wanted to find a rug that was different, not the standard square," said Marlie. "So I began experimenting with shape and design. It just took off from there."

Enter the free-flowing multicolored textured rugs that are now scattered throughout the Morin home — on the





The Morin's casita (shown left) was added to the property after the main house was built. Filled with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, it enables the couple to enjoy a good workout before relaxing in their Jacuzzi next to a soothing fire. The courtyard and iron gates (below) were also an add-on.



Landscape architect George Pingitore used 500 tons of boulders when designing the Morin's 1½-acre lot which now features numerous cabanas, fire pits, (middle) a Jacuzzi and pool (above). "It all started with the bridge," says Marlie Morin.

floors, on the walls, even above doors and windows as combination window treatments/faux clerestory window scenes. While Marlie creates the design and chooses the earthy colors of the multiple rug pieces used within each creation, Jane Tobin from McFarlands Custom Carpets, Inc. helps select the varying textures "to ensure that it all flows together. She is wonderful to work with, and very creative," Marlie extolled.

Eventually, they added an extended pantry off the kitchen, an art studio for Marlie and replaced several windows with sliding glass doors. And while Marlie was working on the interior, she couldn't help noticing the landscape...or, as her husband Marty added, "the lack of landscape." Although the property did have some initial builder installed landscaping, it was not quite what they envisioned. Still, Marlie insists that it all started with the bridge.

"I just wanted a bridge to be built over the existing wash in the back yard that could accommodate a wheelchair," she explained. "But nobody wanted to build it. So I ended up calling my next door neighbor George (Pingitore) who owns

Desert Foothills Gardens Nursery and he said, sure, he could build it. And now look at the landscaping!"

Look at the landscaping is right. A year and a half after building the bridge, the Morin property is flourishing with lush desert foliage, a remodeled pool, cozy seating vignettes, an outdoor snail

shower, gas and natural fire pits, Jacuzzi, vegetable greenhouse, sandpit for the grandchildren, high-tech lighting and sound systems and 500 tons of boulders.

"I thought George was joking," laughed Marty when telling of how many truckloads of boulders arrived daily during construction. "I couldn't believe that all those boulders would really fit in our yard. But it looks natural, it looks great. I love it!"

According to Pingitore, "The hardest part was making sure the engineering pad of the bridge was strong

enough to handle the cranes that came in to work on the waterfalls and place the boulders. With an acre and a half, there was a lot of room to be creative. Marlie and Marty are wonderful to work with."

Likewise, say the Morins. Pingitore has become a good friend, good neighbor and trusted landscaper. When the couple realized that the front yard was flat and held no appeal, they turned to Pingitore again. The result is an elevated landscape with boulders, saguaros, mesquite and

palo verde trees as well as sage, penstemon and other vivid desert bloomers.

Rustic iron fences and gates in scenes depicting the surrounding mountains were created and installed throughout the front and back yards by John Everly of Valley-based Acacia Custom Metal Works. A new courtyard wall was constructed and an entry that was once ordinary has become a charming and interesting space.

One special area that Marty particularly enjoys is the partially hidden, secret reading room located down the steps from the cabana. The sunken structure, covered by wooden slats and an existing mesquite tree as an umbrella, features a variety of "Midwestern" plants in shaded areas that evoke memories of the couple's former home. Fern, geraniums, iris and a magnolia tree give the retreat a cool, invigorating ambience.

And perhaps because boulders have become such a focal point for the exterior of the home, the couple asked Lili Lavon of Rio Verde-based Rock and Water Art to create the look and feel of boulders and a water feature on the pillars in the living room. Lavon, who has studied rocks and boulders for more than seven years, meticulously hand sculpts each project so that it is hard to recognize when a rock is a rock or a piece of her art.

The energy and beauty that is present in the Morin home is a testament to the love and joy that the couple exudes. It is no wonder, then, that creativity has found a home. ✎

## Sources

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602-861-4768