

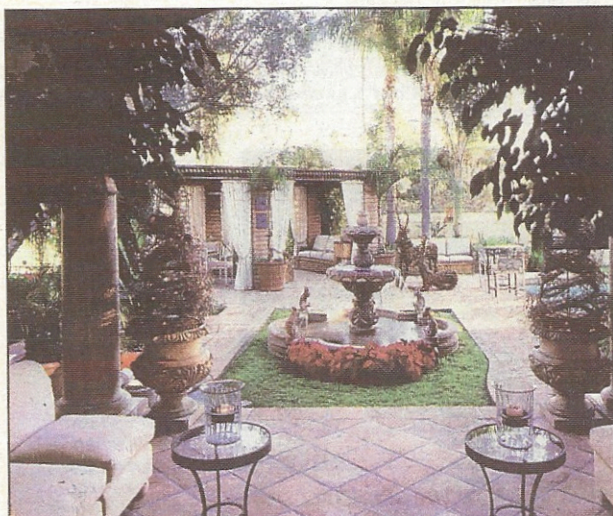


Festive poinsettias, lanterns and twinkling lights in the front and back yards of the Smith and Schweiker residence in Paradise Valley create a warm welcome for guests.

Photos by David Moore
Special for The Republic

Winter wonderland

'Tis the season to enjoy outdoor living



By Suzanne Pickett Martinson
Special for The Republic

Entertaining outdoors is a year-round option for those of us who are blessed with living in the Valley of the Sun. It was an imperative option for Suzanne Smith and Dan Schweiker when they were looking to buy a new home in 1995. They found that option, and more, in their Paradise Valley home on the Camelback Country Club golf course.

"We absolutely love our yard," said Smith. "Since we entertain a lot, we needed to find the right backdrop. This house is perfect for entertaining, particularly since the access to the outdoors is easy and convenient. That makes all the difference."

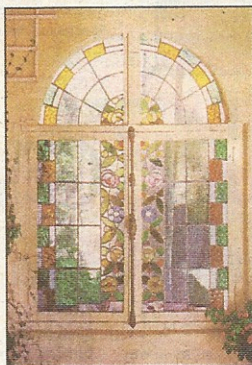
Smith, an interior designer and ASID member, and Schweiker, co-founder and CEO of China Mist Tea Company, are involved in many charitable and civic organizations. They frequently use their sprawling back yard to host cocktail receptions, board functions and fund-raisers, as well as holiday and family parties.

Their back yard faces south with views of the golf course and mountains. Lush plants, green grass and 25 palm trees

create the foundation for some of Smith's favorite seasonal flowers such as sweet william and snapdragons. Pots of red geraniums are scattered throughout the yard while the large olive trees and potted topiary trees host strings of white twinkle lights throughout the year. Smith's favorite holiday plants are poinsettias, which she buys in abundance and uses in groups to make a dramatic statement.

The couple has been working on the redesign and landscape of both the back and front yards since they purchased the home. The roof of the backyard pergola was raised so entertaining underneath would feel more spacious. Outdoor fabric curtains were added to the structure and Smith placed a 60-inch round cement table on one side and several couches and chairs on the other to provide ample room to converse. When nights are cool, permanent space heaters are used. An in-ground fire pit made of red brick is close by, offering further warmth and ambiance during winter months. Smith's collection of lanterns helps create a warm holiday glow in the gardens.

The original pool was replastered a sparkly blue and Saltillo tile with the inverted side up was installed on the pool deck to match the existing tile and red brick throughout the patios and walkways. Although the golf course is across the fence, a mass of Lady Banks' roses covers the wrought iron fence providing just enough privacy. The family dog, Max, fully enjoys the yard too as he has a nice patch of green grass to play in and a pool to take an occasional dip.



Handmade stained glass windows imported from England are found throughout the back yard.

The home's covered patio is wide enough to hold several groups of seating arrangements and the furniture is covered in fabric made to resist the elements. Stained glass windows in red- and green-colored designs hang in various locations throughout the patio and yard. Handmade in-England, the stained glass pieces were installed by the previous owners. The patio is a favorite space for both husband and wife. The couple relishes the outdoor coffee and tea bar and the times they are able to sit outside, relax, read the paper and drink iced tea.

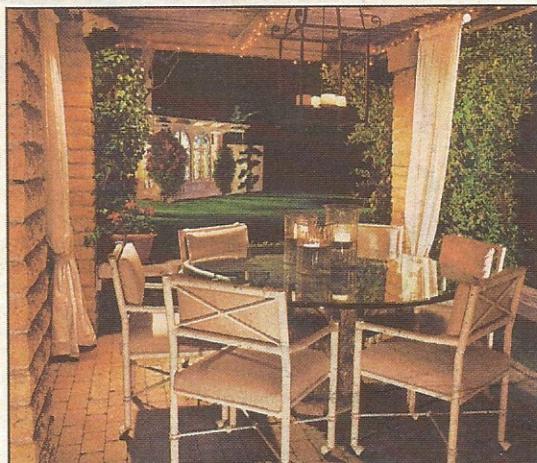
"What I really like about this area is that it is intimate enough to entertain just a few guests yet still plenty big enough to accommodate a lot of people without feeling crowded," explained Smith.

The front of the home evokes a sense of spacious elegance. A hand-painted trompe l'oeil design surrounds the front entry and the original dark wood on the glass doors and windows was stippled in colors that match the faux exterior walls. Again, the couple has provided plants, trees and colorful flowers in abundance as a welcoming gesture to their home.

Extensive work also has been done to the front, including the addition of a circular drive, exterior walls, landscaping and lighting. The final result is striking. The effect is just what Smith had envisioned. "It's reminiscent of our trips to Italy," she said. "A place I really like to call my home." ❄️

Poinsettias courtesy of Fleur de Lis Flowers, Scottsdale.

To see the interior of the Smith and Schweiker residence, please turn to page 4.



Groups of seats are arranged throughout the expansive back yard, providing intimate areas where guests can sit, relax and talk.

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