



Landscape architect Greg Trutza incorporated a fireplace, cantera water feature, ramada and square-cut flagstone in the design of this outdoor living room. Overhead, branches of a palo brea tree stretch through ramada openings. Patio furnishings, a giant bird of paradise at left, and two Indian hawthorn standards flanking the fountain complete the setting.

A photograph of a Mediterranean-style outdoor patio. In the background, a light-colored stucco wall features a built-in fireplace with a warm fire. Above the fireplace is a large, ornate metal sunburst sculpture and a small bronze rooster figurine on a shelf. To the right, a decorative stone face sculpture is mounted on the wall. The patio is furnished with black wrought-iron chairs and a daybed, all with brown and tan striped cushions. A small table with a white top is partially visible on the left. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. Various plants, including potted greenery and a small tree, are scattered throughout the space. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

Great Escape

**An intimate outdoor living room
provides refuge for family and friends**

Text by Suzanne Pickett Martinson • Photography by Doug Baldwin



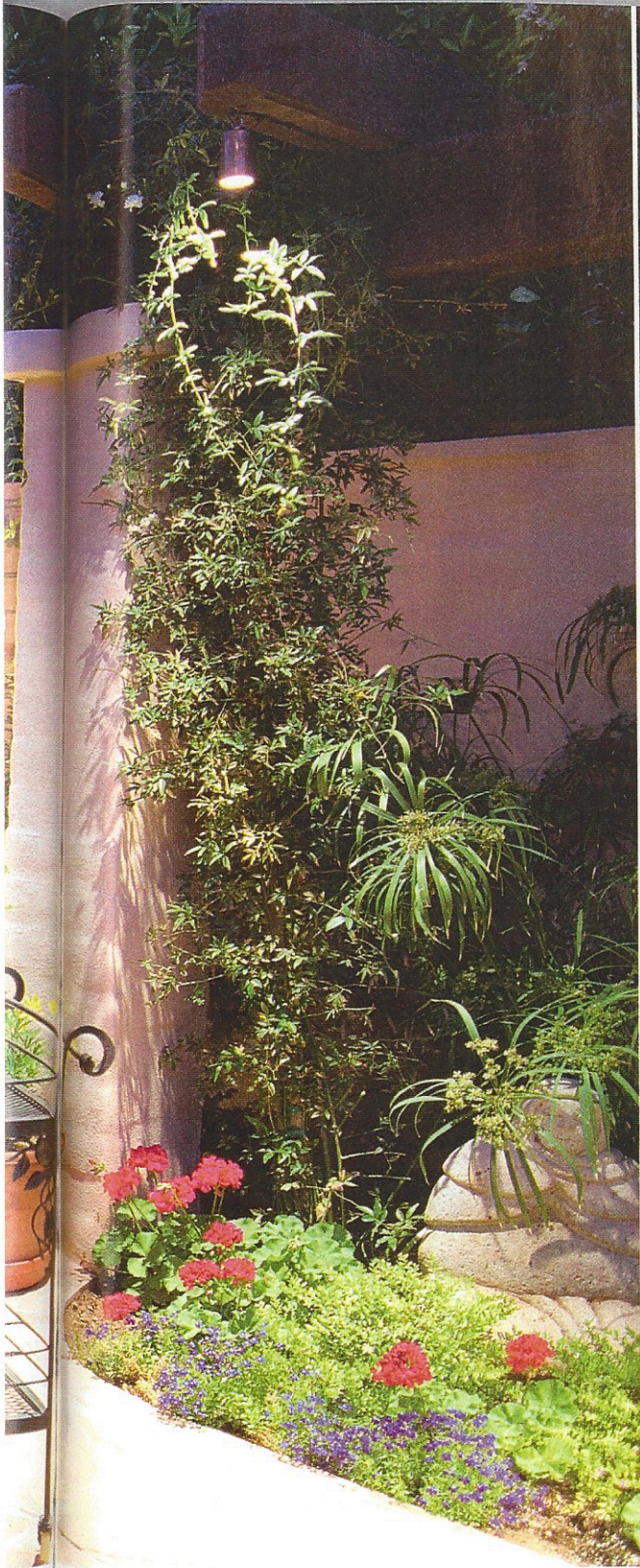
When Mollie and Don Fry purchased their home in Paradise Valley several years ago, they didn't realize that they would end up tearing down the house and redoing the landscape. Downsizing from a 5-acre home site, they wanted something smaller and more manageable, but with enough room outside to occupy their seven grandchildren during frequent visits, as well as outdoor space for entertaining.

"We spend a lot of time outside and really use the outdoor living areas," says the lady of the house. "So it was important that the

design use the space efficiently."

Greg Trutza, owner of Phoenix-based New Directions In Landscape Architecture, worked closely with Fry and general contractor Greg Hunt, president of GM Hunt Builders and Remodelers, to synchronize the goals of building the home and establishing the garden. Mike Karmo of Karmo Landscaping Inc., handled the installation.

After removing the existing pool, which took up most of the yard, and the remaining vegetation, Karmo dug out 18 inches of



Above: Dining alfresco is a year-round pleasure for Don and Mollie Fry. Backed by Mummy Mountain, their dining area has been enhanced by the addition of a pergola, outdoor lighting and various plantings. • **Top, right:** Pigmy date palms and blue and yellow pansies border an intricately carved cantera fountain. **Right:** Outside the master bedroom, an antique lamp illuminates a bed of liriopis.

An artificial putting green makes perfect sense in this shady part of the yard, where real grass won't grow. A row of mature bougainvillea adds a splash of color.



dirt and brought in a mixture of rich soil and mulch to give new plants a healthy start.

"The site was very rocky," Karmo recalls. "Although it is important to know where to place a plant for its best growth, the most important part is to have the appropriate soil, so plant roots can grow deep enough to reach the native soil."

At the Frys' request, Trutza started with a leveled site and a row of mature bougainvillea set against the northern and eastern fences, to create a comfortable and cozy hacienda-style feeling throughout the garden. Trellises and arbors were used along with retainer walls and raised planters to subtly define conversation areas. Rose-color flagstone squares used for patio areas and a walkway that wraps around the perimeter of the home provide

continuity and blend harmoniously with the foliage and outdoor furnishings.

"One great way to achieve multiple intimate settings is to have a focal point or a reason to engage each space," explains Trutza. "For instance, the relaxed seating area has a fireplace with an arbor overhead and a delicate wall fountain that does not overpower conversation."

A larger wall fountain, visible from the living room, was situated near the outdoor kitchen to create a dramatic effect. Another dining area features a small pergola that screens for privacy and provides shade for an antique baker's rack that doubles as a serving bar. The side yard, often overlooked as usable space, features a putting green made of artificial turf.



Retainer walls that match the mortar-washed slump-block house were added as terraced planters. Desert vegetation, including lantana, agave, yucca and palo brea, enliven the space.

Taking his cue from nature, Trutza utilized such native trees as palo verdes and ironwoods to shade various compositions of penstemon, agaves, hibiscus, sage and other colorful groupings. Two of Mollie Fry's favorite specimens are *brugmansia* (angel's trumpet), with its large 12-inch trumpets billowing downward, and Hong Kong orchid, which boasts exquisite purple blossoms twice a year.

"I always love to add scented plants to intimate spaces, so we placed a large range of jasmines throughout," notes Trutza. "And Mollie had some fantastic outdoor furniture that works perfectly. The garden really is like an intimate outdoor living room that beckons you to spend hours relaxing and enjoying the elements."

On the west side of the home, along the flagstone walkway, pockets of planting spaces are filled with lantana, ruellia, roses, seasonal flowers, ocotillos and native trees that offer shade. A natural wash runs alongside the property, and on the other side is a common area with grass and trees. "It's like having an extended yard without the upkeep," comments Fry.

In their previous home, the couple employed a full-time gardener to assist with the expansive gardens. Now, the low-maintenance yard requires help only once a week.

"And I do as much as I can," Fry confides. "I've gardened all my life, and it is such a wonderful escape to get outside and focus only on what needs to be done in the yard. It is very peaceful, and I can't imagine my life without gardening." 🌻

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