

Family First

With welcoming spaces designed for all ages,
an Arcadia home serves as an entertainment hub.

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Architect: Matt Thomas, Matthew Thomas Architecture, LLC **Interior Design:** Caroline Tyler DeCesare and Michelle Drake, DeCesare Design Group, Inc.
Home Builder: Ryan Patten, Arcadia Custom Builders, LLC **Landscape Architecture:** Jeff Berghoff, Berghoff Design Group

For a young couple and their children, almost every day at their newly built dwelling in Phoenix's Arcadia neighborhood is like a small block party, filled with playdates and visits from local friends. And that's exactly what they intended. Prior to having children, the husband and wife built a modern residence that became a little too austere for their growing household—more of a showpiece than a family-friendly abode. “It felt like a resort rather than a home,” explains interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare, who along with architect Matt Thomas, was brought on to the project by builder Ryan Patten. “The goal was to come to a neighborhood with sidewalks and people walking around, and have this home be cozy. They still wanted it to include cool, modern elements but feel more comfortable and traditional.”

Arcadia, with its charming residences and lively community, was the perfect fit. So, the couple purchased two adjacent lots surrounded by towering ficus trees and views of Camelback Mountain. They then set out to combine the properties and construct their new dream dwelling with a separate guest house for family and friends. “During the past 15 years or so, Arcadia has become a very eclectic neighborhood in terms of architectural style,” notes Thomas. “Many of the low-slung ranch residences from the 1950s have been torn down and new homes built in every style from contemporary to East Coast.”

This greatly appealed to the couple, who aren't fans of stereotypical Arizona architecture consisting of clay tile roofs and brown stucco. “The husband is from Virginia, and he is drawn to a more traditional aesthetic,” explains Thomas. “The wife was on the same page. They were unified in their design goals.” Avoiding materials often found in desert homes, Thomas and Patten instead chose to use reclaimed Silver Fox limestone sourced from Northern Indiana, basalt stone and wood siding—a mix that feels classic while still nodding to the contemporary. A next-level modern farmhouse, if you will. “All of the exterior finishes—the steel doors and windows

and Spanish cedar beams—are fabulous and timeless,” notes DeCesare.

She and project designer Michelle Drake wanted to bring the same style to the interiors, incorporating a textural, soothing palette of blues, grays and whites. DeCesare affectionately dubbed the style “Sonoma Modern,” winking to the barns and wineries inherent in Northern California.

Every inch of the nearly 10,000-square-foot home is designed to meticulously adapt to the family's needs. The space is layered with durable, stain-resistant fabrics and rugs to hold up against spills and the family's two dogs. This was a necessity considering the multitude of guests they host, including the children's many neighborhood friends. “It's all about entertaining. They are always having people over,” Thomas says.

A spacious great room that opens to the kitchen, which showcases double islands with deep blue cabinetry, allows for an overflow of visitors. And the room's oversize 5-foot-deep sofa is ideal for family movie nights. Outside, in the yard crafted by landscape designer Jeff Berghoff, a batting cage, sport court, putting green, splash pad and swimming pool guarantee no one gets bored. “There are all of these little destinations and zones,” DeCesare notes.

That's true for the adults as well as the kids. A Soho speakeasy-inspired “man cave” with tufted banquettes, industrial stools and an aged-brass-topped bar provides an old-school setting for evening cocktails. When the couple is ready to retire for the night, a mini-fridge and fireplace in the main bedroom's library-like lounge provides the perfect sitting area for late-night TV watching. “One of the best compliments is that they use every single room,” DeCesare says. “And with the more modern, cleaner furnishings, it will remain as great in 15 years as it is now.”

The family is completely at home—so much so that they rarely like to leave. “This house really flexes for what they need,” the designer observes. “There are so many residences that are like museums where you feel like you can't sit down or take off your shoes. This is truly a family dwelling, and every space is meant to be lived in and enjoyed.” ■



The light-filled entry is awash in Benjamin Moore's Decorator's White, and a pendant by The Urban Electric Co. anchors the space. Wall paneling by Door Works cleverly conceals extra storage for coats and miscellaneous items.

Designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare softened vaulted ceilings with a chandelier by Roll & Hill and selected comfortable seating options, such as Rowe Furniture swivel chairs. A large Millcreek Furniture console creates a natural partition between the great room's sitting area and adjacent kitchen.





Above: The bright kitchen—featuring pendants from Circa Lighting, an Apparatus chandelier and Lee Industries counter stools—is designed for entertaining with plenty of prep space and seating for family and guests. Underfoot are floors from Arizona Hardwood Floor Supply.

Opposite: DeCesare added a splash of color to the cooking area with island cabinetry coated in Farrow & Ball's Hague Blue and adorned with Buster + Punch hardware. The islands are topped with quartz from Cactus Stone & Tile; the perimeter counter is granite sourced from Arizona Tile.





Custom cabinetry by Rysso Peters painted Farrow & Ball's Stiffkey Blue defines the dining room. The Parish Co table is paired with seating by Moe's Home Collection and a Taylor King host chair.



Above: DeCesare appointed the soothing primary bedroom with a custom bed by DeCesare Design Group, a chandelier from Circa Lighting and vintage chairs found at the Round Top Antiques Show in Texas. A Woodbridge Furniture console plays to the fresh palette.

Opposite: To instill a spa-like atmosphere in the primary bathroom, DeCesare centered the Victoria + Albert soaking tub and Waterworks filler in front of doors leading to a courtyard.

