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# HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

By Elizabeth Exline

WITH 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE UNDER HIS TOOL BELT, ONE HOMEBUILDER TRAINS HIS SEASONED EYE ON HIS MOST PERSONAL PROJECT TO DATE—AN ELEGANT SPANISH COLONIAL RETREAT FOR HIS FAMILY OF FOUR.

AS THE VICE PRESIDENT of Scottsdale-based Salcito Custom Homes, Anthony J. Salcito Jr. is on intimate terms with some of the grandest properties within the Valley of the Sun. As a husband and father of two, however, his home-building experience is necessarily more limited. "When I built [my last] house, I was single," he explains. "I got married and had two kids in that house." Located in Scottsdale's golden child of development, DC Ranch, Salcito's previous home was more contemporary, he says, and smaller—the latter quality being the one that spurred on him and his wife, Rebecca, to build this sumptuous, 6,500-sq.-ft. residence in DC Ranch's upscale sibling, Silverleaf.

Of course, while the Salcitos helmed the design-build process, the house didn't draw itself. Rather, Dale Gardon of Dale Gardon Design first sketched the plans, and he incorporated all the thoughtful touches for which his work is known. "I'm somebody who thinks you need to mine out every square inch and square foot that you can," Gardon says, "and that's what this house does. Every turn you go, there's some little nook [or] cranny that has a feature in it."

If Salcito's home feels particularly well-suited to Silverleaf's Arcadia neighborhood, it's at least partly due to Gardon's aesthetic. He is the visionary behind the design guidelines for Silverleaf and DC Ranch, and he developed the communities with an eye toward regional authenticity. Salcito's elevation takes



PHOTOGRAPHED BY DINO TONIN





a Spanish Colonial perspective on architectural history. Its creamy stucco, wrought-iron details, dark wood accents and broad front porch all combine to welcome you inside. And that's where the Salcitos' preferences and experiences show best. For, as Salcito often emphasizes, he was no wallflower when it came to the dance of designing and building his home. "I was able to handle the fireplaces, the millwork and the ceiling details," he says, "and [Rebecca] was able to handle all the furniture, the fabric and the light fixtures...and it all came together really, really well."

The experience starts at the foyer, where the narrow space is outfitted with clerestory windows and tall ceilings wearing stained crown molding. This, Gardon says, creates a "foyer tower experience." Natural light washes over the dark, reclaimed pine floors; and the eye is drawn down the length of the corridor to the kitchen and dining area, bestowing what Gardon describes as a cozy, hearthlike feeling.

The foyer also embodies a theme that pervades the rest of the house: the balance between light and dark. This, Salcito says, is a function of his and his wife's opposing color preferences, but the resolution is as harmonious as their building experience. "You don't really see any beige in here at all," he says. "It's either light-light or dark-dark." This often translates to the happy marriage of dark millwork and furniture with light fabrics. In the stretch of space at the back of the house, for example, the kitchen opens to the dining area, which opens to the living room. In the kitchen, brilliant white Calcutta marble countertops and rubbed-through white cabinetry

are balanced by a dark wood island. (The marble, incidentally, is honed on the island but not on the perimeter counters for an additional contrast.) An Italian mosaic backsplash, meanwhile, softens the transition by weaving together its own delicate patterns of white and jade tinctures.

Opposite the kitchen lies the living room, a space so formal Salcito opted to forego a television. (Just around the corner, the theater includes enough media opportunity for the two rooms combined.) Chairs, whose provenance can be traced to a Scottish castle, echo the same creams and dark woods of the kitchen, as does the ceiling, where light paint is paired with dark beams. The antique Vicenza limestone fireplace frames a herringbone brick interior, and in front of it, a cream and brown rug rests comfortably atop those weathered pine planks.

The dining area, in contrast, separates the living room from the kitchen with a nine-foot, Ralph Lauren pine table that's surrounded by leather chairs sporting nailhead trims. Perhaps it's because the table is flanked by such sumptuousness on either side, but the effect is refreshingly spare. It is the breathing space that allows you to reflect on the intricacies of each room, many of which feature architectural details Salcito designed. In the kitchen, for example, he accommodated a replica Habersham armoire by not only integrating it into the room via a customized nook but by repeating those same lines in the upper cabinets by the refrigerator and in those above the Miele coffee system.

Another motif in Salcito's home is the emphasis on ceiling





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treatments. Salcito bedecked each ceiling with a paint color different from that of the walls and with stained or painted crown molding; and many of them slope, stretch or turn in captivating ways. "When you have that opportunity to play with height, volume, shape, it just adds to the intrigue," Gardon explains. As a result, ceilings soar in the foyer, pitch to a cathedral shape in the master bedroom and, in the dining room, wear an otherworldly finish of metallic plaster that's hemmed in by alder molding and fir beams.

As in many Arizona abodes, Salcito's residence makes a case for outdoor living. The home's courtyard is accessed by the dining room and the foyer's hallway, as well as by the upstairs guest suite via a handsome staircase. (The courtyard itself is a serene spot with a handcarved cantera fireplace and fountain, plush seating, greenery and reclaimed brick underfoot.) In the back, French doors embraced by a striking French-curved window open to the terrace and pool. The dining area also accesses the backyard, and on the other end of the house, the master suite's sitting room opens to the patio and spa. In addition to the fully equipped kitchen and living areas outdoors, side yards afford plenty of turf for Salcito's two young sons; he even designed the wrought-iron arbor on the south side that marks the boundary between the adult play spaces and those of the children.

The engagement between spaces extends to the interiors as well. The loft, for instance, is designated as the children's play room, and it incorporates a Juliet balcony that overlooks the living room. (In fact, this is a feature that's straight out of Gardon's own home.) "It's just all part of the charm factor," Gardon summarizes. "You get fountains, stairs, fireplaces [and] seating areas all surrounding the main living areas of the home. That's how and why it exudes the quality that it does."

Of course, Salcito's professional expertise paid off in other ways. Using different woods in a residence is a trend he picked up on—his home's cabinetry is fashioned from hickory, poplar and alder. He also expanded bedroom and closet sizes from what Gardon originally planned, and he knew his wife well enough to outfit their dressing space with two closets just for her. (One stores her clothes; the other, her shoes and handbags.) But in the end, it just might be the choice of community that most rewarded his discerning eye, for Silverleaf—particularly the Arcadia subdivision where he lives—is shaping up to be the ideal neighborhood. "For my son's third birthday, I bought him a pony," Salcito says. "I had it delivered to the house, and we rode it in the park across the street all day with all the little kids. You can tell that the neighborhood's going to turn out to be a cool neighborhood." And his inviting, comfortable home is ideally situated to enjoy it to the fullest. **EW**

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