

Tucson Lifestyle

# HOME & GARDEN

*Awesome*  
**blossoms**



High Time  
For Tea  
Built for  
Views

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may 2013

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**About the Cover:** African daisies in bloom.  
Photo by Thomas Veneklasen.



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# A Dramatic DISPLAY

Modern art — that's one way to look at this Stone Canyon home that frames incredible views.

BY GILLIAN DRUMMOND  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL SNYDER

Lisa and Mike Mahoney are what you might call homeowners with itchy feet. They buy houses, place their stamp on them, and within a couple of years, sell them. They feel like there's too much out there to enjoy to be tied down to one place for a long time.

In their 14 years of marriage they've had four homes. But their place in Oro Valley may just be their last. They were living in Austin, Texas, when, driving their RV to a house they have in Lake Tahoe, they found themselves at Catalina State Park. They cycled around Stone Canyon in Oro Valley and fell madly in love with it. Soon they were looking at houses there.

"This is the first home I've really felt like I could be content with," says Lisa, who celebrated her second anniversary as a Tucsonan last August. "I've never lived in a home that works so perfectly. When my husband said 'I'm happy living in Tucson,' I said 'Are you kidding?' I take his temperature every day to make sure he's all right."





ABOVE The stacked stone columns contrast with the horizontal elements of the roofline. Outdoor living spaces look over the negative-edge pool toward a view of Pusch Ridge.

LEFT A variety of landscape elements complement the architectural stone textures.



Architect Jim McMahon, presented with the job of designing a spec home on a vista-filled lot in Stone Canyon, knew he was in for a lot of fun. Making the most of those views was what drove the design. With the Tortolita Mountains to the north and Pusch Ridge to the east, McMahon maximized the home's orientation with lots of windows and doors. He favors a contemporary style, and yet with this project he was able to marry modern and rustic.

"There aren't a lot of materials when you look at this house: alder, stone veneer, glass and metal," he says. The exterior and some of the interior walls are stacked stone. There's a metal roof. The bathroom and kitchen cabinets are dark alder, and most of the floors are travertine. Sandstone shows up in the master bath as a countertop and in the shower.

This house is about drama, impact and repetition. It begins with the front door, an

eight-foot-wide expanse of steel and glass that swivels open. The design of the front door is repeated twice inside. The wine room door handle duplicates the one on the front door. In the living room, the almost ceiling-high stacked stone surround for the media center has a row of small windows above it that echo the pattern of smaller windows above the front door. At sunset, those windows are striking, soaking up the hues of desert sky and lighting up the entire living space.

The living/kitchen space and a formal dining area are open to the entranceway of the house. And there's a media room with blackout blinds to serve the built-in movie/TV projector.

The master bedroom is not so much a sleeping space as a luxury suite, with its stacked stone fireplace and seating area. In the master bath, his-and-hers sinks occupy different walls.

This being his baby, McMahon was eager to see



OPPOSITE The stone's texture provides a backdrop for the contemporary furnishings. The "ribbon" windows add a floating sense to the ceiling.

RIGHT TOP The pivoting entry door's design motif repeats in several places in the home's architecture.

RIGHT A 17-foot sliding window wall provides a seamless connection from the living room to the outdoor kitchen and patio.





how it would look when it was lived in. The Mahoneys are the second owners, and McMahon couldn't be happier. "They nailed it," he says of a décor and art collection that's heavy on untreated wood, ceramics and earth tones. Whenever possible, the Mahoneys buy regional art, and their works include those of California-born Michael Nisperos, Ina Yeager of San Francisco, and Arizona native Hilario.

"Our homes have ranged from Old English to really, really contemporary," says Lisa who, with her husband, is establishing herself as a prominent local philanthropist, giving money primarily to University of Arizona Medical Center's Diamond Children's and animal rescue organizations. She describes the look of this home as "soft contemporary."

With so much glass and spectacular views, the outside is as much of a character in this project as the building itself. Desert and mountain vignettes provide relaxing and inviting backdrops — an extra layer of art, if you like. And McMahon's plan to make a true

**LEFT** The tub in the master bath was designed to appear as a piece of furniture.

**BELOW** The kitchen island, with its overhead hood, creates a functional space with many amenities.





**ABOVE** In the master suite, stacked stone columns add texture to the fireplace and armoire niche.

**RIGHT** Thick stone walls transition into the home's foyer.

inside-outside living space has worked; with their built-in patio kitchen and fireplace, a swim-up bar (with bar stools cast into the surface of the pool) and plenty of seating spaces, the Mahoneys have extended their living space well beyond the 4,500 square feet of the building. There also is room outside to build a guest house down the line.

"Jim used top-notch materials. You could tell he put a lot of his heart into this home," says Lisa. If she ever builds another home in Tucson, she says, "It will be in Stone Canyon, and I will get Jim to build it."

But wait ... does that mean they have itchy feet again? **HG**

**Sources:**

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- Landscaping: Tortolita Landscaping Inc., [www.tortolitalandscaping.com](http://www.tortolitalandscaping.com)

