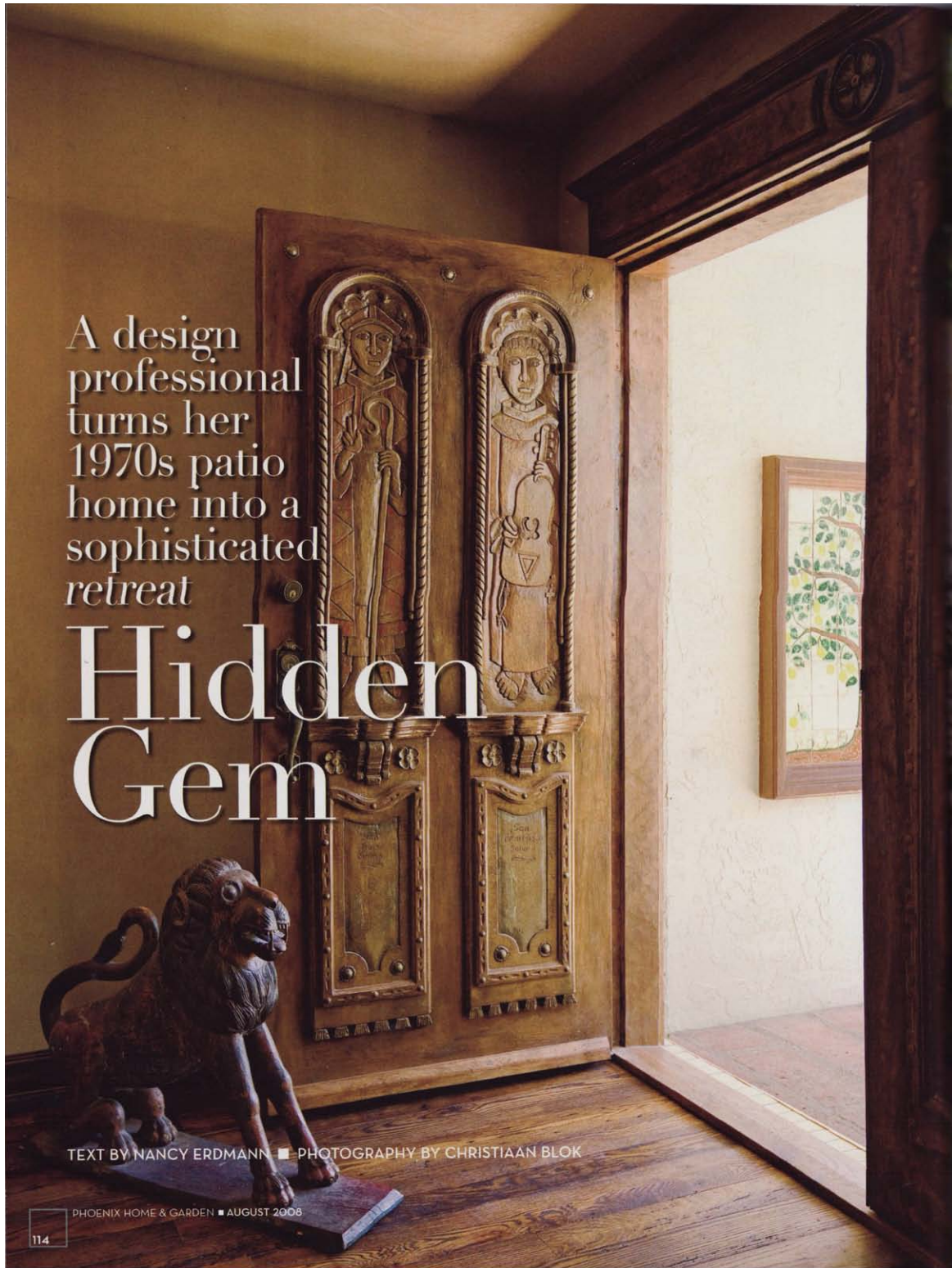


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A design  
professional  
turns her  
1970s patio  
home into a  
sophisticated  
*retreat*

# Hidden Gem

TEXT BY NANCY ERDMANN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAAN BLOK



This page and opposite: The addition of carved veneer panels to the existing front doors during the renovation of her central Phoenix home made the biggest impact on the entry, says Beth McGehee. Pavers set in grass and iron accents dress up the inviting space. A miniature wood church on the wall at right conceals the mailbox.



**T**wo years ago, interior designer Beth McGehee purchased a 1970s patio home in central Phoenix. The interior of the house, which she describes as having a Contemporary bent, hadn't changed much over the years. "It had ceramic tile flooring, lots of carpet and standard doors and windows," she recalls.

Her goal was to transform the 1,600-square-foot two-bedroom residence into a comfortable Traditional-style home that respected its Spanish Colonial architecture.

To that end, she brought in elaborate hand-carved doors, custom Spanish tiles, alder ceiling beams, carved cantera, and Spanish antiques. McGehee also covered the once-white walls in a dusty

gold plaster veneer and laid dark oak flooring to create a warm ambience.

Other changes included updating the kitchen, reconfiguring the master bathroom, transforming a guest bedroom into an office and revamping outdoor spaces.

McGehee, who owns Studio B in Scottsdale, is used to dealing with remodeling obstacles but says she wasn't prepared for the unexpected expense that occurred after deciding to raise the home's ceilings from 7 to 8 feet high.

"The air conditioning needed to be replaced during the process, and it became obvious the roof also had to be replaced," she remembers. "Then I was shocked to discover there wasn't any insulation between the ceiling and roof, so I needed to have that taken care of as well. A lot of money was spent on things you can't even see."

With two dogs and a cat sharing her new home, McGehee loves the easy-care floors, the more workable kitchen, and the spa-inspired master bath. Though none of the rooms is particularly spacious, "each embraces you," she says. "This is a small house that lives big." □

**Above:** Originally a closet, this tiny space in the master bathroom now houses a toilet and an antique cherry cabinet for storing towels and toiletries. The carved door at right came from a monastery. **Opposite:** Oversized furnishings, including Ralph Lauren leather chairs, a black Marge Carson console table and a hand-carved mirror, were needed to fill the unusually large foyer.

**SPLURGE:**

Homeowner Beth McGehee says she spent most of her money on tile, reclaimed-oak flooring, and a Schonbek crystal chandelier that she loves because it adds "bling" to the dark dining room.

**SAVE:**

By keeping the floor plan close to its original state and not changing the location of kitchen appliances and light fixtures, McGehee saved on construction and plumbing costs.



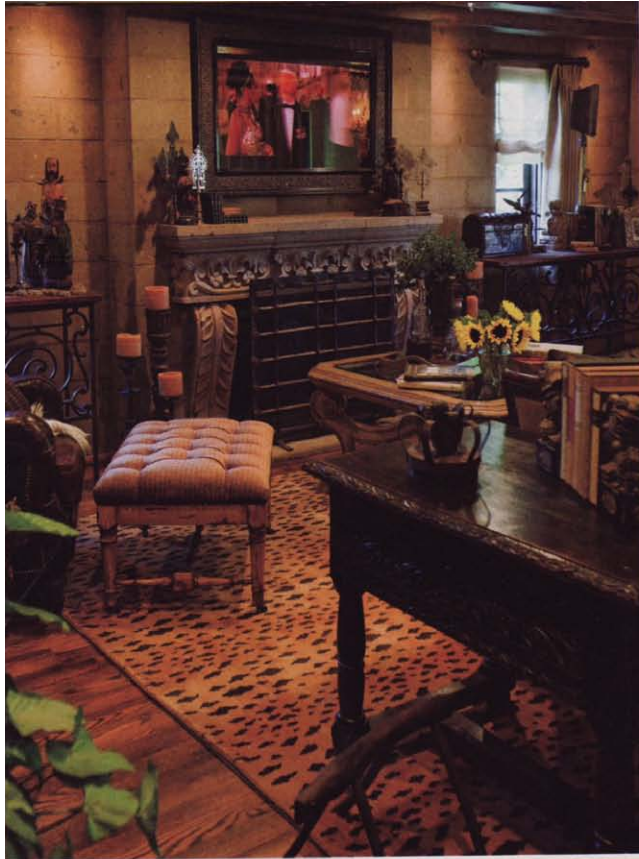


**This page:** Once home to the shower and toilet, this area in the master bath has been retrofitted with an antique Indian dowry chest converted into a vanity and topped with a limestone counter. An old shutter panel on the wall opens to the medicine cabinet. **Opposite:** In the master bedroom, a carved mesquite bed from Taber & Co. is piled high with decorative pillows, as is the Taber bench at the foot of the bed.



Located in the center of the home, the kitchen went from whitewashed cabinets and light-color counters to black cabinetry and black polished-granite countertops. "Because the kitchen is so open to the rest of the place, I didn't want it to stand out," explains Beth McGhee about her choice of dark colors. A stacked washer and dryer are housed behind the brown-stained armoire. Custom-painted Spanish tiles form the backsplashes. The floor is reclaimed oak.





**This page, clockwise from top left:** In the living room, a carved cantera fireplace surround and an antique wrought-iron screen become part of the TV wall. A leopard print rug, wood side table and tufted footstool add to the eclectic feel. ■ In the backyard, a tiny refurbished patio includes an accent wall of custom-painted Spanish tiles, an antique chandelier and a concrete tile floor. Outdoor wicker furnishings and potted plants cozy up the space. Visible in the window's reflection is a cantera fireplace. ■ Formerly the guest bathroom, the new powder room offers global appeal. A concrete Japanese soaking tub, which the homeowner admits to liking more for its look than comfort, sits next to a wall of tile and textured-grass wallpaper. An Asian cabinet was converted into a vanity with a stone sink. **Opposite:** To the right of the dining room fireplace is a sitting area with a carved mesquite table from Taber & Co., a pair of leopard print wing-back chairs and a bronze bust, all illuminated by a Schonbek crystal chandelier. Linen curtains frame recently installed wood casement windows. The homeowner added the alder ceiling beams.

See Sources.



