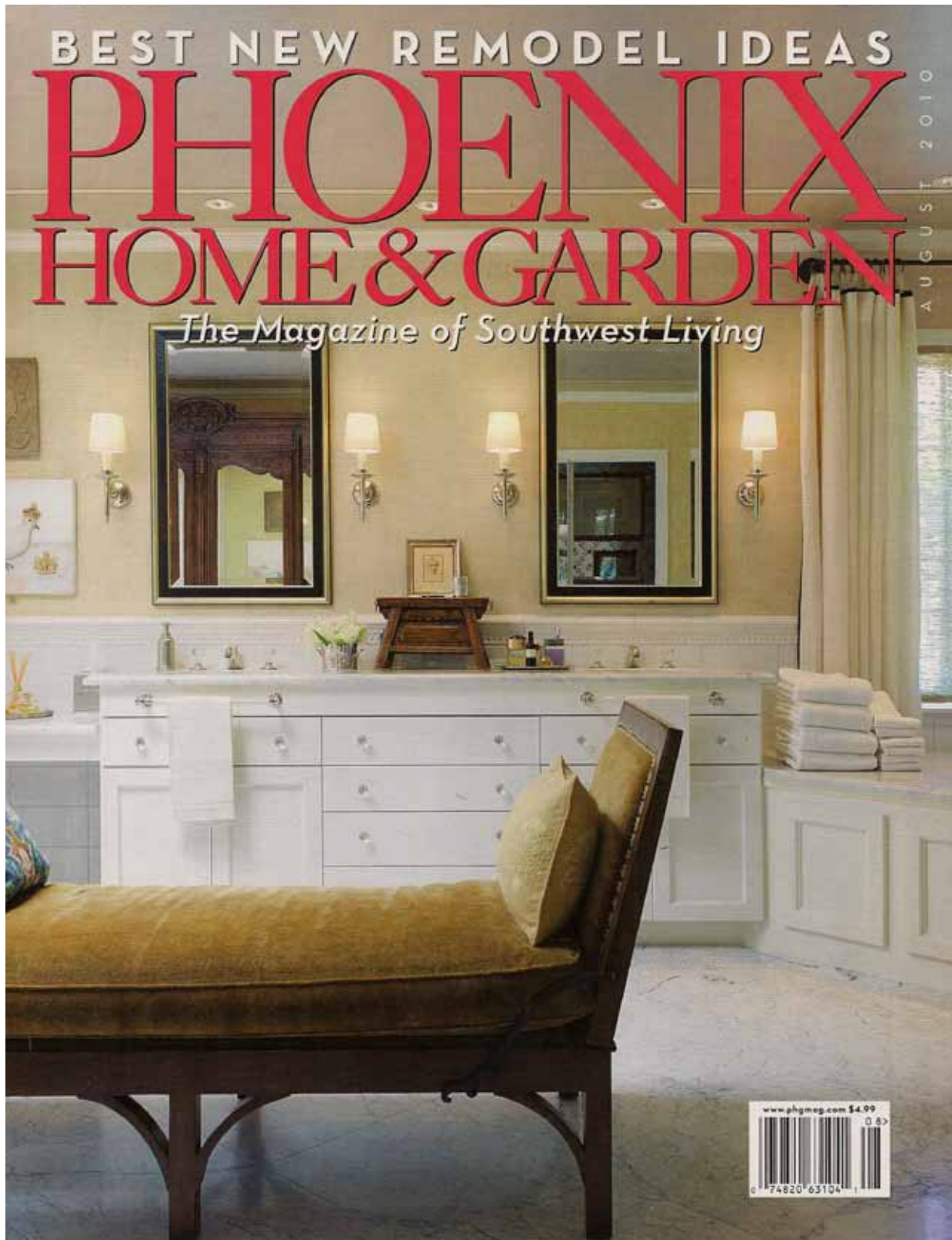


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Opportunity Found

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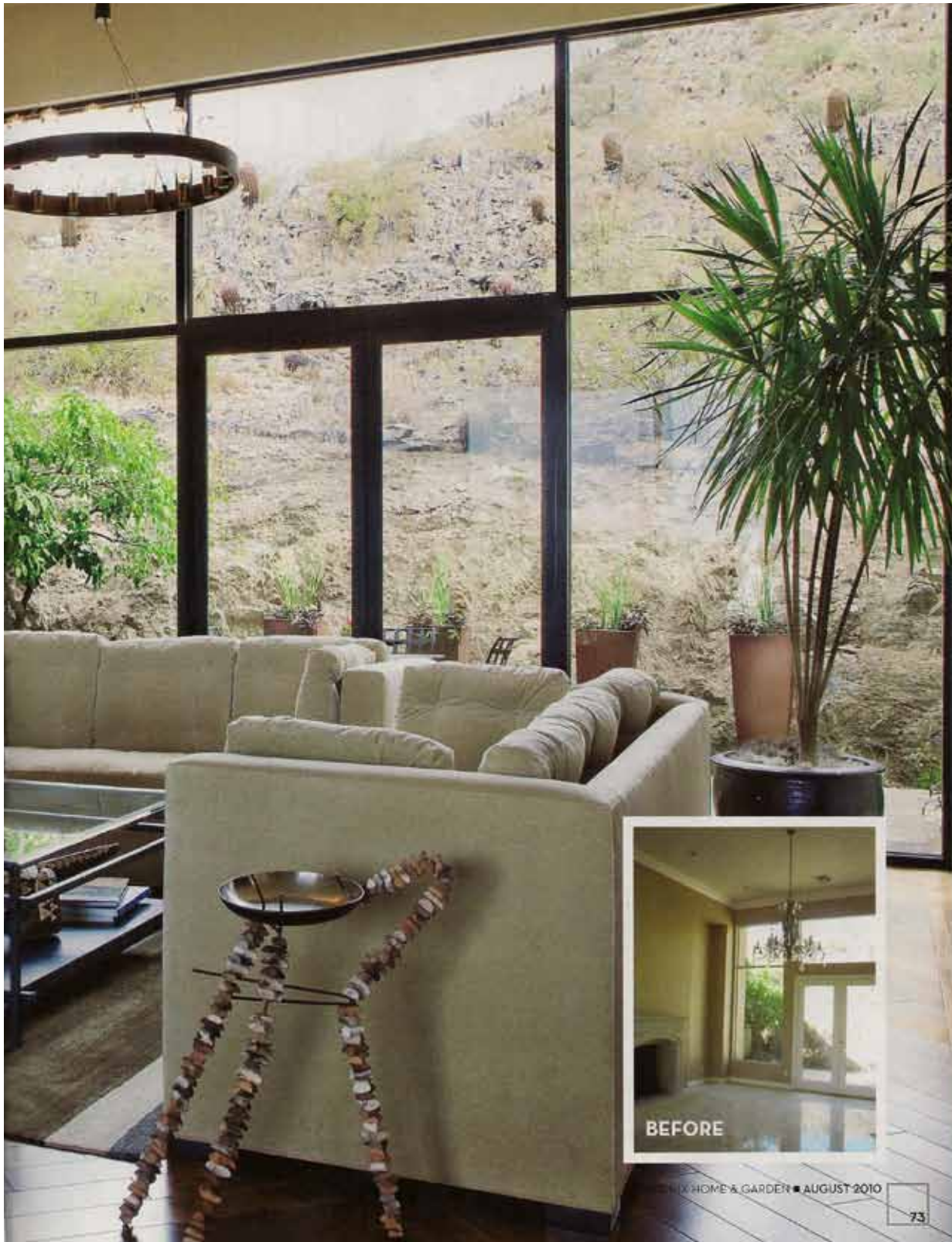
The living room of this Phoenix residence was transformed when the small, plain cement fireplace was dressed up with an eye-catching surround of Sonoran Black ledgestone. Niches to display art were installed on either side of the fireplace, and new walnut flooring was laid in a herringbone pattern.



OPPORTUNITY FOUND

A MAJOR RE-DO TRANSFORMS A DATED HOME INTO A TIMELESS TREASU

TEXT BY SUE BREDDING ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS LOOMIS



BEFORE



If you watch how Paul Bruno and Gary Abeyta are able to quickly and confidently offer tips for people thinking about home remodeling, you might surmise that they work in the interior design or construction fields. The truth is, they are just two businessmen who have gone through a crash course in the school of firsthand experience.

Over the last seven years, Bruno and Abeyta have remodeled three houses on a small scale. When they bought their current place, it cried out for a major overhaul. They describe it as being "stuck in the 1980s," with features that included a sunken bar and light peach-colored exterior stucco. What they dreamed of was transforming the dated residence into a timeless treasure.

In designing the remodel, architect David Dick addressed what he saw as a glaring problem: The home had small windows and little opportunity for the owners, when they were indoors, to fully enjoy the beautiful mountain on which their house sits. "My first impression was that this house represented opportunity lost," Dick states. "It clearly was designed for another site and plopped onto this land."

Dick and the homeowners brainstormed about adding larger windows and glass doors that would engage them more intimately with the mountain setting. They talked about changing the floor plan to open up small spaces, including the narrow kitchen.

"With most remodels, the people I work with are completely out of their element," remarks Dick. "Paul and Gary had a willingness to join me in the design process, so we took a modest house and created one that reflects their lifestyle."

The owners now have separate home offices, a gym, and a master bedroom closet so large that it occupies much of the space that originally was the master bedroom.

The two proudly remember how, at one point, they drew on wisdom gained from their previous remodels. "We were able to recognize when we were over our heads with design decisions, and we called in Beth McGehee," explains Paul.

The interior designer describes her role as a "sounding board" for their ideas. "Paul and Gary needed assistance with tile, carpet, lighting and countertop materials," McGehee recalls. "These guys have good taste, so we focused on combining their ideas and staying with the original design intent." She also helped purchase and design pieces of furniture for the pair. The result is a Contemporary-style home that is sleek yet has warm touches, such as bronze finishes and wood panels.

The homeowners say they learned a thing or two during the process. "Realize it's going to take longer than you think, and do not live in the house during renovation," tutors Paul.

"Yes," Gary adds with a smile. "Don't convert your bathroom into a kitchen by putting a microwave and coffee pot in there. And, don't settle on something you totally dislike. Hold off and look for something you both agree to and appreciate." □

Above: Thanks to an oversized window, the handsome home office offers a view into the living room. Other features include walnut flooring, a wall of built-in shelves and cabinets, and a coffered box-beam ceiling. **Opposite:** Wood panels warm the ceiling and a wall of the dining room, where a long table can seat 10. The bronze top on the custom-designed buffet provides a surface that is utilized when the homeowners entertain. A finishing touch, "The linear crystal chandelier was a piece we fell in love with at first sight," according to interior designer Beth McGehee. "The bling was just what we needed."





BEFORE

This page: A cozy covered patio off the family room boasts flooring embedded with fossils of leaves and stones. **Opposite:** Pops of bright orange enliven the kitchen, where windows provide mountain views. The walnut-topped L-shaped island was designed so that the homeowners can have their friends gather around without impacting the circulation needed for the chef to work. "Before the remodel, it was a small kitchen with a teeny island," recalls Paul Bruno.





This page: A shiny light-hued paint was chosen for its sharp contrast to the earthy wenge wood-paneled wall behind the bed in the master bedroom. "The striped wool carpet is consistent with the Contemporary design of the room while still providing the comfort Paul and Gary desired," notes interior designer Beth McGahee. She designed the cabinet at the foot of the bed to conceal a TV that rotates 180 degrees so it can be viewed from either the bed or the lounge chairs. Heavy linen drapes hang ceiling to floor, and a corner fireplace adds ambience. Opposite: In the master bathroom, a double vanity floats on a grid mirror and window wall that allows a peek at the desert beyond. Flooring is limestone.





BEFORE

This page: The family room lacked wow factor until a wenge wood wall and floating fireplace were added during the remodel. "What Paul and Gary asked for was something with a sense of elegance to it, yet a simplicity," explains architect David Dick. "The granite is honed, not shiny," Paul Bruno points out. "We don't have shiny granite anywhere." **Opposite:** This bathroom was inspired by hotel bathrooms the homeowners had seen in their travels. Carrara marble forms the flooring, wainscoting and vanity top, and also clads walls of the shower.

See Sources.



