

ARCHITECTURE / ANDREW SCHAFFNER, MICHAEL BOYD
AND DALE PATTON, DANIELIAN ASSOCIATES
INTERIOR DESIGN / KRISTEN SMOKOWSKI,
DESIGN REPERTOIRE



FAMILY AFFAIR

A MOTHER AND SON DESIGN TEAM
MATCH TALENTS AND TASTES TO
CREATE A FAMILY HOME IN LA QUINTA.

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Black steel corner windows by Arcadia Custom bring spectacular views of the surrounding mountains into a family room, where a sleek, cashmere-covered B&B Italia sofa from Diva Group is joined by a wool and silk Anthropologie rug and an RH Modern coffee table.

As a seasoned professional, interior designer Kristen Smokowski knew she and her husband, Bernard, needed to field multiple proposals before choosing an architect to conceive their new home in La Quinta. Among the firms pitching ideas was Danielian Associates and a young architect there named Andrew Schaffner. Ultimately, the then 26-year-old Schaffner, who also happens to be Smokowski's son, and the firm prevailed with the winning concept. "We wanted to give everyone equal opportunity, but he nailed it," she recalls. "It's so important to find somebody who can translate your vision, and he did that at such a young age."

The couple envisioned a modern take on a Spanish-style ranch, "which fit that site," says Smokowski, pointing to the surrounding desert landscape and Santa Rosa Mountains beyond. "It was essential to have something

that felt intrinsic to the landscape." To satisfy both the family's wishes and community design guidelines, Schaffner, working with colleagues Michael Boyd and Dale Patton, employed traditional elements such as plasterwork, pillow-cut limestone and reclaimed brick for the parapet trim. He then laced black steel details throughout, such as the floor-to-ceiling windows, and incorporated decorative steel I-beams softened with warm wood inserts. The I-beams, installed under the direction of general contractor Bill Leddy of Sun Vista Construction, were a "trust me" moment with his mother, Schaffner recalls. "But I knew we needed that contemporary detail to come through, to show that this is a new home." Once the wood insert was in place, "it so perfectly blended in," says Smokowski. "It gives that hint of a modern, forward-thinking perspective."

For the La Quinta home she shares with her husband, Bernard, interior designer Kristen Smokowski and her son, architect Andrew Schaffner, collaborated on rooms brimming with warmth and character. In the gallery off the entry, she paired a Noir cabinet from Bassman Blaine with vintage lamps made by her grandmother.

The focal point of the dining room is a freestanding art wall, which hides the entrance to the master suite and displays a commissioned America Martin painting. "We wanted places where our art could shine, where people could walk up to it," says Smokowski. Carl Hansen & Søn chairs surround the Flexform table. The light fixture above by ADG Lighting defines the space while making way for both the view and the art.



Punctuated by two enclosed courtyards, Schaffner's open-plan layout invites discovery. "As you walk around the entire home, you have views from both sides," says Smokowski. "There is this constant unrolling of surprises." The wonders begin outdoors at the massive custom gate. There glimpses of the front courtyard, planted with palms and bougainvillea (a collaboration between Smokowski and landscape designer Gustavo Magaña of GM Future Designs) are visible through square cutouts. "They make you want to see what's on the other side," says Schaffner. "We wanted to create visual interest that keeps you moving to the next space."

Many of the entertainment areas also radiate from this sun-kissed core, including the dining room, which opens wide to uninterrupted vistas of the Chocolate Mountains.

Other social spots such as the kitchen, media room and wine bar flow together. Private spaces flank the rear courtyard, where the master bedroom suite overlooks a reflecting pool, which features a commissioned sculpture by artist America Martin.

When composing these interiors, "I like to keep it simple," explains Smokowski. "Because I think the interior designer's true job is to create a canvas, so you can fill it with things you love, things that matter." Colors remain neutral to showcase the family's vibrant artworks and sentimental pieces, like the lamps made from antique concrete wallpaper rolls by Smokowski's maternal grandmother. For furnishings, she also favored pared-down yet easy silhouettes in lush fabrics and finishes, from the cashmere B&B Italia sofas in the living room and a family room to the

Perhaps the most coveted perch, the pair of swinging Tidelli sofas by the pool "was one of our essential requirements when we imagined our home," says Smokowski. She and Schaffner designed the custom sconces in partnership with Hammerton Studio. Inside above the dining table is a light fixture by ADG Lighting "I think lighting is a great way to be modern and clean," she notes.



Off a hallway punctuated by a Jason Kowalski painting, sleek cabinetry by Leicht conceals the laundry area. The architect and interior designer worked closely with the company. Monarch Plank Hardwood Flooring supplied the European oak.

richly stained dining table by Flexform. “Her approach to design is always about making everything feel comfortable,” notes Schaffner. “She would never choose a cold piece just for appearances.”

A vein of familial warmth indeed runs throughout the project, forged through sunny days on the construction site and late-night text exchanges, swapping sketches and ideas. This spirit is perhaps best captured by Schaffner’s unexpected detail for his mother—an exterior fireplace at the entrance. “We were finalizing

the massing,” says Schaffner, who turned 29 this year, as the project was wrapping up. “We thought a chimney would evoke that Spanish Revival look and create a warm welcome for people entering the home.” The surprise worked perfectly. “We light it when we’re home, to let people know they can come by,” says Smokowski. “And I think everybody who comes here enjoys our space. I hope they see the passion and the beauty of a family who knew what they wanted and was actually able to bring it to life.”

The goal for the kitchen’s cabinetry, conceived in concert with Leicht, was to have it look like furnishings to complement the home’s architectural details and collections of art, heirlooms and other finds. Accenting the space are West Elm counter chairs and a runner from Juxtaposition Home. The countertop slabs are from EuroWest; the appliances are by Miele.



Taking advantage of the outdoors, a generous loggia provides space for entertaining "where we have expansive views of the mountains," says Smokowski. She appointed a cozy outdoor dining area with Tidelli furnishings, including the chairs and table.



The courtyard pool, by McIntyre Pools & Spas, has a negative edge on one side; the decking is limestone from AAA Natural Stone in Jarrell, Texas. "The pool brings in and reflects a lot of light into the area," Schaffner observes.



Schaffner repeated the same pattern of squares found on the entry gate for wood details around the courtyard. "You can really see the light play where it's dark," says Schaffner. Adds Smokowski, "When you repeat a pattern, it lends a sense of a modern edge and connects everything together." The windows are by Arcadia Custom.

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Opposite: Cool, soft blues, echoing the desert sky, define a guest room's palette. Smokowski recovered the West Elm bed, which is dressed with RH linens. The armchair is from Anthropologie.

Below: For the master bath, the materials are glamorous—a mix of Calacatta marble and basalt mosaic tiles on the floor and Calacatta Gold slabs for the shower walls. The California Faucets plumbing fixtures are from Pirch.

