

The Right Angle at Ancala - Scottsdale Remodel

Written by Written by David M. Brown / Photographed by Dino Tonn

Howard and Linda Zimmerman needed a new angle for their Scottsdale home; interior designer Marcia Graber gave them many.



The Zimmermans own Scottsdale's Republic West—one of the Valley's prominent remodeling companies—so naturally they served as contractor for the makeover of their attractive but dated 14-year-old golf-course home.

With the help of Republic West's staff and the slick workmanship of its trade partners, Marcia Graber Designs Ltd. revitalized the family, living, dining, powder and guest rooms as well as alchemized the dull kitchen and master suite into award-winning spaces. The Zimmermans' master bath won first place last year in the annual competition sponsored by the Arizona Central Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). Simultaneously, the kitchen won a third place ASID award.



Abutting the 10th fairway at Ancala Country Club, the four-bedroom home is on a half-acre property, featuring approximately 4,409 under-roof square feet and 6,280 total square feet including a three-car garage and a covered rear cooking space and patio. The backyard also includes a pool and colorful flora, shielding the home from neighbors' and golfers' views.

Still, prior to the remodel the interior of the prestigiously located home was bland and banal, dominated by 80's-style curves and arches. "It looked like so many similar homes—as if it couldn't decide if it was Mediterranean or Southwest contemporary," says Graber, who also frequently lectures on design.

"When we moved to Arizona from Chicago, we purchased our home on spec, so we had limited input into our selections," explains Linda, also the marketing director for Republic West. Because of their new Arizona address, they were first attracted to a Southwest contemporary style, so their furnishings followed this liking.



However, as they frequently travel back to Chicago for work and pleasure, the couple found that they preferred a crisply delineated urban look consistent with the birthplace of modern architecture. "In our hearts, we have always favored contemporary furnishing, so when the opportunity to remodel and refurnish was presented, we knew we wanted to go back to a contemporary feeling in our home," Linda says.

In addition to modern fixtures, they wanted color and luxurious finishes; a sophisticated material palette—glass, stone, wood, stainless steel and copper; an entertainment-friendly kitchen/family room with a multi-purpose walk-behind bar and revamped media center; a "wow" powder room; and a Zen master suite that would invoke a spa-like feeling every time Linda escapes behind its French doors. "It was also important that our home feel very warm and inviting, which is sometimes a challenge with the contemporary look," she says.

Through friends and business, they knew of Graber's interior design reputation (she's been practicing here for 23 years) for innovative

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commercial and residential design solutions as well as her creative strokes of color and artwork commissions.

The Zimmermans first asked her to suggest cabinetry and finish changes in the kitchen, but success with that room quickly morphed into a whole home remodel. They immediately liked that Graber thinks not just about finishes but about the finished environment—not just how to cover space but how to configure it. “My training is in interior architecture as much as interior design, so in my renovation projects I always try to redefine space—not just decorate it,” she says.



“Marcia knew right away that dragging us to many different showrooms and looking at hundreds of fabrics and pieces of furniture was just not our style,” Linda says. “She was able to show us many things we liked and also show us how they worked in the big picture.”

To start, Graber zeroed out many of the previous curves; angles now create a more contemporary aesthetic and practical living spaces. For instance, in the family room the angles of the black granite bar top contrast with the raised glass countertop, which has been sandblasted and back-painted with waves of red and gold. Rectangular space has become exciting space.

Similarly, in the entry, the custom inlay floor design and door handle greet visitors with the home’s new geometry. In the master bedroom, an angled wall contains a large niche above a newly positioned bed and backs up to a custom chest topped by a stone Buddha head. In addition, the master bath, once too linear (“It resembled a bowling alley,” Graber says), is now attractively angular, providing Linda and Howard uniquely configured vanity/mirror areas.

The color palette is primarily earth tones with bright strokes to individuate spaces. Furnishings and glass accessories in the public rooms are shades of red, gold and rust, with occasional ice blue and purple. Much of the colorful artwork in the home is by John Kline, owner of Phoenix Art Group.

To accord with the light travertine floors in the public spaces, Graber applied shades of chocolate to the walls—bittersweet on one of the family room walls; café au lait on many of the ceilings; and milk chocolate on the other family room walls as well as the hall leading to the guest wing, and all but the accent walls in the living room.

The powder room has been transfigured, demonstrating that small space can be exciting space. On the floor, copper metal squares inset the travertine; bright mulberry colors the walls and ceiling; and faux copper accents the decorative cutout partition between the vanity and the commode. Here, and elsewhere in the home, the Valley’s Diane Rogers applied the faux finishes. Creatively, Graber took part of the original space and created a needed linen closet in the master bath.

To further the calming Zen theme of the master suite, Graber finished the walls in soft terracotta to complement the chocolate flooring. To set off the bathroom, Emperador dark marble was inlaid with rojo alacante marble. The shower displays a dry-stack flagstone wall, and cherry wood cabinetry adds further warmth.



In the kitchen, Graber and Republic West took dysfunctional space and remodeled it to accommodate the Zimmermans’ everyday lifestyle and entertaining needs. The original U-shaped island originally drew a line between the kitchen and family room, forming two discontinuous spaces. Graber and Republic West mated the two areas, making the island a focal point; now it’s a mathematician’s dream, as the Golden Wave granite surface incorporates a radiused seating counter as well as right and obtuse angles on the prep side. Here, angles actually reconfigure the rooms for optimum functionality.

Above the island, a stainless and glass triangular art piece—designed by Graber and fabricated by the Valley’s Clear Concepts Mirror and Glass and Hinkley’s Lighting—pierces a circular custom light fixture, also stainless. The ain appliance wall is faux finished with silver to represent raw metal, and in the family room the custom bar base is textured stainless.

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Almost finished inside, the Zimmermans and Graber are looking outdoors next: in the front, adding a courtyard off the study, matching the stonework with that used indoors and vitalizing the large back patio.

"This was an immensely successful project because Linda and Howard welcomed change; they were open to new color and to seeing their spaces differently," Graber says. "Between my firm and theirs, and their excellent subcontractors, they've moved into a new home without moving from the community they so enjoy."

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