

Written by Claire Perkins

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For almost a decade, it has been the hallmark of Sonora West Development to build the finest custom luxury homes in Arizona's most exclusive neighborhoods and communities. Their balance of exquisite materials, quality craftsmanship, valuable experience and careful service are what put Sonora West on the map, but it's their happy clients and relationships that have kept them in business as other homebuilders have found troubles.

We spoke with President of Sonora West Development Scott Pfeiffer about his experience, his latest project in Silverleaf, his favorite styles to build, and how they kept earning business even in the worst of economic times.

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**Can you give us a little background on your business and yourself?**

During college, I worked as a carpenter to pay the bills. After graduating from Arizona State University, I received a position at a local tract home builder. I worked there for a couple years, then accepted a vice president position with a custom home developer in the Paradise Valley area in 1996. After six years of building in PV, I opened Sonora West Development in 2001. Since then we have done hundreds of custom homes and renovations all over the Valley, mainly concentrating in the Arcadia, Paradise Valley and North Scottsdale areas.

**How many custom homes have you built in the Valley?**

Between Sonora West and the prior company I ran, I have built well over 300 projects.

**What is the largest home you've built?**

## Q&A with Sonora West Development's President Scott Pfeiffer

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I have built several homes over 10,000 livable square feet, but probably the largest was about 15,000 square feet.

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### What is your favorite custom home you've built?

All our homes are my favorite! It is tough to pick just one, but I would say that I have finished a few homes that the clients have stayed very true to the architectural style, and whether that is contemporary, craftsman, old world or modern, they have turned out the best.

### What is the most challenging home you've built, and why?

I built the 2004 Arizona foothills showhome of the year. That was the most challenging due to the fact that we had to work with 15 different interior designers, and although it was over 10,000 feet, we only had a year to complete it. Even with that speed and complexity, it still is one of our best projects.

### Can you tell us a little about your new home in Silverleaf?

This, to date, is probably my favorite home. The clients have been phenomenal, and the craftsman style is my personal favorite. Also, due to the market conditions these days, I was able to spend a great deal of time working on the details of this home personally. Personally doing the project management on this home was very rewarding. And, with the help of my staff, we really hit a home run on this house architecturally and good for the client financially. Also because of market conditions, we were able to give the client so much more for their money than they would have received two years ago. The current market conditions allowed us to get very aggressive pricing from the suppliers and subcontractors, which was passed on to the owner.

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### Who is your favorite architect in town?

As a design build firm, we have been using CP Drewett, of Drewett Brenden architecture for several years now. Our relationship has been very productive, and we have been able to realize many dreams of our clients over the life of my company. In custom homebuilding, the ability to marry a budget to a dream is rare, and I believe CP and I have a unique ability to do this. There are a lot of architects and builders out there that design and build wonderful homes. The trick is to give the client as much as you can for what their budget allows.

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### **What is your favorite style of home to design, and why?**

We are known for our Craftsman homes, and our contemporary homes. The Craftsman home is probably my favorite. With all of the heavy dark colors in some popular home styles today, the Craftsman look is really refreshing. This style has gained a lot of momentum in the past few years, and I firmly believe that with its timeless look, there will be more and more built every year. Contemporaries however, are also a favorite of mine because of the skill it takes to piece them together. Everything on a contemporary home must fit together exactly, and careful planning and strategizing must take place to pull this style off correctly. If not planned correctly, contemporaries can be a disaster.

### **What are some signature details you incorporate into all your homes?**

We are very well known for our open floor plans. The old style formal living room that is not used often has really been replaced by large great room kitchen combinations, with large doors to exterior patio and entertaining areas to give a sense of the inside entertaining areas connecting to the outside spaces. I feel our plans have zero wasted space and excellent circulation paths for both family living and entertaining friends.



### **You have given back to the Phoenix Children's Hospital with an Arizona Foothills Designer Showhouse- do you have plans to do any more showhouses or other nonprofit events?**

I really had a great time doing the last show house, and I am proud that we could help such a great organization. We are always open to more of these endeavors, as I think they are great for people to see some really excellent architecture, while helping such a worthy cause.

### **How did you survive the recession when so many custom homebuilders did not?**

We took our lumps like most did, but because we are known as a very stable, reputable builder, we continued to get work throughout this tough time. We also counted on many long term relationships with good bankers and subcontractors to help pull us through. Right now, with the lot prices and construction prices being at all time lows, we are talking with many people who see the opportunity to build their dream home for a fraction of what it cost just a couple years ago. This trend will ultimately pull us out of this tough time.

For more information, visit [www.sonorawestdev.com](http://www.sonorawestdev.com).