

SUNSET

(writer David M. Brown)

CANYON

"The purpose of good design is to soothe the soul, recharge the batteries, and create safe places." —Tony Sutton

Est Est" incorporated all that was good for traveling monks of the Middle Ages.

Centuries later, Est Est Inc. in Scottsdale translates to "very, very good" interiors for clients of Tony Sutton's award-winning firm—most recently for a Virginia couple who've built their dream home in Scottsdale's spectacular Desert Mountain Sunset Canyon.

The quality-conscious monks would send scouts to reconnoiter towns for sleeping and dining accommodations. If the scout liked the opportunities, he scrawled on a wall "Est"—"It is" or "It'll do." If the scout thought the setting was superb, he scrawled "Est Est:" "It is very good," or "It is superb."

Collisions and Creativity

Superlatives and innovations have long been traditions at Est Est. Established in 1959 by founders William Benner and Patrick Maas, the Scottsdale-based firm worked closely with the late architect George Christensen. "George, Bill and Patrick pioneered the concept of Southwest style as a 'collision of cultures,'" says Sutton, who began working for the partners in 1979 after moving west.

"A lot of people talk about a pure Southwest style, but true Southwest is really an eclectic blend, both regionally

and internationally," he says. "Arizona is a melting pot, a collection of the best design features from a variety of different cultures. The early settlers, be they European, Spanish, English, brought with them what they had from where they came from. There is no pure style. It's an amalgam of styles, and, if done well, a beautiful synthesis."

Good Southwest style can, therefore, include the best in artifacts, rugs, furniture, stonework, hardware and antiques from around the world. Benner and Maas also kept a villa in San Gimignano, so for years they sent and brought back pieces from the old Italian town. Hence, Sutton's showroom includes furniture and accessories from France, Italy, Peru, Bolivia and Mexico, as well as Native American pottery. And, of course, he customizes furniture to satisfy the needs of his clients. Sutton: "New isn't bad, and old isn't good just because it's old."

A Sunset Canyon Home in a Boulders Setting

In the recently completed home for Floyd I. Clarke and Carol Ann Petren at Desert Mountain Sunset Canyon in North Scottsdale, Sutton has participated in a team that made these collisions dynamically creative. The 6,000-square-foot home and 750-square-foot guest house are aggressive yet sensitive

responses to a rugged desert setting—living spaces both spectacular and functional, unified and dramatic, traditional and contemporary.

"Our greatest challenge was the lot itself: It's steep and, although still generous, comparatively narrow," says Jim Hann of James Hann Design, AIA, of Scottsdale. Built by Scottsdale-based Madison/Couturier Custom Homes, the multi-leveled home sits among granite boulders on a lot that slopes as much as 25 feet. Because of the elevation change, Hann stresses verticality, so that the home thrusts up from a buttress-like foundation—almost in conversation and competition with the gesticulating saguaros. Indeed, the front columns form a ribcage structure recalling that of the signature Sonoran Desert plant.

Throughout the project, the team worked diligently to maintain the naturalness of the site, to integrate the home with the environment, to bring the outside in. Sutton was well chosen for the project: "Tony is greatly respected for his ability to respond to the challenges of difficult sites and for balancing that awareness with the owner's wishes and desires," says Donna M. Winters, owner of Phoenix's Enchanted Garden Landscape, a project member.

The home was literally carved into the side of a boulder-strewn mountain.

Desert Mountain

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"We worked together to create spaces for living, working, playing and entertaining."



Steve Oliver of Creative Water Concepts of Scottsdale, for example, designed multiple water features for the home to flow against the boulders, as well as a pool that maximizes every opportunity for viewing from the house.

Winters describes the pool: "Water appears to originate between the natural boulders and spills into the pool that incorporates a negative-edge waterfall that greets the viewer at the front door. Tall expanses of glass allow uninterrupted views of the pool as well as the mountainside." The project completed, the

desert was restored: "Saguars, boulders and trees were craned into the back yard to naturalize all disturbed areas while screening views of adjacent properties," she says.

Fieldstone clads the two-story masonry columns. Originally, Hann called for a lighter, more uniform stone as the clients wanted a contemporary structure. But the desert site called for a design that would better coordinate with the environment. So Hann, Couturier, Sutton and their clients saw the original design evolve into one that bridges traditional

"Below left: Circularity themes the dining area: the parquet flooring, the iron and alabaster chandelier, the radiused windows, and the boulders beyond. It is as if the room is enveloped by the desert."

and contemporary worlds.

"What we finally came up with is a design that looks as though it's been there for a while but one that also suggests that it was designed to be forward-looking," Hann says. The Petren/Clarke home, then, sits in the ancient desert, anticipating the contemporary desert lifestyle. It is at once retro and futuristic.

At the front entry, these columns rise into three copper-trimmed, pie-shaped rooflines that intersect at dynamic angles over the expansive windows of the great room. The intersecting rooflines both frame the entryway and direct you backward to the remainder of the home—the vertical thrust of the stones directing a horizontal structure that includes masonry, frame, stucco, window and steel.

A Lot of Eyes on This Team

Hann, with Sutton and Couturier, stresses the teamwork of the design and building process—what he describes as a normal two-and-a-half to three years to complete a custom of this quality. "We all left our egos at home to build this home," he says. Winters: "We worked together to create spaces for living, working, playing and entertaining."

Petren and Clarke selected Est Est from a list of designers recommended by Couturier and Hann. "Because we were building our dream home from afar," says Carol, "it was especially important that we work with designers whom we fully trusted to capture our vision."

"The chemistry with Tony Sutton was immediate," she continues. "We liked him as a person and were impressed with his style, imagination and artistic abilities." Est Est designers Paula McKain and Ashley Hogg Berardi worked closely with the couple to ensure that their creativity was included in the final product.

A Great Great Room

In the Petron/Clarke great room, architecture dictates décor. This is affirmed immediately by Tony Sutton's use inside of the architect Jim Hann's exterior fieldstone. This material's repetition brings the outside in—a theme of the home—and reaffirms that this is a room built for the spectacular views south into the High Sonoran Desert and the city lights beyond.

As this is the central point of the house, traffic flow had to be maintained while ensuring a room that focuses on relaxing and entertaining. But six different ceiling heights, 10 to 22 feet, together with the mechanical aspects of the room, make the room particularly challenging for furniture placement as well as lighting.

Sutton solves the flow challenge by placing the elegant custom sectional neatly below the lowest ceiling. (The sectional is finished in chenille upholstery with down-filled cushions and curved wood-stained feet.) Across from it, the Est Est hand-carved entertainment unit contains all the electronic equipment of the house—making it a room that not only looks good but sounds good, too. ★

"All of the rooms in the main house are a natural part of our daily life and not simply used on occasion. In the end, we wanted our home to be inviting and comfortable for everyone."

Floyd adds: "The professional and constructive environment enabled each team member to explore fully his and her artistic talents without offending or hindering the creativity of others." Carol: "The ultimate testament to their excellence is that we have become dear friends and would not dream of building a home anywhere in the country without them by our side."

Livable Living Areas

The couple's needs neatly intersected with Hann's architectural flexibility, Couturier's home-building experience, and Sutton's Southwest eclecticism. They wanted a multifunctional home in which to escape from the urban pressures of the East, a place where they could entertain friends in elegance, where they could relax and feel at home amid the serenity of the desert.

Their home is also a homecoming: "Arizona is filled with memories of Floyd's childhood and where I shared many wonderful times with my sister Michelle, who loved the desert and offered so much inspiration to the design of the home," says Carol. Unfortunately, she did not live to enjoy the home with them.

Sutton focused on the views with the furniture arrangement, so that the décor follows the flow of the land, the primeval boulders, the desert topography. His goal was to place the furniture almost as on the desert floor itself, wall-less and unenclosed, open to the sky.

As the couple uses all the rooms, the home had to maximize space as well as be comfortable and friendly. Carol: "All of the rooms in the main house are a natural part of our daily life and not simply used on occasion. The guest rooms offer our family and friends both privacy and con-

venient access to the main house. In the end, we wanted our home to be inviting and comfortable for everyone."

The multifunctional dining room is illustrative. "It is dressy enough for formal dining but also serves as a comfortable breakfast area, with its crackled-finish parquet tabletop—which lends itself to casual dining," says Est Est's Ashley Berardi. To complement the table, Est Est designed the chairs with S. Harris fabric, which picks up the color from the boulders—continuing the "outside-in" theme. The iron and alabaster chandelier (which echoes the curvature of the windows and the table) is from Hinckley's Lighting of Scottsdale. On the floor, the custom tufted wool rug is by Edward Fields. And for artwork, nature supplies the boulders and Creative Water Concepts the water treatments. "The spectacular view becomes the artwork," Berardi says.

As with the dining room, the back-patio area represents space that is functional for daily activities (the kitchen is adjacent). It sits serenely in the desert, dwarfed by boulders, below which Oliver has created another water feature. Seating six and up to eight, the table is topped in Dark Emperador marble—once again affirming the home's connection with the earth. It and the remaining furnishings are from the Pavilions in Florida. Finally, the water treatment provides the earth music. "The natural setting with the sounds of water hitting the boulders creates a soothing, relaxed setting," Sutton says.

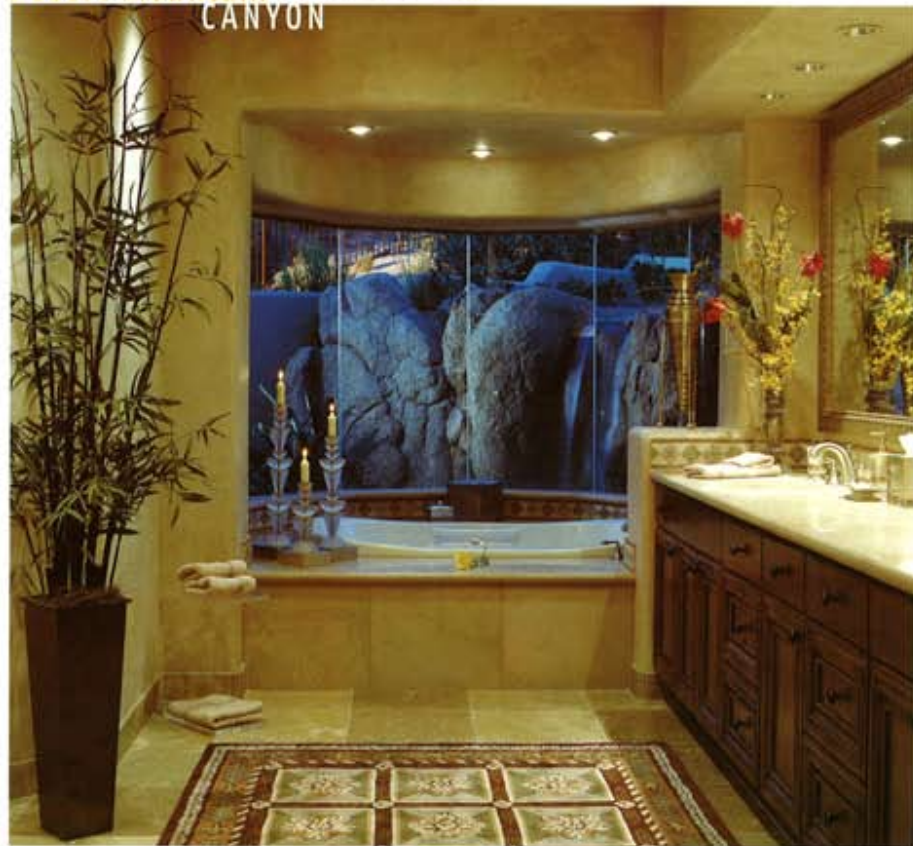
A Time to Bathe, to Sleep, and Always Time to Have Fun

Water treatments are also part of the wonderful master bathroom. Outside, water from the spa falls through boulders

"Verluis: The back-patio area represents a theme of the home. Make the transitions from human space to desert space as seamless as possible. Architect, builder, designer and landscape team create a wall-less room that almost 'sits' in the desert."



Desert Mountain *sunset* CANYON



and rocks. The garden makes a significant contribution to the sense of calm and relaxation enjoyed in the bath. (Winters has also created lush private gardens outside the guest-house shower.) For privacy, Window Dressers of Scottsdale has created elegant draperies that close electronically.

The master bedroom, in an intimate combination of sage green, gold and red, is built around a beehive fireplace faux-finished by Est Est's Jerry Crow, who highlighted the interlocking design on the mantle and created the mottled sage-green finish on the chimney. Because of

the roundness of the chimney, Est Est designed an angular custom metal and glass fire screen to serve as a focal point; this was created by Kevin Sullivan of Phoenix's Steel and Stone. Adding luxury are two lounge chairs and an ottoman that have been luxuriously overstuffed in Myung Jin Inc. chenille. For rest, the couple retires to a king-size bed with a carved wood and upholstered headboard. Draping and lining the bed are fine Italian linens by Versai.

Recreation is reserved for the upper-level game room, which is actually four areas, the central-point champion-size

billiards table, a cigar area with a humidor, a wet bar and a game table. As with all rooms of the house, the view out is just as important as the look inside. "This multi-use room provides wonderful views on all sides," Sutton says. Its rich hickory floors are by Phoenix's Premier Floors, and the wet bar pendant lights are from Hinkley's Lighting. The swivel lounge chairs are upholstered in a tone-on-tone fabric by Kravet Fabrics of New York (with a showroom in Scottsdale).

Providing a Southwest anchor to the room is "Foray" by J.E. Knauf from the Meyer Gallery on Main Street in

Scottsdale. (For their guest house, they also bought another Knauf, "Arrival.") Floyd recalls: "As we were completing the house, Carol and I decided we wanted some art that reflected the local history. We visited numerous galleries in the Scottsdale area and selected this painting."

From gaming room to great room, from its ancient boulders to its interior elegance, the Petren/Clarke home is both modern and traditional, one that incorporates the best of Southwest—so that even artifacts from Old Virginia "collide" comfortably with the new desert lifestyle.

"Arizona has its own style and personality," Sutton says. "That's why people like Carol and Floyd want so much to live here." ★



**above: Billiards, cigars, a game table, libations and friendship make the second-level gaming room dynamic and multifunctional. Centering the room in the Southwest is "Foray" by J.E. Knauf from the Meyer Gallery in Downtown Scottsdale.*

**left: In the wine room, Apex of Scottsdale created a wine-room stacking system and display niches. The café table sits two, and chair seats are embossed red and green chenille from Old World Weavers in New York.*

**far left: Terra Noche flooring, by Phoenix's Cactus Enterprises, and limestone countertops and tub deck combine for cleanliness and charm in the master bathroom. The rug is by Arizona Rug Company, and the custom-framed mirrors carry a pewter and sage-green finish by Interior Excess of Scottsdale.*

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