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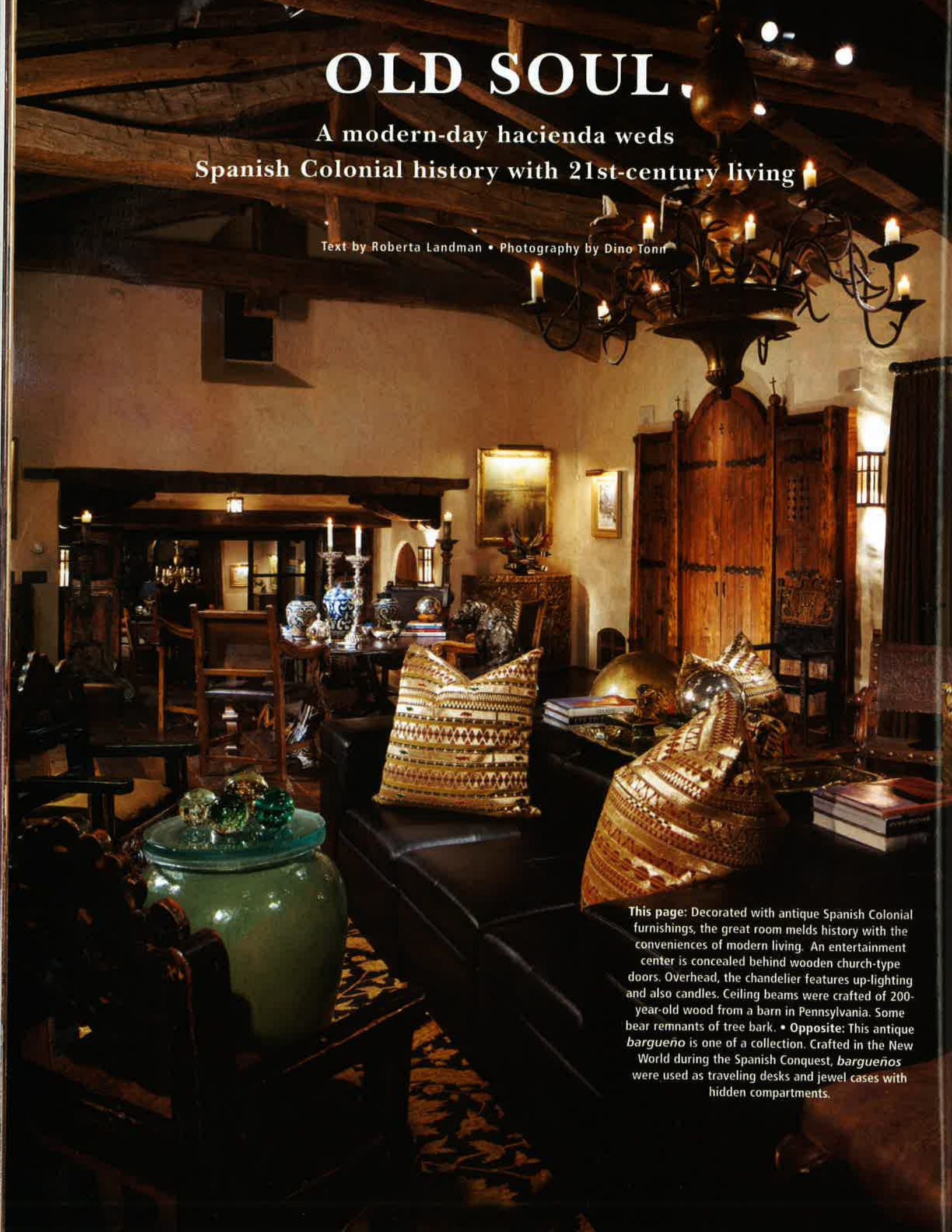


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OLD SOUL

A modern-day hacienda weds
Spanish Colonial history with 21st-century living

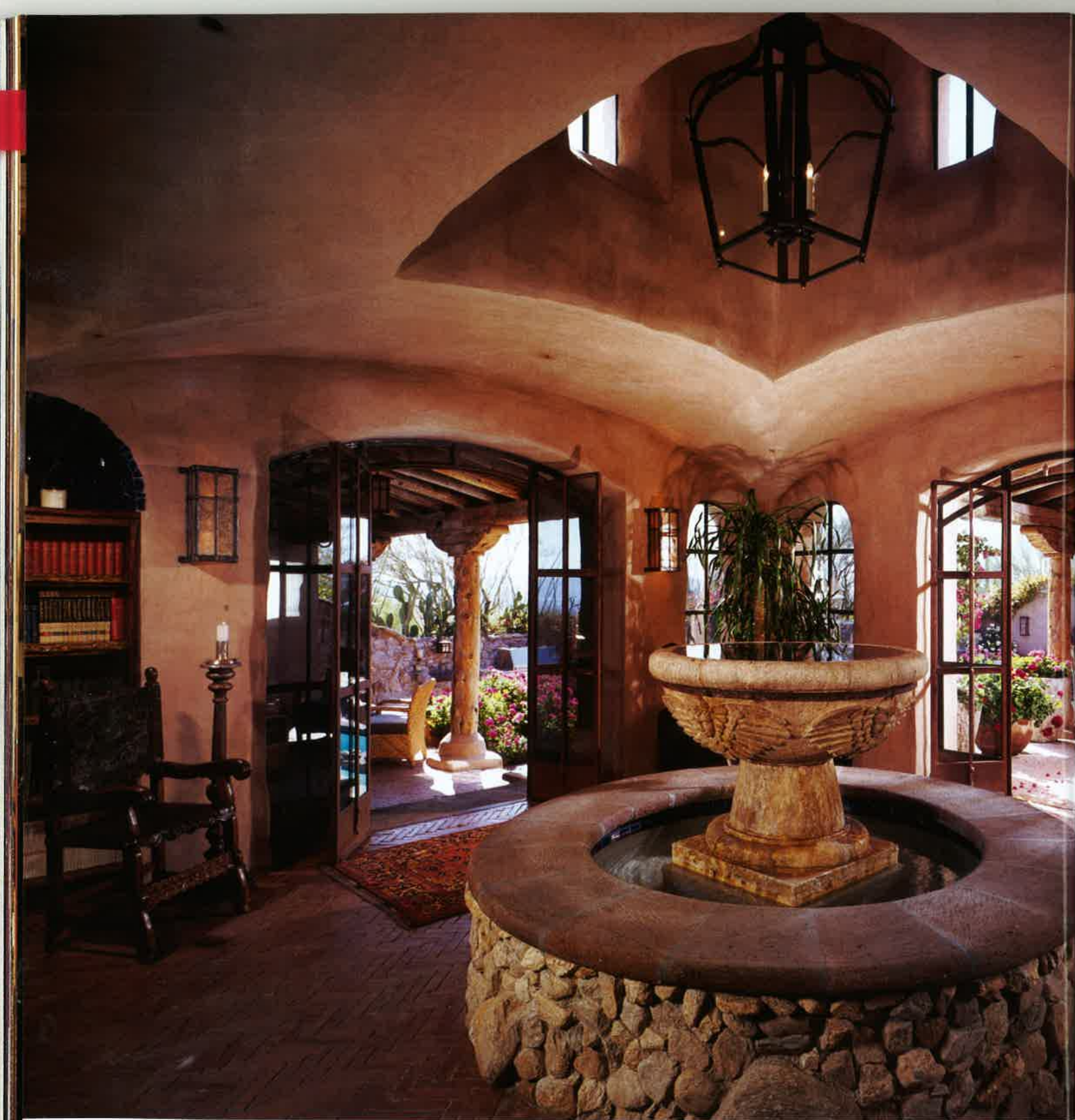
Text by Roberta Landman • Photography by Dino Tonri



This page: Decorated with antique Spanish Colonial furnishings, the great room melds history with the conveniences of modern living. An entertainment center is concealed behind wooden church-type doors. Overhead, the chandelier features up-lighting and also candles. Ceiling beams were crafted of 200-year-old wood from a barn in Pennsylvania. Some bear remnants of tree bark. • **Opposite:** This antique *bargueño* is one of a collection. Crafted in the New World during the Spanish Conquest, *bargueños* were used as traveling desks and jewel cases with hidden compartments.



How many hands before hers had touched this small travelers' desk, opened it, and hidden some treasure in its secret compartment, she would wonder.



Wings of the hacienda extend in crosslike fashion off this domed entry, whose centerpiece is a large tiered cantera fountain accented with lapis-blue tile. A colonial-style hand-wrought metal lantern hangs overhead. Windows and glass-paneled doors allow views of the enclosed courtyard and pool area. Flooring is of brick in a herringbone pattern.

The mystery and charm of the piece—a *bargueño*—would prompt the acquisition of many Spanish Colonial antiques by the woman and her history-loving husband. Ultimately, they would build a remarkable home in the Sonoran Desert of

Tucson to house it all.

The couple obtained more *bargueños* and other hand-carved furnishings from Holler and Saunders Ltd. in Nogales. Edward Holler and Sam Saunders, 1990 *Phoenix Home & Garden Masters*



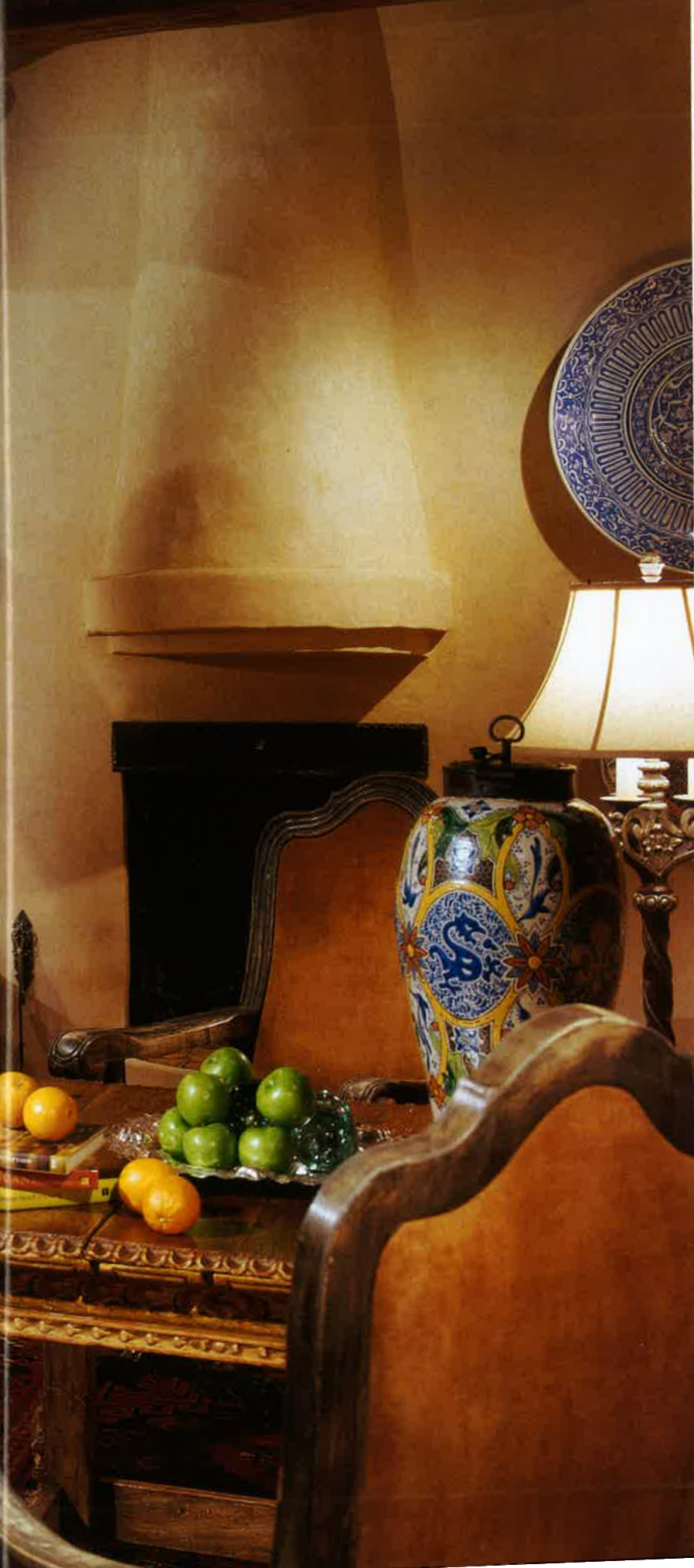
Built-in shelves in the powder room attest to the author-homeowner's love of books. In keeping with a mission-turned-hacienda theme, he and his wife had a baptismal font converted into a sink.

of the Southwest, have traveled for years to Mexico, Central America, South America and places beyond, bringing back a vast array of furnishings and other items crafted in those lands during the Spanish Conquest. These historical trappings lend an

aura of magic and drama to the homeowners' residence.

Some history: For 250 years, between 1565 and 1815, galleons sailed an ocean trade route between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico, carrying goods from as far away as China





and Indonesia to the New World. According to Holler, this and also imports from Europe had a profound influence on Spanish Colonial furniture-making. The furniture, he says, "was an interpretation of what somebody in Peru or Mexico thought European or Asian pieces might look like, and that's why they're so different from Spanish pieces."

These are the cherished finds one sees in this Tucson hacienda. "Our home was inspired by the collected antiques we have from Holler and Saunders—and they worked with us through the whole process," says the woman of the house.

That process combined the efforts of two building teams, Yellowstone Traditions in Bozeman, Mont., where the couple owns a ranch, and McCaleb Construction Inc. in Tucson. They worked for 18 months to bring the design of Montana architect Larry Pearson to fruition. An icon of fine craftsmanship, and built to look old and authentic, the all-new Spanish Colonial-style home was designed around a purely manufactured tale. "We tried to make it look as if an old monastery and then a hacienda had been here, and we were fixing it up," says the wife.

The fable of restoring a centuries-old mission-turned-hacienda harks back to when friars from Spain would have lived in such a dwelling, a rural mission outpost in New Spain. Aptly, the house is designed in the shape of a crucifix, or "cruciform." At the center of the cross is the home's circular entry hall, dominated by a large stone fountain from Mexico. In this drama, the Spaniards' horses would have drunk from its stone trough.

The four arms that radiate from the center of the cross would have housed a chapel (now the great room); a servants' area (now two guest suites); friars' and priests' quarters (now the master bedroom and bath); and an eating area for the prelates (today the dining room and kitchen). Open-air covered breezeways would have run between these separate "buildings" centuries ago, but at some time in the transition to a hacienda they were enclosed as hallways. That was done to keep in the heat, says the husband, maintaining a straight face and clearly enjoying afresh the fabricated tale. This, he relates, is how the four-pronged structure became one fascinating whole.

In the kitchen, custom furniture-style cabinetry and a reading corner with raised fireplace extend a warm welcome. A large hand-carved center island contains hammered-copper sinks. The refrigerator (far left) is faced with patinaed copper.

While founded upon the homeowners' respect for Spanish Colonial artifacts and



etails, the house also reflects . . . their desire that guests . . . feel very much at home.

“The historical context is what drove this,” says Yellowstone Traditions’ Harry Howard of the house. To assure authenticity of its details, he and general contractor John McCaleb traveled together to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, to survey old colonial buildings.

Once the project got rolling, a coterie of blacksmiths in Montana, Arizona and Mexico re-created period lighting fixtures seen south of the border, as well as hinges and handles for doors

and cabinetry.

In Montana, centuries-old wood from barns and other buildings that had been torn down across the country were cleaned of rot and crafted into wide-plank flooring, cabinets, and the attractive colonial-style beams and corbels that adorn ceilings of the hacienda’s every room. In Tucson, McCaleb’s crew fashioned walls that look as if they were built from stones found on the property hundreds of years ago. In actuality, the often 3-foot-

Opposite: Reminiscent of an enclosed breezeway, this brick-floored hallway leads to two guest suites. The bricks were tumbled to give them an aged look, and turned on their ends to show their narrow profile. Against the wall (left), Spanish Colonial parade banners flank a wooden candle case from that period. Used by the homeowners as a place to store their own candles, the piece rests upon a metal stand of contemporary origin. • **Below:** Hung above an antique Spanish Colonial heart-pine table, the dining room’s colonial-style candle-burning chandelier was made from old wood and has arms of silver. Plank flooring was crafted from recycled wood, as were ceiling beams.





The master bedroom is a setting for sweet dreams. The custom-made bed with pineapple-shape finials was hand-carved from recycled wood by Montana artisan Todd Gardenier. The mirror is a Spanish Colonial antique from Cuzco, Peru, as is the centuries-old sabino-wood armoire (left), which today houses a TV. Upon the bed's chenille coverlet are pillows covered in fabric from an antique Indonesian wedding skirt. Windows provide a view of the rose garden.

thick and undulating walls are masonry, with several applications of color-integrated plaster.

Within these embracing walls are rooms that feel intimate and welcoming, this in spite of their sometimes vast dimensions. The chapel/great room is a case in point. To reach it, one ascends cantera steps to ancient-looking wooden doors that unfold to open. On one side of the 55-foot-long room, large carved doors with cut-out crucifix emblems are made to resemble those of an old confessional. Behind them is TV and stereo equipment, an example of the many ways the homeowners conceal technology in this old soul of a 21st-century house. Here and there in this space are reminders of the Spanish Conquest. Two carved Peruvian antique armoires hide wet bar equipment. Chairs finished in gold leaf, also from old Peru, once would have seated friars, and today are in interesting

juxtaposition to a pair of contemporary leather sofas.

While founded upon the homeowners' respect for Spanish Colonial artifacts and details, the house also reflects their sense of humor and their desire that guests and visiting family members feel very much at home. For example, the husband—a lover of books and an author himself—made sure that bookcases brimming with interesting tomes are always available, even in the most unlikely of places. A guest powder room functions as a library of sorts, with built-in book shelves. Here, the commode is faux-treated to look like stone, and the sink is an old baptismal font. Books fill shelves in the pool bath and foyer as well.

Creature comforts and attention to detail abound in this elegant home. In the kitchen, hand-carved custom cabinets by Yellowstone Traditions' Todd Gardenier have the look of free-



The master bath is a study in elegance and creature comforts. Materials include acid-washed marble from Spain, used for the tub surround, vanity top and floor. The sink's faucetry is of onyx. The deep poured-concrete bathtub holds the promise of a relaxing soak. Its unique shuttered enclosure is reached by cantera steps; windows and a skylight here bring mountain vistas into easy view.

standing antique furniture. Appliances are faced with patinaed copper. Hand-pounded copper sinks are from Mexico, where Howard's wife, Susan, discovered a group of indigenous Indians making them. Small appliances are tucked away in little cabinets, as is the telephone. Mother-of-pearl light-switches mimic those of the 1920s, and the plates behind them are of hammered copper.

In a richly appointed master bath, a bathtub dreamed up by McCaleb and his workers to hide a utility area is a source of wonder. Positioned up a few steps, and hidden behind cupboard doors, the deep concrete tub gets its water supply from a stone spout, has built-in lumbar support, is heated from below, and is set beneath windows with both heavenward and mountain views.

Factor in the broad imagination and historical knowledge of

the homeowners as guiding forces, and this hacienda is a work of art, McCaleb and Howard agree.

The homeowners credit these two men, the architect, an army of talented artisans, Holler and Saunders, and also some itinerant laborers with translating their ideas into reality. "This was very much a collaborative effort," the husband reports. He remembers the enthusiasm of workers who added a touch of realism to garden walls, building them of stones found on the site, and then knocking them partially down to simulate their "very old age."

Of the pros and semipros who latched hold of their fairy tale and made it their own, the wife smiles and says, "We had a vision, and they could see it." 🌿

See Resource Guide.