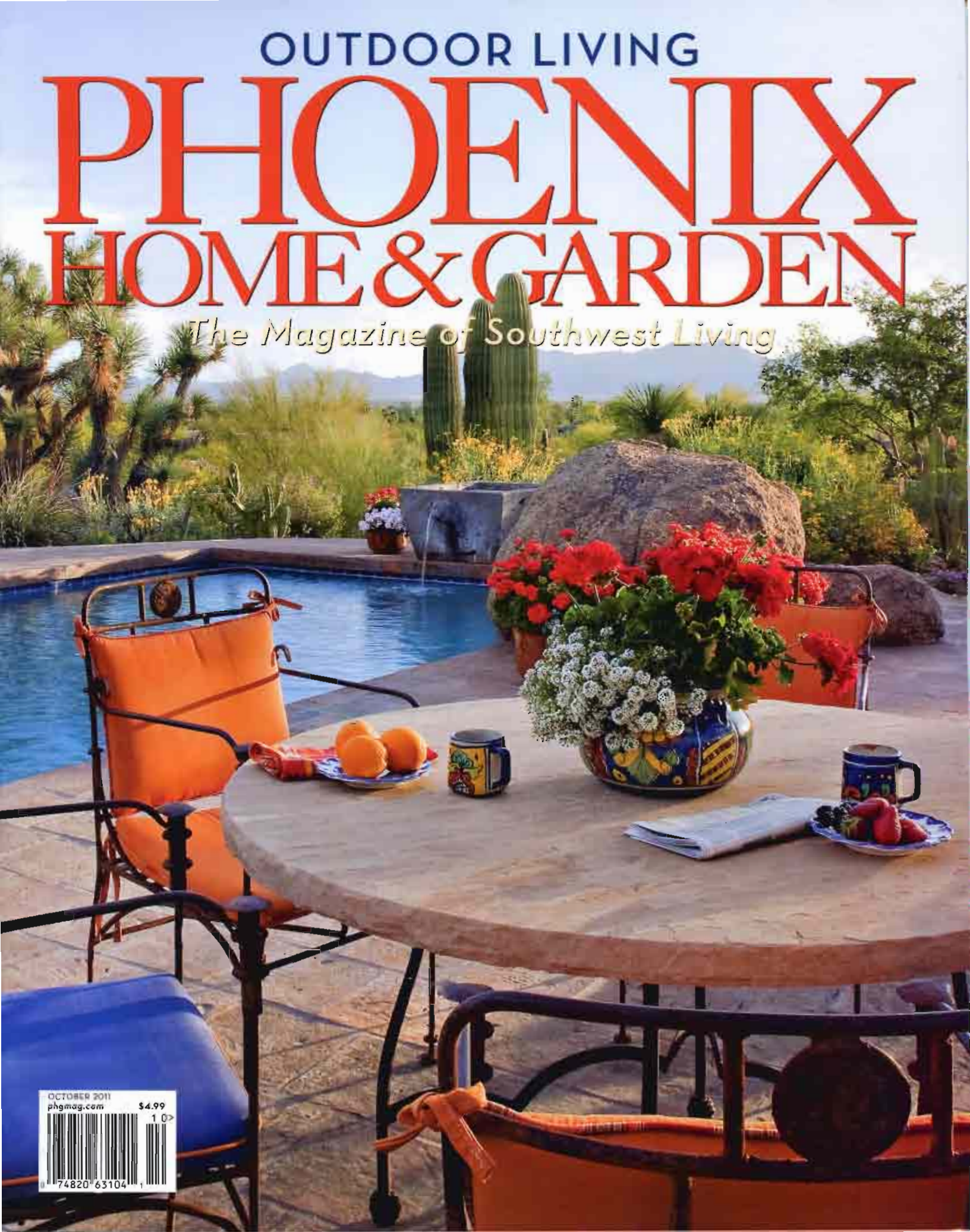


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Mature cactus specimens and low-water-use flowering shrubs make up much of the landscape at this desert home. The stone stairway leads to a backyard pool and outdoor living area.

Rooted

IN THE Past

An Old Arizona Landscape Gets Revitalized With Specimen-Size Plants and Perennial Color

TEXT BY NANCY ERDMANN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD MAACK



The expansive front patio is filled with numerous planting pockets, creating a naturalistic feel that blends with the nearby desert. Saltillo tile laid upside down lends a rustic look. Growing next to the tiled table is an Argentine giant cactus (*Trichocereus candicans*), which puts out spectacular springtime blooms (opposite). Blue cushions, pots and tilework provide continuity throughout the space.

It was 14 years ago when a Paradise Valley, Arizona, couple claims they “found their view.” However, the lot on which they could enjoy it wasn’t exactly what they had in mind.

“Initially, we were looking for an old adobe home with mature landscaping but were unable to find what we wanted,” says the woman of the house. “Then our Realtor called and said she had found the view, but we had to ignore both the house and the landscaping to appreciate it!”

With panoramic vistas of both the McDowell Mountains and Four Peaks mountain range, the property was rich in potential. Soon after purchasing the lot, the couple began its renovation. “The grounds had a basic ’50s look with neglected desert plants, gravel, old palm trees and a small pool right next to the house,” the husband recalls. “But there were some amazing plant specimens already in place.”

The homeowners say they wanted to keep the “old Arizona” look to fit in with the neighborhood, which has mostly native desert. The design team at Landscaping by André drew up plans that involved ripping out the old pool and decking, as well as removing the palms. “We shopped for mature desert trees and cactus, along with boulders that had true character to blend into the landscape,” says the husband. “We also had a gas grill and outdoor fireplace built on the rear patio, as well as a pool and spa.”

In the front yard, the driveway—which came straight to the house—was replaced with one that curves, allowing the residence to “unfold as you arrive,” note the homeowners. Low curving walls were added around the front patio, along with a small fireplace, upside-down Saltillo tiles, a fountain, and gates painted blue.

About five years ago, the couple decided to further update the grounds, working with Kenny Zelov of Landscaping by André. “The house resembles a rustic Spanish hacienda, and the landscape was designed in tune with the architecture and feel of the home,” Zelov explains.

“The homeowners were very excited about adding cactus, succulents, trees and boulders. They also enjoy unusual specimen plants, so there are surprises throughout. Over the years, additional perennial color has been added to help keep the look of the landscape fresh.” □

"Our favorite part of the yard is the rear patio, with its amazing mountain views," say the homeowners. "Watching the shadows form on the McDowells at sunset is a real Arizona treat." A cantera trough at the end of the pool creates a rustic water feature, while boulders placed waterside appear as if the pool was built around them. Pots of geraniums are scattered throughout for pops of color.





Above: A pair of blue entry gates opens to the front courtyard. In spring, the area is filled with blooming perennials and cacti. To keep rabbits at bay, Landscaping by André chose such rabbit-resistant plants as candelilla, chaparral sage, chuparosa, damianita, gopher plant, lantana and assorted penstemon.

Left: Breakfast often is enjoyed poolside, where mountain views are a highlight of this elevated lot.

Opposite: An adobe-style stucco fireplace with curved walls is located in the front courtyard. Planted with mature cacti and specimen trees, the area blends seamlessly into the surrounding desert-scape. Pink-flowering *Penstemon parryi* blooms every spring.

See Sources.