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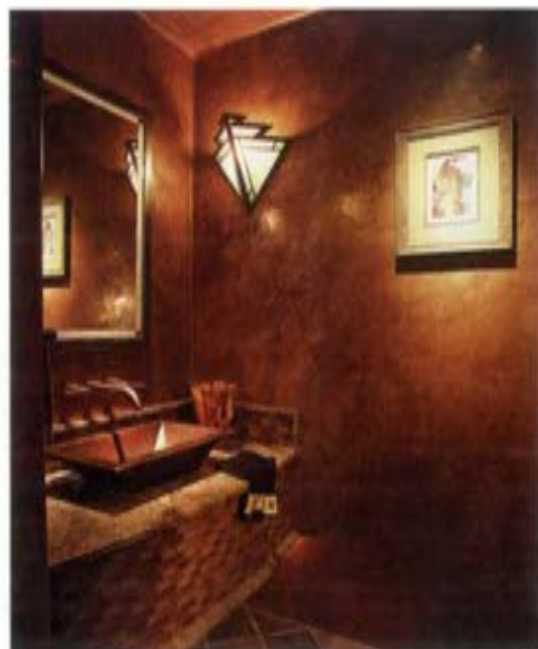


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THE NEXT CHAPTER

Their nest empty, a savvy Arizona couple turns an out-of-date dwelling into nifty new digs

TEXT BY ROBERTA LANDMAN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA



With their two daughters grown and gone, Laurel and Lee Hutchison did what many parents do. They looked around, agreed their house no longer suited their lifestyle, and decided it was time to move on.

After selling their residence in the Arcadia area of Phoenix, the couple relocated to a low-maintenance, upscale patio home in north Scottsdale and put down new roots. This might be just another empty-nesters' rite-of-passage story if the protagonists were not the people they happen to be.

The Hutchisons are in the business of creating dream homes for others. An architect and a Phoenix Home & Garden Master of the Southwest, Lee is principal of Urban Design Associates Ltd., and Laurel is the firm's office manager and CFO. They used his talents and many of her insights to transform what had been a dated two-story home into a high-tech Contemporary Southwest gem. This they did with help from those the Hutchisons work with on homes for others: interior designer Bess Jones, who lent assistance with color and finish choices, Randy Arnett-Romero, who was the remodeling contractor, and a small army of fine craftsmen.

While the entire residence received a major face-lift, the first floor presented the greatest challenge. The architect explains: "The concept was to have one living space—a living area, a dining/entertaining area and a kitchen. When we bought the house, there were three separate rooms; so we took the walls out."

Walls that remain, which formerly were sharply angular, are now rounded, and ceilings have gained new importance—both Lee Hutchison trademarks. For example, the ceiling in the main living

area, once high and straight-lined, is now barrel-vaulted. In the adjacent dining room, ceiling beams punctuated by Saltillo bricklike tiles radiate in wagon-wheel fashion.

This new configuration provides a smooth transition to the kitchen, which, as in many homes the architect has designed, is a cozy gathering place. "When we entertain, most of our friends want to hang out here," Lee relates.

Along with the wood and Saltillo brick of the ceiling are other textures and natural materials that lend interest and appeal. A semicircular dining bar is made of precast concrete, as is the farm sink. Cabinets are crafted of teak, and the large center island is topped with a burnished teak. Counters are polished granite. "We picked everything together, and that made it fun for us," Laurel comments. "We found we like most of the same things."

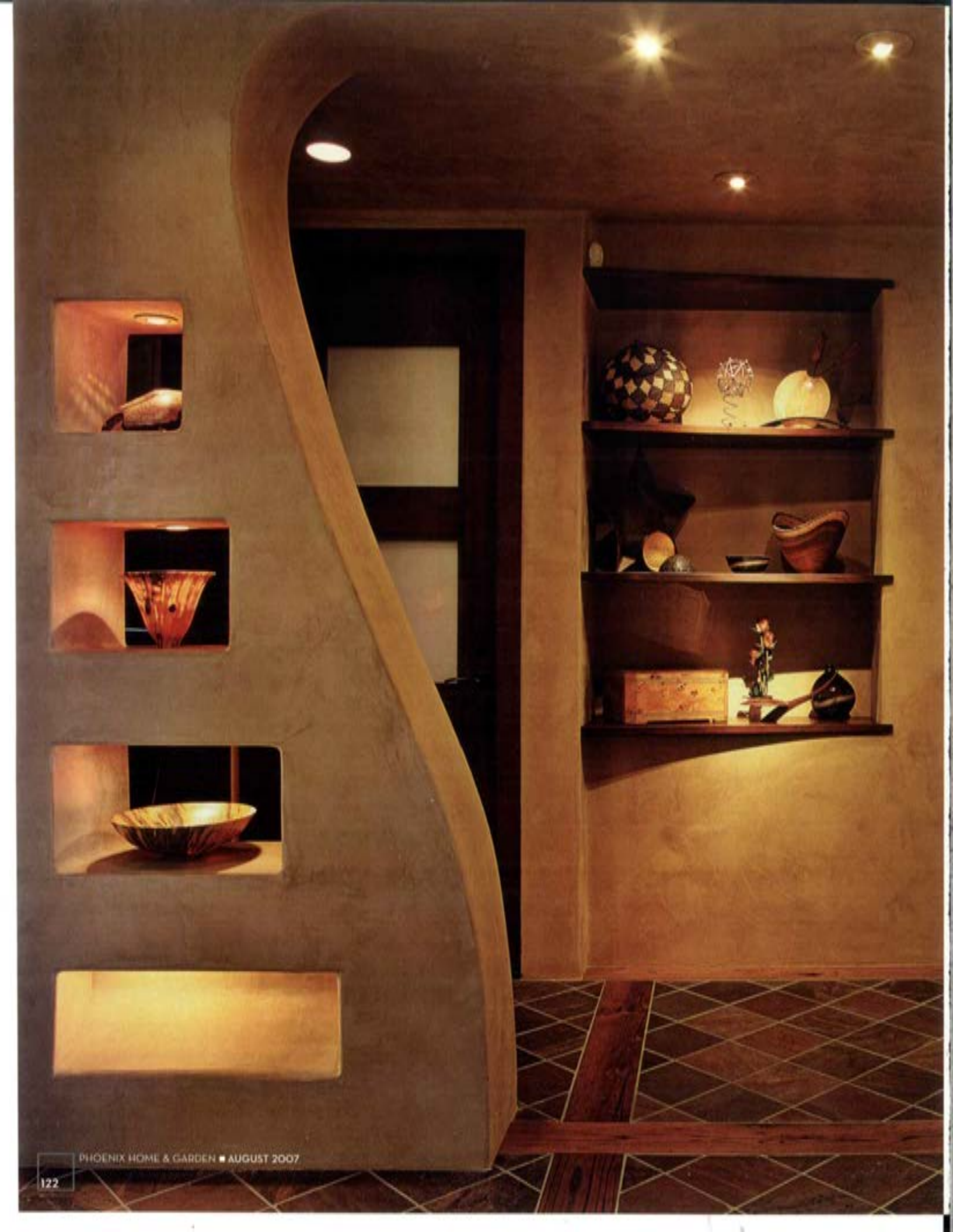
From Lee's design for a soaring slate fireplace wall, to the many pieces of furniture he conceived, to the master bath vanity he created to suit Laurel's petiteness, she acknowledges that his talents are many.

"That's why I chose him as my architect," she quips. □

Above: Powder room walls in a glazed-chocolate finish offer a dramatic backdrop for a granite vanity accented with a glass-tiled apron and backsplash.

Opposite: A Contemporary-style entry water feature with a raised planter is prelude to refurbished interiors. Concrete slabs over the shallow waterway lead to a woven-steel gate and a side yard beyond.







With remodeling, the foyer's stark 1980s look became a thing of the past. Walls and ceiling, now gently curved instead of angular, are awash in richly hued Venetian plaster. Flooring, in a grid pattern, is a combination of copper slate and reclaimed wood. Continuing the palette, slate clads the risers of the wood stairway. An iron railing replaced the former plain wooden banister. Nearby, an undulating wall punctuated with a series of see-through niches provides space for glass and wood artworks, as do adjacent built-in shelves. Both are fitted with lighting. The door with frosted-glass panels leads to the powder room.







AFTER

Employing structural alterations and visual elements, architect and homeowner Lee Hutchison united once-separate living and dining areas and made the entry and second-level loft integral parts of the home's layout. A fireplace wall, once dominated by a window, gained new dimension and function with changes that allowed for a large TV and a recessed display area for art. Today's focal point wall is a curvy sweep of slate accented with metal bands. A rounded wall defines the dining area, with its Hutchison-designed table of burlwood with wenge border.



BEFORE



This page: The reconfigured master bath features slate flooring and walls. Separate his-and-hers vanities are topped with marble and have glass-tile backsplashes. Behind the curved wall is a spa shower, and in back of the sandblasted glass-paneled door is the laundry room, previously located on the lower level. **Opposite:** Pendants above the dining bar and island, recessed ceiling lighting, and under-cabinet lights add soft illumination in the kitchen and facilitate tasks such as meal preparation. A weaving of various woods by Canadian artist Wes Giesbrecht conforms to the shape of the rounded wall.

See Sources.

