

Located on the front terrace of a Scottsdale residence, this award-winning pool has two negative edges, a slate water feature that separates the pool from the spa, and a rain curtain that flows from an overhead beam into the pool.

Falling Water

A stunning aquascape reflects the architectural beauty

of a mountainside home

TEXT BY NANCY ERDMANN

Some people are drawn to outdoor spaces

defined by lawns and flowers and walls of greenery. Others respond to the sleek, clean symmetry of Contemporary landscapes, preferring uncluttered lines and simple plantings.

Valley resident Jim Antich belongs to the latter group, and he makes no apologies about his penchant for the stark beauty of Modern design. A retired airline pilot, Antich is a builder of Contemporary homes. He also lives in them. "It's in my blood," he remarks. "And every couple of years it's time to build another."

One such project Antich is especially proud of is a home built 12 feet into the side of the McDowell Mountains. Its dramatic entry is dominated by the intersection of two strong diagonal crossbeams. Its front door is visible only after one ascends an expansive flight of stairs and walks through a curved steel gate. Antich calls what lies ahead a work of art.

On an elevated terrace, a massive water feature takes center stage. Water plummets from a 13-foot-tall tower of slate and into the swimming pool below. Three window portals at the base of the wall serve as spillways, flowing into the pool on one side and a spa on the other.

For pool designer Kirk Bianchi, the project offered an opportunity to come on board while the design process was still in the works. "Even after six years, this project is still one of my favorites," he says. "Jim wanted a pool and patio that synchronized with the unique elements of the home, and this home has many striking features."

Left: Each of three stair landings is flanked by an oversize concrete wok planted with red yucas. Behind an organ pipe cactus, water flows over the pool's vanishing edge and down a slate wall, creating a water feature at the home's entry. **Opposite:** A view from the patio reveals an expanse of water that leads the eye toward the city and Camelback Mountain beyond.

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While a sweeping cantilevered overhang, barrel-vaulted portico and perpendicular beams are some of these features, one of the most exciting has to do with the home's orientation. "Since the back of the house is nestled into the mountain, the pool and patio became part of a second-floor terrace at the front of the house," Bianchi explains.

Interior areas flow seamlessly out to the covered terrace via a disappearing wall of glass pocket doors. "The roof overhang is so large that with the doors tucked away, you can't tell where the indoor spaces end and the pool and patio begin," Antich comments.

Antich worked closely with Bianchi, a *Phoenix Home & Garden* Master of the Southwest, and architect George Za-jacek, NCARB, AIA, to get the look he was after. "Projects like this take extreme vision and a special eye," Antich remarks. "The success of the house depended on how well we choreographed all the details. Everything we did, we did for a reason."

The curve of the pool's edge, for example, mirrors the sweeping line of the cantilevered roof, while portals on the water feature borrow their motif from three square windows on the home's facade. Further, two mesquite trees behind the slate waterfall serve dual purposes: They soften the tower's prominence, and they shade the upper terrace from the sun.

One of the most challenging tasks, according to Bianchi, was ensuring that all the angles, alignments and elevation changes were accurate and consistent from one phase to the next. "It takes more thought and attention to every detail to design and build sleek architectural pools with lots of three-dimensionality, versus the free-form counterpart on a flat lot," he explains.

For Brad and Trinity Roberts, the property's second owners, the appeal of the home was evident the minute they saw it. "I felt like I was at a spa every time I came home," Trinity recalls. "When the doors are open, the terrace and water are right there."

The couple, with three young boys and another child on the way, recently sold the home to Chuck Celandia and Chris Craft, a



couple who admit to being "of the Modern persuasion."

"We were just casually looking for something, and we were struck by this place—its views, the water feature and the great indoor/outdoor feel," says Celandia. "It just jumped out and bit us."

For Antich, the outdoor space is about so much more than just a pool. "There's the elevated terrace, the city lights, a great breeze, the water reflecting the sunset," he relates. "It was nothing less than a thrill to live in an environment so thoughtfully put together." □ *See Sources.*

Above: A double chaise longue with pillows in decorative outdoor fabrics is just steps away from the spa, visible on the right side of the water tower.

Opposite: The facade of the house is softened by stepped planters overflowing with vibrant bougainvilleas. The stairs were designed to converge at the entry gate, which opens to the expansive patio area beyond.

THIS PAGE: LOUIS CANTILLO, RIGHT: MICHAEL WOODALL

