


# Tuscan Style

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Interior designer Jennifer Dyer employed character-rich architectural upgrades, such as the dining room's brick cove ceiling, to add soul to this Paradise Valley, Arizona, home. Chairs covered in luxurious emerald green silk mohair and a high-gloss ebony-color table balance the brick's rusticity.



A designer works her magic on a partially finished spec home, introducing layered charm via architectural tweaks and rustic elegance with fabric and furniture choices.

# Stately FINISH

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# Houses come alive when they have stories to tell through their architecture, furnishings, fabrics, and accessories,



**ABOVE:** Varied rooflines add interest to the exterior, which was designed with a low-slung profile to preserve views of Camelback Mountain in the distance. **OPPOSITE:** A large oil-paint portrait plays up the formality of an ornately carved limestone mantel in the living room, while a pagoda-top mirrored cabinet and ceramic stool expand the space's global influence. "I love to add a touch of Asian design to all homes," Dyer says.

says Los Angeles-based interior designer Jennifer Dyer. So when a client asked Dyer to transform an almost-finished spec house in Paradise Valley, Arizona, into a vacation home with heart, she started researching. She culled through Mediterranean and French design books, looking for inspiration that would elevate the home's existing design. "I wanted a mix of the two," Dyer says. "To cultivate the feel of a European estate and make the open floor plan work, it was important for the rooms to coordinate without matching."

Dyer's first step was removing existing finishes that weren't in line with her vision. Builder-grade light fixtures throughout the house, rolls of carpet intended for the bedrooms, and a generic powder room vanity went straight to a nonprofit home improvement store. The designer then introduced hickory flooring to the bedrooms and den

to complement travertine in the home's public areas. And she had leftover stone from the exterior applied to interior walls. In the dining room, she created a cove ceiling with decorative brick fronts that reflect the sunbaked hues of classic Tuscan terra-cotta roof tiles. Hand-laid wood pieces set in a herringbone design and bordered by hefty walnut crown molding quickly upgraded the powder room; a monolithic stone sink, ornate tiles, and a French garden faucet amplify the timeless effect.

In the kitchen, Dyer played a bold hand, pulling out the granite countertop on the island and replacing it with a traditional wood one and ripping out a dark slate backsplash to make way for classic cream porcelain subway tile. A cast-stone hood anchors the range where an oversize wooden hood once hung. But the pièce de résistance is the knotty alder wood cabinetry that was lightened and brightened with an antiqued blue-gray paint finish that took two artisans several weeks to complete. "The kitchen is such an open space," Dyer says. "It needed its own personality. The blue-gray cabinet finish really sets it apart."

Combining softness with subtle masculinity is a theme repeated throughout the house via more than 300 fabrics and trims. Blue is a dominant color, but it's used intermittently with tans and creams to lighten it up. Antiques with worldly roots add a layer of antiquity, but never at the sacrifice of comfort because Dyer paired her finds with new upholstered pieces that invite lounging. "I searched antiques stores but wouldn't buy anything I wasn't 100 percent certain about," she says. "I also worked with custom furniture makers to craft reproduction pieces I found in books or my own designs."

Attention to a collected but not overly matched look is evident right down to the lamps, old boxes, and artifacts Dyer gathered over a two-year period. "The home is new, but beauty like this is timeless," she says.





**OPPOSITE:** An existing breakfast niche was changed by pulling out an elevated platform and replacing it with an L-shape bench covered in fabric and faux leather. Dyer found the table's stone base at a sample sale and had it topped with walnut. A local antiques shop yielded the vintage blue chairs. **TOP LEFT:** In the lounge off the kitchen, a traditional rug combines with a Moroccan side table, an iron Indonesian drum table, and a French settee to foster easy elegance with an old-world bent. **TOP RIGHT:** The entry features a custom stone-and-wood console, an antique gilt mirror, and an Italian iron bench dressed with a smoky-green silk. The mirror is so old that Dyer had to secure plexiglass to the back so the silver finish wouldn't flake more than it already had. **ABOVE LEFT:** Hand-painted tiles and a solid one-piece stone sink lend instant patina to the powder room. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A glazed blue paint finish on the cabinetry, a backsplash of cream tile, and a cast-stone hood maintain the kitchen's layout while completely revamping its former woody look. "The key to Tuscan or old-world-inspired style is texture," Dyer says. "Wood, ceramic, iron, wicker, leather, porcelain—mix them all together."



**ABOVE:** Whimsical bookish wallpaper covers a wall in the den—built-ins on the opposite wall hold the real deal. The substantial desk was an eBay find. **OPPOSITE:** A valanced cornice conquers the high ceiling in a guest bedroom in sophisticated European style.



THIS PHOTO: A hand-painted chest and an antique map of Spain draw the eye down a hallway lined with arches. OPPOSITE: Each of the home's guest bedrooms nods to European elegance in its own distinguished way. Here, an iron canopy bed and hand-hewn chest embellished with antique hardware showcase a striking combination of textures.



*"I wanted all the right pieces and I was willing to wait to find them. If you rush a project, you will make mistakes."*

—INTERIOR DESIGNER JENNIFER DYER