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KITCHEN DESIGN / ROBERT MORIC, BULTHAUP SCOTTSDALE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / MICHELE SHELOR,
COLWELL SHELOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

OUT OF SIGHT

A SCOTTSDALE HOME'S SLEEK MAKEOVER ARTFULLY
INTEGRATES ADAPTATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY.

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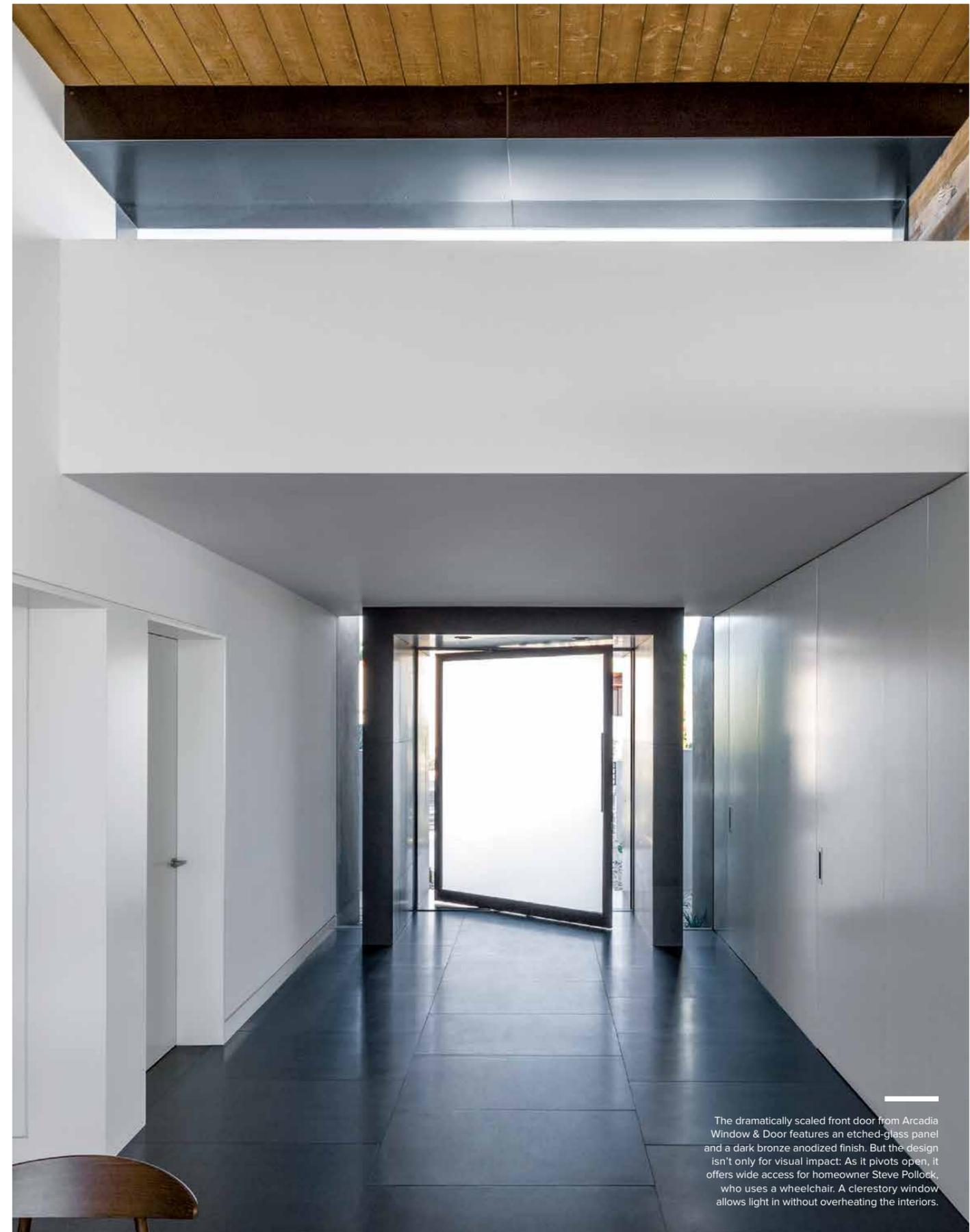
The first things guests notice when approaching this Sonoran Desert home are the boxy basalt protrusions jutting from the exterior's neat white walls. As they wander past the miniature cactus gardens, they enter the home and discover the warm wood ceilings overhead. And when they walk around the spaces, they take in a striking kitchen wall of stacked walnut stained in three shades, sleek modern furnishings and a drop-dead gorgeous view of Camelback Mountain.

What they don't see, however, are the subtle adaptations made for the home's resident, 50-year-old entrepreneurial investor Steve Pollock, who has been using a wheelchair for the past 30 years. "My philosophy of being in the chair and also being a visual person is that we should come up with solutions one wouldn't notice," he explains about his vision for his part-time residence in Scottsdale's Hilton Casitas neighborhood. "You should have no idea it's accessible for someone in a chair."

Steve was rigorous about this visual effect, says Robert Moric of Bulthaup Scottsdale, who designed that eye-catching kitchen. "He didn't want his condition to drive the aesthetics or compromise them in any way," Moric says. The sentiment was echoed by architect Darren Petrucci, who was charged with giving the 1973 structure a 21st-century makeover. "It's really the way we should build," he says. "It's not just for people with some sort of disability; the elderly, too, can benefit."

Petrucci had other equally important considerations to address. The house Steve had purchased is commonly known as a "patio home," the term for a residence where the front yard and back patio are the same width as the house. "What's ironic about most patio homes is that the patio is typically not well-integrated into the house," Petrucci says. Case in point: The back façade of Steve's home was a solid wall of stucco with a door and a window, minimizing exposure to the landscape.

Architect Darren Petrucci was tasked with renovating a 1970s residence in Scottsdale's Hilton Casitas neighborhood. Outside, the sculptural desert plantings by landscape architect Michele Shelor counter the home's angularity.



The dramatically scaled front door from Arcadia Window & Door features an etched-glass panel and a dark bronze anodized finish. But the design isn't only for visual impact: As it pivots open, it offers wide access for homeowner Steve Pollock, who uses a wheelchair. A clerestory window allows light in without overheating the interiors.



Designer Juli Hodgson helped Steve select the furnishings and finishes, including Flexform's Groundpiece sectional and Jiff side tables, all purchased through Inform Interiors in Vancouver, that reside in the living room. Vrieling Architectural built the custom walnut media wall, and Petrucci opened the room to the garden by swapping a solid wall for glass.

Opposite: Hans Wegner's Shell Chair CH07 for Carl Hansen & Son is next to the living room sectional. Behind it are Wegner's CH33 chairs for the same brand around a live-edge dining table by Jeffrey Greene Design Studio; a chandelier by J. & L. Lobmeyr hangs above.

Below: As part of the update, Petrucci designed black basalt apertures that cut through the stucco walls; in this one, Eames LCW chairs gather around an Eero Saarinen table. Kitchen designer Robert Moric created the Bulthaup B3 kitchen that showcases walnut millwork with integrated appliances, including a Liebherr refrigerator and Gaggenau ovens. The painting, from Lisa Sette Gallery, is by New Zealand artist Fiona Pardington.



To create views, the architect replaced the wall and similar ones throughout the home with glass.

In introducing the glass, it was imperative that Petrucci not overexpose the interiors to sunlight and heat. As a solution, he designed four "apertures": box forms swathed in cool black basalt that frame views and cut through walls. "Each is an extension into the gardens that also modulates the sun," the architect says. Placed in the entry, master bathroom, master bedroom and kitchen, they draw visitors outside.

The team also had to address dated interior surfaces and finishes. "It's always a challenge to remodel," says builder Stephan Mackos, noting problems usually aren't discovered until demolition and surface removal begin. In this case, he found termite damage on some of the large wood beams and had to remove the ceiling's white paint using four mediums: "two kinds of soda, copper slag and, finally, ground walnut shells," he says. "But it did create a cool textural finish."

The bigger challenge was leveling every floor in the home. "The flooring can usually be off by a few degrees, and no one would notice," Mackos points out. "But if Steve is chopping vegetables at the kitchen counter and the floor isn't level, his chair would roll backward." Special care was needed to ensure thresholds, too, were perfectly flush, Petrucci notes.

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Steve loves to entertain, so the kitchen was an important place where other adaptations came into play—although Moric ensured they are nearly imperceptible. The countertops are 2 inches lower than the standard height, so "Steve's eye level is in line with his guests'," Moric says. Ovens and other appliances are also about 1 foot lower than usual for easy accessibility. These are aligned neatly along one wall, which is faced with stacked walnut for "a visual effect that has both the energy of rhythm and the harmony of uniformity," Moric says. Recesses beneath the sink and cooktop accommodate the homeowner at the 16-foot-long island,



Just outside the living room, outdoor seating by Janus et Cie creates a conversation area lit by a grouping of Omer Arbel pendants for Bocci in Vancouver. A BDDW credenza is visible inside at left, below a painting by conceptual artist Mike Bidlo; a wine cellar is on the far right.

and Moric installed refrigerators with condensers on top, rather than on the bottom. "This allows him to reach from toe-kick height to 5 feet," Moric explains.

To continue the architecture's modern vibe, Steve consulted with longtime friend and designer Juli Hodgson on interior finishes and furnishings. The two selected contemporary silhouettes mixed with midcentury modern pieces, such as a Hans Wegner Shell chair paired with the living room's sleek sectional and Eames plywood LCW chairs surrounding a Saarinen kitchen table. They also eschewed pattern to augment the simple material palette without disturbing its calming consistency. Upholstery and rugs in a charcoal gray, for instance, add texture but blend into the basalt floors.

Outside, landscape architect Michele Shelor designed cactus gardens that complement the warm yet spacious interiors. They function as natural sculpture installations and set off the newly modern renovation, which Steve admires for both its look and its function. "It's such a joy to live in this house," he says. "I appreciate that it's an easy place to live." ■



Appreciating their period detail and carved-wood elements, Steve and Petrucci decided to retain the original double front doors of the house. The doors were restored and then joined together to form a panel that slides across to close off the master suite.



Simple contemporary molded-wood furnishings and a continuation of the basalt floors from the main spaces distinguish the airy, minimally appointed master bedroom, where a curtain can be drawn for privacy.