

# PHOENIX HOME & GARDEN

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GRAND TOUR  
of  
HOMES

## Sister Act

Sibling Teamwork Results in a  
Dream Home for Its New Owner

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Decorative painting added to the arches of the formal living room made them come to life, says Tess Loo, the homeowner's sister and decorator. The four custom chairs and white baby grand piano are among the few items in the house not purchased from the siblings' secondhand furniture boutique, My Sister's Attic.





This page: A birds-eye view of the light-filled foyer shows the Brazilian cherry treads and custom tile risers of the sweeping staircase. The two materials are repeated throughout the house.

Opposite top: Colorful tile, decorative painting and a shell-shaped basin lend a fountain-like look to an outdoor sink.

Opposite bottom: An iron and glass door from France announces the entrance to this spacious home.

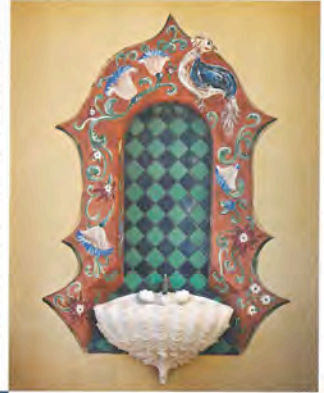
AS SHE HAD DONE countless times before, Ann Siner was casually flipping through her community's real estate magazine when a house caught her eye. "I liked everything about it," she says. "The tennis court, the views, the courtyard." Shortly after two walk-throughs, she bought it. "I'm not an impulsive person, and I wasn't even looking to move, but I thought, only in this market will I be able to afford a house like this. It's my dream home."

In fact, the house is so good that Siner has changed little of it since moving in this past March, and she doesn't plan to. "The previous owner did a beautiful job," she remarks. So, the wood floors, accent tiles and ironwork throughout the 5,600-square-foot home are staying, as are all the finishes in the kitchen and bathrooms, and even the upholstered walls in the master bedroom.

"Some of the stained-glass windows will be replaced to let in the views," Siner says. "Other than that, we've repainted a few rooms and added some decorative painting, but that's it."

"We" includes Siner and her sister, Tess Loo. "I'm just so not good at decorating," Siner says. "I'm the nerd who sits in front of the computer running spreadsheets, but Tess is artsy. She decorated the whole place."

This isn't the first time Siner has put her trust in her sister's eye for design. Loo serves as stylist for the growing chain of resale clothing and furniture boutiques that Siner and the youngest of the three sisters, Jennifer, founded some 21 years ago.



"My sister is not lying. She can't decorate, but she's a brilliant businessperson," Loo says. "And I am not a businessperson, but I can decorate, so we are a good yin and yang to each other."

Since the furnishings from Siner's previous home had a "Southwest/Mexican feel" that wasn't quite right for the new place, everything was trucked off to their store, My Sister's Artistic, to be sold. Starting from scratch, Loo culled almost everything, from furniture to artwork to accessories, from the ever-revolving inventory at the sisters' stores.

"She let me loose to do whatever I wanted to do, but Ann has distinct taste," Loo says. "She likes religious artifacts, like santos, mixed with some Southwest pieces. And, because her house is large, scale is important."

Despite having a clear vision and new items to choose from every day, Loo says it still can be challenging to furnish a home this way. "We have a ton of inventory," she notes. "It takes time to look through all the stores, and it takes patience; you're not going to find everything at once."

But Loo does have a little help. Since she can't be everywhere at once, Siner enlisted the store managers to act as reinforcements. "I had all my managers over for dinner. Afterward, I said, 'Now you've seen the house, when you see something come in that you think might be of interest, let us know,'" Siner relates.

In just a matter of months, the house has become a home for Siner, her two cats and five dogs, which she refers to as her "four-legged children."

"I believe some things are just meant to be," Siner says. "My plan is to stay here and quit looking at the real estate section. I just get myself in trouble doing that." ■



This page: A colorful tile "runner" stretches some 25 feet down the home's gallery hallway. "People are always careful to step over the fringe so they don't trip," homeowner Ann Siner says of first-time visitors to the house. The feature is one of several distinct talking points found indoors and out.

Opposite: The ceiling in the kitchen is accented by wood beams painted green by the previous owner. A new free-standing island blends seamlessly with the existing cabinetry. Countertops are stainless steel with riveted copper trim. Copper also clads the side of the breakfast bar, which was updated with a wide butternut wood top that matches the cabinets. A pass-through window over the sink allows access to an adjacent eating/entertaining area that Siner calls the "cantina."







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Opposite: In the powder room, a pearly neutral wall color serves as a backdrop for detailed tile-work, a stained-glass window, and a recessed ceiling with an inset of latticed wood, all original to the house. The sink is carved cantera; the sconce is an antique.

Above: Decorator Tess Leo says everything in the guest bedroom was chosen to play off the headboard of the carved-wood angel bed, which came from My Sister's Attic. "It turned out to be a quaint little room," she says. Adding to the appeal, a balcony overlooks the tennis court and affords a spectacular view of nearby Mummy Mountain.

Left: A stained-glass window behind the tub in the master bathroom casts colorful reflections on the walls and tile. It is one of several that came from a 1930s Spanish Revival house in Houston.

See Sources.