



# Right Angle

Green aspects make points in a stellar Contemporary home

TEXT BY PAM HAIT ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA



The house faces south and west. Many of the walls are glass. And it's green. So much so, in fact, that it exceeds Scottsdale's green residential building guidelines.

"When people think green, they think straw bale or adobe. Yet this is an amazing piece of architecture," says builder Craig Eckhardt. "[Architect] Gordon Rogers has such an incredible vision. It also helps to have talented, capable people who are great clients."

The owners told Rogers they wanted the home to celebrate the natural qualities of the desert, with its surrounding mountain views. They requested rock elements, earth colors and a soothing, calm, Zenlike environment. Yet they also wanted interesting angles—"no curves"—and space for their books and collection of turned bowls and art created by the husband. The wife desired a private office and a large central kitchen with an oversized counter; the husband needed a studio/workshop area for his noisy avocations of woodworking and boxing. Both requested that their new home have many places where people could gather.

Before the project began, Rogers sat quietly on the hillside site contemplating its surroundings; the homeowners knew immediately that they had chosen the right person for the job. His design sited the 4,660-square-foot Contemporary residence between two outcroppings anchored by massive retaining walls of rock that were hand-culled from the site. The extreme slope made it necessary to penetrate the mountainside in order to carve out space for the garage, guest quarters and workshop. This lower level can be reached by an elevator or an inside/outside staircase of stacked slate separated by a glass wall. Inside, triangular-shaped pillars of stacked rock continue the theme.

"I love how this house sits on the site. It looks like it belongs

there," says the architect. He believes green living is about balance. "There is probably more glass in this house than in most of my houses," Rogers comments. "Yet, it has met and exceeded the green building requirements. That is the result of extremely dense and generous insulation and very large overhangs, as well as other items."

Environmentally conscious aspects include a special coating on the glass that reflects 99 percent of the sun's UV rays and 50 percent of its heat; certified sustainable structural and building components, such as wall studs; zero-VOC (volatile organic compound) interior finishes; and slate and concrete flooring that acts as a "heat sink" in winter. The 1 1/2-foot-thick roof and electronically operated window shades lend more sun protection.

"Gordon is a masterful listener. He listened to both of us and pleased everybody," says the husband. "Before, we lived in a house," the wife remarks. "Now, because of the design of our home, we live in the desert and are seeing things we never saw before. We use every single space and keep discovering new beautiful things to look at."

While they used to go out to dinner often, the couple rarely frequents restaurants now, saying they prefer to be in and around their house, which suggests another green feature. Being surrounded by beauty helps them save on gasoline. ☐

**Above and opposite:** A defining architectural feature of this eco-friendly home is a 40-foot-long copper scupper that soars over the pool and funnels rainwater off the roof into the desert below. Architect Gordon Rogers says the choice of materials for the house was easy. "We used the tools that Mother Nature gives us, in this case lots of stone, which we gathered by hand on-site."





**This page and opposite:** The great room is organized as a collection of public and private spaces that include two separate conversation spots and spacious dining and kitchen areas. A free-standing maple structure contains a pantry, display shelves and a powder room. The glass-art pieces and hand-turned wooden bowls were created by the homeowner.







## ECO-STATS

- Twelve-foot-wide overhangs for shading
- Formaldehyde-free cabinetry
- A whole-house water-filtration system
- Rock reclaimed from the site
- Power-vented water heater and furnace, sealed combustion, and an exhaust fan in the garage aid indoor air quality and circulation.
- Coated-glass windows let in ample daylight, which minimizes the amount of electricity needed.

**This page:** In the great room, architect Gordon Rogers chose cedar for the ceiling and flooring of Rajah slate—a natural material that “makes the house belong to the site.” It flows outside, connecting the mountain setting with the interiors. **Opposite:** The architect designed the patio with an angular steel shade structure that, like the home’s deep overhangs, provides protection from the sun while making a strong architectural statement.





A wide-angle photograph of a modern lounge area. Two large, rustic stone pillars support a ceiling with horizontal wooden slats. The floor is made of large, dark, polished tiles. In the center, there is a glass coffee table with a red base, surrounded by four beige armchairs. A large glass wall on the right side of the room provides a view of an infinity pool and a desert landscape with mountains in the background. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting daytime.

“One of the great events of this house is being in the pool and looking at the mountain views,” says the lady of the house. The negative-edge pool wraps around the “prow” of the residence and makes a conversation area in the great room appear to float. Indoor and outdoor stone pillars are made of rocks that were hand-collected from the site. Swivel chairs were selected to make it easy to enjoy the dramatic vistas.





**Counterclockwise from left:** Wide slate steps lead to the office and master bedroom. Display shelves positioned along a picture window hold the husband's art. Retractable shades are concealed above the window. ■ A top priority for the homeowners was a house with lots of windows and wonderful views. The shower in the master bath, which looks out to a mountain-scape, is a special joy. ■ A long hallway filled with artwork is flooded with sunlight from a series of windows near the ceiling. **Opposite:** Since the wife loves the color purple, it is used throughout the home in a grayed shade that seems "bleached by the desert sun," she says. In the great room, a daybed-sized window seat appears to be set in the desert.

See Sources.

