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From Cowboy to Contemporary



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In the Studio with Deborah Butterfield and John Buck  
Eagle's Nest Home in Sedona, Arizona  
Cowboy Artist E. W. Gollings**

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# Eagle's NEST

*Growing out of the Arizona sandstone, this remarkable home utilizes geology as an architectural element*

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Photography by Gene Sasse

*R*immed by towering rock formations of stratified layers of limestone and sandstone the landscape around Sedona, Arizona, is painted in oxidized tones of red and coral. The visual strength of vertical cliffs jutting up through the fragile landscape contrasts with white wisps of clouds drifting across a bright blue sky. The natural untamed ruggedness of the native landscape draws to it those with an artistic spirit, environmental conscience and exuberance for the outdoor lifestyle.



**Left:** The entry door, by Tom Joyce, was created from a slab of native alligator juniper split in two. A one-inch thick glass spline highlights the fissure separating the natural edges. It is detailed with hand forged steel hardware. The mica and steel wall sconce, also by Joyce, is based on the same theme of the living room chandelier. **This page:** Beyond the stepping rooflines, the striking eagle-like rock formation appears as if part of the architecture, rising above the varied stone parapet walls. Surface weathered sandstone walls and indigenous plantings tuck the home into the landscape.



Eagle's NEST

The view itself is art. By orienting panoramic-size windows toward the grand geologic features, the Western landscape becomes an organic mural of the grandest scale.



Designed by Canadian artist Andrea Marcus, the clutch of blown-glass "eggs" in their "nest" of wrought iron brambles is a whimsical custom light fixture celebrating the owners' joyful love of nature. The effect of indoor starlight is created by pendant hung cable lights from Tech Lighting.

Founded in 1991 by licensed architects Mike Bower and Max Licher, Design Group Architects is renowned for its commitment to design homes which achieve more than architectural artistry. Its structures are equally respectful to the environment and luxurious interpretations of the regional aesthetic. Jennifer Aderhold, the firm's interior- and furniture-design expert, completes the team's ability to create homes truly customized to the individual client's dream.



subtle presence on the landscape. The Design Group Architect's Eagle's Nest House blends so harmoniously into the landscape, it is almost undetectable, completely nestled within its surroundings. The question arises immediately: "Where does the house end and the

mountain begin?" The layering of natural materials and arrangement of shapes related to the natural world dress the home in camouflage. Careful excavation into the natural terrain allows the home to make a discrete first impression to the outside world. The entrance is scaled to the native piñon pine and juniper trees, making the building appear deceptively diminutive compared to the home's true size.



This custom mahogany, wenge and maple cabinet was designed by Jennifer Aderhold to integrate into the living room's ovoid shape. The carved abstract top resembles rivers and tributaries. It is elegantly presented on the base's curving forms. | The extensive art collection is harmonious with the views, culture and history of Sedona. This view of the living room shows the large oil on canvas rock painting, *Golden Monsoon* by Clare Licher, as background to a vignette completed by a bronze sculpture by Susan Kliwer and game cabinet designed by Jennifer Aderhold and created by John Arenskov.

A courtyard, rimmed with floor to ceiling glass, radiates natural light throughout the center of the home.

Eagle's NEST



The architects chose local, surface-weathered sandstone to construct the perimeter walls. This stone is laid in a horizontal pattern, echoing the geologic layers and honoring historic cliff dwellings preserved in nearby canyons.



of sunlight at different times of the year and the abundance of dramatic views determined the strategic placement of panoramic windows. The depth of copper roofing overhangs and thick sandstone window lintels were calculated as part of the plan.

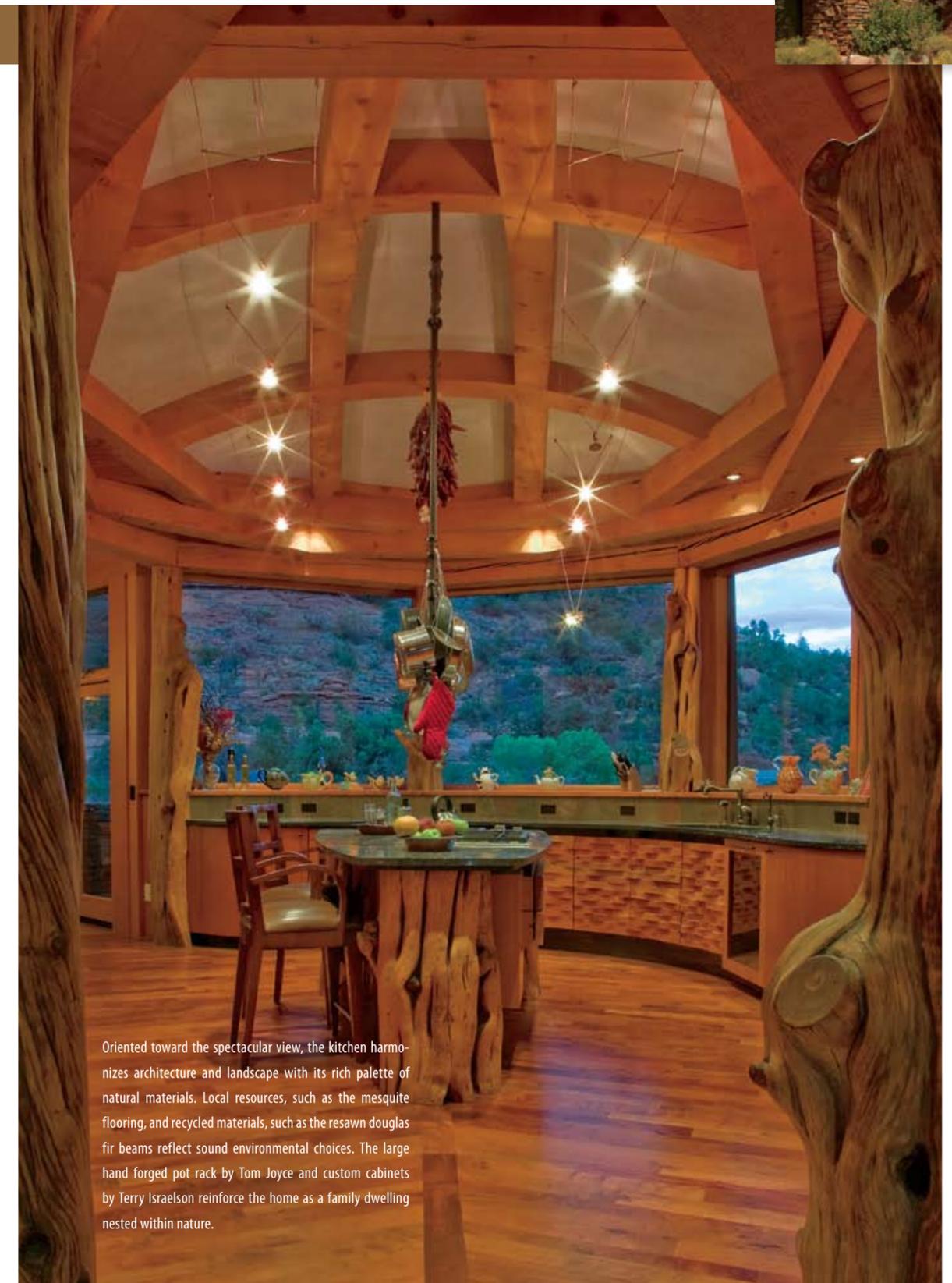
Beyond the stepping roof-lines, a distant rock formation of an eagle juxtaposes a view of stone on stone. The geologic feature in the background appears to be part of the home's architecture. The home feels timeless in its surroundings; it is easy to imagine that the Eagle's Nest House grew organically with the vegetation.

Both the designers and owners share an ethos of sustainability and value green building practices. Before beginning to draw the first line for later blueprinting, the relationship of the sun to the site's geography was plotted. The angle

and is authenticated through the visual relationship of interior and exterior spaces. A courtyard, rimmed with floor to ceiling glass, radiates natural light throughout the center of the home. The courtyard is organized on an east/west axis and has the geometry of a "vesica," the shape formed by the intersection of two overlapping circles of the same radius. This herb-filled space serves as a quiet outdoor retreat and also functions to orient the organic floorplan to the compass directions, thus functioning as a large sundial.



Featuring kiva style ceiling beams, hand plastered ceiling dome and walls and a custom bed of mesquite and wenge woods, the master bedroom is a modern day southwestern retreat. The bed is a custom design by Jennifer Aderhold, fabricated Randy Plapp. Bedside light fixtures are by Terzani. | Floor to ceiling glass integrates the courtyard and hallway, encouraging daylight to naturally radiate the home while allowing the artwork to be enjoyed when tending the courtyard herbs. The acrylic on canvas image of the Indian by Ben Wright of the Panasiti-Wright Art Studio reinforces the timelessness of the art collection when paired with the very contemporary assemblage in the foreground. At night, artful slumped glass and copper sconces by the late Thomas Aderhold warmly illuminate the hall.



Oriented toward the spectacular view, the kitchen harmonizes architecture and landscape with its rich palette of natural materials. Local resources, such as the mesquite flooring, and recycled materials, such as the resawn douglas fir beams reflect sound environmental choices. The large hand forged pot rack by Tom Joyce and custom cabinets by Terry Israelson reinforce the home as a family dwelling nested within nature.



## Eagle's NEST



**Above:** Colors cascade with water-like movement on Marlys Mallet's oil on canvas abstract *Deer Creek Falls*. A series of pears painted in blue and white by artist Diana Wege celebrates taste, inviting visitors to adjacent dining room. **Right:** The tonal qualities of Venetian plaster walls create an organic background to show off artwork. Welcoming visitors to the "blue room," this acrylic on aluminum creation by David T. Kessler floats over an iron and glass table



Downplaying its size, the home has a sense of intimacy enhanced by organizing the main living spaces into five "pavilions," each with its own raised ceiling/roof structure. Posts, individually selected then crafted from hand-sanded juniper tree trunks, support sinuous curving wood beams of resawn douglas fir. The perimeter beam detailing is reminiscent of the beams used to construct the roofs of Navajo hogans — with beautiful structural patterns originally inspired by how the Anasazi

*Posts, individually selected then crafted from hand-sanded juniper tree trunks, support sinuous curving wood beams of resawn douglas fir.*

Indians constructed their kivas — the underground communal meeting rooms in an Anasazi pueblo. In modern architecture, such patterns are a means of enhancing structural strength while highlighting the unique shape of each pavilion with the beauty of their visually woven qualities.

Opportunities for integrating art — both functional as well as purely decorative — abound. The view itself is art. By orienting panoramic-size windows toward the grand geologic features, the Western landscape becomes an organic mural of the grandest scale.

Partial height walls placed at the entryway to the bedrooms resolve several issues. Viewed from the entrance side, the walls provide privacy and offer a surface on which to hang art. On the inside, they provide a logical anchor for the bed, allowing it to auspiciously face the commanding vista.

Blacksmith Tom Joyce, a 2003 winner of the MacArthur Fellowship, crafted the large suspended pot rack in the

kitchen and the ironwork for the front door. His light fixtures of bent mica shades held by hand-forged iron, reminiscent of African ladles, grace the front entry and largest room. Custom-designed lighting and cabinet pieces reinforce architectural themes. Canadian artist Andrea Marcus, who has worked with the owners previously, was asked to create a ceiling fixture for the gentleman's office. Knowing the couple's appreciation for the natural world, she developed a nest-themed fixture, whereby a clutch of her blown glass eggs are suspended from an inverted hand forged iron cradle.

Frank Lloyd Wright must have been a clairvoyant channeling this much-later-built home when he opined, "No house should ever be on a hill or anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together, each the happier for the other." For in Eagle's Nest House, art and architecture are one with the landscape. Man's dwelling is joyfully one with habitat. ■



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