

HOLIDAY LUXURY FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST!

Desert Living

MODERN LUXURY FOR THE DESERT



Gift Guide
2007



**NEW
YEAR,
NEW
STYLE**

AFFORDABLE
HOME RENOVATION

ART SHOWS
GET YOUR
SATISFACTION





Mclain says of the painting studio: "This project couldn't handle a \$400 fan, so we spent \$75 on one at Home Depot and it looks great." Baltic birch plywood covers the ceiling.

Out Grown

AN AFFORDABLE ADDITION BY REPP DESIGN+CONSTRUCTION FOR A TUCSON FAMILY

"WITH TWO YOUNG AND ENERGETIC daughters, it must have been a challenge to keep the busy flutter of activity within the existing exterior walls of that house," says Rick Mclain, Project Manager with Tucson-based Repp Design + Construction, when talking about the mid-century ranch of Michael Brewer and KC Conner. It's not that Michael or KC wanted to relocate any rooms into a new addition or reconfigure their current living arrangement; rather, they simply wanted to make their backyard more hang-out friendly, add a modest-sized multi-purpose room, and extra storage space to reduce clutter within the house.

When proposing ideas for the project, Mclain had to consider the budgetary constraints of the clients—a teacher and a librarian. "We all had a lot of ideas, but

didn't know if we could pull them all off at once," says Brewer. So the plan utilized an existing elevated concrete slab off the back porch and involved the demolition of a totally unsalvageable shed that was, for the most part, taken down by Brewer himself. Mclain's team, which included the firm's Principal, Page Repp, designed a corrugated metal canopy held up by exposed metal posts and beams over the concrete platform. Now, an outdoor living room extends 13 feet from the house and runs the entire 80-foot length. To keep costs down, this is where a majority of the clients' sweat equity came into play – Brewer installed a majority of the canopy.

"I know it took them [Repp] more time to explain things to me, but it kept me engaged with what was going on," says Brewer. "Plus, I'm kind of Type-A and the

project forced me to take some vacation days from work," he jokes.

Aesthetically, "the unprotected steel will slowly rust over time, maturing with a richness that complements the desert surroundings," says Mclain. "Materials left in their natural state express their true characteristics and inherent beauty."

This new covered area serves as patio space for the living room, kitchen, and master bedroom. On the southern end, a 12'x15' masonry storage room gave the owners more space to hold the things that accumulate with a growing family. Exposed metal shelves were integrated into the porch-side masonry for easy access to more everyday items. Concrete pavers run perpendicular to the metal canopy, leading one's eye toward the showcase of the project—a 15'x15' glass



“We are always supportive of urban infill projects where someone decides to modify their existing living conditions rather than moving out to the suburbs.” –Rick Mclain

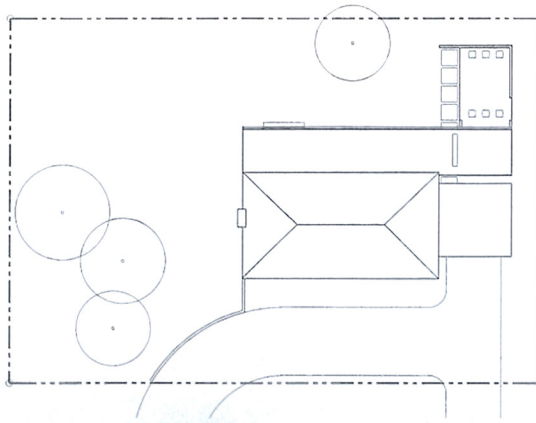
and masonry box. “It was designed to be a painting studio for my wife and kids,” says Brewer, but with breezy cross ventilation and floor-to-ceiling glass walls on two sides, it’s more likely that this space will double as a place to entertain or simply relax.

In between the new studio and storage room, a 9’x15’ covered breezeway with a metal surface on one side blends indoors and outdoors while visually connecting the new structures to the existing house.

Not adding HVAC to the studio helped keep costs down; but it also helped keep the project green. Besides a ceiling fan and can lights, the additions will not add to the owners’ electricity usage. “We also designed a trough into the canopy that leads to a metal water collection cistern,” says Mclain. “That water is used to irrigate their lush desert garden.” The project also incorporates passive solar strategies—the studio is lit by day from northern sun light which is not direct enough to excessively heat the glass box.

But how much does sweat equity really keep costs down? The steel canopy came in at \$24/square foot and the studio, storage room, and breezeway came in at \$82/square foot. The project took eight months to design and eight months to construct.

“My dad is retired and he helped out, too,” says Brewer. “This project really gave us an opportunity to learn more about construction from the pros.” And that kind of experience, as well as the ones this family will have in their new spaces, is worth more than any price-per-square-foot savings. ■



Clockwise from top: A layout of the original house, long rear patio, and additions. With a metal canopy above, the existing concrete slab became the floor for the outdoor living rooms. Metal canopy detail. The homeowner, Michael Brewer. A rainwater collection cistern provides irrigation for the backyard landscaping.