

SuCasa

Northern New Mexico
Inspiration ideas resources

the many
shades
of green
building

performance art

Las Campanas home
hits all the high notes

sliding
barn doors

remodels
big + small



performance art

an award-winning
Las Campanas residence is
many colors, including green



Steven Yazzie's *Road to Nowhere* is visible from the moment you enter the house. The painting's fuchsias and golds inspired much of the home's palette.

If there's anything Brian Johnson and Marsha Hunter have learned over the years, it's to keep an open mind and go where the road leads them. Trained to be professional opera singers and performers, Brian and Marsha figured their lives would be spent on the stage, always in front of an audience. They were half-right. Today they still spend a great deal of time at podiums, but as highly sought-out teachers of presentation and communication skills to attorneys.

"We still get the performance buzz we used to get onstage, and we get to apply all those years we spent in private voice lessons, plus that skill and enthusiasm," says Brian.

"And we love our job!" his wife adds. "The people who attend our courses are interesting, they're curious, and they're motivated."

That sounds a lot like Brian and Marsha themselves. Having bought a lot in Santa Fe's Las Campanas a few years back, the couple finally decided it was time to build their dream home. After conducting extensive interviews, they settled on Tierra Concepts Inc., to build it and Stephen Beili of Studio Dionisi Incorporated to design it. Beili in turn introduced them to Annie O'Carroll of Annie

Left: "We wanted to build a living room that was a beautiful musical instrument," says Brian. Designed as a performance space, the room was built to an acoustician's specifications, with acoustic ceiling panels, strategically placed interior adobe walls, and massive sliding doors that help manage sound.



A slab of magenta solid surface countertop material inspired more color throughout the home. To keep it all sleek, the team opted for calming walnut cabinetry and flooring. A sliding pocket door opens away in front of the waterfall island, offering a unique indoor-outdoor cooking perspective.



Brian and Marsha started collecting midcentury Danish modern furniture years ago when it was out of fashion. All the rage today, it looks perfect in this contemporary hacienda. A niche in the kitchen (above) was specially designed to fit a beloved buffet and mirror set. "From the midcentury dining room table or the magenta counter, you can see the Sangres reflected in that mirror," Marsha notes.

O'Carroll Interior Design, and Kenneth Francis of Surroundings was brought on to create the landscaping and outdoor living areas.

It was clear from the get-go that Brian and Marsha's would be as custom a home as one could get—and their team was on board. "We were trying to explain to Stephen [Beili] what we were wanting to do," Marsha recalls with a laugh. "He looked at us and said, 'So I gather you're looking for something between a circus and a concert hall.'"

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After siting the home to capture gorgeous views of the Sangre de Cristos, "the main thing was they wanted their living room to be a performance space," says Beili. "There would be a grand piano in the space, and they knew it would be an opportunity for them and their friends to perform for each other."

Through the Curtis Institute of Music where she attended school, Marsha was referred to an acoustician, Felicia Doggett, at Metropolitan Acoustics in Philadelphia. "We sent Felicia the dimensions of the living room and told her that the doors would open on both ends," Marsha recalls. "She did a computer model for us, we met via Skype several times, and she told us what materials to use, how


thick the floors should be—even how thick the drapes needed to be and the weight of the lining." Music wants mass. Brian and Marsha were told, so they added 12 pre-made acoustic panels to the ceiling, had two 600-pound sliding panel doors built that close off two of three spaces along one wall, and incorporated thick adobe walls covered by mud plaster that are not only functional, but beautiful in a rich other hue.

Both ends of the living room do indeed open, via sliding glass pocket doors, with the piano end leading to a *portal* and the south-facing end opening to a "roof-less room," an enclosed courtyard-like area inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe's house in Abiquiá. "It was as much about extending the performance space (and audience seating) as anything else," says Tierra's Kurt Faust. "And then the ephemeral pool water feature was one idea to make that space have even more meaning."

The ephemeral pool, the brainchild of Surroundings, is a rock-lined area that fills with water when it rains, then slowly drains, its look changing all the while. The water that does drain, according to Francis, is funneled to a cistern that irrigates the all-native plants that make up the landscaping.



With so much big color going on in the public spaces, other finishes were deliberately kept quiet—but still fun, as in the light-filled master bathroom.



Having never built a house before, Brian and Marsha were determined to enjoy the process and sidestep the horror stories that often accompany such projects. "Part of our goal was to have fun, and to trust our team," says Brian. To that end, when O'Carroll and Belli—who both love color—came across a sample of solid surface countertop in a vivid fuchsia and then excitedly pitched it to their clients, Brian and Marsha went for it. "Then we found out it was discontinued," O'Carroll remembers. "We were able to get one slab of it so it made us commit to that color up front. Then it became a color we wove through the project." A la Luis Barragán, magenta is prominent in one wall of the kitchen, in the living room/performance area drapes, in the custom Robin Gray rug in the living room, and even in some of the artwork. Coupled with the other walls, this is one colorful house, as many people who toured it during the 2016 Haciendas—A Parade of Homes delightedly discovered.

But of all the colors this one-of-a-kind residence can boast, none has proven to be more gratifying to all involved than green. Thanks to a host of green building materials and systems—rooftop solar panels, healthy finishes, windows made from sustainably harvested wood, energy-efficient appliances and mechanical systems, a 6,000-gallon cistern for landscaping, and many other features—Brian and Marsha's home was recently certified LEED Gold, plus won awards for Tierra Concepts for Best Energy Efficiency and Best Water Efficiency on the Parade of Homes. Add to that awards for Best Design and Best Outdoor Living, and you can bet its owners and design team were mighty proud of their efforts. And a little blown away.

"We drove our design team a little crazy, because we kept saying, 'We're building this house for four people: us, and really old us,'" says Brian. Elegant aging in place accommodations, such as a wheelchair-accessible vanity (left), were implemented at every opportunity.



"It's so fun working with a smart team of people who have been building and designing houses together for years," says Marsha. "They know how beautiful it's going to be, and how a wonderful design element will make your life just beautiful. It's such a privilege to be able to do a house like this."

Below: Designed around a freestanding wall that houses closet space, the serene and calming master bedroom gets its own jolt of color from a patterned rug.





The larger of two "roofless rooms" is enclosed and private, but easily converts to extended audience space during private concerts. The ephemeral pool (at right) is a changing water feature that fills with rainwater, then irrigates the landscaping as it drains.



Even though Marsha and Brian, as they say, "hung up their vocal cords" years ago, the two former opera and folk singers still love to perform with and for each other. They look forward to inviting other talented musicians to their home to perform in small, private concerts.

"I was thinking recently that the wonderful team that helped us build this place ended up giving us a house we had no idea we wanted," Brian marvels. "That was the fun of the creative process: they really guided us to a place we never even knew existed."

resources

Builder

Tierra Concepts Inc.
tierraconceptssantafe.com

Cabinetry

Kitchen Dimensions

Countertops

Counter Intelligence

Designer

Stephen Beili, Studio Dionisi Incorporated

Gates, Metal Fabrication & Sliding Doors

Rippel Metal Fabrication

Interior Designer

Annie O'Carroll Interior Design

Landscaping

Kenneth Francis, Surroundings

Sliding Window Walls

Architectural Windows & Doors

Tile

Statements In Tile/Lighting/Kitchens/Flooring
statementsinsantafe.com

Windows

Sierra Pacific Windows
sierrapacificwindows.com