

SuCasa

Southwest Homes

inspiration ideas resources

bold change
three renovations
revealed

planting roots
a stunning home
grows out of a friendship



enchanted home design

from styles to building processes and materials, New Mexico has its own Southwestern homes vernacular

This project by Tierra Concepts features large, round-ended lintels in addition to vigas and other Southwestern building materials.

REGIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY have unique home styles and elements plus terms from the “pop-tops” of Colorado to the hyperbolic paraboloid roof styles common in Palm Springs to Craftsman homes dotting the Midwest. Of course, these elements and styles cross borders, but regions become known for one thing or another, and in New Mexico, it’s—of course—Southwestern style. But what does that really mean? We’ve created a guide to common styles, materials and terms indicative of Southwestern architecture that you’ll likely encounter if you’re buying, building or renovating a home here.

Three main styles define Southwestern architecture, as seen in New Mexico. Of course, there are hybrids of these styles, and we’ve seen an influx of contemporary homes in recent years. However, even in contemporary styles, homeowners often seek to add traditional elements to give these homes a strong sense of place.

Luca Marino-Baker, architect at Tierra Concepts, Inc., says Pueblo Revival is the dominant style throughout the Southwest and especially in Santa Fe. He adds that Territorial style came into being when U.S. settlers migrated to the Southwest, bringing the wood details present in colonial architecture,

including painted wood elements such as casings, shutters and beams. “The most iconic feature of Territorial style is the brick coping,” Marino-Baker says. “It’s the coping at the top of the building instead of the rounded mud parapets.” Keith Gorges, president of Tierra Concepts, poses the twist to traditional Pueblo came with the railroad’s arrival, which allowed for easy transport of these heavy materials.

Yet another transitional style is the Northern New Mexico home with its pitched roof, which is beneficial for rain and snow run-off. “It’s of the same vernacular as Pueblo style, but the folks up in the mountains needed the pitched roof,” Marino-Baker says. While the style generated in the mountains, it spread throughout Santa Fe and the northern Albuquerque suburbs.

There are many hallmarks of Southwestern style homes such as vigas, latillas and nichos, but two that perhaps stand out the most include kivas and adobe. Jim Collins of Jim’s Masonry, LLC has been building kivas since he moved to New Mexico when he was only 18 years old. These unique adobe or stucco fireplaces are often built in the corner of a room and are a true hallmark of Southwestern design—inspired by southwestern Pueblo Indian architecture. They are typically found in Pueblo and Territorial



Wendy McEahern

style homes and often include a banco and/or nichos as part of the overall design.

When Collins works with clients to design a kiva, he's conscientious about the room in which it will be built. "You want the fireplace size to match the scale of the room," he says. Years of experience help him plan a kiva that is proportionate so it doesn't overwhelm or underwhelm. He's crafted kivas with openings as small as 18 inches up to 3 feet wide, but he says it's typical for the openings to range from 24 to 27 inches wide. Collins leaves the fireplace exterior to the plaster professionals for a seamless finish.


Adobe is sometimes confused as a "style" of home, but indeed, it is a method of building as well as a material, says Kenny DeLapp, who has worked in adobe construction for 10 years and whose company Albuquerque Joinery specializes in adobe construction custom homes. "Adobe is adaptable," he says. "There are adobes that are Territorial, Pueblo revival, Sonoran, Victorian and modern. You can do anything with it." He adds that—at least in his business—the homes are a bit simpler in structure and detailing, allowing the nature of the building to speak for itself and to follow the historic look and feel of a traditional adobe structure.

Prepared adobe mud made from clay, sand, water and organic materials is formed into large, sun-baked bricks. Traditionally, the exposed brick surface is plastered with adobe mud. Earthen plaster can still

be found on many historic buildings throughout the state, such as the famous Taos Pueblo, though many adobe buildings today are plastered with cement stucco. Adobe bricks were introduced to New Mexico as a building technique from Spain, although Pueblo Indians used a puddled (hand-formed) adobe construction before European contact.

Adobe construction has become expensive and rare because of its hand-built nature and a lack of builders specializing in this unique style of masonry. Still, adobe offers excellent thermal mass and sound insulation to structures due to its thickness. "The mass has a presence that is at once reassuring and comforting and also fortifying," DeLapp says. He also notes another sensory experience: "The smell of an adobe house is something to behold." Certainly, it stems from the natural essence of its components.

"We have a distinctive architectural heritage here," DeLapp says. "It goes back hundreds of years, and it's based on building with earth from nearby and trees from the Jemez, and it yields structures that belong and fit with the landscape, and I want to see more of those buildings built."

DeLapp is also a member of The Earthbuilders' Guild (TEG), a trade organization for earthen construction. TEG periodically hosts public tours of adobe and other earthen construction projects in New Mexico, as well as historic adobe buildings. For more information, visit theearthbuildersguild.com. 



This Tierra Concepts home blends traditional Pueblo elements with a sloping metal porch roof that would normally be seen in a Northern New Mexico style home.

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