



gracious entry in Paradise Valley

■ The layout of Bette Stofft's house in Paradise Valley, Arizona, is the opposite of most homes. Stofft's front entrance is actually at the rear of the property, and what would normally be considered the backyard faces the street. Visitors found this arrangement disorienting: When they drove up to the house, they couldn't immediately find the entrance; once they found it, it wasn't a welcoming space.

Landscape architect Chad Robert of Phoenix (602/307-0010) transformed this uninviting area into a gracious courtyard. First, he expanded the space to 70 feet wide by 30 feet deep by pushing its boundaries out into a parkway. Then he enclosed the courtyard with a stucco wall

with a dramatic portal that houses a gate with two rustic wood doors. Robert paved the courtyard with Saltillo tiles. A few deftly placed boulders look as if they might have tumbled off nearby Camelback Mountain. To provide a bit of shade, Robert added a pair of Chilean mesquite trees. Bougainvillea spilling over the wall accentuates its sinuous curves.

Sheltered by the house on one side and the mountain on the other, the courtyard is well protected from wind. Heat reflected from the mountainside makes it especially cozy in late fall, says Robert. In the evening, a fireplace built into the wall provides additional warmth for outdoor dining and entertaining. — *Sharon Cohoon*