



rivately situated in a canyon in Rancho Santa Fe, the exclusive enclave in North San Diego County, Mary and Steve Pierson's newly remodeled home was originally a rather dark, 1970s style spec house. Having just returned to the States after living in Europe, the Piersons called upon Paul and Shannon Wehsener, the husband and wife team behind Paul Allen Design, to help them transform their new home into one that incorporated into its appearance and essence the elements the Piersons had encountered in their travels.

"They wanted a European Villa type of look," says Paul of the Pierson's vision for the home. To give the exterior of the house a more vintage feel, the Wehseners changed the painted wood columns to stone, and to the balconies they added wrought iron work which they designed themselves. To add more light to the interior, the designer couple toned down the dark hue of all the woodwork, lightened the floors, and removed several walls. To achieve a warmer, mellowed look, all the walls were painted in a soft, very subtle faux paint to look like plaster, and the ceilings were coved to soften the wall to ceiling transition. "The travertine floor has a craggy edge and a texture to it as well," adds Paul, "and the new cabinetry and beams have a distressing to them, so everything has a little bit of aged look to it."

The living room was designed, as were the other rooms, to incorporate the many antiques the Pierson's already owned. Two arched French door pairs were added to flank the fireplace and access the new courtyard and garden paths. The living room was previously separated from the foyer and upper balcony with walls, and a sunken bar was filled in where the piano now resides. The room was opened to provide a visual connection to the other rooms, and to transform the previous loft into an elegant balcony. Iron railing, clad columns, new false beams and corbels were then added to tie all the new elements in place.

The space the Wehseners created in the patio area provides the perfect sanctuary for both personal contemplation and social mingling. The first change was to pull the barbeque away from the house, creating a larger area for entertaining and seating options. A fireplace was then added, as well as a wall behind the patio area which serves to incorporate the end of the pool, draw that area closer to the house for entertaining, and partition several gardens that lie behind it.

"Nothing worked before," says Shannon of the kitchen. The core of the house actually had to be replanned in order to open up the kitchen to the family room, which involved removing several walls in the kitchen area. A spacious island was then added in the middle of the room that harmoniously connected the eating area to the work area. The Wehseners created more doors leading out, which allowed light to flow in from the spacious patio adjacent to the kitchen. With the new open island and reverse L-shaped arrangement, more than one person can now work in the kitchen while others gather around them to eat and socialize. "It's just really conducive to that," adds Shannon, "because now you can walk inside and outside the house through the kitchen without walking through the main work area."



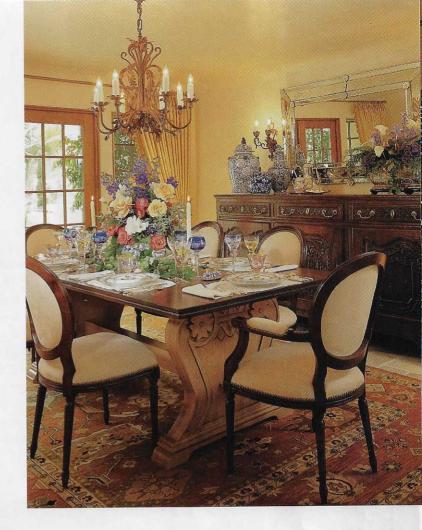
ABOVE: Situated off the family room, this cozy but spacious patio entices quests to gather around its Linx barbeque and lounge in its Brown Jordan table and chairs, the latter of which are covered in a lattice ivy motif. A cap was used on the wall and the mantle molding, and to line all of the planter tops and benches throughout the backyard. It's a cast stone material designed to look like limestone, from which the columns were made as well. Fresh cut flowers from the garden are arranged by Mary Pierson. RIGHT PAGE: The whole upper balcony behind the living room used to be enclosed with drywall that came down to the first floor. One can also see part of the piano, which lies in what used to be a sunken bar. Two Bergere chairs from Fremarc sit regally upon the gold-toned J. H. Minasian rug.



BELOW: Abundant light from the patio bathes this elegant but comfortable gathering place, set off by a gold-toned J. H. Minasian rug which further warms the room. The Pierson's existing couch was reupholstered in a fabric from Brunschwig et Fils, which has a woven, cross-hatched texture. The Bergere chairs are from Fremarc; fabric also from Brunschwig et Fils. Coffee table is from Collections Reproductions. Small bench from William Switzer.







ne of the focal points of the adjacent family room is the large, limestone fireplace the Wehseners designed to be reminiscent of one the Piersons grew attached to in a Belgian house where they had resided. The windows on either side were redesigned to arch at the top, and beams and corbels were added to the ceiling. "The motif on the hand-painted beams reflects the border of the rug," explains Shannon. "This room has the most color and pattern out of all the rooms so as to create a cozy gathering place."

Initially, one walked through the foyer of the house directly into the sitting room of the master bedroom, which was a sudden, awkward transition from the public to the intimate. To ease this transition, the Wehseners created a personal foyer for the master bedroom. They also designed a new fireplace and sitting area, and further opened up the room by adding doors to the private patio that lie outside the room. The bathroom, which had been compartmentalized and drowned by an abundance of 1970s brown colors, was lightened and opened up as well.

ABOVE RIGHT: Two columns were removed which had previously blocked the entrance of the dining room. The French buffet and the mirror were purchased by the Piersons in Europe. The walls are covered and painted with a light faux wash to give the ceiling, which is lower in this room than elsewhere, the illusion of height. The fabric of the curtains is a silken wool by Jagtar, with a Brunschwig et Fils trim. Chandelier and sconces are from Murray's Iron Works; rug is from J. H. Minasian.



efore committing to any fabric or color schemes, the Wehseners traveled with the Piersons to Los Angeles to select the rugs together. "The rugs and the couple's art were what we wanted to stand out," says Paul. "Those are the timeless things. We think that keeping the upholstered pieces more simple and plain, in contrast, creates more of a classic, timeless look."

"With this project we were fortunate to redesign the entire exterior and interior house—space planning, the cabinetry, the finishes, and the furniture," adds Shannon. "And we really enjoyed the challenge and the outcome."







LEFT:To create a more efficient cooking and work area, a prep sink and a regular sink were designed for this room, as well as two dishwashers and two ovens. The cooking appliances are Dacor, the dishwashers are Gaggenau, and the refrigerator is Sub-Zero. The Wehseners put great effort and detail into custom designing all the cabinetry with Penner Designs. The perimeter cabinets are stained alder, and the island, to which Mary Pierson had the idea of adding color, is a muddy blue-brown wash. Breakfast table is from Dupuis. Chairs around the bar are William Switzer. The counter is granite and the backsplash over the stove is reclaimed terra cotta pavers.

Carved limestone wood, which repeats the limestone of the family room fireplace, crowns the stove. Floor is travertine. ABOVE: The Mansour rug and simple but magnificent limestone fireplace provide a wonderful base for the art and other classic pieces that fill this elegant yet comfortable room. A. Rudin couches were upholstered in a chenille fabric by Kravet. The reddish Bergere chair was reupholstered in leather and a linen fabric by Kravet. The round table in the foreground is Sterling, and the cotton curtains are by Greff. The floor lamp by the red chair and the chandelier are from Murray's Iron Works. Library table behind the sofa is from Collections Reproductions.