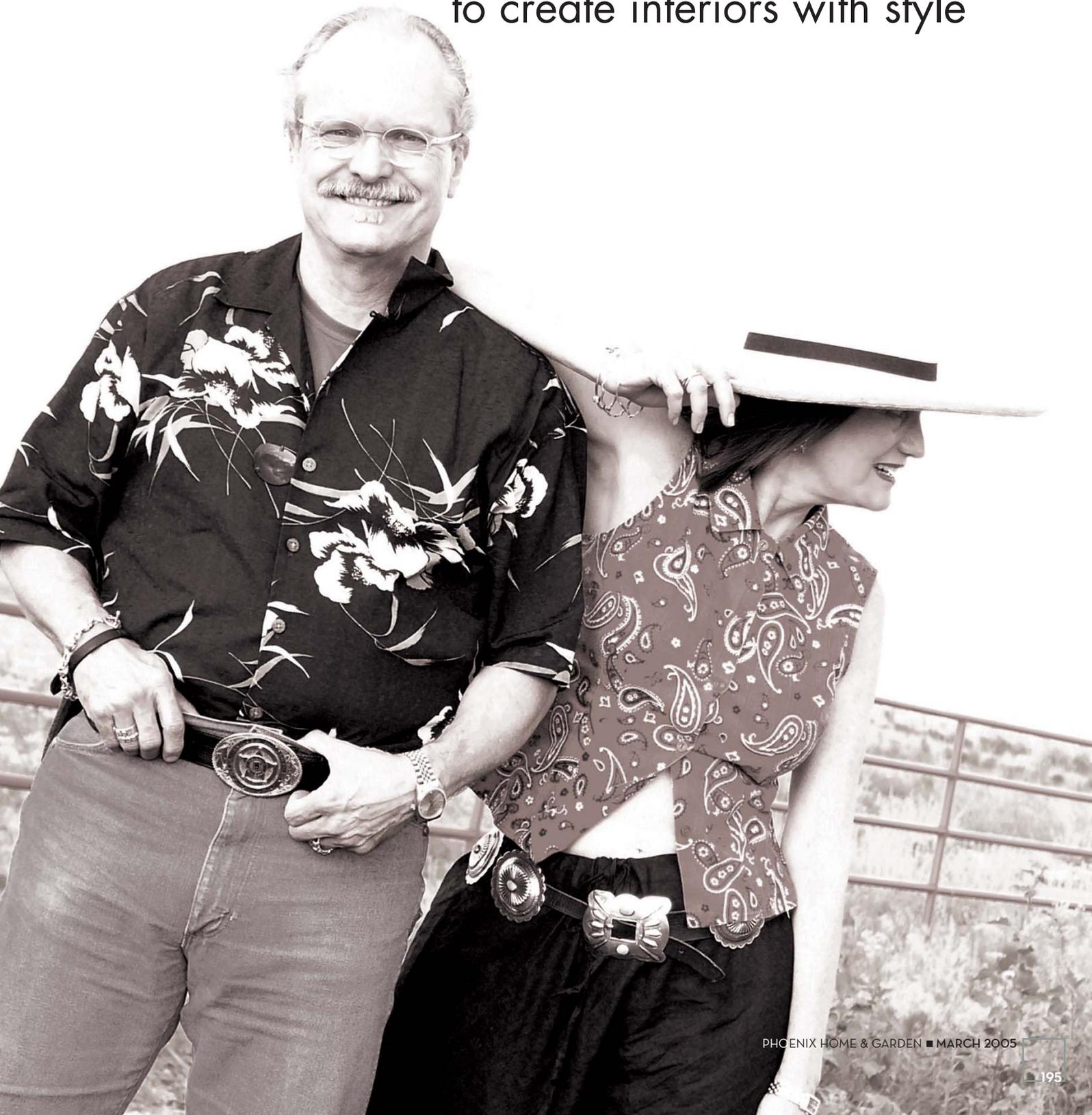


# Design Duo

Dorothy and Eric Bron Team up  
to create interiors with style





A colorful entry courtyard provides a welcoming passageway to the home of Bruce Barth and Joanna Douglas. The rusted-steel gate was designed by architect Gordon Rogers. Interior design by Dorothy and Eric Bron (right).

TEXT BY JUDY HARPER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA

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WITH A BEVY OF awards from prestigious design associations, Eric and Dorothy Bron were looking for something different when they launched Bron Design Group in 1993.

"Our background was hospitality and commercial, but we wanted to work in the residential end, where people are more engaged in the design process," says Eric.

"We wanted to work for nice people, make friends and make a living," adds Dorothy. "But making a living wasn't the driving force. We were very cavalier then, but knew we would love it. Our work is all about enhancing our clients' quality of life."

The Brons met at a coffeehouse while attending the University of Missouri-Columbia. A student of industrial design and business, Eric continued his studies at Kansas City Art Institute. He has worked as an interior designer since 1964, and was a principal of DLR Group, one of the country's largest architectural firms, before forming the specialized Bron Design Group. Dorothy received her degree in social work. Her career focused on behavioral studies and teaching before she discovered her knack for color and design. She is a member of the prestigious International Color Marketing Group, where she participates in color and design forecasting studies. The couple married and moved to the Valley in 1968.

Today, these Masters of the Southwest design extraordinary interior spaces that uniquely reflect the personalities of the owners. Together, they approach projects with the eye of an artist and the disci-

With walls painted a tranquil Water Green, a hallway that leads from the garage becomes a peaceful Zen sanctuary. The enamel-on-copper pieces by Daphne Keskinis are titled *Before the Wedding*. The light sculpture is by Keitaro Fujii.

pline of an engineer.

"The Brons have a unique sensitivity to the architecture that they are creating for," says architect Gordon Rogers, who introduced the couple to Bruce Barth and Joanna Douglas, owners of the north Scottsdale residence featured on these pages. "Rather than treat a space as a palette for their own statement, they capture the essence of the overall design concept and express that in their choices of colors, textures, materials and forms."

The Barth-Douglas home, built over a wash, embraces the beauty of the desert. The couple says the Brons' work illuminates every space, inside and out, with no detail left unattended.

"Eric and Dorothy harmonized Gordon Rogers' amazing architecture as if they were in on it from the very beginning, although they were not," notes Barth. "We've seen Eric's architecture gene at work, in the furnishings he designed and brought together so skillfully with a hundred other elements. And Dorothy's sense of color is surely a direct grant from the gods."

The residence showcases hues so pure they look plucked from a rainbow, from dramatic red walls and highly figured cherry cabinetry in the kitchen, to brilliant purple and red chairs in the great room. An under-lit amber glass sink and a copper glitter-glaze wall finish make the powder room sparkle. Even the laundry room is splashed with a cheery shade of purple.

The Brons' eye for detail is apparent throughout the home. In the entry, a lamp cord was hidden by drilling through an alligator juniper table. Motorized draperies in the guest suite are hung with the print facing the main home and patio. Even the fireplace gets special treatment as flames dance among grinder balls. "We didn't want typical wood," states Eric. "These mesh balls are used to break up rocks in gravel pits."

In the pristine garage, the couple went all out to create a memorable space for





This page: Natural light works its magic in the master bath as dichroic colored glass insets change hues throughout the day. Countertops are a deep chocolate granite, and the built-in spa tub features honed copper slate tile with a figured-cherry surround. The spherical art piece by Jim Olsen is titled *Midnight Sky*.  
Opposite: Sumptuous textures and colors enliven the master suite, from red paint on walls to cedar planking on the ceiling, and copper slate on the ceiling, and copper slate on floors. Echo artwork by Matt Priebe.





Barth, who races Porsches. It's a car buff's dream, with an immense work counter and a lounge area that can accommodate a mechanic. A series of doors painted in brilliant colors conceals a full bath and storage. Black-and-white-check walls and a manhole cover made from tile continue the theme in the bathroom.

"When it comes to the interior finishing of a room, the Brons make art of it," states architect Bob Bacon. "They are true designers, not simply decorators. Dorothy and Eric can work comfortably in any genre, any style and any palette."

"I love living in a Bron world," concurs Steve Grosvenor. "They've been involved in a couple of projects with me, and in all cases, they did a phenomenal job on a reasonable budget. With our first home, I looked at all the colors and the design manual that was four inches thick, and I was very much a doubting Thomas. It was hard to envision how it would all come together, but in the end, I was very much in awe."

Clients especially applaud the way the Brons are able to breathe fresh life into personal belongings and private collections, often by blending them with new acquisitions.

"We are very satisfied," says Susan Slesinger, who hired the Brons when she and her husband were downsizing from a house to an apartment. "They told us what to keep, what to get rid of, what would fit, and what they thought we should add, which wasn't much. They really listened to

Swivel lounge chairs in red and orange leather and a purple sofa add to the living room's high energy. The square ottomans are covered with braided wool. The rug was designed for the homeowners by Kathryn Henneman.

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what we wanted,” the homeowner notes.

With a portfolio that ranges from glamorous Tuscan to funky Western, there is no style that defines the Brons’ work. “We don’t have a formula,” says Dorothy. “We have many projects on our Web site, and it’s frustrating when someone says they didn’t see anything they liked. We haven’t done their home yet. Every project we approach is brand new and very different.”

With attitudes they describe as playful and quirky, with always-present smiles, the Brons enjoy a rich partnership in and out of the studio. “We support each other and respect each other’s talents,” says Eric. “We both have the same goal; it’s not an ego thing for us.”

“I’m amazed at how many people say they couldn’t work with their spouse,” adds Dorothy. “When Eric is completely frustrated or excited about a triumph he’s had, I know exactly what he’s going through and can share in that.”

Of course, each has individual interests. For Dorothy, yoga, reading, going to movies and connecting with friends top the list.

Eric calls himself a “pistol-packin’ interior designer,” and notes that clients often are amazed to see him in uniform as a member of the Arizona Rangers. They’re even more astonished to learn his dedication to martial arts has earned him a fifth-degree black belt.

With a mischievous grin, he comments, “We have no trouble with people paying their bills.”

See Resource Guide.

The guest suite, located beneath a private patio off the master bedroom, boasts walls painted in Desert Doe. The custom Pebbles rug is 100-percent wool. Motorized draperies designed by the Brons maximize the room’s privacy, while allowing picture-postcard views at the touch of a button.