

Minimalism Takes The Lead In A Resort-Like Arizona Mountain Home

BY [SHAWN MARIE GAUTHIER](#) / [FEBRUARY 18, 2021](#)



“Working in these furniture pieces around the center staircase felt like a challenge,” says designer Jill Mitchell, of creating an easy-to-navigate guest lounge with Sunpan chairs. “But I love the way the space turned out—it’s like a sophisticated yet fun lounge in a luxury resort.”

Remember when people hosted parties? Ian and Pedro Rollo certainly do. And there is one in particular that stands out among the rest. While hosting a gathering in their Scottsdale, Arizona, home, the Rollos received an unexpected offer from a couple who lived nearby: If they could buy the Rollos' home, the Rollos could buy theirs. In essence, they wanted to do a house swap. An unusual suggestion, to be sure, but it came with a bit of serendipity. "We'd had our eye on their place for two years," says Pedro. "It has a warmth and resort-like ambience—the private getaway feel we'd always wanted."

The couple jumped at the offer. Avid entertainers, the Rollos had always been intrigued by the home's functionality: The living area, kitchen, entry and patio combined into one open layout ideal for mingling. The stone floors, brick walls, and black doors and windows created a vibe rooted in masculinity that appealed to them. But the couple also wanted to add drama and depth. So they turned to designer Jill Mitchell to do just that.

Originally designed by local architect Tor Stuart, the sprawling residence is perched atop a mountain on 10 acres of unspoiled wilderness. Floor-to-ceiling windows and wall-to-wall retractable doors evoke a floating sensation. "It's a modern beauty," says Mitchell, who used the indoor/outdoor architecture as the jumping-off point for Ian and Pedro's request for a luxurious but livable design that functioned for both everyday life and entertaining.

A minimalist approach became Mitchell's guiding mantra. "No matter what, we had to preserve the view," she says. "By going minimal, we could effectively furnish the space while directing the eye outdoors." In the living area, this meant two oversize, clean-lined custom sofas for ample seating; one of them backless to maintain the sightline outdoors. Clear glass lamps offer ambient light and visual read-through to both the mountain views as well as the landscaping by Chad Norris. "The sun paints incredible colors across the sky at dusk," says Ian. "Maintaining unobstructed views allows that sunset to be experienced anywhere."

To add depth and drama, Mitchell painted the walls white to contrast the dark stone and brick. And, because minimalist should never translate to cold, she counteracted the 15-foot ceilings by adding pieces with visual heft, such as the extra-large coffee table that anchors the living area. “Oversize pieces keep the space from feeling cavernous,” she says. Mitchell then utilized metallic accents to emphasize the stone’s warm golden tones. Bold textiles and materials—velvets, shagreen, burnished brass—as well as abstract patterns surprise against the furnishing’s clean lines. “I love mixing the old and the new, combining textiles, adding metals,” says Mitchell. “Each layer ensures that a space looks curated over time.”

It is a lesson in understated luxury, but Mitchell couldn’t forget the other half of the couple’s request: livability. Every piece Mitchell chose is anything but precious. “No one wants to live in a museum,” remarks Pedro. Performance fabrics on the seating defend against red wine spills and muddy paws from the Rollos’ four pooches—Walker, Winston, Watson and Sammy. Dark wool rugs add warmth to stone floors while combating heavy foot traffic.

The main floor is not the only space that’s meant to be enjoyed to the fullest. A downstairs guest suite, complete with its own living room and kitchenette, is more than just a place for guests to retire to—it’s also an additional entertainment area that nods to Pedro’s affinity for modern Italian furniture. A peacock-blue sofa and chaise pair with a cognac leather ottoman to break the neutral color scheme. Nearby, a shuffleboard begs for competition.

That bedroom, like every space on the main floor looks out on the covered patio—the couple’s favorite space. Here, sheltered in the privacy of the canyon walls, Pedro and Ian dine alfresco, relax on the swings and swim in the infinity pool. The house is exactly what they thought it could be. Says Ian, “It’s our own little resort.”