

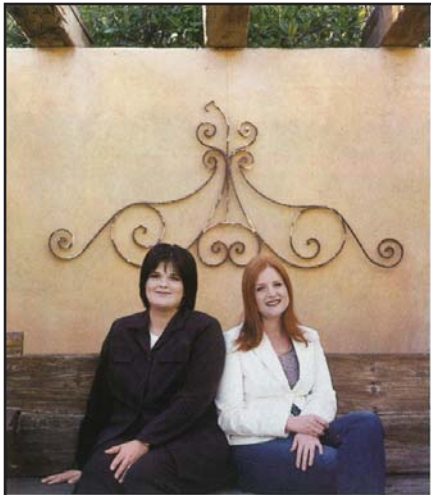


DESIGNERS BERKLEY VALLONE AND CAROLINE DECESARE EXPLAIN HOW TO TRANSLATE THE PHOENIX SPA'S ROMANTIC MEDITERRANEAN FEEL TO A HOME SPA BY ANN ABEL • PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD DUARTE

► SPA SANCTUARY The courtyard off the relaxation room is a harmonious union of the Mediterranean and Arizona. A French antique limestone bench (about \$2,500) sits behind a custom Mexican marble fountain (about \$3,200) and vibrant Talavera (solid blue) and Talavera Deco Palacio (patterned tiles (\$1.90-\$1.75 each). Sources: Bench: Antiquities in Scottsdale (480-556-0303), Fountain and tile: Handcrafted Tile Inc. in Phoenix (602-275-5512).

▲ WROUGHT-IRON WALL HANGING Successful transplant: At first glance, this 16-inch-square piece of weathered antique ironwork (\$195) looks native, but it's actually from France. The designers used a series of these squares to dress up the passageway between the changing room and the showers. Source: Relics Architectural Home & Garden in Phoenix (602-265-7354 or www.relicsaz.com).





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▼ RELAXATION ROOM

"We wanted things to have a world-traveler look," says DeCesare. "We didn't want a suite of furniture or anything matchy-matchy." Thus, the room contains tables in two styles, a landscape by Wisconsin artist Gregg Rochester, Mexican carvings, and scrolled-arm sleigh-like wood chaises (\$1,814 each) covered in a printed cotton (to the trade only). The sheer, slightly metallic striped linen curtains (\$62 per yard) add privacy and an air of mystery. "You can

see that someone's behind it without staring at the person," says Vallone. **Sources**  
 Painting: Wilde Meyer Gallery in Scottsdale (480-945-2323). Colonialwood chaises: Palecek (800-274-7730). Chaise fabric: Osborne & Little in New York City (212-751-3333 or www.osborneandlittle.com), item F1955-03 (Susani in Ceyiz). Curtains: Opuzen Design in Culver City, CA (310-559-2811), item 1233-0078 in Metallic.



**M**ake it look like the home of someone who has traveled the world. That was the mandate given to interior designers Berkley Vallone (above, right) and Caroline DeCesare (left) of Vallone Design in Scottsdale when they signed on to create the Royal Palms' Alvadora Spa. Working closely with Oz Architects and spa consultant Cary Collier, the designers created a residential-feeling spa that reflects the history of the 76-year-old Mediterranean-meets-Arizona hotel, originally the winter retreat of a globe-trotting steamship executive. The two-story spa is painted in rich, warm colors and filled with mismatched antiques, which give it a relaxed, romantic feel.

Vallone and DeCesare turned their biggest challenge—Arizona's blazing sun, which weathers materials quickly—into an asset. "The idea that something is used and has age is something we like to embrace," says Vallone. The walls are covered in Porter Paints, which are made with lime so they "bloom" with time, and centuries-old French ironwork serves as accent pieces. For a home spa, the designers suggest going for authenticity: Use real stone, for instance, select pieces that are handmade or have "an artisan feel," and choose materials that will show their age. "A lot of people shy away from an oil-rubbed bronze faucet because the finish will change," Vallone says. "But we celebrate that. The more it's worn, the better it looks."



◀ **STONE FINIALS**

"They look like finials off a building, found by a man who collected things from abroad," says Vallone of the heavy stone pieces that grace the mantelpiece—and continue the idea of pack-rat cosmopolitanism. "Because they're outside, they needed to be more of an architectural material," she adds.



▼ **CHAIRS AND OTTOMANS**

Although they look like natural wicker or sea grass, these Havana lounge chairs (\$1,795 each) and ottomans (\$890 each) are made of resin, so they'll stand up to the elements. They're covered in an exterior

fabric (\$98 per yard) that's water- and stain-resistant. **Sources:** Brown Jordan ([www.brownjordan.com](http://www.brownjordan.com)). Fabric: Perennials ([www.perennialsfabrics.com](http://www.perennialsfabrics.com)), item 100-01 (Row Stripe in Moss/Pistachio).



▲ **RELAXATION COURTYARD**

Arizona's balmy days and cool desert evenings let this cozy courtyard become an exterior living room—it's used as a pre-treatment waiting area and post-treatment hide-away. That stately marble fireplace (about \$3,500), custom-made for the space, is the key. "If you took the fireplace out of that room, you would feel awkward sitting there with just four walls and some landscaping," Vallone explains. **Source:** Fireplaces: Antiquities.



▲ **TRIANGULAR TABLE**

An example of the designers' eclectic eye, this three-sided drinks table (\$1,050) in the relaxation room (opposite) is an import from Peru. It's topped with leather—a rich, unexpected detail suggestive of an earlier era. **Source:** South Cone Trading Co. ([www.southcone.com](http://www.southcone.com)), item TRNGLT.

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▲ CERAMIC BOWL

Acqua Dolce ("sweet water" in Italian) is a spa within the spa, a couple's suite (pictures on these two pages) with two indoor rooms and two courtyards. This earthy bowl (\$165) holds towels by the indoor tub. Handles shaped like knots add a touch of the artisanal. **Source** Lisa Howe Clay Diva in Scottsdale (480-991-6769).

▼ RAIN SHOWER

The Acqua Dolce suite has a Watsu pool and two showers in its courtyards, including this three-foot-square rain shower that was designed and custom-made by Oz Architects. The copper pan is integrated with the Douglas fir beams and an Altman's (310-274-5896) high-flow shower valve.



▲ TUB FOR TWO

Consultant Collier chose this Sanijet tub (\$4,195) because it's the "quietest on the market, has great engineering with a pipeless system, and has easy selections for whirlpool options." (He also praises the company's customer service.) The sumptuous Jerusalem Stone surround (\$15-\$20 per square foot, material only) and placement beneath a window that opens onto a private courtyard make it as seductive as it is technologically advanced. **Sources** Tub: Sanijet (888-458-6217 or www.sanijet.com), Designer Collection model 680. Surround: Arizona Tile in Tempe (480-893-9393 or www.arizonatile.com).

◀ WROUGHT-IRON CANDLESTICK

The bath is the stage set, the candles are the lighting, but the antique-looking candle holders around the tub add the dash of romance. This one, made of kissing scrolls, is especially distinctive.





▲ **WET ROOM**

Detail-oriented craftsmanship and tactile materials, all designed and custom-made by Oz Architects: The walls are manufactured field-stone with a mortar-washed finish that was created by mixing mortar into a slurry and spreading it across the stone surface. Before the slurry was sponged off, workers threw dirt at the wall to age it. The Vichy showers with Kohler ([www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com)) showerheads are hidden in rough-sawn Douglas fir enclosures, and the massage tables are made of poured concrete with travertine tile and radiant heat underneath.

► **WROUGHT-IRON CHAISE**

"Iron is so European," says Vallone of the pair of pared-down Amherst adjustable chaises by the fireplace in the courtyard. DeCesare adds that their slim lines don't upstage the fireplace and landscaping. This chaise has been discontinued, but the company's Delphi chaise (\$2,605) is similar. **Source** Woodard ([www.woodard-furniture.com](http://www.woodard-furniture.com)), item 850470.



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◀ **RUSTIC BENCH**

An antique bench made from a door plays off traditional wood shutters in the hotel's Palmera Garden.

▼ **TILED STAIR RISERS**

"It's artwork as you're traveling up the stairs," says Vallone of the custom tile work (\$.90-\$1.75 per tile) on the staircase to the second-floor treatment rooms. The detail is a hallmark of both Spanish and Mexican architecture. **Source** Handcrafted Tile Inc.



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◀ **WEATHERED POT**

This 30-inch-high Antiqued Oil Jar (about \$950) was handmade in France. The terra cotta was glazed to produce a sun-dappled look suggestive of age. These pots are used throughout the spa as planters and decorative objects, and could fill either role in a home spa. But "some are really large and heavy," cautions Vallone. **Source** Abigail's (800-678-8485); to the trade only.

▶ **CAROUSEL HORSE**

This whimsical antique is outside a meeting room rather than in the spa, but it exemplifies one of Vallone and DeCesare's cardinal rules: Play up patina.



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► **VILLA SERENA ROOM**

There's a cool color palette in the upstairs treatment rooms because they get more sun than those downstairs, which are painted in warm hues. An antique-looking custom armoire (\$7,500) and vanity and striped flat-weave rug (\$5,500) make the space feel like a bedroom. **Sources** Armoire: Vallone Design (480-421-2799). Rug: David E. Adler Oriental Rugs and Antiques in Scottsdale (480-941-2995).

◀ **BRONZE MIRROR**

It looks like studded leather, but this 48-inch-diameter mirror is weathered bronze. It hangs in a narrow corridor in the spa, put there to open up the space. It could do the same in a home spa, or make a dramatic statement in a larger dressing area.

▼ **CUSTOM VANITY**

This custom vanity (\$6,000) has an antique feel, courtesy of the five-step process used in finishing it. "It looks residential and found," says Vallone, "but inside it's very functional." It's vented in the back to safely store stone warmers and wax melters. **Source** Vallone Design.



► **DAYBED AND SUNBURST**

For an upstairs semi-enclosed relaxation loge, the designers chose a daybed over a chaise. "We didn't want it to be directional," says Vallone. Since exterior fabrics are generally limited to ho-hum solids and stripes, the duo covered the cushion in the same Perennials fabric they used throughout but rotated the stripe 90 degrees on the side to suggest mattress ticking. They also used the striped fabric as piping on the pair of blue pillows (\$200 each) and covered the third pillow (\$200) in printed linen (not weather-proof). Above the daybed is an antique iron sunburst (\$395) from Egypt. **Sources** Daybed: Sutherland ([www.sutherlandleak.com](http://www.sutherlandleak.com) or 800-717-8325). Pillows: Vallone Design. Sunburst: Relics.

**ROYAL PALMS RESUME**

SPA SNAPSHOT

Ten oversize treatment rooms on two floors of what feels like an old house. Many of the relaxation areas are outdoors, in intimate courtyards with fountains and fireplaces. Three rooms are couple's rooms, including the spacious Acqua Dolce suite. In both looks and treatments, the spa focuses on pampering rather than the spirituality and energy work that are the stock-in-trade of many Arizona spas.

SIGNATURE TREATMENT

The Orange Blossom Body Buff, whose star ingredient is neroli oil, a reference to the orange trees all around the nine-acre hotel property and an excellent hydrating agent. It's mixed with salt in this exfoliating scrub. \$125 for 60 minutes.

LOCATION

5200 East Camelback Road, Phoenix

HOTEL RATES

\$405-\$3,000

RESERVATIONS

800-672-6011

WEBSITE

[www.royalpalmsresortandspa.com](http://www.royalpalmsresortandspa.com)





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