

Desert Surroundings Provide Theme For Santo Tomas Home

By Mary Brown
Citizen Homes Editor

Anyone who claims the desert has little to offer in beauty, mystery or a career should talk to Mrs. Elizabeth Hazen whose present address is the Village of Santo Tomas near Sahuarita.

Betty who is now in the process of subdividing 640 acres of desert land has proved she's capable of doing the job single handedly practically.

What's more she's carved out five - acre sites for homes, marked streets and chiseled out roads. She can tell you a few things about the beauty of her part of the country, the desert in bloom, the sunsets casting rainbow colors on the Santa Rita mountains in the distance and the joy of building homes with your own hands.

She's built several houses in the area and envisions a central point which will have a number of shops and serve as the core for the community around. Right now her own woodworking shop is in full swing and from there come many of the handsomely carved chairs, bed headboards, chests and cabinets which keep turning up in homes around Tucson.

One home in the area was built by Betty about three years ago for her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earle Press, formerly of Evans-ton, Ill. Since her father's death, her mother still lives in the home.

Walls and partitions of the home are 45-pound adobe bricks fashioned from the top soil of the lot. As Betty explains it, in making the bricks right on the property they also did most of the leveling needed for the tri-level structure. Roof beams are pine and fir poles brought down from Arizona mountains and peeled on the site. The roof is of mission tile and the fireplace of native volcanic rock covers a 12-foot wall in the living room. A wing on the third and upper level is of redwood board and batten exterior.

While Mexican labor was utilized in building the home Betty herself pitched in with brick making and laying, putting in electric wiring, designing and installing light fixtures and plumbing, planning and building fireplaces.

Electrical fixtures in the home hold to the southwest theme of the house. They're fashioned by Mexican tin-smiths. The home is air conditioned and all refrig-

eration units are covered with louvered doors.

Closets are papered with abaca cloth from the Philippine Islands. Betty does a neat job of paper hanging along with her other talents.

Betty hasn't always lived in the desert. She quit college to marry a rodeo rider whom she later divorced but as the wife of a rodeo rider she followed the circuit back and forth across the country for 12 years. Her travels after that included Alaska, a tour through Mexico and Central and South America and finally the Hawaiian Islands. Many of the treasures in the Press home were picked up by Betty in her travels.

Shades of brown and beige are used as background colors throughout the home. Carpeting in the living room is beige. Draperies utilize tones of beige, brown and turquoise. Adobe walls are painted light tan and full log ceiling beams are used.

Native materials are adapted in novel ways—for example coffee tables are fashioned of slabs of flagstone mounted on wrought iron legs; logs split lengthwise and mounted on sawhorse legs, flat

side up, provide end tables; an antique barrel forms a base for a lamp.

Steps from the living room lead down into a small dining area and the kitchen. The red tile floor in the dining room has a patterned center in red and beige Mexican tile. Another log has been carved out to form a horizontal planter at one side. A grass cloth covered divider between the dining room and kitchen provides a desk work area in the kitchen side. Yellow is used on counter tops in the kitchen and counter backing is in blue and yellow patterned Mexican tile. The door is painted blue with designs of road runners, cacti and other desert growth outlined in blue, white and yellow.

Furniture through the home was designed and built especially for this setting, some imported and some done in Mrs. Hazen's own shop. If a desk or carved chests, headboards on beds, cabinets are used everywhere. The master bedroom has a corner fireplace with a raised hearth. One wall of closet and cabinet space is covered with louvered doors.

In the second bedroom on the second level sliding carved mahogany doors conceal the storage areas.

The guest wing on the third level provides a sweeping view of the entire valley. Treasures from abroad are evident here in

an old bell which formerly hung on the neck of a llama in Peru; an old chest from Guadaluajara; an ancient Spanish spur from Eucador. The apartment is given over to a living room at one end and a galley type kitchen at the other with a small breakfast bar jutting out from a window at the dining end.

Mrs. Hazen tells about sitting at the bar one afternoon and seeing four javelinas roaming around in the yard below. She got a gun and by the time she got back to the window there were 25. She aimed for the smallest and got it. She also hastens to add it just happened to be the season for hunting javelinas.

Caribou horns from Alaska are mounted on one wall and Mrs. Hazen points out make a "dandy hat catcher."

On another wall hangs a painting of the oldest bull ring in Spain which she bought from a Scottish artist in a little village in Spain.

A circular arched entry way to the home is topped with a cross of concrete which Betty molded and installed. A porch stretches across the front of the home with a bordering patio area, one portion of which has a small plot outlined by a miniature wall of volcanic rock. This area is green with dichondra and the ground beyond is landscaped with desert plants of all kinds.

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