

# Tucson Lifestyle

THE MAGAZINE TUCSON LIVES BY

MAY 1995 \$2.50

## Mexican Homes and Gardens

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7-25274-12360-5

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## San Carlos, Mexico—

They come to San Carlos to enjoy the enchantment of the Sea of Cortez. *They* are the deep-sea fishermen, divers and garden variety American retirees eager to bask in a magic combination of sea, sanctuary and space.

Many fall in love instantly with its splendor and build homes San Carlos style: cool, white-washed stucco, breezy terraces with views of the sea, and walls draped with bougainvillea. Thirty years ago the allure captured Royal Bouschor, former Oro Valley chief magistrate judge, and his wife Gwen, but it's only recently that they built their seaside retreat. Songs created by gentle Mexico breezes inspired them to name their haven "Windsong."

"People don't understand why we've come here until they see this. After one look they say, 'Now I know why you moved here — this is incredible,'" Bud Bouschor says as he waves a hand in the direction of one of the views that take in the paradisiacal terrace gardens that are part of every floor of Windsong.

"It's indescribable: The view changes all the time," he adds. "The colors change. In the morning the sky starts to get a little pink over the mountains in Guaymas, and you can still see all the lights down the coast. It gets redder and redder and then orange. And the sea starts to take on some color."

"Sometimes it's so turquoise," Gwen Bouschor adds, contributing her world-traveled opinion, "that it is similar to what you would see in Polynesia. We've looked all over the world and this is the most beautiful bay and coastline there is to see." And she takes her turn at waving a hand toward the waters that lie beyond white walls, tiled roofs and terraces to their other view of the bay below where boats are moored in turquoise depths.

For the Bouschors, San Carlos is an endless cycle of quiet pleasures — beaching, boating, fishing, and enjoying Mexican culture. So when they designed their house, their aim was to perpetuate a graceful sense of magic, blended with the grandeur and informal elegance of Moorish seaside architecture. The design, in fact, started with a picture. "We designed the house with a style that reflects all the things we like," says Gwen. "We wanted a comfortable home where we could display the treasures we've collected from all over the world. An architect made up the drawings from our ideas and our builder was Alberto Truijo. I showed them a picture of a Moorish house with towers. I wanted an entry with three arches — to be able to see in three directions — and that's where we started." ►

Former Tucsonans  
Gwen and Royal Bouschor  
have designed a Moorish-  
style house for sea views,  
sunshine, sea breezes and  
other pleasures in  
San Carlos, Mexico.



# SEASIDE HAVEN IN SAN CARLOS

*Terraces below the rooftop of "Windsong"  
show off the brilliant blue of the sea.*



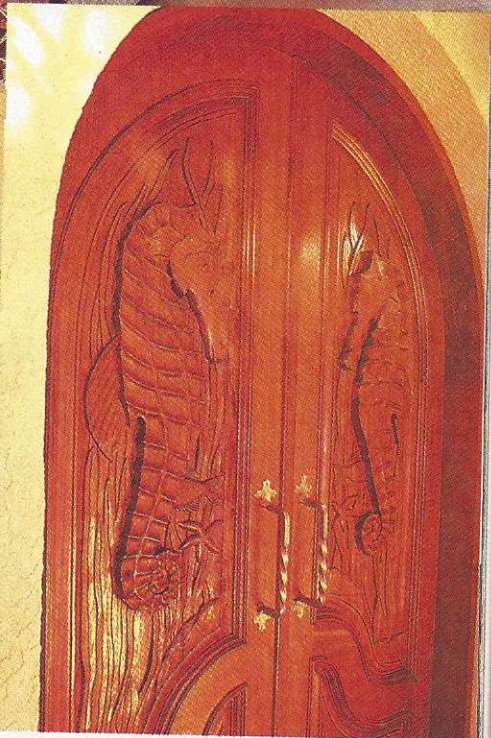
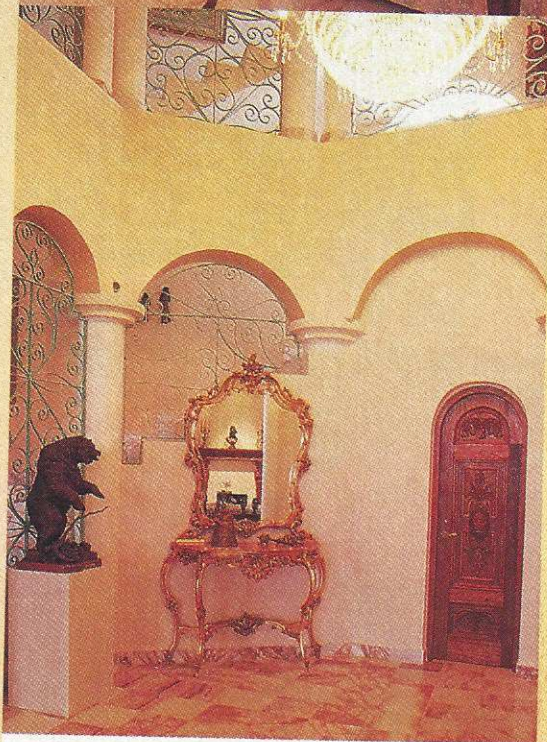


**W**indsong is four stories and virtually covers their hilltop lot. A garage is located on the bottom floor. On the next level an open floor plan encompasses a living room/dining area, huge kitchen, charming breakfast area, and terrace with a palapa bar and fountain. On the next two floors are the master bedroom and guest quarters with a garden and pavilion on the rooftop. And yes, there is an elevator.

While the interior of the house is Gwen's creation, Royal used his experience as a former contractor to tackle the construction. "I like working with my hands, and this house is kind of a monumental fix-up shop," he says. "I did a lot of the work myself, like the electrical system, the air conditioning and the intercom. I worked with many Mexican laborers who were very ingenious. All I had to do was tell them about an idea and they found a way to make it happen. We learned from each other—they loved the new project.

"I built the elevator, and it was like putting together an adult erector set. When I worked up in the shaft—forty-five feet up in the air—we had no ladder that tall, so I called a couple of the men over and said, 'See that spot up there. I want to work there this afternoon. So please fix it so I can.' Then I left and when I came back they had the darnedest contraption you ever saw that was secure and safe. They just said, 'Listo.' (It is ready.) In Mexico anything can be done, but if ever an idea wasn't a good one, they'd say, 'Perhaps it would look better this way.' They always wanted to make their work the best possible."

In the time since the house was built, the Bouschors have roamed Mexico and the rest of the world in search of anything that would suit Windsong: a griffin from a Scottish castle; bronzes and paintings from Spain and Italy; tiles from Egypt; a suit of armour from Spain; chandeliers of Austrian crystals;



**TOP:** Like the rest of the interior, the living room is a combination of styles, reflecting the Bouschors' diverse artwork and furnishings. The hand-carved fireplace surrounds are made of cedro (cedar common in Mexico).

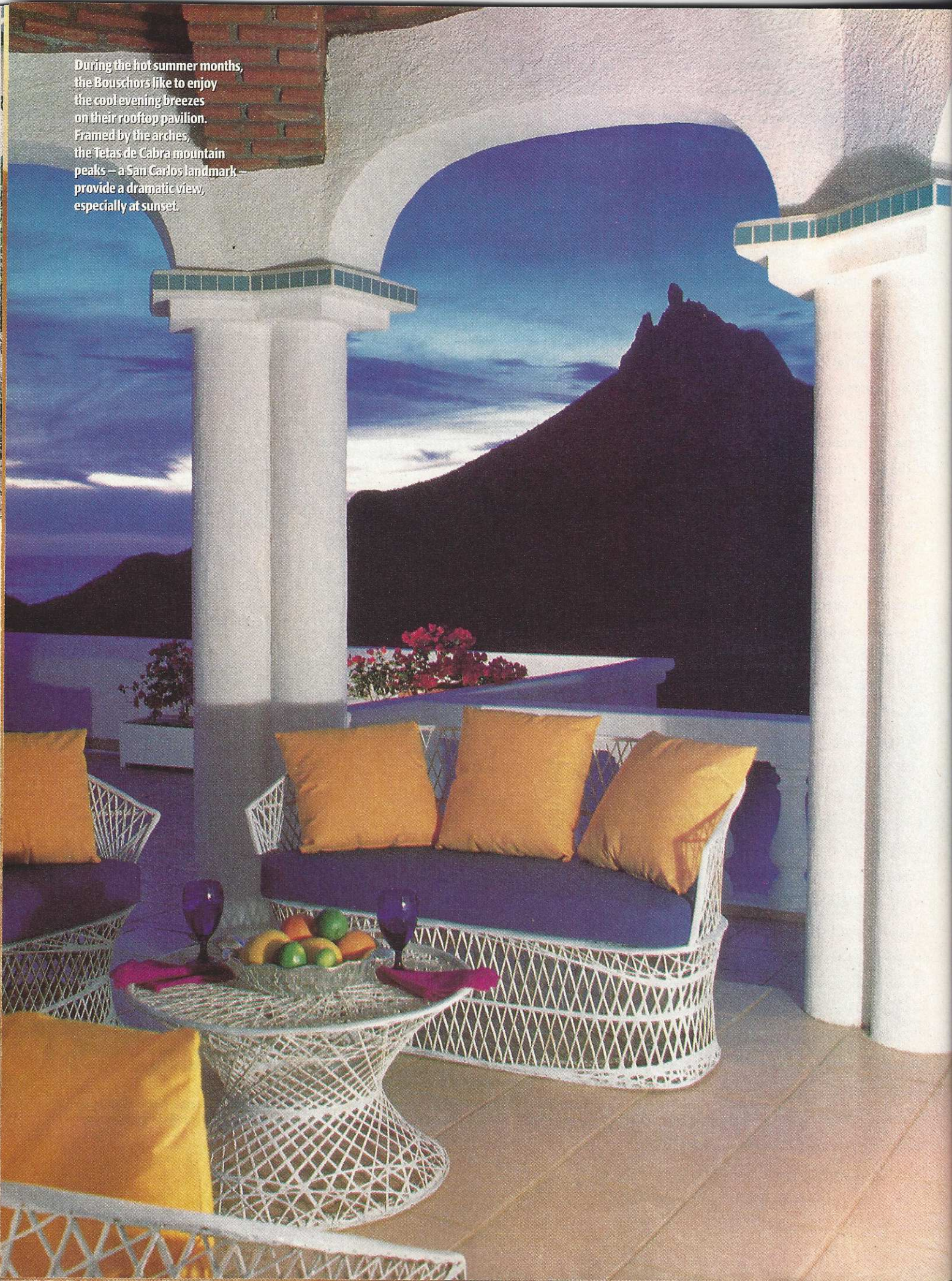
**ABOVE LEFT:** Inspired by a picture of a Moorish-style house, Gwen Bouschor designed the entryway with a high-domed brick ceiling and three arches "to be able to see in three directions."

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The "Seahorse Suite," with seahorses, fish and reeds designed to resemble an underwater scene, was hand-carved at Arimex, a local carpentry company. Each room has a different theme introduced by handcarved doors: Egyptian, medieval, mermaids and dolphins.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Cool and luminous by day, the south-facing dining room is dramatically lit at night by an Austrian-crystal chandelier. The Italian-style dining table and chairs were custom-made in Guadalajara.



During the hot summer months, the Bouschors like to enjoy the cool evening breezes on their rooftop pavilion. Framed by the arches, the Tetas de Cabra mountain peaks — a San Carlos landmark — provide a dramatic view, especially at sunset.



and furniture, crafts and light fixtures from Mexico. "I love collecting things for this house," explains Gwen. "I've always enjoyed Far Eastern influences — things from Egypt, Tibet, North Africa. And I love the Mexican crafts and art work. I love the color, and the primitiveness."

Thanks to the obvious talent Gwen has for creating settings in which each treasure finds its place, the rooms have a feeling of relaxed elegance spiced with a fanciful streak. The displays of diverse collections fill the rooms, cover walls and decorate tables. Sculptures stand on the floor, in niches, and on the fireplace. Even the doors are works of art. Crafted at Arimex, a local carpentry shop, they are embellished with sea shells, mermaids, Egyptian pharaohs and family crests.

The house and terraces are interwoven, an interior-exterior blending framed with stately windows that open the house to the majestic sky and the blue, blue water. Throughout the year, the Bouschors more or less live outdoors — on the terraces overlooking the sea or the bay, beside the fountains and on the rooftop garden. "We use the outdoors more than the indoors," says Gwen. "We are basically outdoor people and I like gardening."

It is here that they do most of their entertaining. Groups of tables and chairs are positioned to catch the sun or patches of cool shade. Giant bold-leaf plants, hibiscus and pots of petunias and geraniums are everywhere, from the rooftop to the lower terrace. Fuchsia and pink bougainvillea cascade over walls.

Not surprisingly, this project has taken the Bouschors several years, and it isn't over yet. They are continually searching for other custom-made decorative elements: a hand-carved table from Guadalajara, another fountain, or folk art bought from the locals who stop by with their wares.

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**ABOVE:** The Bouschors, who "use the outdoors more than the indoors," often entertain on the terrace to take advantage of the sea views. Gwen uses her collection of Italian and Mexican table settings when entertaining.



**LEFT:** Gwen and Royal Bouschor enjoy the balcony views from their home, which overlooks the Sea of Cortez.

**BELOW:** Local seafood — shrimp, lobster, clams, snails, scallops, octopus, fish, and crab — are served San Carlos-style surrounded by bougainvillea, and brightly colored tablecloths. The seafood platter was prepared by chef Lamberto Rivera at Del Mar Restaurant in Guaymas.

