

MANHATTAN MEETS SANTA FE

Tierra Concepts' 2022 Grand Hacienda Award-winning home blends metropolitan and local influences





By Kelly Koepke

Photography by Wendy McEahern (c)

Two things were givens for homeowners Mike and Shelley Phelan when they contemplated building a new home in Las Campanas. First, Shelley's father, architect John Harvey, would design it. Second? Tierra Concepts would build it.

The Phelans had engaged Tierra Concepts for a renovation of their previous home to bring contemporary interior features to a traditional Pueblo revival-style exterior. "It seemed natural to go back to them," Mike Phelan says. "They have quite the reputation as high-end custom builders that always deliver on their promises."

And deliver they did — a 5,220-square-foot (4,063 heated), three-bedroom, 3.5-bath house on just over 3 acres with spectacular views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the fourth fairway at Las Campanas. The contemporary home with a Santa Fe-style exterior and a three-car garage earned the Grand Hacienda Award (best in show) at the 2022 Parade of Homes.

"You know when something works and feels good. The design collaboration with John Harvey was a team approach, with all of us bouncing ideas off each other. It's amazing when you have really engaged players like the Phelans and Harvey," says Keith Gorges, the Tierra Concepts partner in charge of the project.



This was the eighth time Tierra Concepts, helmed by Gorges and brothers Eric Faust and Kurt Faust, has taken the top parade award. “It’s our drive for the highest levels of quality in design and attention to detail — we’re fanatic about making sure everything, whether you see it or not, is done well,” Gorges says about their projects consistently earning recognition from the parade.

Miles Conway, executive director of the Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association, says a culture of evolution keeps Tierra Concepts on top of the local custom building and renovations industry. “Over the years they have grown into a formidable team with a ‘secret sauce.’ They simply don’t stop. Every year the team takes it to the next level, always learning and searching for new ideas,” he says.

The home’s design, described as marrying the elegant sensibilities of a Manhattan penthouse with the earthy elements of traditional Northern New Mexico style, came from Harvey’s key question to his daughter and son-in-law: How do you live?



“We like to live in a space with three things,” says Mike Phelan. “We love each other a lot but need his and hers retreats. We also recognize that the party is always in the kitchen, so we didn’t want to compartmentalize the formal entertaining area. And lastly, we wanted to capitalize on the great outdoors of Santa Fe at all times of day.”

Harvey’s plan achieved these goals. The house has a dedicated office space for Shelley’s interior design business, while Mike uses one of the two smaller bedrooms as a retreat — that is, when the couple isn’t watching movies on the living area’s big-screen television mounted on a dramatic black marble wall that floats above a custom linear gas fireplace. Each of the three bedrooms also opens to its own covered outdoor seating area, providing views and privacy.

The black marble kitchen island echoes the living room wall. Similarly veined forest green marble continues the stone theme into the primary bedroom and the his-and-hers vanities in its en suite bathroom. Repeating the living room’s floating wall, the imported marble creates a privacy barrier separating the freestanding bathtub from the walk-in shower. Marble in lighter, earthy southwestern colors provides contrast for the two smaller bedrooms’ en suites.

By siting the house with easterly views, Harvey accomplished the Phelans’ third goal, avoiding the common dilemma of west-facing patios becoming unusable during summer. The Phelans can now invite friends and family for comfortable summer evenings under the crosshatched cedar lattice pergola. Pocket shades on east-facing windows and doors mitigate bright morning sun.

A lighted, infinity-edge water feature and firepit provide a focal point for the terrace’s seating as well. The home’s landscaping, designed by Serquis + Associates, is irrigated from a 5,100-gallon buried cistern that captures runoff rainwater.





The home flows from inside to out with oversize metal and glass multi-slide pocket doors opening onto the outdoor terrace from the rectangular living space. The open-concept home features a high-ceilinged main entertaining room that flows into a sleek, mid-century-modern kitchen with built-in double wall ovens and a breakfast nook on one side and a floating media/fireplace wall on the other. No barriers separate the spaces, completing the homeowners' goals trifecta. A separate pantry off the kitchen gives space for food and small appliance storage, with a second dishwasher and a wine cooler.

Gorges says the home, with its clean lines, built-in shelving in the bedrooms and office, steel windows, hand-troweled plaster walls, and lofty public spaces reminiscent of a New York penthouse, is heavily rooted in what he calls contextual modern. "This means that, in the language of Northern New Mexico, there are beams — in this case whitewashed Douglas fir — stone decking, and front courtyard, with exterior lines reminiscent of Pueblo design but with modern interpretation."





And though the streamlined kitchen and main bedroom's walk-in closet cabinetry exhibit mid-century-modern elements, the marble and other stone, and the grand entryway from the front courtyard, are all contemporary elements.

Conway concludes, "Tierra Concepts has done an incredible job of embracing the traditions of Santa Fe style, taking new techniques and folding them into their projects. This house was an extraordinary execution, and everyone could see why this house was recognized as best in show."

Santa Fe-based freelance writer Kelly Koepke loves to peek behind the unassuming adobe walls of New Mexico to see what treasures can be found.

The Tierra Concepts team gathers in front of the 2022 Grand Hacienda Award-winning home.



Photo: By Luis Sánchez Saturno/The New Mexican