



Jewel Box

ART, ANTIQUES AND AN EXUBERANT USE OF COLOR AND CHINOISERIE
DEFINE DESIGNER BARCLAY BUTERA'S PALM DESERT DWELLING.

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Interior Design: Barclay Butera,
Barclay Butera Interior Design

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I ve always been fascinated by the magic that lies behind those pink gates,” says interior designer Barclay Butera of Palm Desert’s Marrakesh Country Club. Indeed, the private golf community—where salmon-hued slump-block walls and a whimsical octagonal gatehouse hint at the alluring “pink city” beyond—has attracted attention and awe since its establishment in the late 1960s. The vision of golfer-turned-developer Johnny Dawson and architect John Elgin Woolf, a master of the theatrical Hollywood Regency style, this Moroccan-inspired fantasia of a compound includes 364 villas with pinky-gold exteriors that evoke a sunset’s glow. The only colony of Hollywood Regency dwellings by Woolf in the world, it features distinctive French and English Regency-inflected flourishes like mansard roofs and elongated doorways. After residing in eight different homes throughout the Coachella Valley area over the past 30 years, Butera reveled in the chance to immerse himself in the chic community’s history as a resident himself. The goal for his newest home? An imaginative interpretation befitting Woolf’s glamorous legacy.

The property, one of only a few in the community that boast a private pool, had been well cared-for by its prior owner. Butera made only slight upgrades to the kitchen, bathrooms and landscaping, turning his focus instead to bringing a dynamic infusion of creativity to the decor. And he didn’t hold back. “I’m a big color person, and I drew in a lot of striking jewel tones here. I really wanted to push color inside and have fun with it,” he shares, noting how the rich mix of interior hues plays off the black-and-white furnishings by the pool, which is backdropped by walls boasting the development’s signature pink. Butera pushed his own boundaries, too, turning up the dial on dramatic pattern mixing to a solid 11. He installed six different wallpapers within his two-bedroom home, nearly all of them featuring ornate chinoiserie patterns, from the living room’s large-scale lattice print, which

evokes bamboo, to the pagoda silhouettes adorning a hallway, to the delicate branches and birds in the guest room. The primary bedroom’s striking mural is a particular highlight: It’s an enchanting garden setting reproduced from an 18th-century Chinese hand-painted panel. Add pagoda-patterned bedding, and the room has an impactful chinoiserie-on-chinoiserie effect (employed similarly in the guest bedroom with quieter colorways). Butera upped the ante with a striped rug and goldenrod chair, among other accents. “This is the space that gets all the ‘oohs’ and ‘ahs.’ It’s spectacular,” he says.

Despite the relative modesty of Marrakesh residences (which range from one- to three-bedroom floor plans), the spaces are gracious, with high ceilings that require a deft touch to make an interior composition feel cohesive. “These units swallow furniture,” the designer quips. “In the living room, I brought in enormous ginger jars, and they don’t look overscale,” he notes; the voluminous white-and-blue vessels flank the living room’s masonry hearth. Alongside a dominant black lacquer coffee table squaring off two sofas, the jars aren’t just statements, but vehicles for balancing the airy space.

Perhaps surprisingly for a designer of Butera’s caliber, few furnishings in this home are his own custom designs. He combed high-end auction sites, tapped vintage vendors and also dug into his personal collection (Butera owns the gallery and antiquities shop Terahawk in nearby Rancho Mirage), pulling in items like a brass-edged dining table and glossy wood chairs he bought at an auction years ago. A mix of modern art and photography by Andy Warhol, Slim Aarons and the like engages with the antiques. His treasures, in a sumptuous mix of eras and styles, take on new life in this context of desert whimsy. “There are so many special and unusual pieces I’ve collected that I had the chance to style in a totally different way here, resulting in a lot of diversity and creativity under one roof,” he concludes. “And it works.” Woolf would almost certainly say the same. ■

Opposite: Intricate Thibaut chinoiserie wallcoverings line both the hallway and guest bedroom, met by the brand’s chinoiserie bedding. The rug is Missoni Home.

Previous page, left to right: Andy Warhol artwork and a botanical Corbett Lighting chandelier preside over the living area. The coffee table is Ralph Lauren Home. In the dining area, artwork by Raoul Morren hangs near 1990s Ralph Lauren Home chairs and a Mastercraft brass table. The living room’s Thibaut wallcovering is reflected in the mirror.





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Above: In a guest bathroom, the wallcovering and window shade fabric, both by Thibaut, enliven the space. A vintage photo of Christian Dior models hangs on the wall.

Opposite: A Thibaut mural and pagoda-printed bedding wash the primary bedroom in layered patterns. The rug is Missoni Home. Slim Aarons’ iconic *Poolside Gossip* hangs above the bed.



Left: Homeowner and designer Barclay Butera added striped Sunbrella fabric to frame the front entry. The exterior showcases elongated double doors, a hallmark of architect John Elgin Woolf's design.

Below: Large, cantilevered Tuuci umbrellas shade the private pool. Lion head spouts nod to neoclassical style.

Opposite: A striped two-tier California Umbrella patio umbrella outfits a terrace dining set. The cushions wear a Sunbrella fabric.

