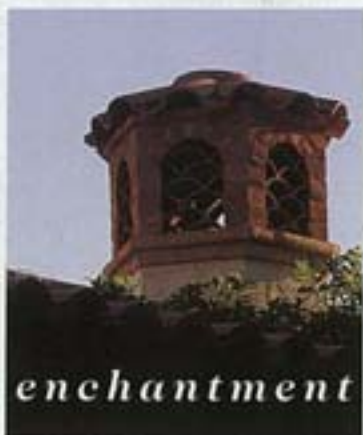


A stunning formal garden greets visitors at the entrance to Dos Puertas, a private enclave in central Phoenix.

Opposite top: This Spanish-style bell tower typifies the architecture of the neighborhood. Terra cotta tiled roofs, arched doorways and walled gardens also are prevalent.

Opposite middle: A lovely ceramic fountain teams up with bougainvillea and a wrought-iron fence, adding charm to this intimate side yard.

Opposite bottom: Pieces of outdoor art, such as this Spanish-tile mural, transform the outdoor living space of more than one outdoor courtyard.



*Verdant enclave lends enchantment*

# Dos Puertas

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDA ENGER



**F**or the most part, the four "Private Drive" signs posted on the entrance to Dos Puertas keep passersby away. On occasion, however, people have been sufficiently charmed by this quiet central Phoenix neighborhood to slip through the imposing entrance, knock on residents' doors and ask if they'd like to sell their house. To date, the answer is usually a polite "no."





*There is only one way in and one way out*

It's understandable why people are drawn to the area. Just beyond the pair of large iron gates for which the community is named, a formal garden of the sort more often seen on European estates beckons for a closer look. At its center, a pair of long, carefully clipped hedges draws the eye to the many-paned windows of what once was the main house of an 80-acre estate. Today this residence serves as the historical centerpiece of the enclave.

The current owner of the Spanish-style house, Sandra Baldwin, is in the midst of careful renovations. Since purchasing the home last March, she has gleaned bits and pieces of the area's history. "My understanding is that the guest house was the first building on the site, and that much of the land originally was used as a citrus grove," she says. "The

main residence was built from 1923 to 1925."

The original owners, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Douglas, initially used it as a winter home. They later moved to the Valley permanently and, over the years, sold off parcels of the land.

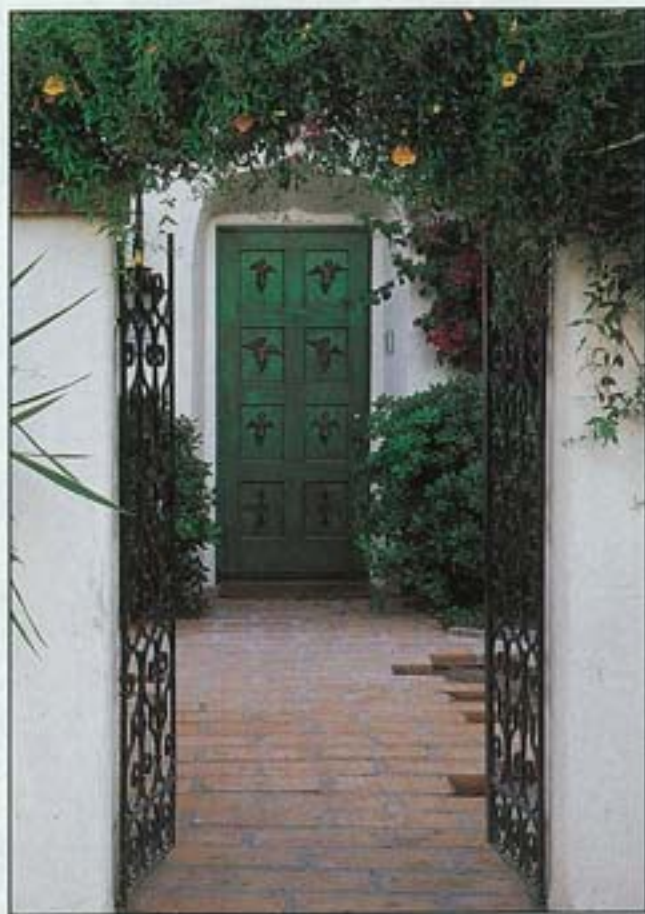
The community as it exists today got its start in 1967 when Charlotte and Bill Heuser purchased the last five acres of the estate as well as the main house. "The Heusers lived in the home while a larger residence was being built on the property," says Baldwin. "Later, they built another house on the land for a friend." Over the years, the Heusers built still more homes on the site, and a neighborhood was born.

The current residents of Dos Puertas are planning to erect a memorial for Charlotte Heuser, who lived in the neighborhood until three years ago and passed away last

Left: Lush foliage, meticulously manicured hedges and splashes of vivid color amplify Dos Puertas' nostalgic appeal.

Below: Beneath a bower of flowers, wrought-iron gates open to a brick courtyard where a paneled green door adorned with hand-carved angels beckons guests inside.

Bottom: Terra cotta and ceramic tiles are key elements found throughout this quaint neighborhood.



*out of Dos Puertas, heightening the sense of community.*





year. She is being honored for her visionary role in creating this enchanting spot where, once inside its walls, the bustling city beyond is quickly forgotten.

"Every one of these houses was built as a labor of love," says Laura Grafman, a 21-year resident of the neighborhood, along with her husband Dayton. "Charlotte was especially involved in the design of each, picking out the tiles, creating the interesting niches that make this neighborhood so special."

Flourishing landscapes, meticulously mowed lawns, tile accents, distinctive pots, iron gates, burbling fountains and hand-carved doors lend character to the charming neighborhood. While all of the houses are styled after the adobe walls and tile roof of the original house, and thereby present a cohesive setting, each residence exhibits distinct personality and displays

great pride of ownership.

A grassy common area, which includes a shady lane bordered by rows of carob trees, lies behind the main house. Nearby, well-worn brick paths lead to the community pool, an inviting spot that was part of the original estate. Situated on a loop, there is only one way in and one way out of Dos Puertas, heightening the sense of community.

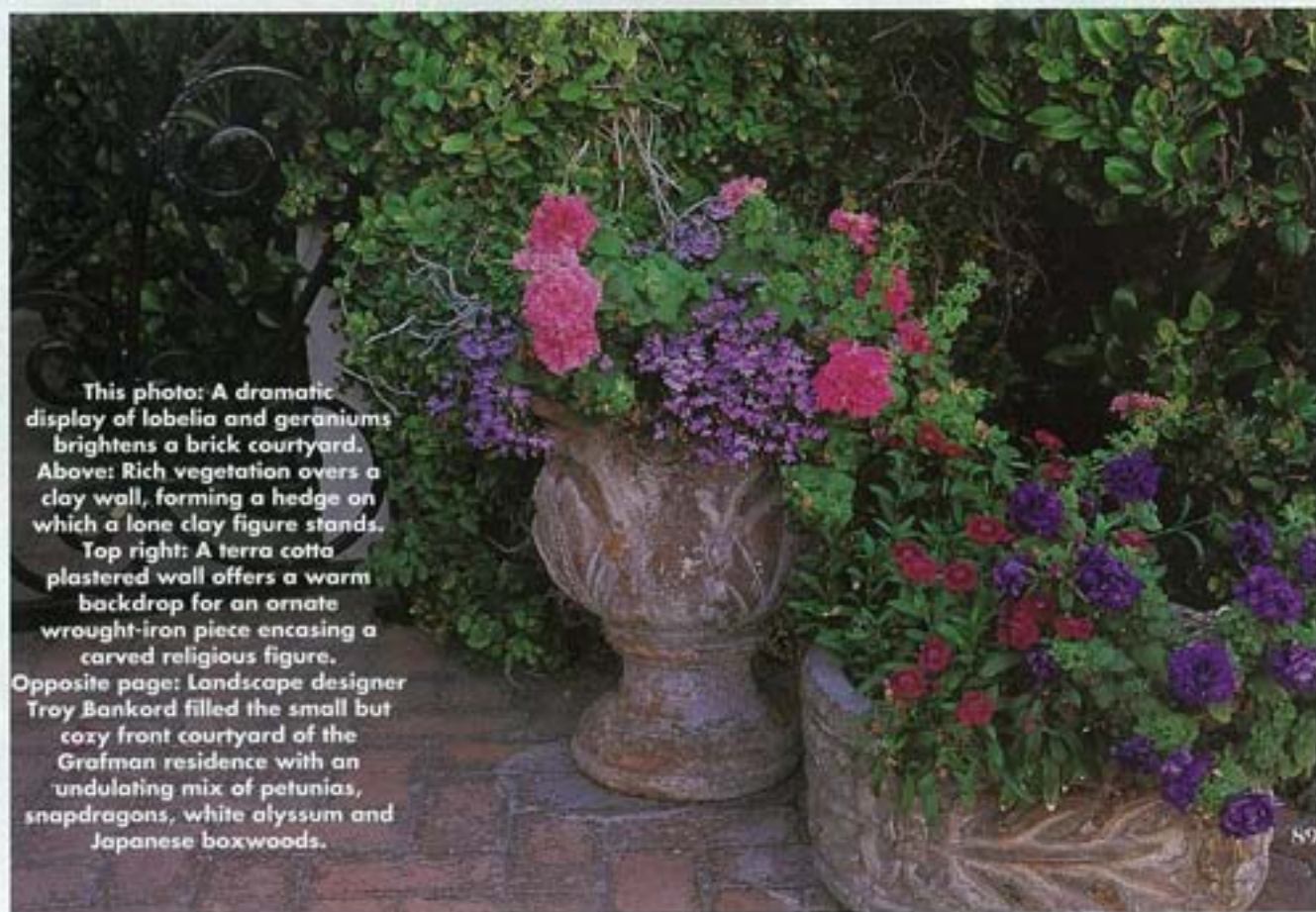
According to Baldwin, homes rarely go up for sale here. "When word gets out that one is available it usually sells before it's even put on the market," she notes.

One longtime resident, Zelda Faigen, cites many reasons for having lived in the area for 21 years. She speaks of the residents' collective desire to maintain their quiet niche, as well as the beauty and convenience of living here. "Much of the vegetation is very old," she says. "It feels like I'm living in the country, but I'm really only 10 minutes from the airport, from downtown, from Scottsdale, from anywhere."

Baldwin, too, recognizes the uniqueness of the property and one day will count herself among those who have resided there for 20-some years. "I've wanted to live in this neighborhood since I moved to Phoenix from Mesa 11 years ago," she says. "Now that I'm here, this is where I'll stay." ■



*"...the land originally was used as a citrus grove."*



**This photo:** A dramatic display of lobelias and geraniums brightens a brick courtyard.

**Above:** Rich vegetation covers a clay wall, forming a hedge on which a lone clay figure stands.

**Top right:** A terra cotta plastered wall offers a warm backdrop for an ornate wrought-iron piece encasing a carved religious figure.

**Opposite page:** Landscape designer Troy Bankord filled the small but cozy front courtyard of the Grafman residence with an undulating mix of petunias, snapdragons, white alyssum and Japanese boxwoods.