

# Taking Spanish style to new heights

BY PETER O. WHITELEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

A pioneering spirit and a sense of humor enliven Gene and Gail Zannon's new row house in Santa Barbara. Located behind a two-story office building on busy State Street, the compact 1,399-square-foot home captures the city's Spanish colonial revival spirit while leading the way in revitalizing the downtown area with new housing. The iconic

## Ironwork

The rippling, plantlike patterns of the purple iron railing meld with real foliage to celebrate natural forms.

## Zigzag brick

Tiled stair risers—often seen on houses in southern Spain—enrich the ascent by drawing the eye upward.





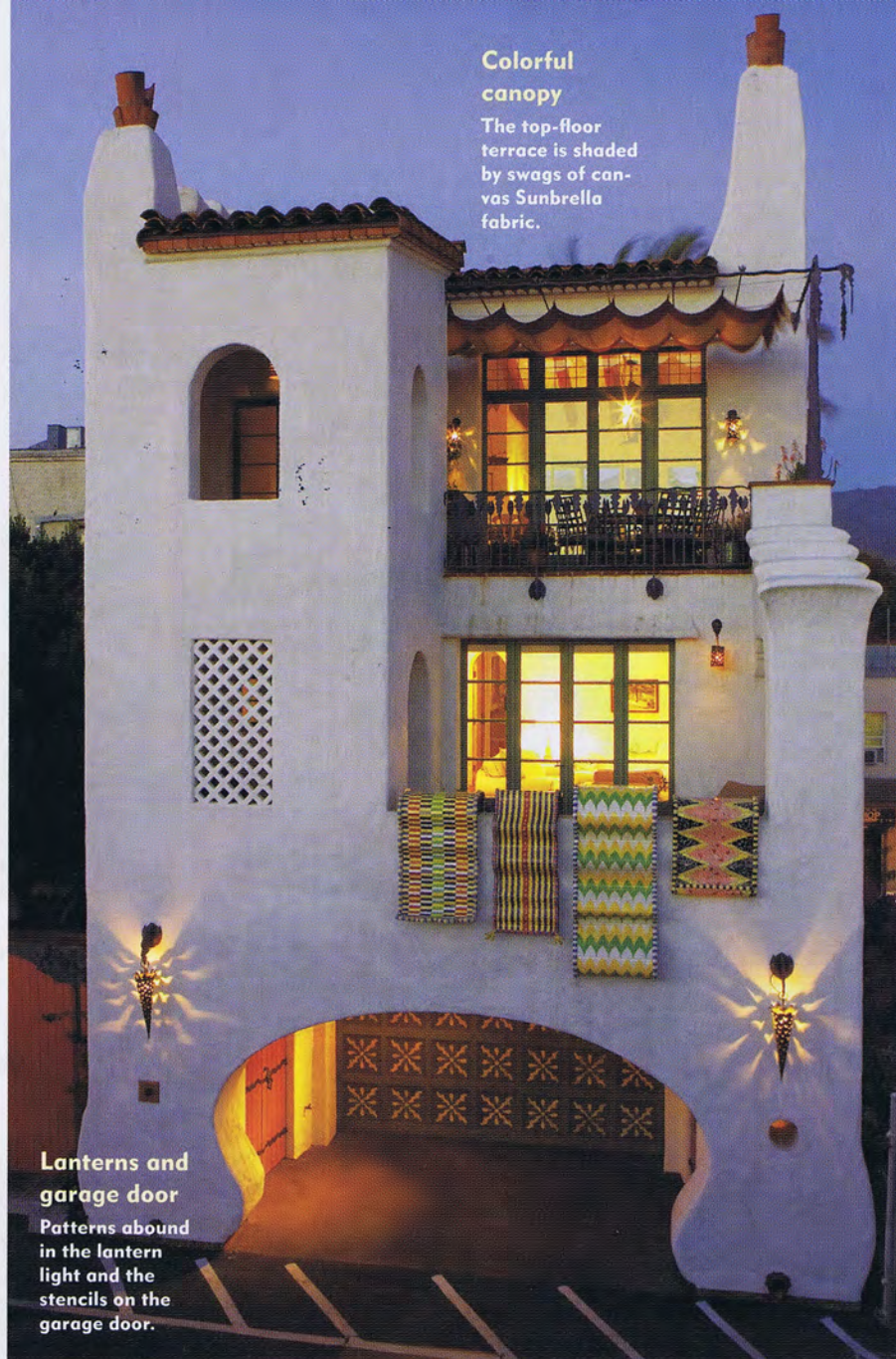
**Open-air nook**

With its vaulted ceiling and built-in banquette, the little alcove is the perfect place to sit and read.



**Tile rugs**

As if hung over the railing to dry after a washing, these whimsical mosaic-tile rugs dress up the lower balcony and the entire façade.



**Colorful canopy**

The top-floor terrace is shaded by swags of canvas Sunbrella fabric.

**Lanterns and garage door**

Patterns abound in the lantern light and the stencils on the garage door.

architectural elements that define Santa Barbara—white walls with arched openings, red-tiled patios, and tile roofs—are part of the design, but they're embellished with personalized touches that bring a smile. The ornamental details give the house its distinctive character (think Morocco or Spain with a touch of Salvador Dalí's paintings of melting clocks).

"We moved here from Montecito, where we raised our children, because we got tired of traffic and driving all over. Now everything we need is within a six-block walk, plus there's a ton of

nearby restaurants," Gail says. Acoustically, it's a long way from the quiet streets of nearby Montecito. "It's like Mardi Gras on weekends," says Gene, who likes it that the front office building buffers against noise.

The artistically adventurous Zannons found a kindred soul in local architect Jeff Shelton, who has a well-developed sense of whimsy and a passion for Spanish-Moorish architecture. Not surprisingly, the home celebrates its balmy setting with exterior spaces, seven on multiple levels, literally taking Spanish style to new heights. Four faux

**Corner fireplace**

Rising out of black stones, a gas fire warms an outdoor sitting area.



**Railing with character**

A graphic banister adds a sculptural feature to the stairway.



**Handmade lanterns**

Snipped copper cylinders look surreal by day and magical by night.

**Gutter extras**

Copper downspouts and an arch pattern painted under the eaves highlight the roof.



**Pistachio fountain**

A carved-stone nut is the centerpiece; water pours from it to the urn below.



rugs that hang like fabric (but are really made of hand-painted tile) bring a dash of humor to a second-floor balcony off the master bedroom, over the garage. The top floor opens to a balcony shaded by a red-and-yellow awning suspended on metal brackets.

Alongside these balconies are small covered sitting areas with built-in benches and an outdoor fireplace. Gray-purple iron railings and green wooden doors provide contrast to the white walls. Custom light fixtures—hand-shaped with a cutting torch—hang from exterior walls to cast intriguing shadows in daytime and

patterned lighting at night.

The Zannons grow pistachios, so with Shelton's help, they found a way to use the nut as a motif in wall fountains, railings, wall brackets, and shade-structure supports. It's truly a home with "local flavor."

**DESIGN:** Jeff Shelton Architect, Santa Barbara ([www.jeffsheltonarchitect.com](http://www.jeffsheltonarchitect.com) or 805/965-8812)

**INFO:** Ironwork and lighting by David Shelton Design, Santa Barbara ([www.davidsheltondesign.com](http://www.davidsheltondesign.com) or 805/882-9100); sculptures and pistachio fountain by Andy Johnson, Santa Barbara ([www.andersjohnsonstone.com](http://www.andersjohnsonstone.com) or 805/969-7806) \*