



The Real Thing

The Weidners give their westside home a completely custom exterior makeover

Story by SARAH WOMACK + Photography by STUDIO J

Bill and Lynn Weidner received fair warning. Leslie Parraguirre, owner of the design firm Colours, Inc., told the couple that once they began upgrading bits and pieces of the exterior of their 10,000-square-foot Queensridge North home, it could be hard to stop. A new finish here, authentic stone there and suddenly even the front door can look out of place. Thus, the project gained momentum and grew in scope until scarcely any outdoor element was left untouched.

The initial plans to replace the faux stone, concrete driveway and anything store bought, as well as to re-colorize the stucco and enrich the landscaping, turned out to be just the beginning. Bill, president and COO of Las Vegas Sands, and Lynn, a former Miss New Jersey and board member of the Miss America Organization who is deeply involved in the community, wanted a bona fide original. Nothing faux. Nothing copied. Nothing straight off the store shelves.

"The home had great bones architecturally, but Bill and Lynn wanted authentic, real materials to bring it to that estate level," says Parraguirre. And so the home was stripped of the old and the artificial in order to reveal the potential it had all along. The home was brand new when Bill and Lynn purchased it about seven years ago, but the fully finished exterior left little room for personalization at the time.

"The outside never did live up to the inside, and we finally decided to take the next step about a year ago," says Lynn. The couple reenlisted Parraguirre, who designed the interior of this and their previous home, as well as Par 3 Landscape, another longtime associate, to get the project rolling, starting at the curb with the stamped concrete drive.

Every inch was open to reinterpretation, and the driveway was no exception. Tumbled travertine pavers were hand set and sand grouted in a cobblestone fashion to lead all the way up to the grand portico, centered between two turrets rising in the background.

A bronze sculpture by Archie Held of Archie Held Studio in Richmond, Calif., welcomes you at the end of the nearly 200-foot-long drive. Trickling quietly into a rectangular pool of water, the sculpture, entitled "Trust," is one of Held's two original creations for Bill and Lynn. The surrounding landscaping, including cypress trees lined up like Romanesque columns, makes the arrival point spectacular for Bill, Lynn and their guests.

The space where the sculpture now rests was part of the original hardscape when Bill and Lynn bought the home, and Par 3 redesigned the surrounding landscaping a few years ago to better emphasize the entrance. With the recent



A favorite spot for entertaining, the poolside dining and lounging areas received an update with David Sutherland furnishings, handset travertine pavers and a custom copper fireplace by Hans Liebscher.





Opposite page: Custom drapes create a resort setting for outdoor dining. This page: Central to redefining the home, authentic finishes include a hand-forged brass balcony railing, hand-stamped copper decorative edging and dry-stacked ledgerstone.



addition of Held's work and a new stone finish on the flowerbed, the area now demands even more attention.

The flowerbeds and the home both feature the same ledgerstone, which was dry-stacked to maintain a natural look and create a surface of depth and texture. The absence of grout may seem insignificant amid all the other spectacular features, but it's yet another example of the project's no-filler design approach.

That same philosophy allowed Mark Rockwell, vice president of operations for Par 3 Landscape, to create a beautiful landscape that seems more akin to a well-established garden that has been lovingly tended for years than a young and newly planted yard. Nearly 800 flats of blooming flowers fill the bed in front of the portico alone, and seasonal updates keep the color vibrant all year long.

"We didn't want to go through a filling-in, growing-type period," says Rockwell. "We wanted to get right to the fullness to look like the landscaping has been there for a while." For the winter months, Rockwell uses flowering kale for hardy purple and white blooms, as well as a mix of yellow and blue pansies for additional color. In the springtime, brilliant pansies accent the home's point of entry in highly saturated blue, pink, red and a splash of bright white.



Left: An archway opening frames a trickling water sculpture at the home's point of arrival. **Above:** Decorative brackets and downspouts draw attention to the custom copper gutter system. **Opposite page:** A private balcony and several intimate seating areas overlook the pool.

It's a delight to the eye, and with layer upon layer of detail, all the new additions seem to send the residence backward in time. It's rare to find a home built in the past 10 years, or even the past 50, that showcases so much of the human touch. From the hand-set driveway to the copper finials on each turret, the art of handcraftsmanship is easily the home's paramount characteristic.

In particular, the centuries-old craft of coppersmithing adds stunning depth. Hans Liebscher of Custom Copper Works & Sheet Metal in San Marcos, Calif., designed beautifully detailed gutters, downspouts and brackets to accent the entire

exterior's lines. Liebscher's touch is also on the custom outdoor fireplace, chimney copula and decorative edging that highlights the roofline, front door crown, door cladding and more.

"The copper work was the most time-consuming aspect of the project," says Parraguirre. "If Hans was in the middle of creating a piece and something went wrong or didn't fit, he had to start over from scratch and reinvent that piece; it's all handmade. It all looks so beautiful on the house. It's kind of like the icing on the cake."

Parraguirre describes the home as Transitional Euro, so while there are many traditional aspects, the design style





Seasonal flowers, cypress trees and a quiet water feature create a centerpiece garden in front of the portico.

isn't as strictly defined. This opened the door for Parraguirre to create more of a resort feel in the backyard, where Bill and Lynn enjoy relaxing and entertaining while overlooking the Badlands Golf Course.

"We wanted to create exterior entertainment space because the weather is beautiful here a lot of the year, and they have frequent dinner parties," says Parraguirre. "That's what prompted us to add the fireplace. The dining area and barbecue were already there. We just enhanced it and added drapery to create intimacy and a more indoor-outdoor space."

Along with the drapes, Boston ivy and creeping fig ivy growing up the walls are a soft complement to the surrounding hardscapes. Even the stone-covered archways defining the seating areas create a fluid movement in the space. Using the same rich-hued travertine pavers as in the driveway, Bill and Lynn also opted to replace the majority of the stamped concrete from the pool decking with a warmer and less slippery surface.

"It's a completely usable exterior experience," says Parraguirre. "There's something to do in every area versus just space." This includes another seating area with a fire pit as the backyard terraces down toward the golf course, as well as a nearly 2,000-square-foot putting green, complete with a sand trap, to challenge Bill and entertain the couple's grandkids.

"I initially thought, 'What's wrong with the house?,' when Bill brought up the idea of doing all this work on the exterior," says Lynn Weidner. "But now the difference is overwhelming. It's really a matter of warmth, beauty and quality. Everything is now at a higher standard of quality."

The quality and craftsmanship has reached a level that Parraguirre rarely sees today. "Faux has become king, but this home is art," she says. "It's the difference between buying something that's cookie cutter and creating something. I've been in business since 1988, and I can count on one hand the clients who have the desire to invest in this type of home."

From every viewpoint, the home now showcases custom finishes, functional works of handcrafted art and authentic materials. Tom Strain handled the lime-washed, custom-blended paint job, which was hand-applied with painstaking care. Parraguirre estimates that the ledgerstone now covers a full quarter of the exterior. Both the stone and copper accents wrap around the structure to add texture and interest to every wall.

Gladstone Industries in Las Vegas created even more custom, hand-forged pieces for the project. Two distinct one-of-a-kind chandeliers and numerous lanterns are all softly aglow when Bill and Lynn are entertaining. The custom ironwork gate at the entrance and railings on two balconies overlooking the pool are further evidence of the home's uniqueness.

"The great thing about working with Bill and Lynn is that they are meticulous," says Parraguirre. "They weren't looking for a quick fix. Their attention to detail allowed us to be thorough and complete. They aren't ones to ever say 'good enough.'"

"Good enough" would have meant Bill and Lynn stuck to their original intentions of a partial remodel, and the craftsmen who added some of the home's most striking features may have never come on board. It's safe to say, that for Bill and Lynn, there's a certain satisfaction in knowing when to not say when. **HD**