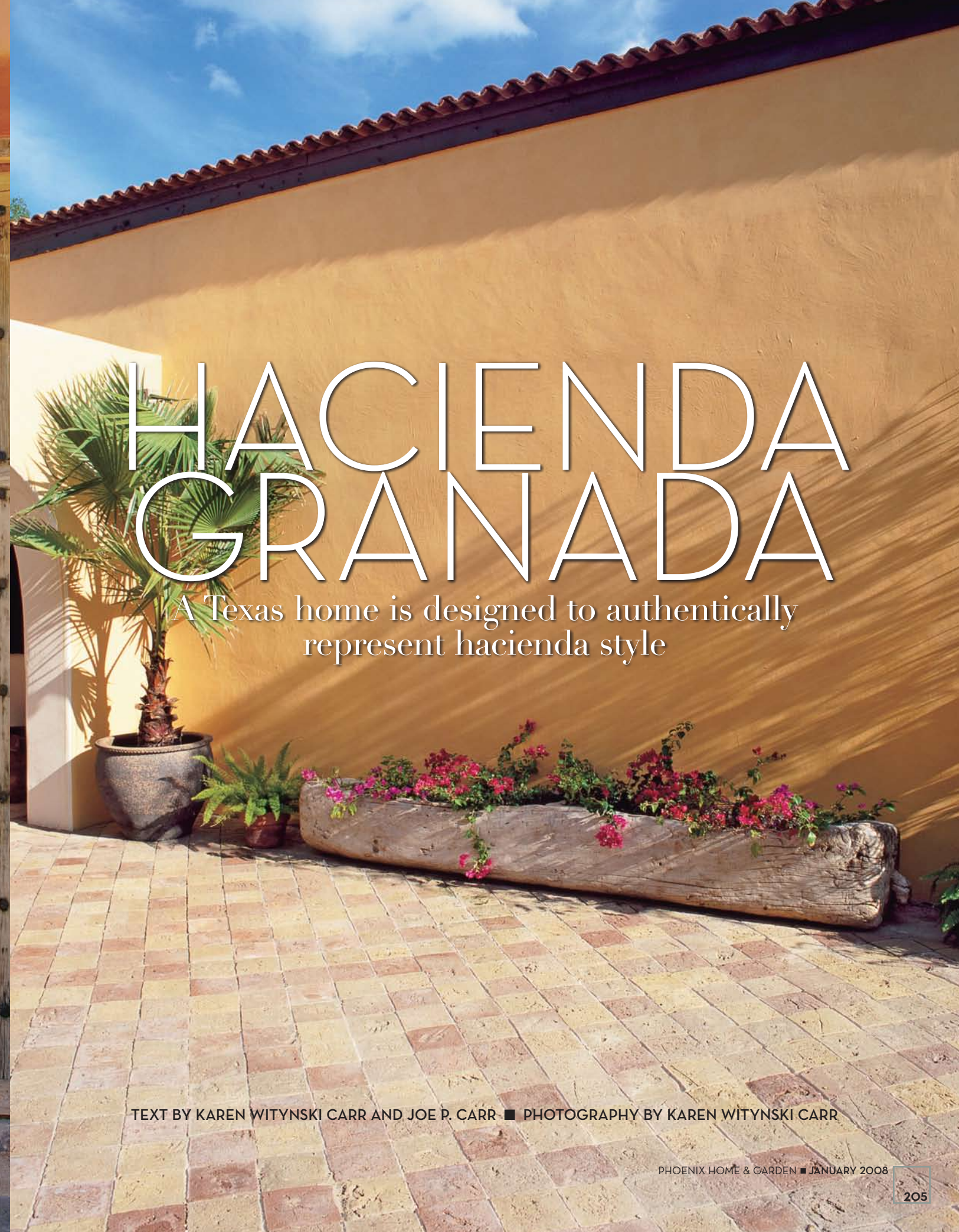


This page: A pair of vintage clavos-studded hacienda doors from Mexico opens to an arcaded courtyard at the Austin, Texas, home of Karen Witynski Carr and Joe P. Carr. **Opposite:** Set against a mustard-color courtyard wall, an old trough made of sabino wood provides an unusual vessel for growing bougainvillea plants. The piece once was used on a Mexican hacienda to feed livestock.



HACIENDA GRANADA

A Texas home is designed to authentically represent hacienda style



TEXT BY KAREN WITYNSKI CARR AND JOE P. CARR ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREN WITYNSKI CARR



Ever wonder what it would be like to design

a hacienda-style home? We asked Mexican style experts Karen Witynski Carr and Joe P. Carr for insight into what inspired them to build the hacienda of their dreams. The couple's firsthand account of the experience follows.

An ongoing desire to embrace Mexico's cultural richness has led us on a fascinating journey that has spawned eight books and numerous design projects in Mexico and the U.S., including our own hacienda-style home in the Texas hill country. Located outside of Austin, Hacienda Granada (Granada means pomegranate in Spanish and is a reoccurring motif in Spanish Colonial design symbolizing, among other things, good luck) was the natural conclusion of many years of work visiting, researching and photographing Mexico's unique colonial estates.

For decades, we've been intrigued by the handcrafted details particular to Mexican hacienda architecture: grand scale, nail-studded entrance doors, turned-spindle window guards, carved-stone pavers, columns, *canales* (rain spouts), old beams, clay roof tiles and arched *portales* punctuated with wall-embedded wooden hammock hooks.

During our hacienda pilgrimages we became most enamored with the secluded estates that were designed around gracefully arched courtyards. We knew we wanted to bring this soothing aesthetic to our own home, so we focused our plans on a defined open-air space that would allow us to feel connected to the outdoors at all times.

Equally important was design authenticity; so we sought traditional Mexican materials and antique architectural elements, including old doors that we had restored in our workshop. Our desire to create the look and feel of an old hacienda prompted us to integrate

key elements into the design, including a *zaguán* entrance (covered passageway leading to a central courtyard), *alacenas* (built-in wall cabinets), nichos and decorative old stone. The warmth of Mexico's traditional red and yellow-ocher paint colors also was key in replicating the Old World charm of our favorite 18th-century estates. The rich hues worked well with our collection of colonial furniture.

We chose to build using an insulated concrete form (ICF) system, as it produces a monolithic reinforced concrete wall that is structurally sound, energy-efficient and fire-retardant. In addition, the wall mass created by using ICF instills a feeling of solidity found in well-made adobe structures or old rubblestone haciendas. The series of arches for our arched *portal* was hand-sculpted from ICF blocks that, once in place, were filled with concrete to complete the sturdy building system.

Our courtyard has become our favorite "room" in the house, as there is an indescribable feeling of peace, tranquility and protection that one gets from being enveloped in a private yet open-air living space. We have enjoyed many courtyard experiences in Mexico; however, we never imagined how much a serene courtyard environment could enrich our daily lives. We savor the flash of tangerine butterflies or the changing afternoon shadows on the colorful walls. A staple element of any courtyard, the hammock has become our loyal friend, beckoning us to rest for a spell with every gentle breeze. ☐

Karen Witynski Carr and Joe P. Carr have co-authored eight books on Mexican design and architecture, including Hacienda Courtyards and the forthcoming Hacienda Style (Gibbs Smith, Publisher). Based in Austin, Texas, they own Joe P. Carr Design, LLC, a store specializing in Mexican architectural elements, antique furniture and decorative accents.



This page: The dining room is resplendent with vibrant color, a Mexican concrete tile floor and an *alacena* with antique doors. Wrought-iron lockplate designs reminiscent of those found on Spanish Colonial trunks form the wall sconces. The doors to the room are antiques from Mexico. **Opposite:** Named Hacienda Granada, this home incorporates numerous natural elements. The courtyard, for example, showcases handmade Mexican clay bricks, stone rain spouts and clay roof tiles.

An 18th-century *arcón* (trunk) from Ecuador anchors the hacienda's *sala* (living room). Mr. Puppy, the family dog, keeps a watchful eye on a collection of Mexican dance masks and antique painted crosses. To the left of the trunk is a piece from an old ranch fence; to the right is a part from a *trapiche*, a device used to press juice from sugar cane.





Clockwise from bottom left: A poured-concrete countertop in the master bathroom supports a pair of red travertine sinks whose design was inspired by Mexican stone feeding troughs. Onyx sconces illuminate the arched freestanding wall. ■ Turned spindles detail these antique Mexican doors, which separate the dining room and *cocina* (kitchen). The wall is painted Delta Clay, a red hue from Pittsburgh® Paints. ■ This wall in the library/office displays an *alacena* with raised-panel doors. Inside, a collection of design books shares space with Oaxacan baskets. An old wooden Mexican *copete* (crest) above the *alacena* accents the space. **Opposite:** A poured-concrete countertop and semi-circular-shape island decorated with traditional hand-painted Mexican glazed tiles distinguish the *cocina*. A painted tin *retablo* and antique Guatemalan ceramics enhance the south-of-the-border flavor.



Above: Mexican Colonial antiques blend with old ceramics and comfortable furnishings in the *sala*. A Rodolfo Morales pastel hangs above the simple fireplace. **Left:** An *alacena* in the dining room opens to reveal a collection of antique Mexican and Guatemalan ceramics. Sconces made from lockplates highlight the colorful wall. **Opposite:** Antique Talavera tiles line the *nicho* behind the *cocina* sink.

See Sources.

“Our desire to create the look and feel of an old hacienda prompted us to integrate key elements into the design”

