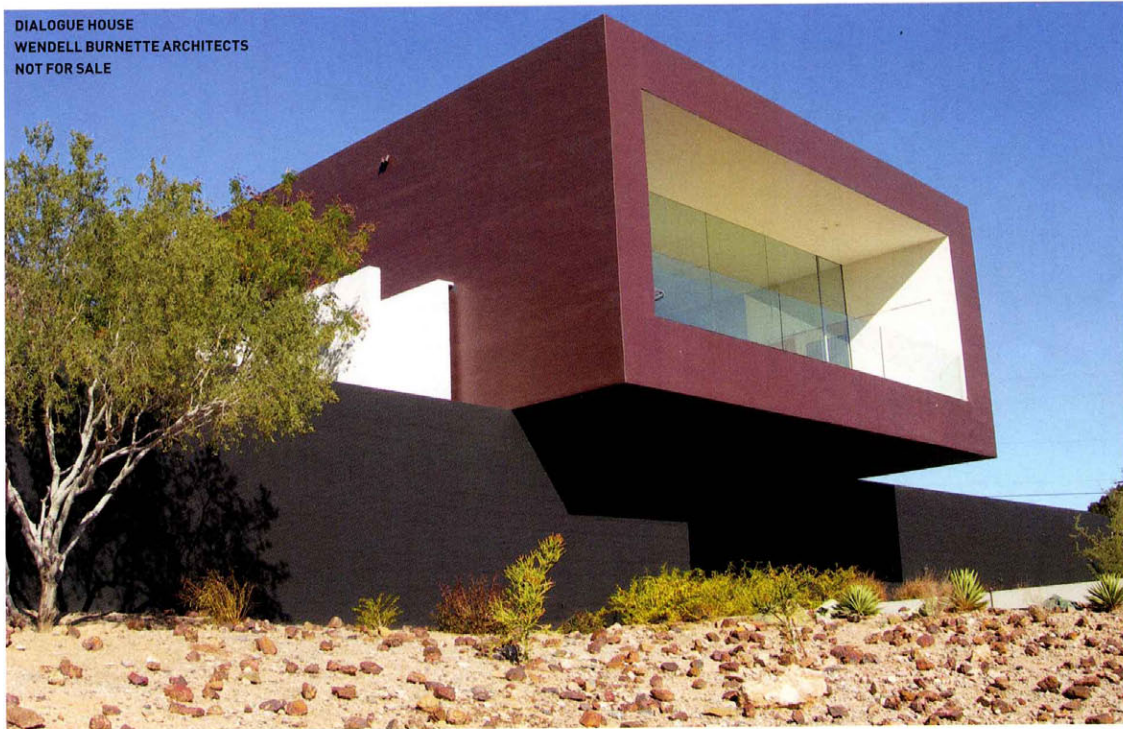


# jarson & jarson

## ARCHITECTURALLY UNIQUE HOMES FOR THE "CREATIVE CLASS"

BY LAUREL MAY

The real estate firm of Jarson & Jarson handles only those homes deemed "architecturally unique." On the frontlines of preserving important properties both historic and modern, Scott Jarson weighs in on the demand for these special abodes, the importance of protecting them and some local architects to watch.



**944: What is your background and how did you come to specialize in "architecturally unique" homes?**

SCOTT JARSON: Debbie (Jarson) and I both have art and design backgrounds. I have a fine arts degree from ASU and Debbie studied fashion in New York. I grew up here and have always been interested in architecture and design, living in close proximity to Paolo Soleri and the not-too-distant Taliesin West. Debbie and I became licensed in real estate in the mid-'80s. By 1990, we were feeling bad about the type of homes we had to represent, challenged by having to educate buyers that just weren't interested. It was Debbie's bold idea to specialize. One day, I told her I just could not go on. I remember the

conversation: "If I have to sell one more tile-roofed tract home, I'm going to get another career," I said. She replied, "Well then let's do what we love. Let's just specialize in unique architecture, historic and modern." We followed our passions and we love what we do.

**Is the demand for this type of home increasing in the Valley? If so, why?**

Our clients have always been loyal and consistent, but we have seen our demand increase. On a basic level, buyers are demanding better. On a higher level, I think that this is reflective of the return to Arizona of what [urban studies theorist] Richard Florida calls the



"creative class." It's a very good sign for our Valley's future. We think that younger buyers have discovered our architectural heritage and want a piece of it, and overall, design sensitivity is increasing. It goes beyond a stylistic trend. It has a lot to do with wanting to contribute to something lasting and worthwhile. Buying and living in a home that is better designed makes your whole life experience here change for the better, not to mention they are typically more efficient and appropriate [for] the desert in which we live.

**Most people are familiar with the local legacies of Al Beadle and Ralph Haver ... any other names we should know? Any up-and-coming architects that are building homes in town now that you think will be specifically sought out in the future?**

We are so blessed with talent in this town, it's amazing. We have a very rich architectural legacy here, much of which is often forgotten or ignored, or there is an assumption that it's unobtainable. Anything by Bennie Gonzales is a rarity. Of course, we have Will Bruder and Partners, Jones Studios, Wendell Brunette. The homes and projects like The Vale by Will Bruder [are] future architectural icons, just wait and see. I don't think people understand just how rare it is to have projects like these get built; it's akin to what Beadle did with Three Fountains and Boardwalk.

DC RANCH HOME  
CONSTRUCTION ZONE  
NOT FOR SALE  
PHOTO BY BILL TIMMERMAN



**Phoenix isn't exactly known for its preservation policies, are there any historic neighborhoods/homes you feel are in immediate jeopardy? Which ones?**

Actually, the perception that Phoenix is not preservation oriented is wrong in my opinion. Phoenix has done a very admirable job in recent history protecting, promoting, sponsoring and preserving many residential areas that would have been lost long ago. That doesn't mean they have always done this. Especially endangered are the architect-designed buildings often recognized as mid-century modern. There's not enough conversation about these buildings and we have lost too many and will lose many more before it's all done. Not every one of these should be saved, but they must be recognized as landmarks. They represent a particular place, time and ethic; they are a fundamental part of our regional history. The Arcadia area is rapidly losing its signature. It is much endangered and I see no solution. These definitive ranch houses are such a part of the Valley's history that we will really regret transforming [Arcadia] into some sort of Bel-Air. One area that is not everyone's first thought but is very threatened is the Town of Paradise Valley. It's an old area building-wise and its history was not always that of super-high-dollar homes. A Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian house ... got swallowed whole by a new home ... in our opinion, every mid-century modern and architect-designed home on an acre lot that was built before 1990 and is less than 3,000 square feet is endangered there. About that Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian house ... we had the pleasure of selling it before it got away. The person who bought it was viewing the house and we were sharing its history with her. The buyer said to us halfway through our little talk, "You know, I've heard about this Frank Lloyd Wright, but I really don't know much about him. Wasn't he famous?" We were floored. "Honestly, I just really love the light in this house, that's why I want it," she said. She bought it and for exactly the perfect reasons. Not because the house of the architect was famous, but because it was good and it felt very special to her. It heightened her experience to live there. We often think back on this, it's exactly why we go to work each day.

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