

# AIA Architecture Week Home Tour 2010

AIA Phoenix Metro  
architecture month  
april 2010

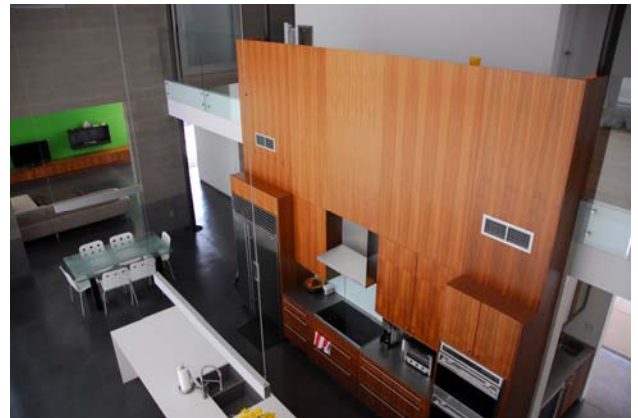
## [5] Essence of the Desert House

10010 East Jenan Drive in Scottsdale - 85260

The southwestern desert makes vivid impressions in the mind. One that strongly remains are the boulders and the shadows in the wilderness. During one of my hiking trips near Pinnacle Peak, I noticed that these boulders create micro climates around themselves and life thrives in the shadows. They act as heat sinks and as thermal masses. The Native Americans were aware of this phenomenon, often building homes in the shadows of such boulders. I am inspired by such observations that help me create meaningful architecture, rooted in the Sonoran desert.



While designing this home, the image of such boulders flooded my mind. I took one such boulder in my mind's hand and pressed it and it became a wall. This wall was 12' to 22' high and 118' long, casting desirable shadow on the east where the family could thrive. As soon as I put this wall on the west side of the site the sun said, "You are turning your back towards me" and further added that, "the thought even crossed your mind to do so, is because of my very own existence". I felt compelled to respond to this and notched the wall on top which brought the sky into the composition. Along with the sky, came the sun, in such a way that, on their anniversary on May 3<sup>rd</sup> it set in this notch celebrating the day with the entire universe. Osho, a spiritual leader, once said, "You can hold the sky in your fist, provided the fist is open." Poetically the notch became the open fist that holds the setting sun.



Design: Amit Upadhye, Associate AIA  
Contractor: First Choice  
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