





by Jessica Salopek photographs by Jesse Ramirez

fter various moves in her life took her from 2,000 square feet of living space to just 570 square feet, and then down to 450 square feet, attorney Joni Autrey became a self-proclaimed minimalist. "I found that I very much enjoyed simplifying and living with that only-keep-what-you-love mindset," she says.

After stints in Nashville and Oklahoma, she returned to her home state (she originally hails from Ruidoso) to be closer to her two sisters in Las Cruces. She settled into an apartment until, on a sudden whim, she welcomed Shih Tzu Stella into her life. "Apartment living got old real fast after that," she remembers.

A realtor friend began showing her condos and small houses, but nothing caught her attention, until she was introduced to Arista Development, new Las Cruces homebuilders who proved to be kindred spirits. Arista specializes in farmhouse and rustic-industrial residences, two styles that stray considerably from the Southwest and Mediterranean builds so common in Southern New Mexico.



Autrey says she was drawn to the materials and textures in Arista's model home, as well as the company's commitment to super-efficient layouts. "We've down-scaled the modern home and created open floor plans that ensure every bit of square footage is usable," explains Mike Fraembs, director of build operations, who co-founded Arista with his lifelong friend, architect Matt Adams. "By doing away with long hallways and formal areas that never get used, we've been able to offer superior finishes to every income level." Both Fraembs and Adams spent several years working on luxury and large-scale builds in Scottsdale, Arizona, before returning to their hometown and venturing out on their own with the goal of introducing something completely new to the local marketplace.

"I'm not a big decorator, but the house has so much character that I didn't need to add a whole lot of my own things. It's one of the reasons I was so drawn to Arista's design style."—Joni Autrey

Arista built the first of two model homes in the up-and-coming Metro Verde neighborhood in 2015, and the response was overwhelming. "We have a lot of people stopping in simply because the façade is so different," says real estate agent Crystal Martinez-Fraembs, who oversees Arista's customer relations.

While their model homes offer a whole lot of inspiration, Fraembs says they pride themselves on straddling the line between custom and production building. He and Adams work closely with clients to customize each floorplan. Autrey, who admits to loving a good soak in the bathtub, changed up the guest bathroom finishes and pushed out a section of the master bath to separate the shower and create her ideal relaxation den. Other Arista clients have added on mudrooms and extra bedrooms, incorporated additional storage, and redesigned finishes to meet their individual needs and style.

Autrey's home is about 1,500 square feet—"Way more space than I actually need, but the two extra bedrooms are nice for guests," she admits—and packed with Arista's signature rustic-industrial style elements. Reclaimed plank walls, a sliding barn-style door on the master closet, and wood-look tiles in the bathroom fulfill the rustic half of the equation; concrete





floors and countertops, exposed ductwork, and black galvanized piping comprise the industrial. The around the light fixtures." energy efficiency and abundant natural light found in Autrey's home are other hallmarks of Arista's contemporary-minded designs.

"I love the mixture of wood and metal; that's just my style," Autrey says. "What really attracted me to Arista are all the little details: the exposed

wood shelving in the kitchen, the crossbeams on the skylight, the roping

One of Autrey's favorite elements—and one of Arista's most recognizable design features—is a glass overhead door (think garage-style) that opens up with the push of a button, extending the living space out onto a back patio with mountain views.

When it came time to furnish the home, Autrey took cues from the interior design work Arista has already done. The company purchases





Below: Style and function: Edison-style pendant lights echo the home's industrial design and add a glow to the relaxing master bath. Open shelving gives the feeling of more





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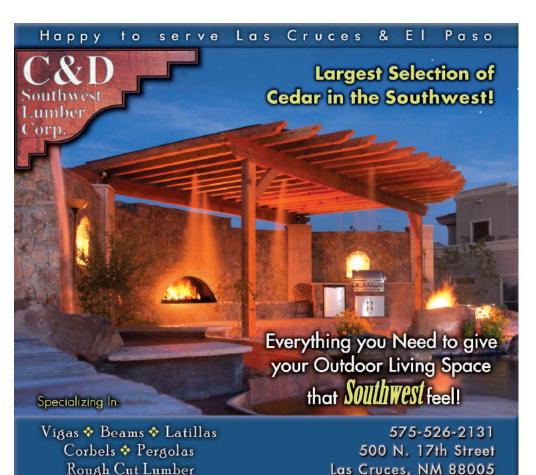








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their furniture West Elm in El Paso, and Autrey followed suit with a reclaimed wood dining table with bench seating and an industrial headboard in the master. She threw down several large rugs to keep it cozy and, in keeping with her minimalist mindset, decorated with the few items she owns that have sentimental meaning, like artwork done by her college roommate and her high school art teacher.

"I'm not a big decorator, but the house has so much character that I didn't need to add a whole lot of my own things. It's one of the reasons I was so drawn to their design style," Autrey notes. "I did worry for a moment that the industrial aspect might be cold or hard to make homey, but it really hasn't been. It's warm and has a very comfortable vibe to me, and all the natural light keeps it open and airy."

Perched in a corner lot, Autrey's home's outdoor spaces have proven to be ideal in getting to know her neighbors. She recently added a small fire pit to the yard, which she enjoys while observing the hustle and bustle of the growing, family-friendly neighborhood.

Since moving in last October, Autrey has found the open concept living/ kitchen area that flows into the outdoor space ideal for guests, but points out that it's the unexpected design features that catch visitors' eyes. She notes, "I have started entertaining a little bit, mostly because it's such a fun house and I just love to show it off."

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