

UPTOWN

SAVOR THE SUMMER

Refreshing poolside pours

Superfood-filled delights

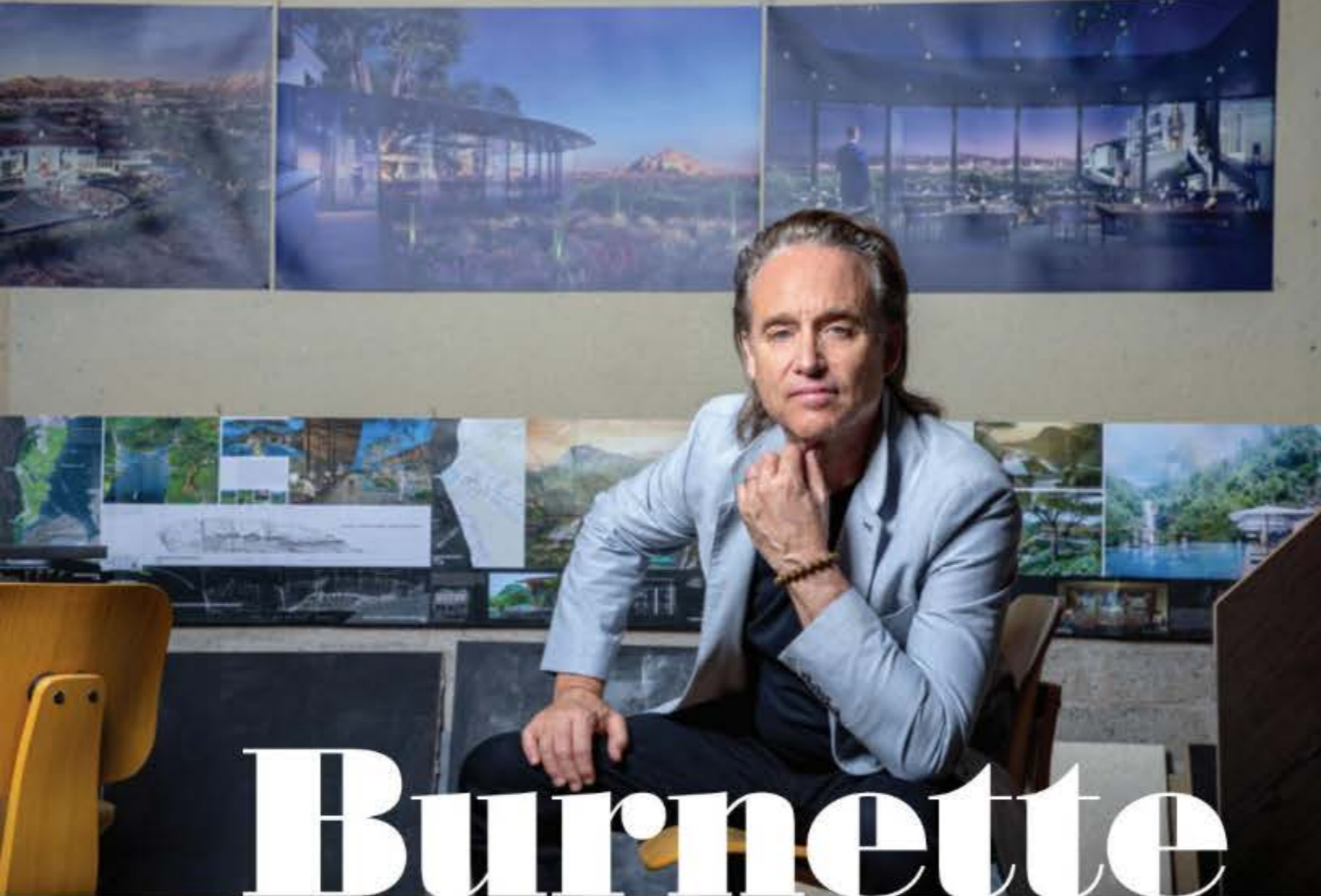
Backyard bash essentials

WENDELL BURNETTE

The world-renowned architect talks design philosophy, community connection and some of his most popular projects

+
HASH
KITCHEN
OPENS IN
ARCADIA

Wendell



The internationally recognized architect finds inspiration in the natural surroundings for his innovative designs

BY MANDY HOLMES / PHOTOS BY CLAUDIA JOHNSTONE

Wendell Burnette's journey with architecture began at age 13 when he would visit his local library to read books about the topic. Since then, his love for the craft has taken him to some of the most picturesque destinations around the world.

"I'm always searching for the next project and the opportunity to craft the next experience, the next moment, the next memory that is in some way resonant across time," he explains.

A Resume of Note

The Tennessee native attributes his global success to hard work and passion – not a college degree. Self-taught and known for his eye-catching structures, Burnette has called Phoenix home for 39 years. During his time as an apprentice at Frank Lloyd Wright's School of Architecture at Taliesin West, Burnette solidified his love for the desert while living in a 8-by-8 shepherders canvas tent, drawing inspiration from the landscape that surrounded him.

The architect, who has projects throughout the world that resonate with their natural surroundings, works in a studio located on Central Avenue that he designed to reflect the community he lives and works in. Burnette's uptown workspace is an impressive adaptive reuse of a 1950's uptown furniture store, with walls that are lined with blueprints, awards, glossy photos of completed projects, and more than 200 publications that feature the artist's work. The building also houses For The People and Kream Coffee.

After being a student himself once upon a time – Burnette completed an 11-year association with the studio of Will Bruder culminating in a six-year design collaboration on the Phoenix Central Library – he then shifted from student to teacher as a Professor of Practice at The Design School at Arizona State University. He continues to lecture internationally and hosts community events at his studio for the public to collaborate and learn about the future of Valley architecture, often joined by guest speakers.

In 2009, he received the Academy Award in Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City, which recognizes an American architect whose work is characterized by a strong personal direction. This award was accompanied by an exhibition at the Academy in



the same year. Most recently, his first full-length monograph titled *Dialogues in Space* was released.

Engaging Creations

The prominent architect strives to create spaces that engage people and his eye for detail infuses every corner of his designs. His projects include adaptive reuse spaces, historic remodels, residential remodels, public work, and luxury resorts.

"[My design philosophy is] grounded in listening and distilling the essence of a project to create highly specific architecture that is at once functional and poetic," Burnette says.

Some of his notable Arizona-based projects include St. Francis restaurant, SOI 4 Bangkok Eatery, the Palo Verde Library and Maryvale Community Center.

"The urban design approach of the Maryvale Community Center first brokered key parking variances to preserve the large ball field and other recreational amenities, insuring Maryvale Park would remain the 'green heart' of this 54-year-old community," he explains.

In the middle of the southern Utah desert lies Burnette's "dream project" – Amangiri, which he designed in collaboration with fellow established architects, Marwan Al-Sayed and Rick Joy. The luxury resort is a celebrity destination for guests including Brad Pitt and Kanye West thanks to its remote location, remarkable landscape and dramatic design set in the midst of awe-inspiring cliffs and dramatic rock formations. The idea evolved from many late night conversations between Burnette and his colleagues at the site and resulted in a property

where the guest rooms provide a solitary experience centered around a piazza, in this case a giant rock formation smack dab in the middle of the swimming pool. Burnette incorporated local sand, aggregates, and fly ash to create the bold yet responsive resort that both honors and celebrates the magic and mystery of the area.

"The big idea is that Amangiri is conceived as a ruin that is akin to the landscape," he says. "It's always been about doing work that is resonant about people, program, and place."

Currently, Burnette is designing the new Christopher's at the Wrigley Mansion for chef Christopher Gross. The faceted glass garden pavilion will feature 30 seats, each with a stunning view of the Valley.

"Elegant dark finishes will allow the food, who you are with, the Wrigley Mansion and its panoramic view to be the stars," he explains.

Soon Burnette will travel to Sardinia to develop a large parcel of land complete with a river and estuary into a sustainable farm, restaurant, and upscale accommodations while restoring a 300-year-old villa on site, which will serve as the DNA for the project.

For Burnette, one of the biggest rewards is knowing his designs will contribute to people's lives in a positive way.

"From a personal residence to a luxury resort, we always look at local traditions and culture," he says. "We slow down and look at what exists in the area and do work that makes sense so you feel the connection to the space."

For more information about Burnette, visit www.wendellburnettearchitects.com.