

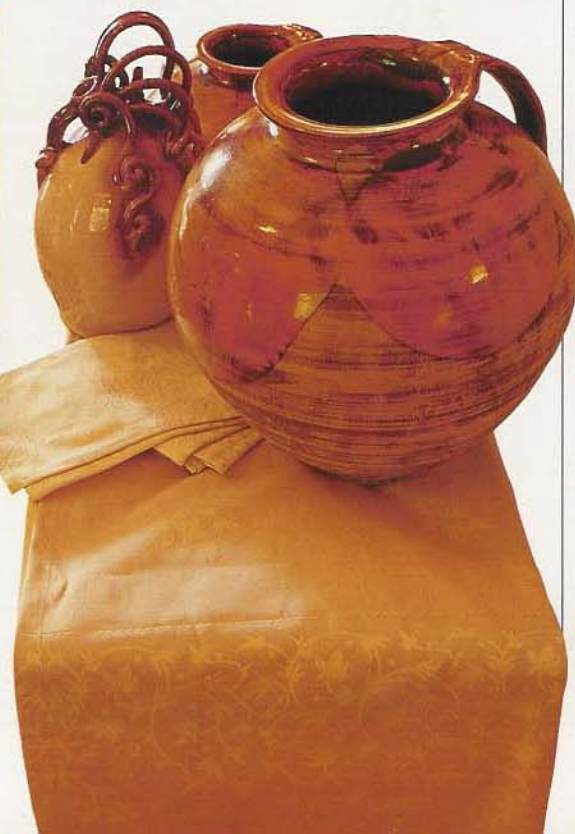


European Union

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA



Above: A reproduction hand-painted wall-hanging from Italy and an imported candlestick lamp **Right:** This grouping of artisanal ceramics is displayed with French table linens.



Business name: Via Mediterranée
Owners: Sophie and Patrick Christian
Opened: July 2006
Location: 7001 E. First Ave., Scottsdale
Hours: Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; or by appointment
Phone: (480) 990-7263
Web site: viamed-az.com

History: Sophie Christian, a native of France, and her husband, Patrick, have long been interested in the cultures and wares of southwest Europe. The couple has traveled throughout the area, and found that "on every trip back to Europe we'd return with our suitcases stuffed with objects for our house," recalls Patrick. During a recent visit, they stopped in a French ceramics shop run by a family who has artisanal contacts throughout the western Mediterranean region and Morocco. The Christians were inspired by the opportunities this merchandising network afforded them and opened Via Mediterranée, an imports boutique, last summer.

Philosophy: The husband-and-wife team was intrigued by the colors and textures of decor found in such places as Italy, Spain and France, and how the look can be incorporated in Southwest homes. "We wanted to familiarize people with the styles on Europe's southern shores," explains Sophie.

What's in store: Located in a remodeled 1940s house in Old Town Scottsdale, the shop is filled with room vignettes presenting a range of furniture, ceramics and accessories that are updated frequently to display new merchandise the couple finds on their travels. Among the options are a reproduction of an antique Italian buffet, wrought-iron Spanish wall-hangings, floral-themed paintings by a French artist, and handcrafted zellige tables from Morocco. A colorful collection of draperies in taffeta, cotton and organza is available in an array of designs. The store also carries an exclusive line of artisan indoor/outdoor urns and pots from France and Italian-made statues and fountains that could make fine additions to a Tuscan-style garden. —SR