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Home renovations earn BOWA Builders dual COTYs

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For all the importance some attach to the size and opulence of a home, excellence in remodeling is often about subtlety. Typically, it is the finely detailed execution seamlessly blended with the original home that professionals single-out for praise.

Case in point, a Great Falls home that recently won McLean's BOWA Builders two top prizes an FFL Monument Award (formerly the "Finest for Family Living") from Northern Virginia Builder Industry Association and the Washington-area chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry's coveted "Contractor of the Year" Award.

In all particulars, the project is an exemplar of effective "strategic" remodeling. By reconfiguring the floor-plan, replacing builder-grade finishes, adding custom built-ins and increasing

natural light throughout, the home's living areas were transformed into well-appointed spaces that suit the family's lifestyle and enhance the unique ambiance of an elegant farmhouse. Throughout, comparatively small focused alterations are made to converge as dramatic changes to the overall function and look of the residence. The result is a showcase of careful architectural elaboration, innovative space planning and finely crafted interior detailing.

Some key components to the winning renovation include:

A separate family entrance on the front elevation. Directing traffic is critical to the successful functioning of any happy home, so when owners sought to create a family entrance that would save wear-and-tear on the front foyer, the immediate question was how to do it in a way that would not seem ad hoc. The solution: convert a poorly designed laundry



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and powder room vestibule into a new entranceway that better serves the family's on-the-go lifestyle.

Entered via a new Dutch-style door discretely tucked into the front elevation, the reconfigured space provides direct access to the garage, a redesigned powder room, the family room and the amenities of the new family foyer. The new "mudroom" features the convenience of a free-standing porcelain sink and floor-to-ceiling custom built-in cabinetry (with private storage for each family member) as well as

the beauty of a Brazilian slate floor.

Where the original layout conspired to keep rooms separate, BOWA's plan substantially opens up the rear of the house while skillfully employing "zoning" techniques that preserve the privacy of selected spaces.

A 14' x 9.5' "morning room" added to the rear elevation significantly increases available light, improves visual linkage to the pool and rear landscaping, and creates a winning indoor/outdoor continuum conducive to easy interaction.

Moreover, with its broad rear-facing window wall, two sets of double French doors and skylights, the "morning room" is an ideal spot to retire with a book after breakfast. A sweeping view of the pool and backyard facilitates sight lines to children at play.

The kitchen makeover sharply improves many cooking and cleaning functions within a graciously redesigned interior that evokes an elegant country ambiance. Contrasting black and

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white distressed cabinets, commercial-grade appliances, a teak butcher-block island and colorful hand-painted tiles are among the

many custom details transform the original bland room into a vibrant showpiece. Careful attention was paid to every detail so as to create a space that works for the family, accommodates cook-

ing and storage needs and facilitates family interaction.

A monotone floor-to-ceiling brick back wall and fireplace that made the old family room seem cramped and dated was replaced with a natural stone fireplace flanked by custom built-ins accommodating hidden television and dual-accessed firewood storage. Small, casement windows placed high on the wall on either side of the fireplace are additional craftsman-style accents that provide added light. The wall, which originally separated the space from the kitchen, gave way to low built-in bookshelves, decorative columns and an arched entryway. The new approach successfully opens the room to the adjoining kitchen and frames the inviting, stylishly appointed home entertainment area.

Better rationalizing the master bedroom suite (while relocating the displaced laundry) was among tasks driving a thoughtful reworking of the second level. Oddly, in the original

floor plan one could reach the master bedroom suite only by trudging through a front-facing sitting room that had once served as a nursery.

The BOWA make-over calls for converting one of the MBR walk-in closets into a barrel-vault entry gallery centrally positioned on the second-floor landing. The arch motif employed here is used in several other entrances throughout the house.

Closing off one door of the former sitting room and converting the space to a laundry room added step-saving convenience. MBR closets and several doors were relocated to improve traffic flow and optimize furniture placement.

Replacing a single-window front elevation dormer with a triple-window augmented available light and interior sight lines while carving out a cozy seating area. The renovated master bathroom is fitted with a custom mosaic-tiled shower, pedestal tub and private water closet.

A two-level detached garage was designed and built to provide a third car bay and added storage space. Among other features, the garage was built as a structural concrete slab over an unfinished basement, which provided considerable storage below and disguised a steep drop-off in the sloped backyard. A breezeway, trellis and landscaping modifications reinforce the architectural unity of house, garage and grounds.

Throughout the interior, many finishing touches—including wood panel wainscoting, doors with oil-rubbed bronze hardware and crystal knobs, faux finishes and textured glass—artfully build an ambiance replete with period touches appropriate to the architecture of the original home.

Founded in 1987, BOWA Builders was recently ranked the "Largest Whole-House Remodeler in the Country," by Qualified Remodeler magazine.

For more information, call 703/734-9050