

Renovations can create a true dream house

BY JOHN BYRD
Home Front News for Homes

For all the importance some attach to the size and opulence of a home, excellence in remodeling is often about subtlety.

As a rule, it is the finely detailed execution seamlessly blended with the original home that professionals single out for praise.



COVER STORY

Case in point, a Great Falls home that recently won McLean-based BOWA Builders two coveted prizes—an FFL Monument Award, formerly the Finest for Family Living Award, from Northern Virginia Builder Industry Association and a coveted Contractor of the Year award from the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.

The project is an example of effective, strategic remodeling. By reconfiguring the floor plan, replacing builder-grade finishes, adding custom built-ins and increasing natural light throughout, the 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—all in all, a dream house without moving.

There are many key components to the winning renovation.

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

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Photos by Home Front News
A GATHERING SPACE: Above, arches lead into this bright yellow room with a stone fireplace.

GOURMET SPACE: Right, stainless steel appliances and a dramatic hood are perfect in this new kitchen.

THE MUDROOM: Left, lots of built-in cabinets and a porcelain sink make this area a favorite spot of homeowners and busy parents.



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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 mud-room features the convenience of a free-standing porcelain sink and floor-to-ceiling custom built-in cabinetry (with private storage for each family member) and the beauty of a Brazilian slate floor.

Reconfiguration to a suite of family rooms at the rear of the house. 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-foot-by-9.5-foot 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.



SITTING PRETTY: A formal dining room opens into this sun-filled space.

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



BLUE AND WHITE: The blue breakfast area and the white cabinets in the kitchen create a warm setting.

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so as to create a space that works for the family, accommodates cooking and storage needs and facilitates family interaction.

Family room makeover. 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.

Master bedroom suite reconfiguration. Better planning of 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



OUTDOOR PLEASURE: The renovated white farmhouse has beautiful grounds.

nursery.

The BOWA makeover calls for converting one of the master bedroom 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. Master bedroom 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.

Detached garage, landscape changes reinforcing architectural unity. 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.