

A tale of two vibrant kitchens

A French country design and a grand farmhouse have dramatic culinary designs

BY JOHN BYRD
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Two very different kitchens—both the featured “heart” of custom homes—won BOWA Builders Inc. a pair of “Finest for Family Living” awards.

As one might expect from a designer/builder noted for mastery of varied architectural languages, each kitchen is a highly original reflection of very different owner requirements. Still, the crisp articulation, skilled craftsmanship and clever space plan tucked into a warmly inviting ambiance remain identifiable characteristics of the Northern Virginia company’s work.



Farmhouse kitchen

Proving that simplicity and understatement are often the most refined aspect of luxury, a spacious local kitchen presents not only an appealing subtle blend of textures, colors and natural light, but a clever step-saving floor plan in an otherwise sprawling home.

The house itself was meant to recall a handsome American farmhouse—albeit a large one of some 12,000 square feet. To keep the architectural concept viable, BOWA went some lengths

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A CHATEAU: French country dictates the mood of this marvelous kitchen with a cooktop hearth.

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to “scale down” the structure’s mass by subdividing it into four smaller “living areas,” with the kitchen/breakfast room being a featured domain.

Occupying the entire first floor of a hyphen that links the home’s “main block” to a separate wing, the kitchen figures integrally in a series of traffic patterns. While remaining appreciably open space, the room also seamlessly supports the home’s multiple specialty uses without conflict.

For instance, a door that exits directly from the kitchen to the tin roof covered front porch invites one to partake in the old-fashioned pleasures of sitting and rocking.

Still, lest one get too rusticated, the kitchen is also designed to give servers discrete, dedicated access to the formal dining room. And in an altogether different vein, the food preparation zones are just steps from the spacious family room, or a sizable pantry and other conveniences.

Most days, though, the sunny, well-apportioned breakfast area to the rear of the room accommodates gathering needs. Here one sups amidst pastoral splendors—gazing out over the endless pool, grazing horses and the adjoining pasture.



DETAILS, DETAILS: A granite cooking island and a country farm table team up to make this kitchen a combination of farm house and strong design with touches of yesteryear.

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BOWA went some lengths to “scale down” the structure’s mass by subdividing it into four smaller “living areas,” with the kitchen/breakfast room being a featured domain.

A FARMHOUSE DELIGHT: The house itself was meant to recall a handsome American farmhouse—albeit a large one of some 12,000 square feet. Its custom kitchen has warmth, class, character and upgrades galore with a porch that has a tin roof opening off of it.



FORMALITY: The formal dining room is adjacent to the country-style kitchen.

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French flair

In an altogether different mode, the kitchen in a recently completed residence reflects the French chateau style that eventually evolved into the home’s architectural vocabulary.

Originally, the owners were looking for a floor plan that covered a whole range of personal requirements—though the exact architectural style was an open question. As the plans began to take shape, however, the arrangement and required interaction of the spaces seemed to support a French style manor house—complete with stair tower on the front elevation.

True to the prevailing idiomatic constraints, BOWA borrows details from a classic French country kitchen—building a warmly nostalgic interior that masks the thoughtful floor plan and high-tech functionality.

A cooktop hearth with crown molding, a sconce-supported mantle and embossed panels obscure the requisite vents but—more importantly—gives visual definition to the one side of the



COZY: A warm stone fireplace greets those who gather in the family room area off the kitchen.

large room without windows.

Likewise, a butlery linking the kitchen to the formal dining room is both functional and aesthetically sympathetic to finished work details in the two rooms it enjoins.

Across an open gallery abutting the kitchen, a great room beckons with its stone fireplace and panoramic views.

Regardless of architectural style, the secret to any winning floor plan is directing owners to the next phase of their day.