

COUNTRY CLUB LIVING—AT HOME

A million-dollar, whole-house renovation creates the perfect environment for entertaining



*By Barbara Karth
Photography by Jim Tetro*



Reasons for remodeling and adding on to a home are as varied as the people who live in them. For this Maryland couple with high school- and college-age children, it was all about family. Their young adults swoop in with friends in tow, all welcomed by Mom and Dad.

This family resides in a well-established community

with abundant amenities. Theirs is a family home in the long-term sense, one full of precious memories. Over the years, they've made harmonious additions

Architecture: Thomas French, Thomas French Architect, McLean, Virginia

Builder: BOWA Builders, Inc., McLean, Virginia

Interior Design: Lavinia Lemon, Washington, DC

Kitchen Design: Jerry Weed, Kitchen and Bath Studios, Chevy Chase, Maryland



onto their traditional house. While the additions provided extra space that was appreciated, the home still lacked suitable flow from one space to the next. More important, access to the spacious backyard was unwieldy at best. Essentially, it was a great family house that just didn't work as well as it could. Improving flow was the prime motivation for this whole-house renovation by BOWA Builders.

The homeowners' goals were achieved, and now they live in an award-winning home, one that won a

Despite several additions, the house had little connection to its expansive backyard (opposite, inset). Now that the renovation is complete, stone-faced staircases (opposite) curve downward from the upper decks to the lower terraces, the swimming pool and spa. Outdoor "rooms" on several levels (above) make it possible for everyone to enjoy the out-of-doors.

2004 Monument Award for Customized Residential Remodeling and a Contractor of the Year Award for BOWA Builders in the category of whole-house renovation over one million dollars. Working with archi-



tect Thomas French, BOWA established easy and elegant access to the backyard and pool, improved flow through the main level with a connecting sunroom, installed a fabulous kitchen and, as a bonus, developed the lower level to accommodate a workout room, a casual entertaining area and bar equipped with a wine cellar and humidor, adding approximately 750 square feet of interior living space.

French introduced a neo-classical layout for the staircases and terraces in this traditional, colonial-style home, providing an elegant transition from the interior to the exterior. High-grade, stone-faced staircases curve downward from the upper decks to the lower terraces, the swimming pool and spa. Outdoor "rooms" on several levels make it possible for everyone to enjoy the out-of-doors.

Inside, the cheerful breakfast room, which occupies a bay, is used all day long. The room can be screened off from the new sunroom by pocket doors of one-way, mirrored-glass, an idea brought to the table by interior designer Lavinia Lemon after spying a similar feature on a trip to New York. When the doors are closed it is impossible to see into the breakfast area from the new sunroom, affording privacy in the kitchen area.

Jerry Weed of Kitchen and Bath Studios worked with BOWA to create a kitchen spacious enough to accommodate large gatherings. It faces the sun-filled rear of the home. Family and guests can gather around the table or sit at the peninsula, which houses the primary sink and the dishwasher. To maximize storage, the nearby china cabinet extends to the counter.

An island creates another gathering place. In this kitchen, there is room for family and friends to be together, but it is designed to keep the work zones functioning without interference. Of course, this space is amply equipped with an abundance of appliances, among them, a large range on one side of the island with a full refrigerator and a full freezer on the opposite side.

Oriented toward the front of the house is a smaller "prep kitchen," really a multi-purpose room for an additional refrigerator, a cabinet lined with Pacific cloth for silver, a gift wrap counter and all-around, all-purpose storage. It's the room that people seldom have but often wish they did.

BOWA's Steve Kirstein describes the sunroom as "a transverse hall that is usable," facilitating flow with two comfortable seating groups and a table handy for



entertaining. Motorized shades that disappear into the ceiling tame the strong sun. Skylights with custom stained-glass inserts are also equipped with motorized shades to minimize the intensity of the sun in summer when closed or to maximize light on gray days.

Drawing on the proximity to the landscape, Lemon chose light and airy furnishings in the sunroom. A loveseat and two chairs upholstered in a floral fabric are placed at one end, with four rattan chairs at the other. In another nod to the outdoors, garden gates hang on the walls.

As the upper level of the home came to fruition, the possibilities for a "fabulous" lower level became quite apparent, says Kirstein. "They really wanted to create a fun place for their children," says French. "They wanted to create a club house to some extent, for the kids to bring their friends and hang out."

The inviting family room is a contrast to the sunny upper-level sunroom and breakfast room. With a row of windows and French doors, it is light-filled in the day, but retains cozy warmth with a fireplace of fieldstone. A walnut-beamed ceiling lends the room a rustic touch. Lemon provided comfortable seating for everyone to gather around the television—or the

The new kitchen (opposite) occupies the sun-filled rear of the home. Family and guests can gather around the table or sit at the island. In the new sunroom (above), interior designer Lavinia Lemon chose light and airy furnishings. A loveseat and two chairs upholstered in a floral fabric are placed at one end, with four rattan chairs at the other.

fireplace on the opposite wall. Two facing sofas are upholstered in soft, deep blue chenille, a contrast to the leather chairs flanking the fireplace. Two club chairs are upholstered in a blue woven fabric. Furnishings are large, in scale with the room for a warm, yet uncluttered ambiance.

A wine cellar and humidor are adjacent to the bar. Kirstein emphasized that all the cabinetry was stained in place to "guarantee a seamless installation." A door behind the bar leads to another kitchen with easy access to the terrace and pool. The second door is an optional entry to the well-equipped exercise room. A hidden bonus feature that hopefully won't have to be used often is a gas-fired back-up generating system. Now the family is unaffected by storms and electrical outages.

This home fits the personality of the family who inhabits it, notes Kirstein. It is subtle and private, unassuming from the street; but from the back it is





"spectacular." It's a project about family. The wife was involved in all the decisions. When faced with a question, he reports, she drew from her perception of what the family would enjoy, what would make the kids want to be there. Now the home is the epicenter of family life. As time passes, it will continue to draw everyone back, keeping the ties made in their growing years strong and enduring. ♦

Contributing editor Barbara Karth resides in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Photographer Jim Tetro is based in Vienna, Virginia.

A lower-level "clubhouse" includes a rustic family room (opposite, top). Two facing sofas are upholstered in soft, deep blue chenille, a contrast to the leather chairs. A wine cellar and humidator are adjacent to the bar (opposite, bottom). All the cabinetry was stained in place to guarantee seamless installation. A door behind the bar leads to another kitchen with easy access to the terrace and pool (above).