

Romantic master suite heads out to sea

Makeover includes an eagle's nest with a view of Washington Monument

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Though he lives in Arlington and works as an attorney, the owner of this 1920s Dutch Colonial has the sea in his blood. He and his wife have spent weeks exploring the Caribbean in their 50-foot cabin cruiser; the Chesapeake Bay is like their backyard.

So an eagle's nest atop the house had long been a dream of his — inspired by the view of the Washington Monument from his rooftop. When he and his wife decided to renovate their house, he casually mentioned his idea to the contractor, **BOWA Builders of McLean**, a full-service design and construction firm that specializes in delivering distinguished makeovers to homeowners with vision.

"My response was: Yes, I can see that," says Rich Cassagnol, a BOWA principal. "The project was already exceptional ... an eagle's nest would be the crowning touch."

Exceptional, indeed. The couple

wanted a three-story addition wrapped around two sides of the house, which meant deconstructing an earlier addition. Architecturally, the home's original Dutch Colonial antecedents would find more distinct expression in the Craftsman style, which provides an appropriate framework for the fine detailing throughout.

The main level would feature a new family room, breakfast room and sun-room — all accessible from the newly expanded chef's kitchen. The lower level would feature the gym, a mahogany and stone wine cellar, and an adjacent sitting room.

Altogether, some 2,000 square feet of new space would be added to the house. But once work began on the master bedroom suite, there was little doubt where the creative focus of the project would be.

The eagle's nest sits above the master bedroom and adjoining owner's spa. With its built-in coffee system, under-counter beverage center, and hot tub/Jacuzzi for five, the generously proportioned spa is a splendid facility. Open the French doors and enjoy the view from the second-level balcony.

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Photo Courtesy/John Byrd

In the master suite, the original design called for an L-shaped stairway leading to the eagle's nest. As construction progressed, it became obvious that this plan was not ideal as it ate up a significant amount of space. The solution was a custom-built ship's ladder, which blended well with the room's theme and had a minimal footprint. The flooring in the loft and sleeping area is select-grade white oak.

The master bedroom features a

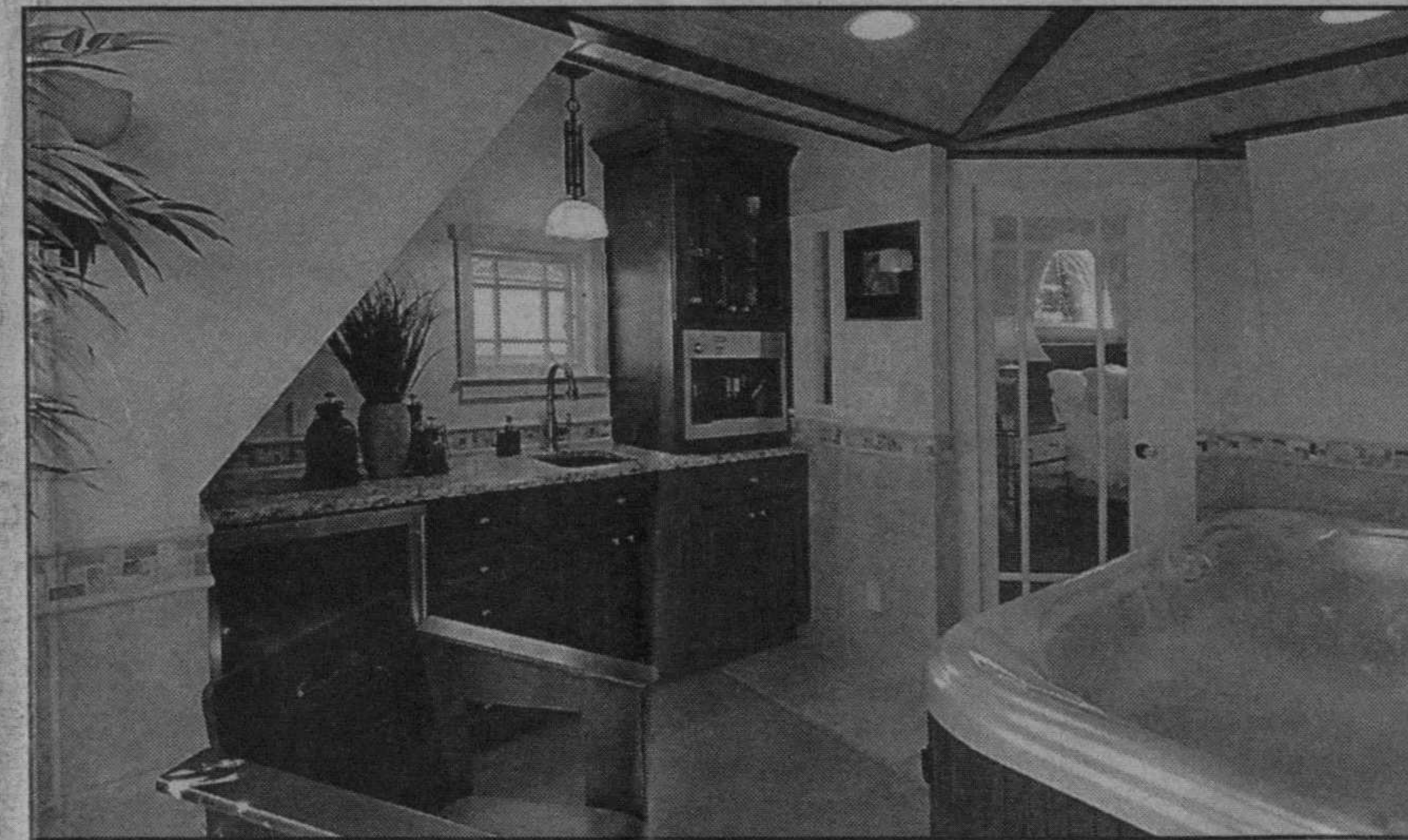
gas-log fireplace with a herringbone brick interior. In the middle of the bedroom is a beautiful sleigh bed; at the foot is a mysterious wooden trunk. A hallway to the right leads to a changing area and master bath, with its large soaking tub and a tiled steam shower. And to the left is a ship's ladder, which leads from the "captain's quarters" to the eagle's nest.

Cassagnol suggested the ladder as a way to save space. The original plans had called for an L-shaped staircase leading up to the eagle's nest, but the ladder seemed perfect. He quickly had one specially made by a boat builder in Jessup, Md.

"From that point, the nautical motif for the loft just took on a life of its own," he says. "We just went with it."

Climb up through the opening of the eagle's nest, and you quickly understand what he means. There's an old diver's helmet on a stand to the left; a globe sits on a table in the center. The room is octagonal, painted white, with a window at every turn. The owner calls it his "map room," a place to plan his boat trips. Step out on the balcony and take in the view. You can almost smell the salt air.

The project recently won BOWA Builders two top honors: a Monument Award sponsored jointly by Northern Virginia Building Industry Association and Maryland National Building Industry Association, and a "Contractor of the Year" Grand Award for "Best Addition Over \$500,000" from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. For more information, call 703-734-9050.



Photos Courtesy/John Byrd

A hallway to the right of the fireplace in the master bedroom leads to the changing area and master bath, which features a steam shower and soaking tub.