



L O U D O U N  
**INDEPENDENT**

# Northern Virginia Kitchen Makeover Tops 10 State Home Remodeling Competition



## French Country Interior Wins Regional COTY for Michael Nash

Transforming a circa-1970's kitchen into a French country style interior recently won Michael Nash Kitchens and Baths of Fairfax a Region Two "Contractor of the Year" (COTY) Grand Award from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI).

*Continued inside*



**NAMED "BEST KITCHEN IN THE \$30,000.00 TO \$60,000.00" BUDGET CATEGORY, THE DESIGN SOLUTION WAS SELECTED FROM ENTRIES IN 10 SOUTHERN STATES RANGING FROM MARYLAND TO FLORIDA AND AS FAR WEST AS TENNESSEE. EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE PROJECT TOOK TOP HONORS FROM NARI'S 500-MEMBER METRO WASHINGTON, DC CHAPTER.**

**N**amed "best kitchen in the \$30,000.00 to \$60,000.00" budget category, the design solution was selected from entries in 10 southern states ranging from Maryland to Florida and as far west as Tennessee. Earlier this year, the project took top honors from NARI's 500-member metro Washington, DC chapter.

The comprehensive makeover is in the home of Jeffery and Meg Levine of Springfield, who have occupied their center hall Colonial since the early nineties.

On learning that her kitchen was judged the best of its class in such a wide geographic area, Meg Levine noted that she was "not that surprised."

"This contractor accomplished a lot with our budget," she observed. "The new space feels enormously expanded in every direction, yet we only borrowed a few feet from inside the house. It's magical."

The original 143 square foot kitchen with family dining area presented a host of practical problems, Levine recalls, most notably—it was too dark, all the appliances were in too small an area, limited storage space, poor circulation. "It's funny," Levine reflects. "This was considered a modern kitchen . . . yet I couldn't open the doors to the dishwasher and the stove at the same time."

Adds Sonny Nazemian, chairman and CEO of Michael Nash Kitchens:

"The original plan used space dividers—like the L-shaped countertop—to segment activity zones. Twenty years ago, people wanted lots of rooms—even small ones; now they want generous space, storage and comfort."

So what exactly did the Michael Nash team do to transform a dysfunctional kitchen into an award-winner. Consider?

The existing kitchen's L-shaped counter—intended to give the cook privacy—actually made limited space even more cramped. The HVAC system—concealed in overhead casing—restricted cabinet height and reduced storage capacity. The Michael Nash solution—replacing the L-counter with a stand-alone island—creates flexible work triangles, yet directs thru- traffic away from the cook. The island also doubles as a two-seat lunch counter.

#### **But what about the HVAC?**

To gain inches, the dining room door was shifted to the left. Eighteen inches by eight feet was borrowed from an adjacent, seldom-used living room, then shelled-in to create a niche for the refrigerator, and a new a wet bar. Heating

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— Meg Levine, owner



**REPLACING THE ORIGINAL L-SHAPED COUNTER WITH A STAND-ALONE ISLAND CREATED FLEXIBLE WORK TRIANGLES, YET DIRECTS THRU-TRAFFIC AWAY FROM THE COOK.**



and cooling ducts were re-routed behind the new walls. The door-shift creates a vertical surface for taller cabinets to the right of the stove. More storage everywhere.

A small family room at the kitchen’s opposite end features a pleasant brick back wall and hearth. Owing to its narrow door, however, the room is visually cut off from the rest of the house. The Levines sought cleaner “sightlines,” which called for enlarging the door. The plan: an archway—five feet in width—which can be closed off

by a barn door mounted on a cast iron rail. To make this happen, Michael Nash craftsman construct a 430-pound Dutch-style barn door to owner specification. To guide the door, the crew installed a pre-manufactured wrought-iron track, devoting several days to assuring the alignment would support load requirements.

To bring in the light, Michael Nash redesigned the home’s east-facing rear elevation. A Double French slider replaces the original single door. The window in the cook’s

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station was relocated and enlarged. The result: “the whole area is warm and light-filled,” Meg Levine allows. “The trees and the yard are now all around us. It’s very peaceful.”

All of which, Levine concludes, is a testament to her contractor’s grasp of modern kitchen design:

“The company president met with us at the house, and pointed out some ways that we could meet all our needs just by borrowing a little from existing rooms. I was kind of skeptical, but when we reconvened at his show room a little later, he presented us with a detailed floor plan ... and we hadn’t even signed a contract.”

What impressed Levine equally was the fact that Nazemian offered a “flat rate with no contingencies.”

“No one else would do that, and there turned out to be some wiring challenges we hadn’t anticipated. Sonny stuck to the agreement and performed the extra work with no added cost to us. Plus, the crews were consistently excellent: courteous, clean, on-time. I don’t know if that kind of service is considered by the COTY judges, but it made us happy.”

