



HOME STYLE

Change Comes with the New Year

By John Byrd

The Stouts run a busy household—two pre-schoolers, a home-based business, and frequent visits by elderly parents and out-of-town guests. Unfortunately, the ongoing challenge—a lack of living space relative to the multitude of daily missions—often slowed things down to a crawl.

Foremost, Mom's "office" was the dining room table—which made entertaining cumbersome. But, more importantly, the "work space" restricted sightlines to an enclosed rear porch where otherwise-unsupervised children had most of their toys.

After a few years, the dysfunction began to wear.

"We were looking for a plan that offered better use of the main level living area—where we spend 90 percent of our time," Tracy Stout explains. "I also wanted dedicated guest quarters and an exercise room. The problem was: we didn't know what was feasible, so the solution proposed by Michael Nash was a revelation."

So welcome to the New Year.

What the Stouts sought were focused changes that would add square footage,

sharply improve both room access and circulation and improve visual continuum and natural light availability, after consulting Michael Nash, a plan emerged.

Among key elements: create an appreciably open primary living area floor plan; design rear lower level space for guest quarters and an exercise facility; sharply improve visual linkage to the family room from both the kitchen and dining room; reconfigure the kitchen, dining room and family room into a better integrated whole.

Finally, since the existing back yard offered little more than a precipitous downward slope, the entire household yearned for outdoor family play area that was level, self-contained and visually linked to the home's rear rooms.

"Our idea was to square-off the rear elevation with a two-story rear addition," explains project designer Shawn Nazemian.

The addition's footprint extends the existing concrete foundation mat and rear elevation-bearing wall. The new lower level—which now includes dedicated



Photo By: Michael Nash

guest quarters and exercise room— features a spacious side window and a rear slider that walks out at grade level.

On the level above, the Michael Nash team removed large portions of the original bearing wall, shifting loads to newly installed steel I-beams positioned to provide structural support to the second floor and roof. The reconfigured family room now spans the entire rear of the house.

The dining room and family room are now linked by a generous archway; the kitchen has been, similarly, opened up on the rear, with sections of the original brick-back wall preserved as a half wall granite-topped serving counter and breakfast bar.

A cathedral ceiling, skylights, side elevation windows and a double French door assure the remade interior is generously bathed in daylight.

New and refurbished all-wood flooring lends visual unity to an appreciably open

floor plan, yet carefully selected wall colors help to differentiate the primary components of the reconfigured space. New built-ins designed to match an existing bookcase are finely detailed and evenly rationalized.

"The look and feel is fabulous," says Tracy. "We couldn't be more pleased."

Out back, the plan called for a two level deck designed to provide a multi-zoned indoor/outdoor continuum. Constructed of a composite planking in a deep red tone, the tree-shaded space is both restful and uplifting. A two step-height variance differentiates the grilling deck from the lower zone set aside for outdoor dining.

The Michael Nash staff periodically offers seminars in addition planning and design at their Fairfax, VA showroom. For more information, call 703 641-9800, or look online at michaelnashkitchens.com