

# Excellent! Year after year

## ■ New remodeling award stresses consistency over 10 years period

BY JOHN BYRD  
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

A decade is a long time in the lifespan of remodeler. While Northern Virginia boasts many companies that have plied their trade for a generation or more, the fact is that the remodeling business-- like most based on contracts-- tends to be perishable. The vagaries of the economy, the ease with which competitors enter the field, the challenges of sustaining a reputation, are just a few of the market realities that make it hard for even the best companies to keep at it year after year.

That said, one must marvel at the optimism when the industry’s most prestigious purveyor of best-quality work introduces its first ever “Decade of Excellence” award. To win, according to Director Ken Kanline who developed the Chrysalis awards in 2000, a remodeler must have won at least one Chrysalis every year for the past decade.

“Performance consistency over time has become the critical variable in evaluating remodelers,” Kanline says. “The Decade of Excellence award gets past the question of whether a firm has performed well periodically, and introduces the more relevant long term reliability issue. Our goal is to identify remodeling brands with staying power.”

How many firms in 12 Southern states (ranging from Florida to Virginia to as far west as Texas) have actually received the award?

To date, just one: Michael Nash Design Build and Homes. The 30-year-old full-service firm, headed by president and CEO Sonny Nazemian, has garnered at least one Chrysalis annually since 2009. Moreover, the honors have been conferred in a cross-section of categories ranging from “whole house remodeling” to “additions” to “interiors” and “exteriors”-- plus, “detached outbuildings”, “kitchens”, “bathrooms”, “basements.” Adding rigor, the prize also measures the accomplishment within a specific price range (ie. “Best kitchen under \$50,000”). Of the awards captured by Michael Nash since 2009, nine have been national; 19 are category-best in the twelve-state South Atlantic region

“This company’s consistent level of success points to a concern for quality within the corporate culture that has made Michael



PHOTOS BY GREG HADLEY

**2017 National Chrysalis; Best Whole House Remodel Under \$300,000**  
By eliminating a wet bar and relocating the powder room to a spot between the family room and the music room, the new floor plan better rationalizes existing square footage. The two-level fireplace (formerly stacked stone) was re-surfaced in grey-striped porcelain tile; the recessed niche over fireplace was designed to accommodate a flush-mount TV.

Nash one of the best recognized remodelers in the nation,” Kanline observes. “It’s also noteworthy that this acknowledgment comes at a time when many companies are still recovering from the slower economy of the past three years.”

A look at the range and diversity of Michael Nash work in Fairfax County is also instructive. The remodeler doesn’t specialize in any particular type of remodeling or price point; rather innovation and creativity are the prevailing constants, a fact that the remodeler’s clients readily acknowledge.

### Whole House, Big View

“I interviewed several contractors regarding our remodeling goals, but they didn’t grasp the big picture” recalls Rima Bitar of McLean, who hired Michael Nash to renovate a 20-year-old-Mediterranean style house that eventually won a string of top awards including (in 2017) a Chrysalis for “best whole house remodel under \$300,000.”

The house had “lots of potential”, as Bitar saw it-- much of it was unrealized. A particular problem was the sequence of rooms on the left side of the foyer.

“There was a great view of the pool from the rear of the house,” Bitar says. “But from the foyer, one entered a living room on the left, which revealed a doorway on the back wall linked to a rear office. A powder room in-between flanked right. Overall, the left side of the house was too dark from front to back. Plus, we didn’t want a home office, and the powder room was in the wrong place.”

To allow more natural light and visual continuum, the remodel-

er introduced a structural beam, mounted on vertical supports mid room, and removed the obstructive bearing wall. The vertical supports were encased in visually-sympathetic recessed paneling.

Meanwhile, the entrance from the foyer has been widened and changed to an arch that reiterates existing window shapes.

Throughout, Nazemian advised on everything from structural issues to interior design fundamentals.

“Sonny asked me if I wanted the color undertones to be cool or warm,” Rima Bitar says. “I then realized that cooler undertones would allow me to choose brighter colors as accents for some accessories. This helped us find an appropriate compositional balance, which made all the difference.”

### Gourmet Kitchen

Two year before (2016), Michael Nash won a regional Chrysalis for “Best Residential Kitchen \$100,001 to \$150,000”. “I had been thinking about improving the kitchen ever since we bought the house, three years before,” Great Falls homeowner Phillip Breddy says. “Since I like cooking, the restricted space was a problem, but then I didn’t like the kitchen’s aesthetics anyway, so we started gathering ideas.”

A chance visit to the Michael Nash showroom in Fairfax soon ignited Breddy’s still-formulating remodeling plans.

“There were lots of useful kitchen displays,” Breddy recalls. “Before we left, I scheduled an appointment with Sonny Nazemian.”

Once Breddy identified the professional caliber stove and hood he

wanted, the remodeler developed a space plan that called for shifting the rear elevation further out onto the back deck. The change would accommodate a larger refrigerator and a substantial food preparation island. It also allowed the designer to remove ceiling-flush bulkheads housing plumbing and electrical. The increased headroom provided space for taller cabinets-- a welcome 20 percent increase in storage capacity.

Overall, the new plan unfolds “generously” in every direction, Breddy says. With the food prep island completing one leg in a work triangle that includes a clean-up and the 6-burner gas range oven, the step-saving configuration facilitates all the essential cooking and clean-up tasks.

“It’s a place where we can entertain,” he adds, “and it works beautifully for that purpose. But it’s also where the kids do homework while meals are being prepared.”

### From Patio Home to Spacious Southern Colonial

“I was looking for a larger master bedroom, a guest room , but also wanted a front porch and a foyer,” Oakton’s Gina Jones recalls. “The foyer was important in my childhood home (Huntsville Alabama). The foyer is where the house begins.”

A practical problem, however, was the steeply sloping grade immediately outside the existing front door. The more Jones learned about her home’s inherent site problems, the more the search for new square footage became concentrated on the rear elevation.

It was at this juncture that Jones met Sonny Nazemian.



The gourmet kitchen began with assessing square footage requirements for adding 4’x8’ food prep island, a 6 burner gas range and a 72” refrigerator and freezer. Ultimately, the remodeler relocated the west-facing rear elevation four feet back onto a rear deck, adding over 150 feet of enclosed usable space. Removing ceiling-flush bulkhead-ing allowed for taller cabinets and a 20 percent increase in storage capacity.



**2015 Chrysalis; Best Residential Exterior under \$100,000.00**  
Indoor-outdoor play space for a family of five integrates a covered porch with open air decking that features panoramic views of adjacent parkland. The stained decking and synthetic railing are mold-resistant. A mudroom behind the garage (right) helps kids clean-up before entering the house.

“We re-graded, leveled and re-compacted the whole front yard,” the remodeler explains. “That may sound simple, but the site changes are carefully calibrated. This allowed us to specify deep footings for structural support, eliminating the need to excavate.”

With the site satisfactorily prepared, Nazemian next concentrated on the addition itself, converting the existing front patio into a 14-by-26 ft footprint for a two level enclosure.

The lower level now accommodates a spacious foyer with ten foot ceilings, a first level guest room and a full bath. On the second level, the Michael Nash team co-opted one of three existing bedrooms to form a substantially larger master bedroom suite.

Best yet, the new site plan permits a top item on the wish list: a 25-by-6 foot two level front porch that, Jones says, evokes the graciously welcoming facade of her childhood home.

Inside, the new interior faithfully explores late 18th century decorum in detailing appropriate to several period collectibles and

antiques.

The project so impressed other professionals that it won a Chrysalis (in 2009) for best “addition in the \$100,000 to \$250,000” category. It also won a “Contractor of the Year” (COTY) award from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. “It’s the details that make the house so cohesive,” Gina Jones observes.

To give the eclectic architecture a unifying cast, the exterior elevations are clad in cedar shake and painted vivid Wedgwood blue.

“It just works beautifully,” Jones says. “And it feels like home.”

For information, call: 703-641-9800 or visit: <http://www.MichaelNashKitchens.com>

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CONTENT PROVIDED BY KIM & JAVEN HOUSE

The arrival of September brings the last part of summer with warm days, flowers in full bloom and delicious fresh fruits and vegetables in season. With fall just around the corner, September is a good time to take advantage of the moderate weather to get your house in shape and make any needed repairs before the first frost arrives. Here are some home maintenance ideas that will keep your home running in peak condition all season long.

**Clean Up Your Garden** – Trim back flowering plants after summer blooms fade, prune



trees and shrubs near house, plant bulbs and lay mulch to protect your plants from cooler weather and prepare your beds for next spring.

**Declutter Your Garage** – Pack up your beach chairs, beach umbrellas, pool toys and other summer gear. Discard any items that are broken or no longer used. Use walls and ceilings for storage to free up valuable floor space for your cars.

**Host a Garage Sale** – Unload some of your unused items, either at a community yard sale or one of your own to create more space in your garage and home.

**Service Yard Equipment** – Keep the parts of your lawn mower and trimmer in good working condition by replacing the oil, spark plugs and air filters before storing them for the winter. Gasoline that is left in a mower over the winter can get stale, clog the carburetor and invite rust, so empty the gas tank prior to winter storage.

**Replace Weather-Stripping**

– Prevent winter drafts in your home by replacing the weatherstripping now while the weather is warm with a good quality vinyl, silicone or metal product.

**Tune-Up Heating System** – Hire an HVAC contractor to service your system before you have to turn on the heat. Don’t forget to change your filters to keep

your system running smoothly.

Whatever your September plans entail, as you transition into fall, take some time to relax and enjoy these last warm days.

*Content source: Suzanne Whitenight Pilcher, Marketing Coordinator, Long & Foster Companies.*

## THE TOP TEN SALES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY



### MCLEAN

6441 NOBLE DR,  
MCLEAN, VA 22101  
\$904,000  
4 bed, 2 bath



### MCLEAN

1938 BEAVER LN,  
MCLEAN, VA 22101  
\$1,525,955  
5 bed, 4 bath



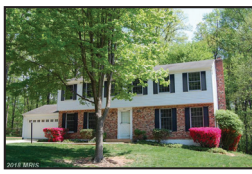
### VIENNA

2613 BOWLING GREEN  
DR, VIENNA, VA 22180  
\$540,000  
4 bed, 3 bath



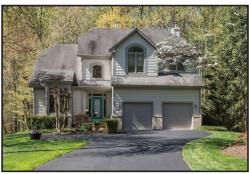
### VIENNA

2715 WILLOW DR,  
VIENNA, VA 22181  
\$1,529,480  
4 bed, 4 bath



### RESTON

2411 ANDORRA PL,  
RESTON, VA 20191  
\$540,000  
5 bed, 2 bath



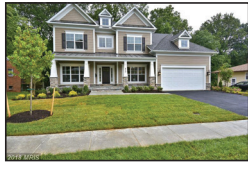
### RESTON

1106 WATER POINTE LN,  
RESTON, VA 20194  
\$835,000  
5 bed, 3 bath



### FAIRFAX

10733 MARLBOROUGH  
RD, FAIRFAX, VA 22032  
\$575,000  
4 bed, 3 bath



### FAIRFAX

4115 BURKE STATION RD,  
FAIRFAX, VA 22032  
\$1,117,559  
4 bed, 3 bath



### CENTREVILLE

5314 KIMANNA DR,  
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120  
\$380,000  
3 bed, 1 bath



### CENTREVILLE

14610 CEDAR KNOLL DR,  
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120  
\$749,900  
5 bed, 3 bath