

A kitchen in the wrong part of the house?

■ Michael Nash solution wins National CotY Award

BY JOHN BYRD
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A space plan reconfiguration and makeover in an Ashburn residence has won a National Contractor of the Year (CotY) Award for Michael Nash Design Build and Homes. The innovative solution has been judged the nation's top kitchen remodel within a prescribed budget range by the National Association of Remodeling Industry (NARI).

Among other space enhancement strategies, the remodeler converted a seldom-used breakfast room into a gourmet kitchen, removed a bearing wall between the new kitchen and adjacent two level family room, introduced a food prep island and dining counter, which seats six, and formed a new dining room adjacent to a butler's pantry that features custom-designed cabinetry.

The new living space now accommodates a professional caliber cooktop range, a double door refrigerator/freezer, a butler's pantry equipped with wine refrigerator, a farm sink and many other amenities. The interior design is articulated in a warm "transitional-style" that balances traditional detailing with well-developed sight lines and a bold indoor-outdoor visual continuum.

Taken as a whole, the makeover transforms a poorly-conceived first level floorplan into a generous suite of rooms that segues directly to an open family room and the re-located dining room.

In accepting the "Best Kitchen" honors, Michael Nash



PHOTOS BY JUNE STANICH

Nation's best kitchen remodel. A space plan reconfiguration and makeover in an Ashburn home has won a National "Contractor of the Year" (COTY) award for Michael Nash Design Build and Homes. The renovation was named the nation's top kitchen remodel within a prescribed budget by the National Association of Remodeling Industry (NARI).

Founder and President Sonny Nazemian praised his company's design team and their cost-sensitive approach to helping homeowners make effective home improvement decisions.

"Since most of our projects are executed by Michael Nash employees, we're able to offer fixed-price contracts," Nazemian discloses. "Customers can select finishwork materials from our show room at-cost. These are among the components of our business model that allow us to consistently outperform our client's budget."

In the case of the recent "Best Kitchen" winner, grappling with a first level plan ill-suited to the homeowner's needs was the principal challenge.

"The owners had purchased

a model home, but soon realized the floorplan didn't really work for them. This was partly because they had concluded that the kitchen was in the wrong part of the house," recalls Michael Nash president and CEO Sonny Nazemian. "Our plan proposed switching-out the mid-house kitchen footprint with square footage then-allocated for a seldom-used breakfast room to the left of the family room. The revisions added both square footage and natural light to the kitchen. It also opened-up a contiguous relationship with the adjacent family room-- which features a two level stone hearth."

Other challenges: the existing cooktop island didn't provide an adequate meal preparation surface; kitchen work triangles were space-restricted; storage was se-

verely limited; nondescript wall elevations and equally undistinguished tiling and back splashes set the tone for a bland interior.

Executing the envisioned spatial reconfiguration was the real challenge from the outset, however.

"We began developing a working solution on his first visit," Nazemian recalls. "It was clear we could gain a much more expansive spatial presentation by removing a bearing wall between the family room and breakfast room, and re-configuring the breakfast room as the footprint for the new kitchen."

Following an on-site examination of owner needs, the Michael Nash design team proposed a re-configured first-level plan, which incorporates the unneeded breakfast zone while co-opting enough



BEFORE: The owners had purchased a new model home, but soon decided the existing first-level plan didn't work. The kitchen was located in the center of the house, which reduced natural light availability coming from a large window on the rear elevation.

square footage from adjacent pantry to form the footprint of a far more personalized kitchen.

A load-bearing wall between old breakfast room and adjacent two-story family was removed. In its place, a steel beam, mounted on vertical supports, now holds up the second floor-- creating an open, expansive connection between kitchen and rest of the home. To assure stability, the steel posts are extended all the way to the basement-- embedded in specially-engineered footings.

The main sink has been re-positioned under a large south-facing window, opening-up dramatic visual linkage to the backyard.

A large island, with prep sink, microwave and dining counter circumscribed by seating for six, was custom-designed to family requirements.

The kitchen's new focal point is a four-burner gas cooktop, positioned under a decorative arched hood and flanked by custom-designed glass-facing cabinets.

The island component is perfectly integrated into a series of cleverly conceived work triangles that simplify kitchen circulation and work flow.

It is also the essential pivot between the new farm sink, the cooktop and double door refrigerator/freezer.

The butler's pantry and wine refrigerator is within an easy reach.

The plan, in fact, facilitates a long list of family entertainment requirements.

What results is an "open" plan with clearly defined activity zones within a visual continuum. The spacious new interior allows all to enjoy private pursuits while maintaining eye-contact with other parts of the suite.

"A family kitchen is always a fulfilling assignment," Nazemian says. "It really keeps us in touch with how families interact-- it's an arena where our skills are especially well-applied."

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