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HOME REMODELING

# Townhouses Fully Realized

MICHAEL NASH MAKES MORE SPACIOUS, ATTRACTIVE AND COMFORTABLE LIVING  
BY JOHN BYRD

A townhouse is a unique housing classification and the skills required to effectively enhance living space within one are, likewise, specialized.

"There are usually structural and building code issues involved," says remodeler Sonny Nazemian "We often discover that the original builder did not optimize the space plan, so there's a lot of wasted square footage that can be put to better use."

Nazemian should know. As founder and CEO of Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes, the remodeler has renovated hundreds of townhomes, frequently winning

top peer awards from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, the National Association of Home Builders and Qualified Remodeler Magazine among other purveyors of highest quality work.

That said, the investment incentive for renovating a local townhouse has been steadily improving. In the past 12 months, real estate assessments for townhomes in northern Virginia have increased at a faster annual rate (3.15%) than single-family homes (2.36%— and with new Metro stations driving demand, resale values are growing.

Three recent award-winning projects illustrate:

*"The original builder did not optimize the space plan, so there's always a lot of wasted square footage that can be put to better use."*

—Sonny Nazemian



## ALEXANDRIA

*End-unit floorplan reconfiguration yields indoor/outdoor solution*

A retired Alexandria couple sought to make better use of a grilling deck on the side elevation of their townhouse end unit, and also to develop display space for Italian collectibles.

Unfortunately, the kitchen was sequestered behind an L-shaped serving and dining counter. Since the grilling deck was cut off by a half-wall serving counter, traffic problems became “bottlenecks” when warm weather entertaining was underway. To reach the kitchen from deck one, in fact, you had to circle around the counter and through the living room.

Early on, Nazemian proposed reconfiguring the entire back half of the L-shaped “great room” as a component in a new kitchen-centric entertainment suite. The cabinetry would extend all the way to the French doors leading to the deck.

A stand-alone island with a sink positioned midway between the deck and the family room would function as the center of the “new” kitchen while doubling as a wet bar and mid-room dining counter.

Today, there’s a convenient wine cooler below the sink. The island’s lower cabinet houses a glass display case designed to spotlight the porcelain collection.

“The ceramics display is the dominant focal point,” the homeowner adds. “The dark woods and textured tile

backsplash on the rear wall nicely converge into a warm background.”

## MOSAIC DISTRICT

*Open plan features transitional-style*

To expand available square footage in a three-level Merrifield townhouse, Michael Nash designers deleted a bearing wall between the kitchen and a formal dining area, insinuating an I-beam supported by concealed vertical shafts.

The “opening” gave way to a counter surface and three-seat dining counter. The change also augments natural light and visual continuum from front to back.

To gain kitchen floorspace, the team removed a pantry and oven stack, and relocated the refrigerator to the newly surfaced south wall.

On a similar note, deleting unnecessary bulkheading allowed for taller cabinets and custom cubbies. Roll-out shelving proved a handy space saver.

Today there are custom cubbies for favorite pots, dishes and glassware. A special drawer for fruits and vegetables. A drawer for exotic teas. At the stove, an under cabinet pull-down shelf with a light is a perfect place to mount a cookbook needed when preparing a meal.

The built-in efficiencies make the room feel larger. Because of the two counter-height surfaces the whole family can participate in kitchen duties at the same time.

*Page 45: To introduce an “open” plan into the middle of a three-level townhouse, designers deleted a bearing wall between the kitchen and a formal dining area, insinuating an I-beam mounted on concealed vertical shafts to bear the weight of upper floors. The project was named a “Contractor of the Year” (COTY) winner by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.*

*Above: The first-level makeover to a townhouse end unit in Alexandria won remodeler Michael Nash a “Contractor of the Year” (COTY) Grand award. The interior design scheme focused on re-defining the relationship between kitchen work zones and adjacent living and socializing areas.*

*Opposite top: Revealing and refurbishing wood flooring help to visually unify the great room which extends from the front to the back of the 1,700 square foot townhouse. The solution was named greater Washington’s “Best Whole House Remodel” by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI).*



## CLARENDON

*Whole house makeover satisfies family's long-term needs*

The owner's goal for their Clarendon townhouse: create a more fluidly interactive space—without adding on. An early phase focused on what remodelers call “discovery:” i.e., assessing existing systems and how well they function, or don't.

“A traditional production house is like a movie set,” Nazemian says. “A lot of what you see is designed-in to convey a lifestyle image, but the plan may not be as functional as you want.”

To execute needed changes, the design team concentrated on finding more usable floor space within an existing structure. The bigger task, however, was top-to-bottom modifications on all three levels.

To upgrade second level functionality, designers deleted a kitchen-to-dining room pass-through, then removed a pantry, relocated the refrigerator and changed the corner of the perfectly square powder room into a diagonal.

Deleting unnecessary bulk heading allowed for taller cabinets. Roll-out shelving for spices is a handy space-saver. The room's centerpiece, though, is a 4' x 6' food preparation island and dining counter surfaced in exotic stones. Furnished with three comfortable stools, it's also the spot for in-kitchen dining.



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—Sonny Nazemian