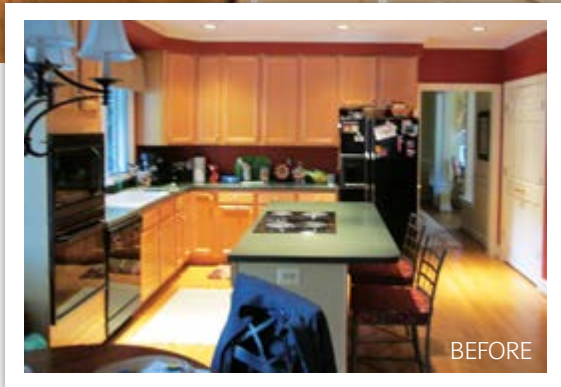




BY JOHN BYRD

The Carters purchased the original production house in 1998 and have steadily made focused improvements and upgrades. The open kitchen plan (shown) was part of the final phase. Sun Design Remodeling introduced a transitional-style interior design scheme which greatly increases natural light and visual continuum. Wall cabinets were eliminated, yet there's been a 35% increase in storage capacity.



BEFORE

The Evolution OF A FAMILY HOME

STARTING IN THE LATE 1990'S, PAUL AND LAURIE CARTER BEGAN TRANSFORMING A SIMPLE PRODUCTION HOUSE INTO A PERSONAL RESIDENCE.

Collaborating closely with Sun Design Remodeling, the Carters nursed their vision of an exceptional property boasting a stunning indoor-outdoor continuum.

This past September, the public was invited to see the results.

In the late 1990's, Paul and Laurie Carter purchased a new production house in a new neighborhood not far from Mount Vernon. At 3,700 square feet, it was a perfect spot to settle down and raise their son. The schools nearby were excellent; the house was just a few miles from Old Town Alexandria. But there were some things about the property Carters thought they might improve—should they stay in residence long enough.



Fleming extended the shed room to cover sun-exposed decking. Two overhead rotating fans make the new outdoor space comfortable even on the hottest day. The couple take meals on the deck throughout summer and well into fall.



Cramped master bathroom; no family play area; dark rear rooms with no visual continuum; cabinet-cluttered kitchen; builder-grade finishes...Just a few of the perceived shortcomings.

But skip ahead almost two decades, and the whole house remodel that the public was invited to see this past September firmly demonstrates the kinds of improvements and upgrades that can occur when owners continue to occupy, modifying the environment to suit evolving interests.

In fact: it's no longer merely a house. It's the Carter's long-term residence.

"The ideal of long term ownership is the option to create a home that, over time, becomes more supportive of favored activities and aesthetic preferences," says Bob Gallagher, Sun Design Remodeling's Executive Vice President. "We are finding this kind of on-going commitment to personalizing a residence much more frequently than in decades past."

Gallagher was at the house September 12 to greet neighbors who wanted to learn

more about remodeling in phases. Sun Design had guided the Carters through nearly every revision over the past decade. Many guests seem surprised at the project's top-to-bottom scope; that the vision had such continuity and coherence.

The Carters are quick to acknowledge that their periodic home remodeling efforts have been a logical and sequential response to family needs—beginning with an 18'x 36' swimming pool installed in the back yard of their quarter acre lot in 2006.

"We wanted a place where Paul, our son—Austin—and I could enjoy pleasant summers together as a family," recalls Laurie. "Our remodeling changes reflect the different stages of our lives, and the lifestyle options we wanted to pursue in day-to-day living."

As Austin's circle of friends expanded, for instance, the Carters hired Sun Design Remodeling to convert the home's unfinished lower level into a spacious family room and fitness center complete

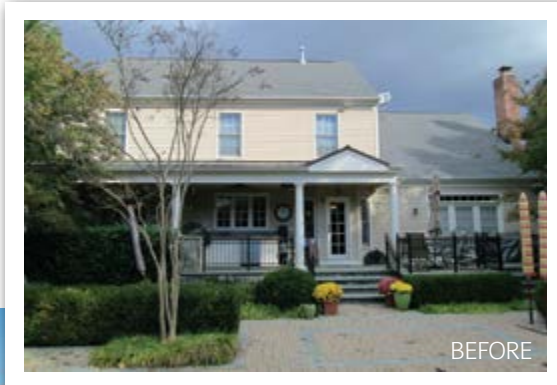
with a billiards table and TV viewing area suitable for guests of all generations.

During this same time period, Paul and Laurie—both working professionals—sought improvements to the second floor master suite, introducing a sizable master bath with a walk-in shower and changing vestibule. The plan was designed so that one partner could shower, dress and slip off to work without rousing the other partner, who might be still sleeping.

"The new master suite made life more comfortable for both of us," Laurie says, "and it still works beautifully today."

More recently, when Austin left for college, the Carters—now empty nesters—

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To create the shady spot appropriate for dining, Jeremy Fleming extended the shed roof which is now covered with an architecturally-appropriate seamless metal.



Bianco romano granite surfaces, square flat cabinet facings and bright, reflective wall coloring provide clean interior lines that support visual linkage to the outside. A small window over the sink was replaced with a three-part glazing solution that includes a 45" picture window.

The Evolution of a Family Home.
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began considering ways to better integrate the home's rear suite of rooms with its lovely poolside setting.

"The landscaping and mature trees confer a lot of backyard privacy, so we were looking for graceful ideas to better integrate indoor and outdoor horizons," Laurie says. "It made no sense not to have a better view and more natural light from the back of the house. Also, we didn't have a comfortable outdoor dining zone."

Not surprisingly, the core problem was the home's original floor plan.

Unchanged since the late 1990's, the three rooms on the west-facing rear elevation consisted of a central kitchen flanked by a formal dining room to the right and a family room to the left.

The dining room was sequestered from the kitchen by a floor-to-ceiling wall festooned with builder-grade cabinets. There was one small window above the kitchen sink which was, likewise, bordered by cabinets on two sides. To the left, one entered the family room, which provided an exit to a rear veranda partially covered by a shed roof.

"We had talked about a more open floor plan," Laurie recalls, "But how do you tear down the walls that are holding up the cabinets you use every day?"

As it turned out, this was a good question for Sun Design's Jeremy Fleming, who supervised the Carter's most recent remodeling.

"Something as simple as custom-designed cabinets can inspire a completely new—and much more functional—floor plan," Fleming says.

"Once the Carters were satisfied that the wall between the kitchen and dining room could come down," he adds, "it was clear that innovative storage solutions would make it possible to further develop a special visual continuum from inside the house."

A counter surface with a gas-fueled cooktop range between the kitchen and the formal dining area, thus, provides storage for both the best family china (accessed from the dining room) and everyday cooking necessities (retrievable from the kitchen). A reach-in pantry next to the refrigerator offers discrete supplemental storage. Though the eye-level cabinet clutter has been deleted, Fleming says there's actually been a 35% increase in storage capacity.

To improve natural light, the small kitchen window has been replaced with a three-part glazing solution consisting of a 45" picture window flanked by two 20" double hung windows.

Better yet, with its *bianco romano* granite surfaces, square flat cabinet facings and bright, reflective wall coloring, the new space has acquired a design elegance that was never previously in evidence.

"An open plan that segues to a free-flowing indoor/outdoor component is the very essence of a transitional-style interior design solution," observes Fleming. "The



A sizable master bath with a walk-in shower and changing vestibule was designed so that one partner could shower, dress and slip off to work without rousing the other still-sleeping partner.



The home's unfinished lower-level was converted into a spacious family room and fitness center complete with a billiards table and media viewing area.

formal elements provide definition and balance, yet the clean lines allow a lively visual continuum."

To provide for outdoor dining, Fleming extended the rear shed roof over the previously sun exposed decking. The former outdoor dining niche now becomes a viewing area adjacent to a recently installed flat screen TV.

With the addition of two overhead rotating fans, the new outdoor space is both intimately connected to the house and visually linked to the pool and well-landscaped setting.

"We couldn't be more pleased with how well the house has evolved over the years," says Laurie. "We look forward to living here long into the future."

Sun Design Remodeling frequently sponsors tours of recently remodeled homes as well as workshops on home remodeling topics. Headquartered in Burke, the firm recently opened a second office in McLean. For information call 703.425.5588 or go to www.SunDesignInc.com. ❖

AUTHOR: John Byrd has been writing about home improvement topics for 30 years. See more stories at www.HomeFrontsNews.com.