

Custom kitchen, new foyer reflect empty-nesters' emerging requirements

■ Staying within the existing footprint of 18-year-old home, Foster Remodeling achieves a sweeping first-level upgrade

By JOHN BYRD
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

Kevin and Priscilla Kelleher have occupied their 5,200-square-foot Springfield home since 1992 when they bought it new. At the time, the builder provided an array of finish work choices. The couple selected the Corian kitchen counter surfaces, a food preparation island of their preferred size and style. The flooring, cabinet-facings, window styles were all a testament to personal taste.

Situated on nearly an acre that backs into the woods, this is the spacious home where the couple raised two daughters who have subsequently fled the nest.

But 18 years is a long time to regularly inhabit the same floor plan, staring the same unyielding look.

"It was when the appliances started failing that we thought seriously about remodeling our kitchen," says Kevin, who retired from the Army several years ago and now works in government. "My wife eventually decided she really didn't like the Corian countertops. There was a wasted space and dead corners; yet not enough storage. We also wanted more natural light, and better views of our pretty, wooded setting."

Of course, such observations typically describe the beginning of a process that entails much research and a regime of decisions. But, more importantly: where does one turn for ideas that will give definition and focus to a collage of emerging preferences, images, and wish-lists?

Kelleher turned to David Foster, Certified Remodeler.

Foster, president of Foster Remodeling Solutions in Lorton, had finished the Kellehers' 1,500-square-foot basement in 2003. The positive experience had left the couple with the sense that they had found their "go-to"



PHOTOS BY LARRY GOLFER

Dory Clemens at Foster Remodeling Solutions executed a comprehensive kitchen upgrade in an 18-year-old Springfield home while staying entirely within the footprint of the existing production house plan. To create light and visual continuum, a small casement window was replaced with a divided-light picture window. The food prep island and two-seat dining counter is positioned to support work triangles in three directions.

guy for home improvements; better yet, Foster's process had actually gotten easier to apply in the intervening years.

"15 years ago, we were offered sketches of designs for the lower level," Kelleher observes. "Today, Foster's designers model three-dimensional space on CADD system software. This allows you to instantly assess different views of the room you're remodeling so you can clearly visualize how each perspective will affect the whole. It's a great tool for space planning."

This visualization, combined with a wholly new interior design scheme, was exactly kind of the improvements the Kellehers were seeking.

In fact, the footprint of the kitchen, breakfast nook, family room, foyer and, even, the grand stairs at the entrance retain their existing measurements down to the centimeter. It's only the positioning of key components, their design, their storage capacity and their aesthetics that have changed... and dramatically.

"Inches really count when you're renovating a kitchen floor

plan," says Dory Clemens, the Foster architect who designed the project. "This was largely about making better use of existing space while introducing a whole new interior design style."

For instance:

- Removing a mostly unused desk built into an interior wall elevation and shortening the wall by nine inches freed up 32 square feet of floor space, allowing designers to nearly double the size of the kitchen's food prep island and dining counter.
- Space-wasting counter surfaces on two walls were replaced with a curvilinear design that emphasizes the new plan's easy-flowing circulation. Wider, taller (42-inch) cabinets increased storage capacity by 40 percent.
- A seldom-opened casement window was replaced with a 4.5'-by-4.5' divided light picture window that dramatically improves available light while offering spot-on views of the leafy backyard.

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The 5'9"-by-36" food prep island includes a microwave drawer and custom-designed storage compartments. Kitchen surfaces are Cambria Berwin quartz finished with an OGE edge.



BEFORE



Clemens created an eye-catching visual rhythm by combining gray (genesi) and white (bianco) quintessenza mosaic backsplashes with more traditional raised-panel cabinet facings. The backlit glass-facing cabinets were designed to display collectibles.



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Foster Remodeling Solutions has become a leading local resource for porcelain flooring with a wood grain finish. The wood pattern is ink-jetted into the tile, which offers the warmth of the traditional look with much greater durability.

HOMES

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Gradually, the kitchen's interior design evolved into a transitional-style scheme emphasizing contrasting lights and darks.

To create greater visual cohesion to first-level living spaces, the wood flooring in the foyer and the white mosaic tiles in the kitchen were replaced with a wood grain porcelain tiling imported from Italy.

A comparatively new flooring material, the wood pattern is ink-jetted into the tile, offering the warmth of wood - but with much greater durability.

Meanwhile, ceilings and cabinet facings are bright white, and the wall is a color that West Pointer Kelleher describes as "Cadet Grey." Throughout, the play of lights and darks is further developed, like three-dimension checker board.

The island base is a resonant walnut-color; the quartz surfaces are vanilla-hued Cambria Berwin finished with an OGE edge.

To create visual rhythm, Clemens designed a quintessenza backsplash that combines gray (genesei) with white (bianco). The traditional raised-panel cabinet facings, in turn, lend a crisp linearity amid muted tones.

In the foyer, the game of contrast continues. The staircase balustrade and all risers and treads are bright white, but there are now black iron spindles where there had been wooden versions.

Since the staircase and living room rise two levels, the

Kellehers wanted to reduce to monotonous crush of white walls disappearing up into a distant ceiling.

"We wanted more definition around the stairway, and in what one generally sees looking up in a big room."

To this request, Clemens introduced a shadow box effect by adding white picture frame molding to walls that have been re-painted grey. While its formality vaguely recalls 19th Century decorum, it fundamentally provides a much better definition of the planes, angles and forms that tend to get washed-out in a solidly white wall treatment.

"The pattern draws your eyes up," says Kelleher, "which makes the space feel more proportional and balanced." He adds: "Foster's lead carpenter, Brian, is really a master at this kind of detailing. It's hard to see how anyone else could have done as well."

Foster Remodeling Solutions, a full-service remodeler, maintains a 3,270-square-foot Design and Selection showroom at their headquarters in Lorton. For information call (703) 550-1371. On Oct. 4, Dory Clemens will be leading a seminar on "Kitchen and Bath Design." For information, visit <http://www.fosterremodeling.com/remodeling-resources/seminars-and-sign-up/>.

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BEFORE



AFTER: Clemens designed a picture frame molding to add depth and visual drama to the home's formerly non-descript foyer.



BEFORE



AFTER: Owners Kevin and Priscilla Kelleher wanted a transitional-style interior emphasizing contrasting lights and darks. The wooden staircase spindles were replaced with black wrought iron elements; staircase treads and risers were painted white.

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