

June 2014 HomeLifeStyle



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A Porch with a View

Outdoor rooms call for special materials.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When a Great Falls homeowner decided she wanted to breathe new life into her large covered porch after a long, cold winter, she called on Anna Kucera, owner and principal designer of Gracious Living by Design in Alexandria, to give the space a fresh look in time for warm-weather gatherings.

“The client has an expansive porch with incredible views of Great Falls,” said Kucera. “She [wanted] to refresh and update the outdoor living space while still allowing the vista to remain the focal point.”

Kucera’s goal was to create a space that was at once tranquil and invigorating, but also respected the home’s architectural features, including stonework and wood siding. Kucera was careful to upholster the casual, but elegant seating with fabrics that were durable, heavily textured and able to withstand the elements.



PHOTO BY VERONICA BRUNO

This Great Falls porch offers spectacular views, which designer Anna Kucera emphasized when redesigning it for warm weather entertaining.

“Although the porch is covered, we needed to select materials that could withstand moisture and sun exposure,” said Kucera. “And considering the large quantity of cushions on the porch, it was prudent to select upholstery fabrics that would not become tiresome after a season or two.”

The upholstered cushions were crafted

from outdoor fabrics made of 100 percent solution-dyed acrylic. The main seating area is accessorized with custom-sized, flat-woven, polypropylene area rugs by Couristan.

“Both solution-dyed acrylic and polypropylene are inherently mildew and fade resistant,” said Kucera. “We selected an off-white solid woven from Stroheim

“We created emphasis by combining succulent citrus shades of green, orange and yellow. The mood could easily be changed with pillows by combining soothing tones of sea glass, green and aqua, or by boldly contrasting black and off-white.”

— Anna Kucera,
owner and principal designer of
Gracious Living by Design

to cover the back and arm cushions. For the seats and contrast welt on the back cushions, we chose a neutral tone fabric with a subtle dot

SEE PORCH, PAGE 4

Pub by the Pool

Remodeler collaborates with Great Falls architect-homeowner to create expansive lower-level.



PHOTO BY DIMITRI GANA

Chris Arnold at Foster Remodeling Solutions completed the intricate lower level interior of a Great Falls home. One component: a replica Irish bar with an exposed 300-bottle wine rack tucked under the stairs.

BY JOHN BYRD

Sometimes it’s not that the lower-level is “unfinished,” but rather that the house itself is “incomplete.”

Consider a 4,500 square foot Craftsman-style home on a five-acre lot in Great Falls that gracefully segues to a sizeable pool and patio. Yet there’s no same-level bathroom, no changing room, no convenient shower; just 1,500 square feet of ground-level insulated basement situated behind French doors, large divided glass windows and ample natural light.

Interestingly, the owner is an architect. He had sketched out a floorplan years ago, but — busy with other priorities — was waiting to meet someone with the skills to build-out the lower level to his satisfaction.

Seventeen years later, after interviewing several contenders, he hires Chris Arnold, top designer at Foster Remodeling Solutions.

“I was presented with a floorplan and

several key concepts,” Arnold said. The owner “had been looking for a design/build firm to guide the material selection

SEE PUB, PAGE XX

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A Porch with a View

FROM PAGE 3

pattern designed by Wendy Tsuji and Linda Ueda for Perennials.”

The rugs are perfect for alfresco gatherings: “Clients who enjoy entertaining outdoors and love natural sisal rugs are impressed with the way polypropylene rugs offer the same look with the added benefits of easy clean-up ... along with durability,” said Nancy Hardy, a design associate at Gracious Living by Design.

Kucera used a neutral and timeless palette as a backdrop for vibrant pops of color in accessories such as toss pillows. “We created emphasis by combining succulent citrus shades of green, orange and yellow,” she said. “The mood could easily be changed with pillows by combining soothing tones of sea glass, green and aqua, or by boldly contrasting black and off-white.”

To complete the space, Kucera picked up a few accent pieces at The Virginia Florist of Alexandria. “I found accessories and finishing touches such as orchids in cachepots, a sweet bird votive holder and greenery-filled urns.”

These carefully chosen details gave the



PHOTO BY VERONICA BRUNO

Alexandria, Va., based designer Anna Kucera chose neutral, weather-proof fabrics for the seat cushions on this Great Falls porch, which she accented with vibrantly colored throw pillows.

porch a polished aesthetic. “The objects and works of art that we look for and carry are as important as the floral arrangements that we create because we think they should always work together,”

said Kevin Green, owner of The Virginia Florist. “Our clients are interested not just in flowers, but in decorating their environments, and we share that kind of holistic approach.”



PHOTO BY VERONICA BRUNO

Alexandria, Va., based designer Anna Kucera created a covered porch space that was tranquil and invigorating, but also respectful of the Great Falls home’s architectural features, including stonework and wood siding.

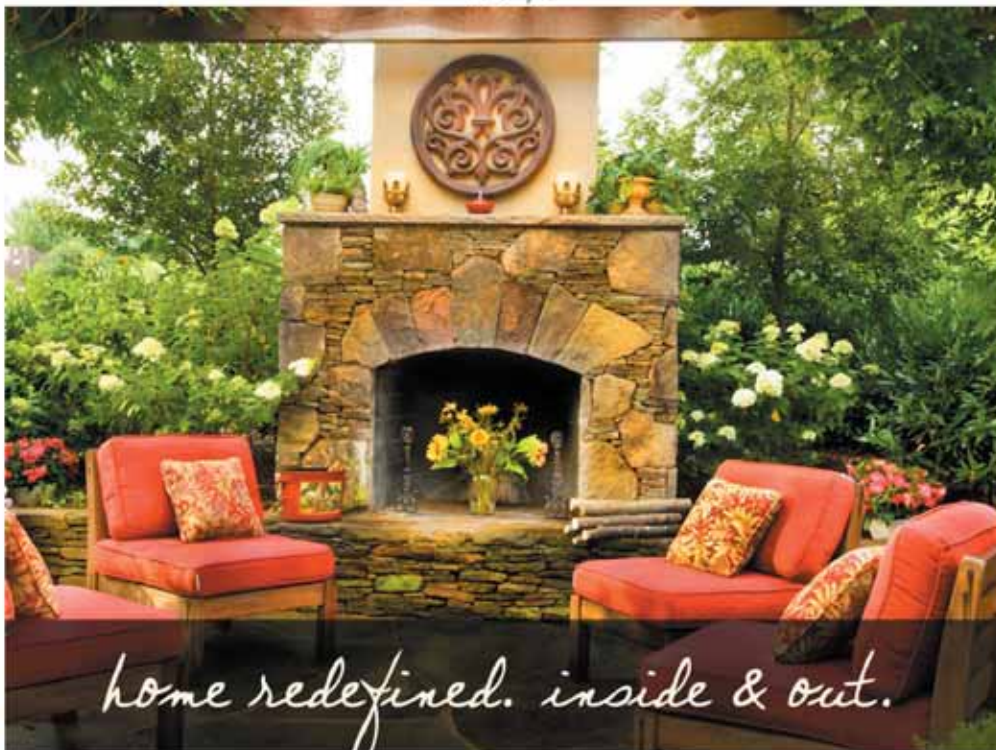
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Pub by the Pool

FROM PAGE 3

process and generally help him realize the many details in a project of this scope. It was an exciting assignment from the start.”

That scope included a suite of rooms that includes a replica Irish pub, a billiards room, a media room, a fully-equipped fitness center and a wine cellar, not to mention to the needed changing area, bathroom and pool-access foyer.

“The collaboration began where the floorplan left off,” Arnold said.

Every aspect of the interior design needed to be developed, much of it in pursuit of a very specific ambiance, starting with the replica Irish pub.



A wine rack built under the staircase and lit from behind is both practical storage space and a festive icon that sets off an otherwise empty wall.

“We talked about some of the pub’s general characteristics, exposed beams, support columns, backbar. Then, it was up to my group to draft the elevations,” Arnold said.

As became apparent, the pub would be one of the suite’s central gathering areas. A half wall separates it from the billiards room; from the bar one wanders (beverage in hand) into the spacious media room.

“We wanted the pub to have its own integrity, to be nicely differentiated, yet it also needed to interact with adjoining rooms,” said Arnold.

Hence, the Anglo-Irish style “drink rail” between the billiards room and the bar; the stacked fieldstone hearth in the family room.

Borrowing a few ideas from photos of actual pubs, Arnold constructed replica beams and stained them the signature black of rough-hewn timber. The room’s existing steel vertical supports are, likewise, now clad in the same walnut-hued wood.

Searching for a festive central icon envisioned by the owner, Arnold and team proposed a 300-bottle wine rack neatly tucked behind glass doors under the stairway.

“It’s entirely practical dry space storage, but the owner was looking for something visually compelling that would add to the ambiance,” he said. “In addition to being spacious, it’s actually lit from behind for optimal effect.”

To help unify the suite’s public spaces, Arnold and team installed prefinished oak hardwood flooring with seven inch planks in the pub, billiards room and family room. Sticking with the darker, “old world” color tones, the bar counter is surfaced in Black Galaxy granite.

PHOTOS BY DIMITRI GANA



The billiards room, visually linked the suite’s other public spaces, was designed to accommodate a regulation-sized pool table.

Backbar cabinets are in cherrywood with a dark espresso stain. For contrast, mirrored wall panels, glass shelves and halogen lighting create a sparkling surface any pub aficionado will admire.

Just below eye-level, a stainless steel counter surface with a welded-in sink helps the barkeep maintain order. Complete with kegerator, icemaker and dedicated wine- and beverage- refrigerators, it’s a plan that can quench almost any thirst.

Other lower level chambers are equally well-conceived. From the pool, one passes through French doors into 135-square-foot foyer tiled with slip-resistant porcelain. To the left, there’s a shower room and changing area complete with bench; on the right, the ever-convenient half bath.

The suite’s largest gathering spot is a nearly 400 square foot family room accessible from the pool foyer and the pub. Featuring nine-foot ceilings and four eight-foot divided-light windows flanking a central fireplace, the room satisfies multiple requirements. There’s an 80-inch LCD video screen mounted on 15-feet of

wall space for video entertainment and a state of the art audio system.

The defining focal point, however, is the hearth, which is plainly visible from the pub and billiards room. Originally a standard builder-grade brick, the new design employs cultured stacked fieldstone, a nod to “old country” ambiance that shows to good effect on cooler days.

The adjacent billiards room, which features a three window bay, was designed to accommodate a regulation-sized (10x5) pool table. Visually linked to all the suite’s public rooms, the room is spacious, airy, interactive.

On the other hand, the 200-square-foot fitness center has been situated for privacy. Accessible only through a back hall, the family gym offers weight machines and a treadmill in a brightly lit space adorned with photos of top rugby teams (the owner’s favorite sport).

In short, a perfect place for pursuing a “personal best.”

Foster Remodeling Solutions periodically offers workshops on home remodeling topics. For Information: 703/550-1371 or www.fosterremodeling.com



Owners wanted interactivity in the primary gathering areas. The Anglo-Irish “drink rail” separates the bar from the billiards room. Pre-finished oak flooring visually unifies the pub, the billiards room and the adjacent media room.



Accessible only through a back hall, the 200-square-foot fitness center offers weight machines and a treadmill in a brightly lit room adorned with photos of the owner’s favorite sport: rugby.

Local REAL ESTATE

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April, 2014 Top Sales in Great Falls and McLean

IN APRIL 2014, 19 GREAT FALLS HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$3,675,000-\$565,000 AND 102 HOMES SOLD BETWEEN \$3,400,000-\$162,750 IN THE MCLEAN AND FALLS CHURCH AREA.



1 211 Clarks Run Road, Great Falls — \$3,675,000



2 6718 Benjamin Street, McLean — \$3,400,000



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| 3 6022 ORRIS ST | 6 | 7 | 2 | MCLEAN | \$2,869,500 | Detached | 1.06 | 22101 | RIDGEWOOD | 04/07/14 |
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| 5 8815 GALLANT GREEN DR | 5 | 5 | 2 | MCLEAN | \$2,200,000 | Detached | 0.95 | 22102 | WOODSIDE ESTATES | 04/01/14 |
| 6 721 STRAWFIELD LN | 6 | 6 | 1 | GREAT FALLS | \$1,935,000 | Detached | 1.73 | 22066 | RIVERBEND | 04/17/14 |
| 7 1203 TOWLSTON RD | 5 | 4 | 1 | GREAT FALLS | \$1,925,000 | Detached | 5.00 | 22066 | UNKNOWN | 04/30/14 |
| 8 655 POTOMAC RIVER RD | 5 | 6 | 1 | MCLEAN | \$1,673,000 | Detached | 1.15 | 22102 | POTOMAC OVERLOOK | 04/28/14 |

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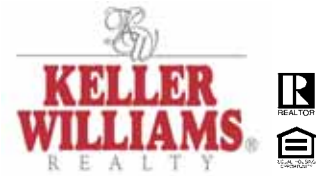


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