

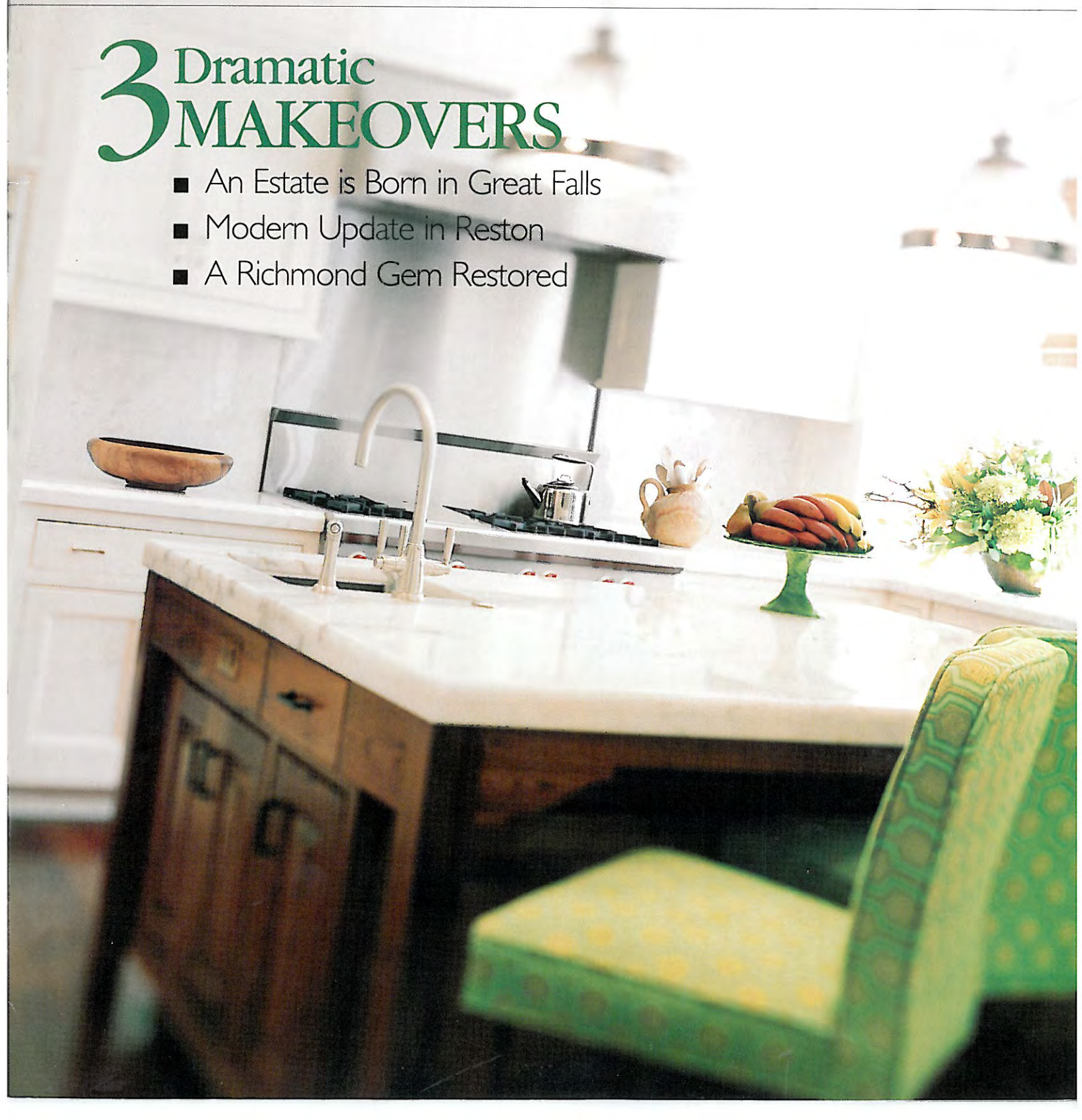
HOME & DESIGN

LUXURY  
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3 Dramatic  
MAKEOVERS

- An Estate is Born in Great Falls
- Modern Update in Reston
- A Richmond Gem Restored







REMODELING

# TIMELESS *Tradition*



Sometimes you just need more space. That's certainly how Carol and John McDonnell, a former technology executive at a Reston, Virginia-based company, felt about their home in Great Falls. "At the time, we had just one child but knew we wanted several more," says Carol McDonnell. However, after five years they had grown accustomed to the gorgeous rolling countryside outside their windows, so rather than pack up and move to a new home, they decided to expand.

"Our goal for the remodel was to update both the design and livability of the home while maintaining the classic

ARCHITECT: George Myers, GTM Architects, Bethesda, Maryland. CONTRACTOR: Tony Paulos, Block Builders, Bethesda, Maryland.





## An ambitious renovation transforms a Georgian colonial into a sprawling farm-style estate with its own separate guesthouse

BY KELLI ROSEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KENNETH M. WYNER

bones of the house,” McDonnell says. “We were resolved not to just tear the house down and put a McMansion in its place. We wanted a welcoming, unpretentious house with great flow, where no room was off limits to our kids.”

The couple teamed with George Myers of Bethesda-based GTM Architects, who conceptualized the remodeled, expanded home in terms of the landscape. “The existing home was a generic Georgian-style colonial, but I wanted to create more of a farmhouse look to the home, give it more of a rambling quality,” he says. To make it a better “fit” for the six-acre property, Myers doubled the original home’s square footage and added stone and white clapboard siding to the existing brick.

Myers also aimed to give the family a more open floor plan, instead of the



Architect George Myers took what he terms a “generic Georgian-style colonial,” (insets above and right) and created a stately, sprawling home (top and opposite bottom) on a sweeping six-acre property. Combining white clapboard with the original brick and adding white-railed balconies both to the house and to the newly built guesthouse, he introduced a sense of freshness and light.

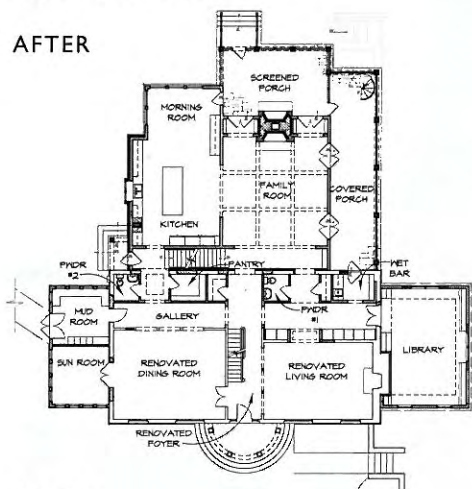




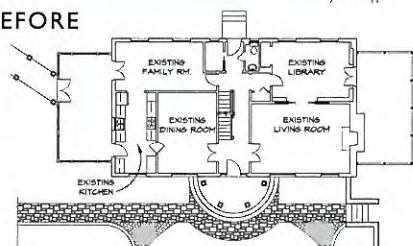


### First-Floor Plan

AFTER



BEFORE



compartmentalized one they were used to. Besides creating larger spaces overall—most notably a spacious new kitchen and family room in a large addition to the rear of the home—he incorporated a second stairway and a hallway perpendicular to the existing colonial’s front-to-back layout, creating a “cross-axis” of flow within the home.

Although all three bedrooms and two bathrooms were renovated on the second floor, the second level of the addition was used to create a spacious master suite, complete with gas fireplace, deck, wet bar and sitting area. But it was McDonnell who transformed the room into a cozy retreat. “I wanted a Southern plantation feel,” she says. “But not anything overdone—more eclectic. I like when a room looks like you’ve collected things over time.” In fact, it was McDonnell who chose most of the furnishings, fixtures and finishes throughout the home. “My husband and I have a very strong sense of what we like and we







To renovate the space, Myers gutted the original house, replacing smaller rooms with an open floor plan. A new gallery perpendicular to the original hallway opens to the dining room (above). The front entryway (opposite) flows directly into the living room, creating one large space. The screened-in porch (near left) offers lots of seating and spectacular views; beyond it, a spiral staircase leads up to the second floor deck. With all three levels lit up at night, the house projects a festive, welcoming air (far left).







A large kitchen and dining area. The kitchen features white cabinetry with glass-fronted upper cabinets and a black granite countertop. A wooden breakfast table is set with a vase of red tulips. A brass chandelier hangs over the table. The ceiling is paneled and coffered. A window with a view of a snowy landscape is visible in the background.

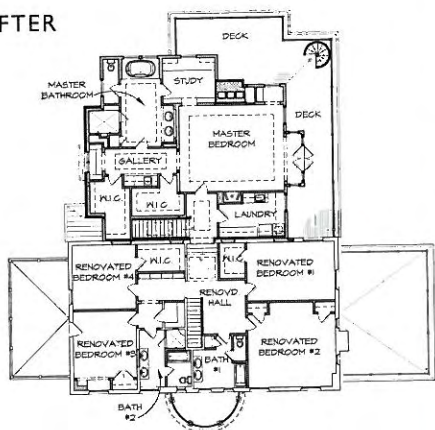
The large kitchen pairs reclaimed oak floors with crisp white cabinetry to create a look that is both elegant and inviting. Black granite countertops contrast with the cabinetry of the island, painted sage green and topped with Carrera marble. The paneled and coffered ceiling and wooden breakfast table reinforce the home's farmhouse feel.



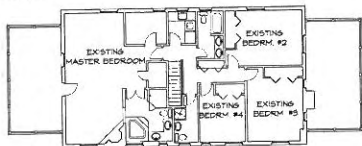


Second-Floor Plan

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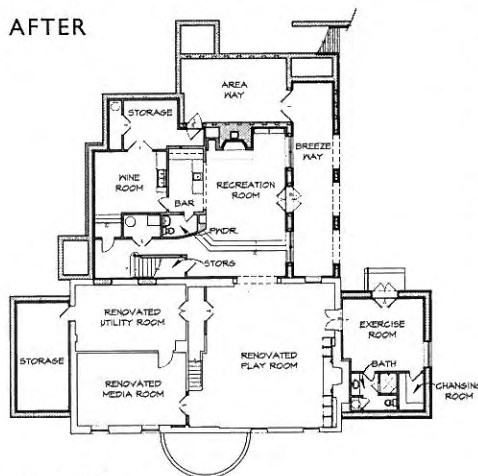
In the master bathroom (top left), a honed Calcutta marble floor with a quiet gray border, white porcelain subway tiles on the walls and vintage-style twin sinks by Waterworks create a serene and timeless look. By contrast, the brightly painted kids' bath (opposite bottom) is paneled with beadboard; its sink, purchased from a salvage store, has an eye-catching, bright yellow basin, applied with a faux finish. Three renovated bedrooms include the nursery (above), a kids' room (top) and a spacious master bedroom (left) with double doors leading out to a second-floor balcony.



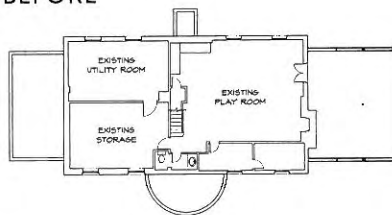


### Basement Floor Plan

AFTER



BEFORE



wanted the home to be an authentic representation of us and our taste," she says. As it turns out, much of the inspiration for McDonnell's design choices stemmed from the couple's extensive travels throughout Europe.

"People in Europe invest in quality, rather than just going for that over-the-top feeling," McDonnell says. She hoped to duplicate the timeless design she observed across the pond in her own home; for instance, she chose honed Calcutta marble for the floors and Danby marble for the countertops in the master bath and purposely kept the accessories and color scheme to a minimum.

Also influenced by their overseas travels is the stately wood-paneled library. "This room reminds me of what I would see in the manor homes throughout Scotland, England and Ireland, where people would gather in the afternoon for tea," she says.

But it's the McDonnells' guesthouse, with its reclaimed timbers and hand-made copper gas lanterns, where Old

World influences are most apparent. "I have always loved old carriage houses and suggested that as an idea for a guesthouse," says McDonnell, who admits she even selected the tartan Ralph Lauren fabric for the sofa because its pattern reminded her of some favorite dishes she bought in Scotland years ago.

The McDonnells were also very specific about how they planned to use the space. "We wanted out-of-town guests to have a place to stay where they could be close to the action, but not be awakened by the hustle and bustle of our young family," McDonnell says. "And we also wanted a place to host dinners without waking the kids."

It was up to Myers to design a floor plan that worked, as well as an exterior that would complement the main house. Ideal for entertaining, the great room's large stone fireplace is surrounded by plenty of seating, as well as a small kitchen and powder room. Upstairs, the loft features a bedroom and full bath, with dramatic views down below. On the outside, Myers echoed





The original basement has been transformed into a series of rooms, including an entertainment center (left); a lounge with a fireplace, bar, and pool table (above); and a playroom, painted a warm persimmon, also with a fireplace (top left). The playroom leads to an exercise room. Since most of the space opens out to the back yard at ground level, it's bathed in plenty of natural light.





From the outside, the guesthouse (above) mirrors the look of the main house, with its white clapboard siding and matching decks. Inside, the similarities end. Intended to evoke the look of a lodge or cabin, the interior is open, with a vaulted, beamed ceiling and huge stone fireplace (opposite, bottom left), as well as reclaimed flooring and a small, rustic kitchen (above right). In the dining area, carriage house-style windows let in plenty of light (opposite, bottom right).

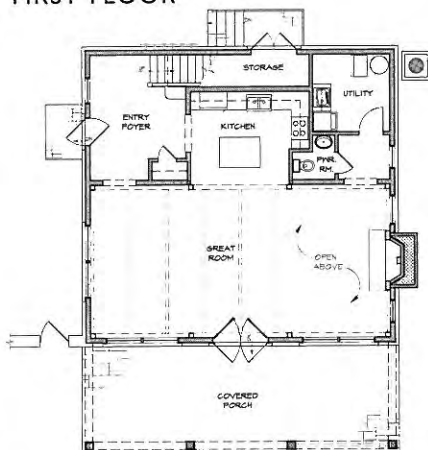


the farmhouse feel of the main home with a large covered porch and a combination of stone and clapboard siding topped with a cedar-shake roof. He opted for a one-and-a-half-story roofline to keep the carriage house in the proper proportion to the main one.

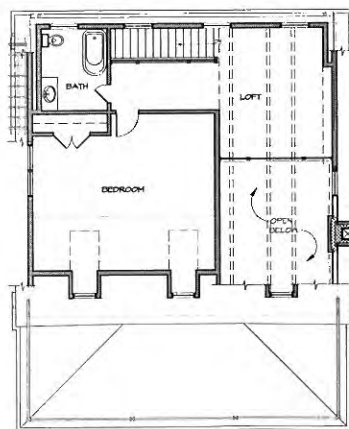
Despite the McDonnells' beautifully remodeled home, it turns out that the guesthouse is what this pair loves most about their remodel. "My husband and I lived there with our two oldest children during the final months of construction on the main house," McDonnell says, and their third child was born during that time. "When I walk in there, the beautiful beams, the smell of old barn wood and the memories of our young family all piled in there just make me melt. The place is not even two years old and it's already filled with great memories." ♦

### Guesthouse Plan

#### FIRST FLOOR



#### SECOND FLOOR



Writer Kelli Rosen is based in Monkton, Maryland. Kenneth M. Wyner is a photographer in Takoma Park, Maryland.



