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Spring Real Estate & New Homes

Great Kitchens Help Sell Homes

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL The Connection

esigner Jacquelin Lluy, of Nicely Done Kitchens and Baths in Springfield, recently transformed the kitchen of a home in Mantua, in Fairfax, from a small, dark space to a light-filled, freeflowing culinary oasis.

"The kitchen was built in the 70s with a small, dark eat-in kitchen table for four," Lluy. "The family wanted a view of their expansive wooded lot and an island built for entertaining and family meals with their young boys."

The new kitchen includes an island made of maple. "The two-height island has a 'truffle' finish [and] was designed for game nights, football watching, entertaining friends on the higher level while the lower level is used for quick weekday meals and easy clean up with sink, trash/recycle and dishwasher located there.

Before putting a home on the market, real estate agents encourage homeowners to spruce up the kitchen. Well-designed, free-flowing kitchens like Lluy's can often make or break the sale of a home say some local Realtors.

"I think a kitchen is one of the top things that a buyer looks at," said Arlington Realtor Michelle Sagatov of the Michelle Sagatov group at McEnearney

Alexandria-based Realtor Elizabeth Lucchesi of the LizLuke Team at McEnearney Associates said, "Kitchens are the nucleus of the house. It is where everybody hangs out. The kitchen has to look good and feel good.'

Ken Nies, of Two Poor Teachers in Annandale, recently remodeled the kitchen in a Falls Church home adding "custom window millwork, lighting, a backsplash, a large center entertainment island and farm sink." Nies advises using "different materials on your island to give a custom look."

Realtors suggest investing in quality cabinetry and countertops. "Granite is something people look for but there are other materials that people can use like caesarstone and quartz," said Sagatov.

For those who want to update a kitchen and think they will be selling their home within five to seven years, Sagatov suggests that homeowners think about the resale value before remodeling. "Make the kitchen timeless," she said. "Make the things that cost a lot of money neutral and timeless, so when you go to sell your home, it appeals to a much broader audience.

If you plan on renovating the kitchen, do it early, "not when you're about to sell so that you can enjoy it too," continued Sagatov.

However, one doesn't need to remodel an entire kitchen before putting a home on the market. Real estate agents say there are a few changes that homeowners can make to help their kitchen sparkle.

"If you don't have an updated kitchen there are things that you can do to make it look updated, clean and fresh," said

Make sure the kitchen has matching appliances that are in good working order. "It doesn't matter if they are stainless steel, black or white as long as they match," said Lucchesi.

Spruce up dated cabinetry. "Painting cabinets a crisp white goes a long way," said Sagatov. "A lot of older kitchens have dark wood. Putting a coat of fresh paint and new hardware goes a long way and is an investment that gives you so much money back.'

Sagatov said, "Another easy fix would be painting the walls. Taupe or grey paint on the walls in the kitchen would be soothing and go well with the white cabinets. Those fixes don't cost a lot of money."

Fixtures are another minor element that can make a big impression.

"Make sure that cabinet pulls are updated with materials like glass or brushed nickel," said Lucchesi. "Great faucets are like a nice pair of shoes or a good belt.'

Lucchesi speaks from experience. "We sold a 1940s house recently with a small kitchen," she said. "We added new appliances, a new faucet, new cabinets and it sold for \$24,000 above the list price in four days with seven of-

"When enhancing a house for sale, you want to appeal to the broadest audience," said Lucchesi. Polished and updated kitchens create appealing pictures. "Sexy kitchens photograph well," she said. "When people are looking at kitchens in online photos, we don't want to give them a reason to tell their agent, 'No I don't want to see that

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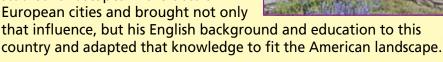
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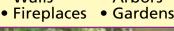
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What to Expect Buying or Selling

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

eal estate agent Joan Caton Cromwell says she lost a home bidding war last week in Falls Church even though her client was a strong contestant.

"We were one of five contracts and we even waived the appraisal," said Cromwell of McEnearney Associates. "Any house that is close-in [to Washington, D.C.] and that is in nice condition, is going to attract a lot of attention."

Real estate agents say spring is one of the busiest times of the year for home sales and there is dearth of available homes in popular neighborhoods. "The lack of inventory in sought-after communities like Arlington and McLean has already ushered in the return of bidding wars for move-in ready properties," said John Eric, Vice President TTR Sotheby's International Realty in Arlington. "I expect all sectors of the market to see price gains and demand to remain high."

HOME PRICES are on the rise. "If you put a home on the market and it gets multiple offers, the eight other people who didn't get the house will bid on another house," said Cromwell. "In a market where there are multiple offers it definitely drives the prices up and it drives them up quickly."

"We see a new trend in all price ranges where buyers want to buy where they can walk to amenities, restaurants and shops. Buyers are satisfied with smaller houses that are conveniently located."

— Marsha Schuman, Washington Fine Properties

Anthony B. Sanders, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Real Estate Finance at George Mason University said, "Very simply, this is still an area that is growing, so housing home sales will continue to rise, but more slowly than during the real estate bubble."

Still, agents are optimistic as they enter the spring buying season. "The state of the real estate market is great," said Marsha Schuman of the Washington Fine Properties' Schuman Team. "The weather is behind us and there is a momentum going into the spring market that feels very positive."

The spring market in the Washington, D.C, area is aligned with academic calendars. "It starts in April and May in the suburbs," says Cromwell. "Those in the military or who work for the World Bank for example, put their homes on the market in spring to prepare to relocate during the summer."

Proximity to public transportation increases desirability. "For example, Reston

SEE WHAT TO EXPECT, PAGE 7

Fairfax County Real Estate Overview

- In February, 789 homes were sold in Fairfax County, an increase of 2.1 percent from the 773 homes sold in February 2013.
- On average, homes that sold in Fairfax County in February were on the market for 60 days, 8 days longer than the 52-day average in February 2013
- The average home sales price of all homes that sold in February 2014 in Fairfax County was \$499,765, an increase of 4.8 percent over the February 2013 average sales price of \$476,735. Compared to the annual 2013 average home sales price of \$531,136, the February price decreased 5.9 percent.
- The average sales price for detached homes that sold in February 2014 was \$677,199, an increase of 7.4 percent over the February 2013 average of \$630,557.
- The average sales price of attached homes increased 6.9 percent in the same time period, to \$352,384 from \$329,534 the year before.
- In February, the number of active listings in the County was 1,814, an increase of 26.3 percent over the 1,436 listed in February 2013. Based on the February 2014 listings and the current sales rate, there is a 2.3 month supply of homes for sale in the County, up from the 1.9 month supply a year ago.

SOURCE: Fairfax County Office of Management and Budget

A Picture Perfect Home

a home's curb appeal.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

hen Realtors Marsha Schuman and Betsy Schuman Dodek drive up to a home to show it to a prospective buyer, they know that they have only one chance to make a good first impression. Potomac-based Dodek and Schuman of the Schuman Team of Washington Fine Properties say a home's curb appeal matters.

"When we think of curb appeal we think of the lawn and landscaping, front door, windows, roof and how it all looks," said Dodek. "Buyers want to buy from someone who has taken really good care of their home and that translates in to curb appeal."



Photo courtesy of TruPlace

Realtors say this Oakton home exemplifies ideal curb appeal, a critical factor when selling a home.

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Schuman added, "If things are not nice on the outside, then [potential buyers] wonder what the house will be like on the inside."

REAL ESTATE AGENTS SAY buyers want to purchase a well-cared for home, and the exterior aesthetic of a home creates that impression. Whether you're planning to put your house on the market or would just like a clean and fresh exterior to welcome you home each day, local real estate experts offer advice on enhancing a home's exterior.

McLean-based realtor Chris Pritchard of McEnearney Associates suggests starting by "The sense of arrival is very important you never get a second chance to make a first impression."

— Chris Pritchard

critiquing your own home. "Stand in front of your house and take a look," she said. "Walk up the driveway, ask yourself what you would want to see if you were shopping for a house."

Tips from the pros on boosting

The yard should be pristine and vibrant. "Trimming, mulching and planting some colorful plants are key," said Pritchard.

"Add color with flowers, pots with plants, choosing things like geraniums and pansies," said Dodek. "Adding color just makes such a difference. It makes the yard pop."

Consider safety. "Is the yard hazard-free?" asks Dodek. "It needs to be freshly mowed and mulched with dark mulch because that makes the greenery pop. Make sure your bushes are trimmed and proportionate. Look at trees to make sure they aren't blocking the size of the house."

"One of the next areas we look at are patios, walkways and fences," continued Dodek. "Do they need repairs? Is there loose mortar?"

McLean Realtor Ann McClure of McEnearney Associates says that a home's exterior should be well-lit. "You need good looking and functional lighting which should be on in the evening."

Examine the entrance. "Take a look at the front door," said Dodek. "Does it need painting? We had a recent listing and we painted the door red and added new hardware and a kick plate and that made it stand out. That is something that is very cost effective to do."

A clean appearance is critical. "There should be no algae stains on the roof," said McClure. "The homeowner should make sure that if they have siding that it doesn't

See Picture Perfect. Page 7

Local Designers Help Unveil DC Design House

Area tastemakers dream home, currently on the market for \$3.85 million.

THE CONNECTION

ocal designers showed off their and Alexandria to Potomac, Md., the area's top designers competed for an opportunity furniture to fill the space. to donate their talent to transform a local, grand home into a showcase home.

\$3.85 million, is now open to the public for patio. The design duo created a room with tours. It features six-bedrooms, five full-and French doors that open to the pool area two half-baths. Built in 1929, the home fea- when the weather is mild, but added a lintures a three-car garage and a pool. The ear, modern fireplace to create a warm and stone house offers three levels and nearly cozy space during cooler months. They cre-8,000 square feet of living space, which loaded "cascading light down the hand-woven cal designers transformed.

THE HOME'S FRONT FAÇADE was designed by David Benton and Jim Rill of ernism. Potomac's Rill Architects. Inspired by the stately stone home, the duo decided to add a bit of detail and interest in the form of "style appropriate light fixtures, shutters, scribes the small space as "chic, classic and furniture and accent colors." When choostimeless ... a jewel box bath." The room feaing a paint color for the front door, they tures Calcutta marble flooring in a herringwanted a hue that was traditional, but unexpected. Their choice: a "high-gloss verdigris green-blue [that] immediately catches music while bathing. Mann was able to pre- a light and airy space, the duo selected wall your eye from the street. They replaced the serve and refinish the home's original iron paper in a pink floral pattern. "We choose existing solid wood single door with a glasspaned French door that "pulls outside views sand daylight into the entry hall."

By Marilyn Campbell Victoria Sanchez of Victoria At Home in Old Town, Alexandria, designed the family breakfast room. "I wanted to create a room with a casual and cozy feel," she said. The master work when the 2014 DC room, which has large picture windows that Design House was unveiled re- offer uninterrupted views of nature, concently. From Arlington to Burke, nects the kitchen with butler's pantry/wine tasting room. Sanchez choose woven rattan

Jeff Akseizer and Jamie Brown of Akseizer Design Group in Alexandria designed the The home, which is on the market for family room, which overlooks the pool and wall covering..." The room is filled with organic textures, tone-on-tone colors and "nods to both a mid-century flair and mod-

One of the home's guest bathrooms was created by Arlington-based Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling Inc. Mann debone pattern and the acoustic "Moxie" showering system that allows one to listen to



One of the home's guest bathrooms was created by Arlington-based Allie Mann of Case Design/Remodeling. The room features Calcutta marble flooring in a herringbone pattern and the acoustic "Moxie" showering system that allows one to listen to music while bathing.

bedroom in the home. In an effort to create streamlined furniture and fabrics to accent Janice Donelson, a classically trained artist. low for a larger master bathroom and a walk-Susan Donelson and Sharon Bubenhofer, the Asian feeling of the wallpaper." The of Cleveland Hall Design created a guest room, designed whimsically in pink and green, features twin beds. The art in the by Nancy Colbert of Design Partners in room was painted by Donelson's mother, McLean. The space was repurposed to al-



Victoria Sanchez, of Victoria At Home in Old Town, Alexandria, designed the family breakfast room. The room, which has large, picture windows that offer uninterrupted views of nature, connects the kitchen with

butler's pantry/wine tasting room.

THE MASTER BEDROOM was designed

in closet with built-in shelving. Colbert discovered a painting that she thought would be perfect for a master bedroom, and designed the room around it. She chose an newly discovered artist. It is a work of art ivory turned-post king bed that she furnished and a table." with silk bedding in parchment and seafoam

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green. Colbert added crown molding for additional detail. "One of the room's multipurpose features is a silver toned gilded butterfly side table that was created by a

Beth Boggs, Teri Lohmann and Lynne



Location: 4600 Linnean Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008 Hours: Saturday and Sunday, noon-5 p.m. and Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., closed Monday, \$25. The home will be open for tours through May 11, 2014.



Jeff Akseizer and Jamie Brown, of Akseizer Design Group in Alexandria, designed the family room of the DC Design House. The room is filled with organic textures, tone-on-tone colors and "nods to both a midcentury flair and modernism."

Parmele of C2 Paint, Potomac Paint & De-striking textured design." sign with locations in Alexandria, Arlington Paintable wall paper "conveniently camourability for high-traffic use and creates a

Now in its seventh year, the annual event and Chantilly, added color to the back stair- is a fundraiser for Children's National Health case. The team chose paintable wallpaper System, formerly Children's National Mediin shades of plum, lilac, and spring green. cal Center. The D.C. Design House has raised more than \$1 million and attracted more flages old plaster wall cracks, provides duthan 55,000 visitors over the past six years.



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Susan Donelson and Sharon Bubenhofer, of Cleveland Hall Design created a light and airy guest bedroom in the DC Design House. The room, designed whimsically in pink and green, features twin beds. Art in the room was painted by Donelson's mother, Janice Donelson, a classically trained artist.



The master bedroom was designed by Nancy Colbert, of Design Partners in McLean. The space was repurposed to allow for a larger master bathroom and a walk-in closet with built-in shelving.



The home's front façade was designed by Rill Architects' David Benton and Jim Rill of Potomac.

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space during cooler months. 4 * CENTRE VIEW * Spring Real Estate & New Homes 2014

Jeff Akseizer and Jamie Brown, of Akseizer Design Group in Alexandria, designed the family room of the DC Design House. The duo created a

room with French doors that open to the pool area when the weather is

mild, but added a linear, modern fireplace to create a warm and cozy

CENTRE VIEW * Spring Real Estate & New Homes 2014 * 5

Sampler of New Homes Offerings



Van Metre

The Van Metre Portsmouth Model at Brambleton includes 3,692 square feet with five bedrooms and three baths with a main level bedroom and full bath. Van Metre homes operates an award-winning new homes design center at 24600 Mill Stream Drive #400, Stone Ridge, VA 20105.



Ryan Homes — Hampton Reserve, Fairfax Station

Ryan Homes is offering several models of single family homes up to 6,000 square feet at Hampton Reserve in Fairfax Station. Homes at Hampton Re-

serve sit on lots of at least one acre and have three-car garages. Located at 8830 Chrisanthe Court, Fairfax Station, VA, 22039. Call 540-940-9397.



Richmond American Homes

Townhomes and duplexes in the City of Fairfax, from the mid \$600,000s, at approximately 2,200-2,300 square feet with 3-5 bedrooms. Located at 10623 School Street, Fairfax, VA 22030. Call 703-348-0025



Photos by **Craig Sterbutzel**

New homes in Vienna in the Maymont community, built by Basheer & Edgmoore.

Basheer & Edgemoore Wins Silver

The Maymont community in Vienna, Va. won a Silver Award for Basheer & Edgemoore at the National Sales and Marketing Awards for 2014. Hosted by the National Association of Home Builders, Basheer & Edgemoore took silver in the Community of the Year category.

The 5,000-8,000-square-foot homes at Maymont feature amenities such as hardwood flooring, granite countertops and brick and stone exteriors.

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Over the years, Basheer & Edgemoore used technological advances and improvements in construction and design, and these efforts have garnered industry recognition for leadership and innovation.

Visit www.basheerandedgemoore.com.



Pulte Homes

Metro West — with prices from \$454,990-\$831,845, Pulte has 1,256-1,942 square-foot condominiums and townhomes next to the Vienna Metro with 2-4 bedrooms, 2-3.5 baths, located at 2952 Rittenhouse Circle, Fairfax. Call 888-817-2201 or visit www.pulte.com.

Potomac Yard — 1,736-4,167-square-foot condominiums and townhomes priced from \$619,990-\$1,133,845. Located at 2400 Main Line Blvd, Alexandria, VA 22301. Call 888-617-8583 or 800-665-4161, or visit www.pulte.com.

Stanley Martin

Summit Oaks — a community of new single family homes in Lorton, within seven miles of Lorton Station Town Center, Kingstowne Wegmans (coming in 2014), Kingstowne Center, Springfield Target and the Springfield Town Center project. Summit Oaks will offer two floorplans: The Carey (3,331-5,849 square feet) and The Davidson (3,492-4,917 square feet). Prices start in the low \$700,000s. Contact Lisa Sullivan at 703-339-9670.

Cameron Glen – new homes located just off Judicial Drive in the City of Fairfax, with the benefits of new construction amidst the charm and conveniences of Old Town Fairfax. Prices start at \$639,900. 4092 Sutherland Place, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Callaway – a community of new single family homes in Annandale, with three single family floor plans ranging from 3,037-4,363 square feet. Prices start in the upper \$700,000s. Contact Rhonda Shapiro at 571-266-9172 or Lisa Chapel at 703-994-3780.

Evergreene Homes

Columbia Place — 1100 S Edgewood St., Arlington, VA 22204, Condos From the Mid 500s - Towns from the 800s. Call 703-868-8196.

Vale Oakton — 11797 Stuart Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124. Single Family, \$2,313,925. Call 703-466-5411.

Wolf Trap Woods — 9518 Leemay St., Vienna, VA 22182. Single family-\$1,449,900. Call 703-466-5411.

Oakton Heights — 10412 Miller Road Oakton, VA 22124. Single family homes from \$1.3 million. Call 888-925-7411.

Westover Place — 1009 North Kensington St., Arlington, VA 22205. Townhouses from the \$800,000s. Call 703-652-2949.

What to Expect

From Page 3

is popular because of the Silver Line," said Cromwell. "North Arlington and Falls Church are popular. Anything that offers a decent commuting experience for someone who can't afford what they want in the city will be sought after."

Schuman said, "We see a new trend in all price ranges where buyers want to buy where they can walk to amenities, restaurants and shops. Buyers are satisfied with smaller houses that are conveniently located. They want an easier life. Convenience is the new real estate buzzword. Property becomes compelling when buyers see value."

Sanders said some communities are especially competitive. "Virginia has two of the wealthiest counties in the country, Loudoun and Fairfax counties, so those communities should see a fairly short turn over."

NOT EVERYONE IS KEEPING with the trend. "We're not seeing middle class families buying homes through the mortgage market," said Sanders, the GMU professor. "Their income was devastated during the housing bubble burst due to foreclosures. Real household income has fallen since 2007. So the American middle class is worse off than it was in 2007. It's more high-income families with cash or investors who are buying homes."



Photo courtesy of TTR Sotheby's International Realty

John Eric, Vice President TTR Sotheby's International Realty says lack of inventory in sought-after communities like Arlington and McLean has already ushered in the return of bidding wars for move-in ready properties like this Arlington home.

Schuman says that homes priced below \$1.3 million "are being snapped off the market if they are well conditioned and fairly priced. The ultra-luxury market, homes over \$2 million, is a little bit slower paced at

present, but there are signs that these buyers are out there and wanting to buy."

Cromwell agrees, "The 600-900K price point is very busy for a house in good condition.'

A Picture Perfect Home

need power washing."

"Power wash driveways, walkways and even the house sometimes," said Pritchard. "The house should be washed before it is painted. Do any kind of painting or touch up painting of siding trim and doors that needs to be done. Sometimes you don't have to paint at all if you do power washing. All homes get dusty. Sometimes paint fades and needs repainting."

"Another easy thing is the windows," said Dodek. "Remove screens and wash the windows. You want your house to sparkle inside and out."

Pritchard said, "Curb appeal also goes to having a fence in good shape: washed and painted or washed and sealed. The home's deck should be in good shape. More often than not a deck should be power washed and painted or stained or sealed or whatever the appropriate finish is."

Minor touches can make a major impact. "Take a look at your mailbox," said Dodek. "Is it upright? Is it tilted? Does it need to be painted?

Don't hide your amenities. "If you have a swimming pool, we get them to remove the cover," said Dodek. "There's nothing more beautiful than a beautiful blue swimming

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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