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THE *Luxury*
KITCHEN & BATH ISSUE

An aerial photograph of a large, luxurious estate situated on a bend in the Severn river. The property is characterized by a long, multi-level pier or marina extending into the dark water on the left, with several boats moored. The estate itself is nestled among dense trees displaying vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A large, light-colored house with multiple gables and a grey roof is the central feature, surrounded by manicured lawns, a swimming pool, and a tennis court. A winding path or driveway leads through the trees to the property. The overall scene is one of a secluded, high-end residential location.

A FRENCH CHATEAU ON THE SEVERN

By Robert Haywood
Photography by Alan Gilbert and Steve Hane



As president of the Technology Development Division for America Online (AOL) during its golden age in the 1990s, Martin Fisher built his career on the foundations of the modern technology economy. Yet when he and his wife Georgianna had the chance to build a waterfront home on the Severn River, they did not look so much to modern architecture but to the past. For their twenty-acre property with 900 feet of spectacular water views the Fishers enlisted architect David Riegel and builder Guy Pilli to build a French Country style 22,000 square foot home (plus 6,000 square feet for the pool house). Although the architecture and antiques in the Fisher residence evoke the past, the home is fully modern. In fact, when it was built roughly ten years ago, it was as fully automated as any home at the time.

Few properties of this magnitude and even fewer with this much waterfront exist on the East Coast. When Georgianna Fisher refers to the Severna Park estate, she says, "I love every inch of it." And there are a lot of inches to love—336,000 square inches of architectural space.

The home has the enchanting character associated with Old World architecture and exhibits a romance with European

history. At its conception, Martin Fisher gave Riegel a simple set of directions: he wanted a French-style, brick home; Georgianna made it clear that she wanted a home and not a museum. From there, Riegel says the Fishers were ideal clients because they gave him much freedom in developing the plans. Given the house's size, as well as the Fisher's trust in the experts they hired, both Riegel and Pilli have a special fondness for the home and see it as

among their most ambitious work. Indeed, Pilli and his team devoted nearly three years to the construction, which includes the finest wood, stone, moldings, windows, plaster, and ironwork found anywhere.

Among the many features of the exterior, Riegel points to the carefully balanced, descending rooflines. The center facade is the highest

point, with each section diminishing in height. A sense of weight comes from the grey-slated roof, while the beige stone provides the massive exterior with a lighter feel. Windows and porches are accented by intricate forged ironwork. The exterior stone accents include large, natural, rubble stone quoins climbing up the corners of the house, adding to the home's rustic, Old World character. Custom designed cast stone was used at all window and door surrounds.





Throughout the interior and exterior are antique mantels, doors, planters, textiles, and statuary. Interior Concept's founder Arlene Critzos, who scours the US and Europe for fine antiques, furnished the home, including the fireplace mantels. The front doors are from a mid-nineteenth-century French château. The living room contains an antique stone fireplace, also from France. The elaborate and ornate music room fireplace, made of walnut, was part of an entire built-in wood room from an early-twentieth-century Parisian home. The fireplace in the library is also made of walnut, its opening decorated with antique English tiles.

The kitchen, designed by Joni Zimmerman of Design Solutions, accentuates the French Country theme. Zimmerman created a kitchen that is both rustic and elegant with two basic areas split by the doorway

from the back entry. One area is for preparation, and the other for serving. Zimmerman explains that in the serving area "we have a more elegant design of tall, glass fronted cabinets to house and showcase dishware. The appliances in that area are more 'service' oriented." Zimmerman adds that the prep side has a red Aga range, "a statement in design and cooking style." In this section, the cabinets have a less formal look from the glass front units.

The ground floor spaces are only the beginning. The basement contains a full-blown man cave with a theatre, billiard area, bar, and beautiful gothic-like wine cellar. The wine cellar features reclaimed oak beams from an 1840s church. All of this building demanded exceptional craftsmanship, which Pilli and his team delivered.

Mark Childs of Exterior Image designed the landscape, conceived to evoke an English garden. The landscape design includes a formal front garden, colonnade, and a more relaxed area in the back, which contains a koi pond and

grotto. Georgianna, who has an earthy nature at heart, brought her own special touch to the landscape; she had added a chicken coop and vegetable garden, both with easy access to the kitchen. (And the days I visited the chickens seemed as if they couldn't be happier!)

After enjoying and "loving every inch" of this land and home for many years, the Fishers, whose children are grown, have decided to sell their estate. What they are selling is a property for which they hired experienced design and building professionals, allowing them to work at their highest level of achievement. [AH](#)

For more information on this Severna Park estate, contact David DeSantis or Maria-Victoria Checa, TTR | Sotheby's International, Chevy Chase MD, 301-967-3344.

THE SECRETS OF AN A+ KITCHEN

By Kymberly Taylor

Photography By Anne Gummerson

Imagine a seagull gliding high above the Bay. Next, picture a baby osprey crash landing on Spa Creek. Good and bad kitchen design has much in common with flying: success depends upon balance. When balance is achieved, there is harmony. When there are flaws, there is disruption, lack of ease, or even pain if you hit your head on a cabinet door while loading the dishwasher. By contrast, a good design promotes effortlessness and comfort. Every phenomenal kitchen has this balance, a special poise,

and a primary example can be found in the work of architect Leo Wilson of Hammond Wilson Architects in Annapolis and kitchen designer Brad Creer of Bradford Design in Bethesda. Recently, an Annapolis couple turned to Wilson and Creer for help transforming their newly purchased 1970s waterfront house into a home, but not just any home—one with seven working fireplaces, including one blazing away in the kitchen.





Wilson and his firm aggressively redesigned the house, built by Greg Younger of the Annapolis-based Younger Construction Company. Wilson added fireplaces, moved walls, and enlarged the kitchen, which needed thirteen appliances integrated seamlessly. The kitchen is, literally, in the home's center, so creating some privacy, while including a fireplace, sitting areas, a suite of professional-grade appliances, and workstations were especially tricky, says Wilson.

Early in the design process, Wilson and Creer collaborated to create a balance not only between appliances and furnishings but also between space and matter, forming, among other things, invisible pathways so one can travel easily from island to island, from task to task, appliance to appliance. Wilson believes the kitchen's success has much to do with deferring to a professional kitchen designer. "They know about options you may never have heard about. They've done this before. They know your story even better than you do," he says.

Creer had many conversations with the homeowners and came to understand their romance with warm fires, and respect for beauty—they wanted both in a truly working kitchen. "To make a kitchen functional is fairly easy but to make one beautiful and efficient is harder," he explains. For instance, what good is an attractive fireplace if you can't experience it? With this in mind, Wilson and Creer positioned the fireplace higher than usual so the chef could see it while cooking. The mantel was designed by Creer to complement the kitchen cabinetry. A flat screen television overhead is hidden behind pocket doors.

Creer notes that the drama created by the fireplace and range hood is balanced by quieter elements. For example, the cabinets along the range walls vary in placement. "I like to pull some

cabinets out and push others back in so it doesn't look so clinical with them all lined up," says Creer. He anchored the inside row of cabinetry at both ends with tall cabinets, which creates symmetry. Creer also used color to provide symmetry. "There is lots of glaze, lots of sheen, calling attention to the island, which is a unique green," he notes. Cabinet and wood floor finishes complement and accentuate each other. "That is very important to kitchen design, there are different grains, species, colors, and intensities. All these things play and can almost clash, so you must make sure the woods are compatible," he says. Fine but seminal details such as these could get lost in the process of designing a kitchen.

Before embarking on your own project, Wilson suggests three things. The first is to take your time and educate yourself about the many options available and then build upon that knowledge. The second is to trust an expert. "Don't be afraid to hire a qualified kitchen designer. The A+ kitchens all have them. It is invaluable if you want a good outcome," he says. Finally, he cautions: "Be honest with yourself. People demand a lot from their kitchens today. They tend to be way over the top, with not just one workstation but two. Make sure you need what you build."

Resources:

Architect: Leo Wilson, Hammond Wilson Architects, www.hammondwilson.com

Kitchen Designer: Brad Creer, Bradford Design, LLC, www.bradforddesignllc.com

Builder: Greg Younger, Younger Construction Co. Inc., www.youngerconstruction.com

Interior Design Firm: Interior Concepts, www.interiorconceptsinc.com

Fireplace: Lennox, www.lennox.com