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YOUR HOME

CUSTOM HOME WITH ROOM FOR MOM

BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME WITH MOTHER-IN-LAW SUITE OVERLOOKS REISTERSTOWN HORSE FARM

By Mary Medland
Contributing Writer

Originally Gersha and Lafon Porter intended to build a home for just the two of them and their elementary school age son and daughter. But about two months into the planning and design the couple began thinking how to best include Lafon's mother into the project.

"We worked with our designer and builder, Ashley Custom Homes, to figure out how we could incorporate her," says Gersha. "The first idea was to build a mother-in-law suite in the basement, but that didn't work well for us."

Instead, the two decided to expand the first level of their home to accommodate Lafon's mother and began making plans for such an addition.

The elder Mrs. Porter, who lives completely independently, was enthusiastic. "We all respect the boundaries, and I knew it would be a pleasure to have her live with us," says Gersha.

The result was an addition - a 1,200-square-foot condo, as Gersha puts it - that gave her mother-in-law a separate front door and her own one-car garage. The condo has a master suite with a linen closet, a living room with a gas fireplace, coat closet and big eat-in kitchen which also houses the washer and dryer. "My mother loves to cook and bake, so she really needed a serious kitchen," says Lafon.

When the couple began planning their dream home, they worked with Ed Goddard, sales manager with Ashley Custom Homes. Having sold their old home, the couple and their children spent months living in a two-bedroom apartment while building took place.

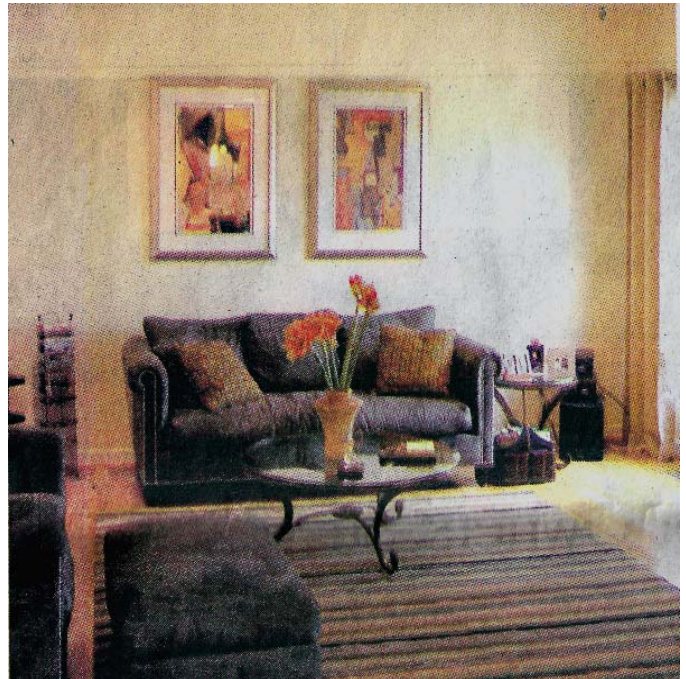


Photo by Mary Medland

The Porters tapped Ashley Custom Homes to build their dream home.

As Lafon is the primary chef in the home, they consulted with a kitchen designer for that space, while the Porters worked with Ashley to plan the rest of the house.

"When someone comes in to see us, we try to get a feel for what they are looking for," says Goddard. "We have about 50 or 60 plans and blueprints that we show them, but clients can change things to suit them."

In addition to working with homeowners in the

planning and construction of a house, Ashley Custom Homes will lend a hand when it comes to finding the land on which to build. "The biggest thing these days is land," notes Goddard. "Houses are easy, you can draw one up in an hour, but finding the right lot is getting harder and harder. If you own the land, that's more than half the battle."

Goddard was looking for land for the Porters as well as a number of other clients. When he found a plot of land in Reisterstown that he believed would meet the needs of several clients, he notified all of them. Most were reluctant to make a decision at first - except for Gersha.

She's a Realtor, she knew what she was looking at. The plot looks over a horse farm; she showed up with a check," notes Goddard, adding that the other clients decided too late that this really was the perfect property for them as well.

As one enters the foyer, the living room is to the left and the dining room to the right. (All of the first floor and the staircase to the second floor is hardwood flooring, while the second floor is carpeted with a neutral semi-shag rug.)

The living room is home to a chocolate brown microsuede sofa and love seat, which are accented by two brown lamps. Having received an Oriental carpet from Gersha's parents for the living room and another for the dining room as Christmas gifts, the two deliberately chose a glass coffee table that very nicely shows off the living room's rug. Just off the living room is a powder room with a granite pedestal vessel sink.

"Our dining room has a table and chairs for eight, but I can easily seat 10 here," says Gersha, a Realtor with ReMax Advantage. "We also have our china cabinet here, and the silk curtains in the dining room match those in the living room."

A short hall leads to a step-down family room, which features a raised gas fireplace, flat television and surround sound audio. The furniture includes a sofa, two club chairs, an oversized chair and ottoman, a decorative area rug and large windows that look out onto the wooded lot.

Across from the family room is a knockout kitchen. "We purchased a Viking cook top with an industrial hood that has both a grill and a griddle, as well as a pot filler that makes it easy to fill a large pot right here, instead of having to carry it across the kitchen," says Lafon, a contract negotiator for IBM. "All of our appliances are top-of-the-line GE products."

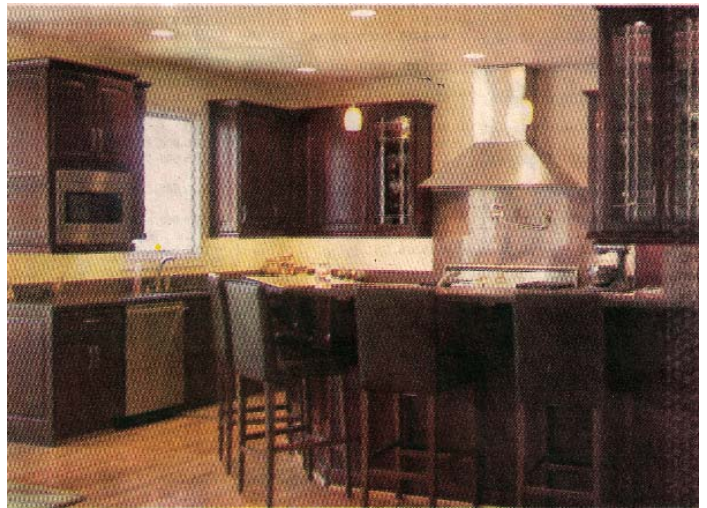


Photo by Mary Medland

A chef's kitchen is just one of many upgrades in the Porters' home.

Here the cabinetry is a dark cherry shade - which is echoed in the master bathroom - and, also in dark cherry, a peninsula island bar. "This is where we and our kids eat breakfast," says Gersha, adding that if she is not home, it is her husband, who also has a home office, who gives the children after-school snacks and gets them started on their homework.

The second floor has a bedroom for each of their children and a bathroom, with a separate water closet that can be accessed from their son's bedroom and from their daughter's. The Porters' 7-year old son has a bunk bed for sleepovers and their 10-year old daughter's bedroom reflects her love for playing basketball.

"Each of my children has a computer in their room, but neither has a television," says Gersha.

Down the hall is a laundry room and a spare bedroom with a private bath that today serves as Lafon's office. The master bedroom suite includes a sitting room with a television and juice bar. The bedroom itself has a gas fireplace and outside the bedroom is a balcony with bistro table and chairs.

"Our master bath is a luxury spa bath with an oversized shower that has 10 jets, and we have a two-person Jacuzzi tub. The vanity has granite tops and we've used the same cherry cabinets as in the kitchen," says Gersha. "Without a doubt, our two favorite rooms are the kitchen and this bathroom."