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Divine Designs Revealed at Upcoming Kitchen Tour

By Catherine Kauder



Shelly and David Barnes in their newly-renovated kitchen that Shelly designed herself. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Six beautiful kitchens will be featured at this year's Lafayette Juniors' Kitchen Tour on Saturday, May 18. The 14th annual event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., features kitchens with influences as diverse as the European countryside to the Barefoot Contessa.

Shelly Barnes envisioned her dream kitchen 20 years ago when she and her husband David purchased their home in Lafayette's Silver Dell neighborhood. Although the couple wasn't crazy about the layout of their 1960s ranch, they loved the lot and knew that the space had potential.

Two years ago, the Barnes embarked on a full-house renovation, and as visitors will see from their spacious, rustic kitchen, the result was worth the wait.

The kitchen features a sweeping, cream-colored stucco hood that evokes a country house in Tuscany. The natural stone and glass backsplash over the six-burner stainless steel stove frames a carved Sonoma tile plaque that Barnes found in a tile shop.

The fronts of the two cabinet doors on either side of the hood are made of wire mesh, which allows the viewer to see what's inside but also gives depth and texture to the cabinetry. The large, honed light mocha-colored Juparana Persa granite island stands in subtle contrast to the creamy

hued cabinets, giving the kitchen a warm and inviting feel.

"I like to build around a focal point," explains Barnes, who designed the kitchen herself and has also rebuilt two homes with her husband in their neighborhood.

Perhaps one of the kitchen's most enticing features is its view. Across from the island is a breakfast nook with a banquette against a large wall of windows looking out onto the back yard. The yard, which has a pool, fire pit and awnings hanging with wisteria, will be where lunch is served during the kitchen tour.

Nestled on a quiet street in Lafayette's trails neighborhood, Vickie and Dan Vradenburg's home features a clean, contemporary kitchen with a colorful Vetrazzo glass island countertop made of recycled bottles and jars. Flecks of green, blue and brown glass give the island a pop of color over its dark walnut wood base and contrasts with the gray Caesarstone counters and lighter-stained wood cabinetry in the rest of the kitchen.

"My favorite thing is the island - it's such a functional piece of art," says Vickie, who has a long-time hobby of creating mosaics out of broken glass.

The Vradenburgs had wanted to redo their kitchen, which was once walled off from the rest of the house with a semicircular bar that overlooked the family room. Last year, after the kitchen was flooded and extensively damaged when a hot water dispenser burst, they got their chance. The Vradenburgs decided to remodel their entire home with the help of architect Leila Douglass of Douglass Designs.

The couple decided to tear down the original wall of the kitchen and open it up to the adjacent living areas. They converted an unused nook off of the kitchen into a spacious work area for Vickie, raising the window so that they could add a desk that overlooks their garden.

Their more formal dining area, which was originally walled off from the kitchen, is now opened up and overlooks their spacious entry way and fireplace. An elegant Hubbardton Forge chandelier hangs over the dining table, giving soft light to the space.

Colorful accents complement the kitchen, like three modern, amber-colored pendant lights over the island and forged metal hardware on the cabinetry. The backsplash behind the Dacor stovetop is a mosaic of thin mink-colored glass tiles that pick up on the gray tones of the countertop. A travertine tile floor and natural woven window shades frame the kitchen and allow the colorful elements to stand out.

Rounding out the eclectic mix of homes on this year's kitchen tour are an energy-efficient Mediterranean style home with spectacular views of Mount Diablo, a kitchen inspired by its horse ranch setting, a classic traditional-style home and one with a kitchen inspired by the easy yet refined style of Ina Garten, the Barefoot Contessa.

All the homes featured on the tour are located in the Happy Valley, Burton Valley, and Reliez Valley neighborhoods of Lafayette.

Proceeds from this year's kitchen tour will go to Lafayette Juniors' non-profit beneficiaries: New Day for Children, CoachArt, Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, and We Care. These organizations were selected by the Lafayette Juniors for the exceptional support they provide to children and families in need throughout Contra Costa and neighboring East Bay counties.

Tickets are available for sale to the general public for \$40 (\$30 tax deductible), with a box lunch available for
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\$12. Tickets can be purchased online at www.lafayettejuniors.org or from Douglah Designs (3586 Mt. Diablo Blvd.) and Premier Kitchens (3373 Mt. Diablo Blvd.) in Lafayette.



A sonoma tile that owner Shelly Barnes found in a tile shop is used as a backsplash for the kitchen's stove. Photos Ohlen Alexander



The outdoor patio of the Barnes' home, which will be where lunch is served during the Lafayette Juniors' Kitchen Tour this year.



Vickie Vradenburg in her kitchen, which features a colorful Vetrazzo island countertop made of broken bottles and jars.

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