



9th Annual Lafayette Kitchen Tour—Don't Miss It

By Andrea A. Firth

The ever-popular Lafayette Kitchen Tour is back. Homes and kitchens will be open for viewing on Saturday, May 17th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. "It's a really fun day that has become a Lafayette tradition," states Pam Severson, President of the Lafayette Suburban Juniors Women's Club which hosts the event. "People come back year after year saying how much they always look forward to this day," she adds.

There will be a total of six kitchens to oooh and ahhh over—here's a description of just two to whet your appetite.

Convenience, efficiency, and attention to detail define the Casella's new kitchen. After kicking around remodeling ideas for about a year, Char Casella spent last summer creating the ultimate functional kitchen. "We wanted a larger kitchen that worked for multiple cooks," explains Char. "I cook. My husband cleans and preps, and our eight-year old twin boys get involved."

An accountant by training, Char first compiled a full inventory of the items in her kitchen and how much space everything occupied. The kitchen was then designed with separate areas, or zones, for prep, cooking, baking, clean up, plating, beverages, breakfast, and snacks. Char has what she describes as a distributed pantry that stores foods and appliances in the relevant zone.

For example, the bread machine and flours are kept in the baking zone which also has a lower than conventional counter making it easier for Char and her young sons to roll out dough and make cookies. "We have room for everything now. This kitchen works whether it's just me, me and my kids, or lots of people."

Tami and Christian Mirner took their inspiration from south of the border when they built their new home, which has Mexican elements evident throughout such as the rough-finish, brightly-colored plaster walls. After tearing down their old home, the Mirners worked to reduce their contribution to the local landfill by recycling the used building materials for use in the construction of new homes in Mexico.

Christian Mirner's fluency in Spanish was helpful throughout the building process as the couple made several trips to Mexico to source fixtures and furniture including a hand-carved, 11-foot long dining room table and assorted chairs. Relaxed and casual come to mind when one enters the Mirner's new kitchen. "Roomy. It's a room to hang out in, to be a family in, and to entertain in," explains Tami.

Lafayette Juniors expect about 700 attendees at the Kitchen Tour this year. "The reception from the community has never diminished," notes Dana Green, who organized the first Kitchen Tour nine years ago. "To the Juniors' credit, the day is executed flawlessly, and the flavor is just different enough each year that the community is still intrigued," she adds.

Proceeds from the Kitchen Tour will go to Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, an organization that provides permanent housing and support to families who have been homeless and who are challenged by disabilities. Attendees can also enjoy a catered lunch in the beautiful gardens of one of the homes on the tour.



The Casella's kitchen

Photo by Heather Rachelle Photography



The Mirner's kitchen

Photo by Heather Rachelle Photography