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It's All About the Kitchen

By Rosylyn Aragonés Stenzel



Gary and Rica LaVerda's kitchen reflects a Contemporary Craftsman style Photo Doug Kohen

and was inspired by Art Smith's "Back to the Family," where he writes about the connection between family and food, and how the kitchen represents that connection.

But wait there is more to see, because there is not one, but two kitchens in this fabulous home. The prep kitchen sits behind the main kitchen, and is where Laurie, an avid cook, does most of the food preparation. With antiqued-painted cabinets and colorful tile backsplash, the prep kitchen is stylish and functional. The Winslows enjoy entertaining, and the prep kitchen comes in handy as a place to put away dishes for later and out of sight.

Another feature in the prep kitchen is the induction cook top which uses magnetic technology to heat a pan quickly. The Soapstone countertop - untreated with any chemicals - serves as a great spot for making pastries.

Lastly, with all the careful attention to detail in designing the home, at the forefront for the Winslows was ensuring their home was healthy and chemical-free with good indoor air quality. She used "Prescriptions for A Healthy House" by Paula Baker-Laporte, Erica Elliot and John Banta, as a guideline during construction of the home. Describing herself as both health and environmentally conscious, Laurie researched all materials used, including paints and finishes, to confirm that everything had either low or no VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) and no added Formaldehydes.

Another home not to be missed on the tour is a newly built Craftsman on the Lafayette Trail. Wanting to bring the Tahoe feeling to Lafayette, Gary and Rica LaVerda worked with their architect to design a contemporary Craftsman home with an open living space, high ceilings and lots of windows and light. The LaVerdas also own a home in Truckee, so they hired an architect who keeps an office there along with a local designer; who both shared their vision for creating a Tahoe feel to their home.

They've been in the same spot in Lafayette for over 30 years, remodeling and adding onto the original cottage through the years. After awhile, says Rica LaVerda, there is only so much one can do, so they decided to tear their old home down and start from new.

They enjoy entertaining, and Rica loves to cook, so her goal was to have an easy kitchen with lots of space where guests don't feel crowded. The large Wolf Range is a standout in the kitchen with a gas stove top and six burners plus an electric double oven.

The LaVerdas found many of the fixtures online including the range hood, copper sink and hardware. The centerpiece in their kitchen is the large, one-of-a-kind range hood; made from recycled auto parts, the steel is stained in an earthy tone complimenting the mosaic tile backsplash.

The slate countertops have a smooth finish and are edged in a unique, wavy pattern. The wood floors are unique too and are Civil War era Oak; reclaimed from tobacco barns in the South. The same theme is carried over to the adjoining living room where a grand, rustic mantel, also made from reclaimed wood, sits over the fireplace.

Another special feature is the state-of-the-art lighting throughout the kitchen. Gary LaVerda is a retired electrician and installed all the lighting himself. All the lights are LED (Light Emitting Diodes) which means low energy and efficient lighting. In addition, there is a centralized light control system that controls all the lighting in the home. There are different lighting scenes which are set for the time of the day; eliminating the need for several light switches throughout the home.

Four other fabulous kitchens are also featured on the tour, including a modular home, an Eco-Modern home of
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Offering the very latest in kitchen design and style, the 11th annual Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour is Saturday, May 15th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Six brand new kitchens are on the tour showcasing the latest and up-to-date trends in traditional and contemporary kitchen design. These stylized kitchens feature an array of different tastes ranging from East Coast traditional and French Country to Eco-Modern and contemporary Craftsman and even including one house that has two kitchens.

Walking into Burney and Laurie Winslow's home, it's easy to pretend that you have been transported to a villa in Tuscany. This same theme extends into the kitchen. With sunlight pouring through the wall of windows, it is a dramatic, grand, yet inviting space with Old World style custom cabinets, limestone floors and a unique tile backsplash from Mexico. Homeowner Laurie Winslow worked with a designer to create an Italian, earthy, casual style to her kitchen.

The extra large kitchen island - granite with a leather finish - is not only perfect for entertaining, but it is also where the family of five eats all their meals together.

Winslow explains that the kitchen is the heart of their home

an architect and the home of the former Lafayette Junior who conceived the original Kitchen Tour over 11 years ago.

Proceeds from the tour will benefit Brighter Beginnings, a non-profit organization that reaches out to families in need, providing services to promote healthy births and children's successful development. Brighter Beginnings serves over 2,300 families in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

11th Annual Lafayette
Juniors Kitchen Tour,
Saturday, May 15th
from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Tickets are \$35 and may be
purchased at Douglah Designs and Premier Kitchens, both in Lafayette.
Visit www.lafayettejuniors.org
for more information.



Burney and Laurie Winslow's main kitchen features an extra large granite island with leather finish Photo Kelly Wood



Rica LaVerda appreciates the natural, evolving patina of her copper-hammered apron sink Photo Doug Kohen



Another view of the Winslows' main kitchen showcases the Italian, earthy, casual style Photo Kelly Wood

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