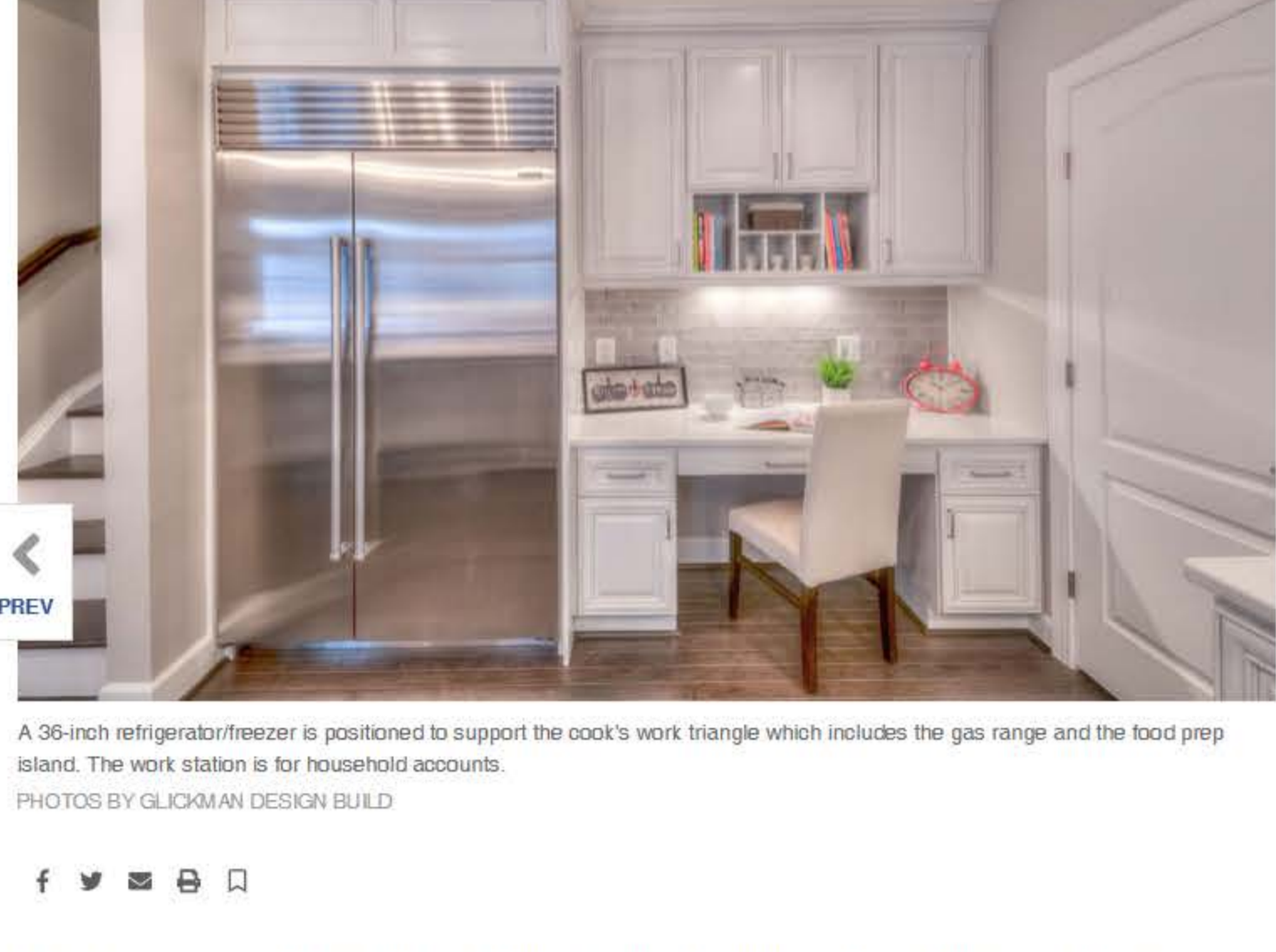


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PREV **well-conceived space plan is key in the kitchen** NEXT

By John Byrd Special to the Fairfax County Times Sep 29, 2016



A 36-inch refrigerator/freezer is positioned to support the cook's work triangle which includes the gas range and the food prep island. The work station is for household accounts.
 PHOTOS BY GLICKMAN DESIGN BUILD

Yes, the kitchen is the heart of the family home. But it's not simply the association of meals and nourishment that makes it so. In any home where the first level is 1,000 square feet or more, the kitchen is most likely the hub around which a whole series of activity zones must orbit.

There's the link between the kitchen and the muddy outdoors; access to the garage, laundry, decking; the adjacent family entertainment area; the quiet spots for homework and managing accounts; the segue to the dining room.

Seen as a system, the kitchen commands a vital suite of interconnected spaces. It's the vibrating center for emotional warmth and replenishment; it's also a hive buzzing with life that only functions to capacity when there's an orderly infrastructure guiding everyday behavior.

For many homeowners, formulating a plan for the kitchen and environs that is truly tailored to family needs can be a journey of self-discovery. Case in point: Alex and Michelle Del Pizzo

When the couple and their young children moved into their nearly 5,000-square-foot Colonial house in Vienna five years ago, all were pleased with the home's spaciousness, location and local schools. One of Alex's first thoughts, though, was that the 20-year-old kitchen would have to be remodeled sometime soon.

With three growing children and busy careers, the Del Pizzos wanted a hub that not only reflected their tastes, but also supported daily lifestyle requirements. Instead, they were contending with a circa-1990s builder-grade kitchen, which (as Alex describes it) "had a lot of dead space, out-of-date appliances and didn't circulate well."

"There was much about this kitchen's design that just didn't work for us," Del Pizzo recalls.

For starters, the 4-by-9 crescent-shaped cooktop island tended to be more of an obstruction to traffic than a useful serving station -- a far cry from the professional caliber gas range the family wanted.

The stacked ovens in the corner didn't figure into regular cooking needs either. The refrigerator was too tall. The same could be said for the dishwasher.

Nearly 500 square feet, the footprint should have been large enough by any standards, yet work triangles were constricted. Worse, there was no in-kitchen dining spot for the kids. No place to re-charge your cell phone.

Meanwhile down the hall, the laundry room offered a similar travesty. It wasn't so much space-constricted as inadequately designed, a shortcoming that had made it a "catch-all" for kids' jackets, athletic equipment and missing shoes.

Even the butler's pantry between kitchen and formal dining room lacked the means to a cool beverage.

With so much dysfunction all around, the unspoken question was: where will we find the space for all the needed upgrades without adding on?

"It was clear that our 1990s floor plan wasn't configured for our requirements," Del Pizzo says, "and that's about when our research phase began in earnest."

Of course, the exercise of due diligence can be time-consuming.

Nearly four years later, in fact, that Del Pizzo found the change-agent he had been looking for in the form of Glickman Design Build, a thirty-year-old home remodeling firm with a reputation for executing creative solutions.

"We had done a lot of research into our choices for larger built-ins and appliances, and had stockpiled interior design ideas for years" Del Pizzo says. "What we needed was someone who got our vision and could put it all together into a coherent whole."

After interviewing four contractors, the couple chose Glickman who started sketching out interior design concepts the following day.

"Our collaboration with the design team really worked well from the start," Del Pizzo says. "They were very focused on delivering the outcome we wanted, which kept the whole process within our budget."

The design process lasted seven months. Early meetings explored options for optimally allocating square footage needed for key activity zones.

Several goals emerged early on, to wit:

- Introduce a larger (60-square-foot) island with a dining counter-- a place where the kids can do homework while dinner is underway;

- Accommodate a 6-burner Wolf range oven; a second dishwasher; a 36-inch sub zero refrigerator; a wine refrigerator; a cell phone charging station;

- Create personalized closets with bench space for children's outer wear, provide personal cubbies and other containers;

Moreover, while pursuing a fundamentally "open" floor plan, the interior elevations to kitchen/ great room had to be distinctive, handsomely articulated; soft, yet balanced.

"The interior design goals pointed towards transitional-style," Russ Glickman, founder of Glickman Design Build, explains. "It's a design language that calls for finely elaborated formal elements within an appreciably open space. The details help to delineate the primary activity zones, which are independent from one another, yet interact fluidly."

"Cabinet facings, counter surfaces, back splashes are critical in executing this design style successfully," he adds. "In effect, you are creating compositional surfaces much as a photographer or painter might."

To begin again with a blank canvas, designers deleted a row of cabinets separating the kitchen from the family room, creating the floor space needed for the new 5-by-12 food prep island and three-stool dining counter.

Obstacles on the inside interior wall were, likewise, eliminated to make room for a six burner Wolf range complete with a Tuscan cooktop hood. As a space-saver, the hood's two decorative pillars conceal "pull-out" spice racks. To facilitate cooking activity, the range forms one leg of a work triangle that includes a prep sink on the island immediately parallel to the burners and 36" subzero refrigerator now on an interior wall to left.

The "clean-up" triangle (which is independent of food prep) incorporates the primary sink on the home's south elevation. There is now a second dishwasher embedded in the food prep island, which is surfaced in a bright white Quartz Cashmere Carrara.

Meanwhile, the island's three dining stools are a perfect spot for the children to tackle homework while meals are being prepared, or cleanup is underway.

To configure the new mudroom, Glickman incorporated the 5-by-5 foyer between garage and laundry room into an enclosed space that would serve multiple purposes. Washer and dryer were re-located to a back wall, creating the square footage needed for a counter with sink.

On the opposite wall, a floor-to-ceiling console comprised of four cubicles, one for each child plus a "bonus" unit to be shared by adults.

Each cubicle features bench-seating, a pull-out drawer for shoes, and overhead basket for miscellaneous personal items.

There's also a cell phone charging-station just inside the mudroom as one enters from the garage.

Finally, the butler's pantry now includes an under-counter wine refrigerator, as well as back splashes and cabinet facings that match the kitchen's new interior décor.

"This is a very specific execution," Del Pizzo says, "and we're very pleased with it."

Glickman Design Build will be offering a workshop entitled "Creating the Perfect Home as You Age in Place" on Saturday, Oct. 8 from 10 a.m. to noon at Ferguson's in Rockville, MD. For information, visit www.GlickmanDesignBuild.com, or call (301)-444-4663.

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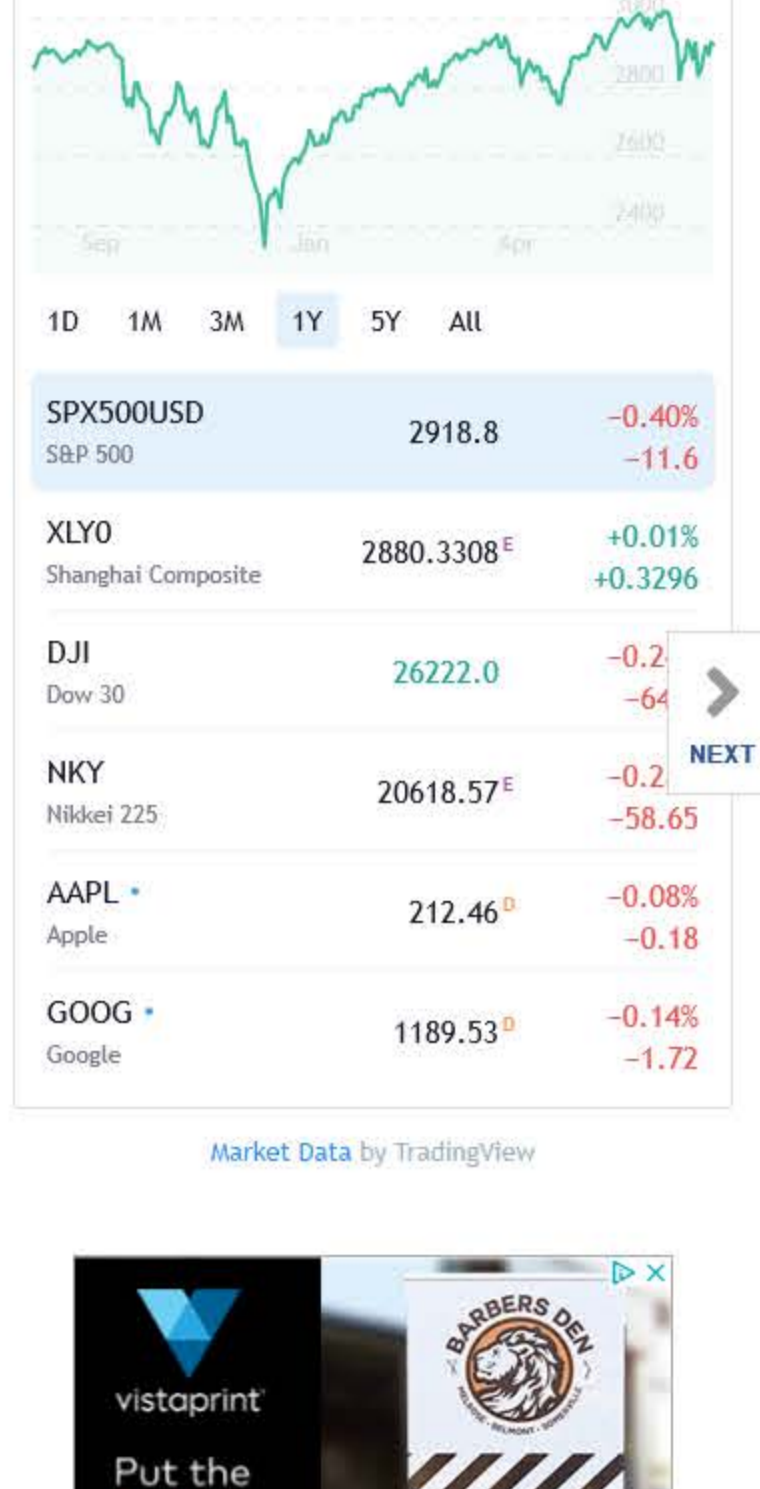
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