

# AT HOME

## Great Falls family redesigns home better, not bigger

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett  
Special to *The Examiner*

**L**auren and Chris Barton were convinced they needed an addition to their Great Falls home to meet the needs of their active family, which includes girls ages 10, 7 and 5.

A call to Francisca and Antonio Alonso, the owners of AV Architects and AV Builders, changed their minds — and changed their think-

ing from remodel to redesign.

"They didn't need more space, they needed better space," said Francisca Alonso, whose firm redid the master suite, powder room, kitchen and sitting room.

Whether hosting a bunch of children or a dinner party, the Bartons love to entertain and wanted a kitchen built for parties. The Alonsos delivered with soothing shades of beige, cream and brown in a luxurious British Colonial-style

kitchen. Birchwood cabinets in a brown-glazed eggshell finish cover everything, including a double refrigerator and a pair of refrigerator drawers and base cabinets that contain snacks for the kids.

On the first visit to the home, the Alonsos asked Lauren Barton to identify her favorite spot in the house: an archway that connected the kitchen to a large sunroom overlooking a tree-lined backyard filled with swing sets, a trampoline, a play-

house and a vegetable garden.

"The problem was there was nothing in that spot," Alonso said. The flaw was in the layout. Most of the cabinets, appliances and work space were stacked in one corner of the large, centralized kitchen. Empty walls and a standard built-in desk filled the rest. Although walls of tall windows flooded the sunroom with light, it was barely visible from the primary cooking area.

Now a bar with Red Dragon granite counters is built into the archway, with seating on both sides, allowing Lauren to enjoy her view and guests. "We wanted to celebrate that space," Alonso said. Volga Blue granite counters cover the rest of the kitchen, with the exception of the end of a peninsula, which is topped with Jatoba wood.

"I wanted the kitchen to feel cozy, despite the size," Barton said. Breaking up the space with different countertops creates the cozy feel. "We had a party here and had about 80 people over, and 40 were in the kitchen," she added.

The kitchen is a cook's dream, with a stainless steel Wolf 48-inch gas range top equipped with six burners and a griddle. A stainless steel Dacor hood hovers over the range top and a charming mosaic

of 1-by-2-inch tiles. Porcelain tile in a Versailles pattern covers the kitchen floors and transitions to Tosca Amber tiles in the sunroom, echoing the warmer tone in the Red Dragon granite counter.

A powder room holds a round Vessel sink atop a custom pedestal encased in mother of pearl mosaic tile. Wrought-iron fixtures and glitzy gold leaf-painted walls are reflected in a mirror embedded in mosaic of 2-by-2-inch limestone tiles behind the pedestal sink.

In the master bath, the Bartons ditched their garden tub for a 5-by-5-foot dream shower with multiple wall-mounted jets. Heated floors in Pietre del Sole laid on the diagonal generate a spalike atmosphere. Custom-built closets in a honey finish flank the doorless entry from the master bedroom to the master bath.

"There were so many doors. You don't need all these doors in a private area," Alonso said.

What used to be a built-in desk in the kitchen was relocated to the couple's sitting area in the master bedroom suite, to the delight of Barton, who prefers sorting personal papers in private.

"Who needs a sitting room? Nobody sits in this house," she said.



STACY Z. GOLDBERG PHOTOGRAPHY

The kitchen is a cook's dream, with a stainless steel gas range, a Dacor range hood, mosaic backsplash tiles, granite countertops and porcelain floor tiles.