ALISON RESIDENCE

Architect, Interior Designer and Construction Manager: Seth Ballard, AIA, NCARB, Ballard Mensua Architecture

General Contractor: Gerald Staley Builders

Kitchen and Millwork: designed by Seth Ballard, fabricated and installed by Montgomery Kitchen and Bath/ Cabico Cabinets

Stonemason: Antonio Correa, AVC Construction

Windows: Loewen Windows, The Sanders Company, John Sanders

sink, facing the front yard. Because the Henry's were willing to forego wall cabinets immediately above the sink, Ballard + Mensua designed the window to bring in as much light as possible.

The kitchen has a combination of cabinets, a hickory java stained Yorktowne line and a feature cabinet with a green stain. The feature cabinet is designed more like a piece of furniture and sits in the middle of the Yorktowne piece, creating a really elegant display of wall cabinets.

The home has very comfortable living spaces in the interior, but it is the exterior wrap around porch that really makes this home unique. The porch is set behind exterior columns made of eldorado stone and laid by a stonemason for optimum balance of color.

The natural woods and the dark trim on the exterior, and the overall feel of the home achieve something that is not that common in the mid-Atlantic region. Although it may not be common, the California-style home has been pretty popular in the Henry's neighborhood since the completion of their renovations. According to Ballard, the firm is now working on their third bungalow style renovation in that neighborhood.

About a half-hour drive from the Henry residence in Alexandria, Ballard + Mesua, took what was originally a hunting and fishing lodge constructed in the late 1800s, and created a vast open door farmhouse on 8.5 acres of land in Great Falls, Va.

The main level of the Kelly residence features the master suite, with a reading room off of the bedroom, a large library, kitchen and breakfast room, and mudroom. The Kelly's have a horse stable outside and spend a lot of time riding, meaning they put the mudroom to some good use. The space has stone floors and a shower for after the family has been out with the horses. Upstairs are three bedrooms and an upstairs living room and playroom. Also upstairs is the pool table room and an octagonal room that overlooks the vast property.

One of the highlights of the home is the wood paneled master bath. The firm decided to maintain the room's cathedral ceiling, giving the space a grand and elegant feel. They went against the grain by putting hardwood floors in the bathroom and wood panels in the ceiling, but the wood creates a really warm and comfortable space and nice dialogue with the high cathedral ceilings.

The exterior of the home is a mix of a synthetic stucco called Senergy, stone from Northeast Pennsylvania, clear vertical grain cedar and timber columns and brackets. The home still maintains the lodge feel, but with a new degree of luxury that stems from the design as well as the home's stylings and furniture.

"We tried to take care with every angle, every corner, every detail inside and out," the firm said. "We worked to find budget conscious ways to achieve a high level of design and are very proud of the result."

The Alison family hired Ballard + Mensua to convert their builder grade custom home into a luxurious and highly appointed custom. The firm built a new master suite, redid the stair and redid all of the bathrooms in the house. There is a custom wet bar, library, home theatre and bath in the basement of the home, which Ballard + Mensua completed in 2003. In 2007 the firm began designing a new grander kitchen, living room and dining room renovations and a new addition with a breakfast room and sitting room.

"Everything now has craft as opposed to what you get from a builder," Ballard said. "All of the floors are nicer, all of the tiles are nicer, all of the details are nicer."

In the Alison family, the husband is from California and the wife is from Austria, therefore there is an interesting balance of the two cultures in the interior of the home. The stained cherry arches throughout the interior and the mission style fireplace, a testament to the husband's California roots, is juxtaposed with a historical Austrian chandelier that was installed at the wife's request.

Like many Ballard + Mensua projects, the beauty of the home is in the details. ***ALT***

OPPOSITE: The Alison family hired Ballard+Mensua to convert their builder grade custom home into a highly appointed custom. The firm made a series of renovations in 2003, including a new master suite, stairs and bathrooms, and then returned in 2007 to design a grander kitchen, living and dining room.

ABOVE, TOP: A new kitchen were a part of the second Ballard+Mensua renovation to the house, which took place in 2007. Every detail of the kitchen is ornately done, which can make for a difficult job for the construction team and contractors.

ABOVE, BOTTOM LEFT: The original Alison residence is a custom home built in the 1990s. Although it boasted a generous floor plan with five bedrooms, a large front porch and a huge unfinished basement, the home lacked the ornate detailing that the owners wanted in their home.

ABOVE, BOTTOM RIGHT: The stained cherry arches throughout the interior are a testament to Mr. Alison's California roots. Mr. and Mrs. Alison both wanted their unique heritages represented in the design of the house. Mrs. Alison is from Austria. The two cultures made for an interesting balance in the home.

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