
Local Builder & Nashville Native Completes a Kitchen Facelift on His 1930s Belle Meade Home

Stacey Wiedower

Marcie & Derek Van Mol purchased their Belle Meade house in 2013 knowing there were many large-scale renovations that needed to take place before they moved in. One of the first projects they completed was a kitchen renovation. They painted the dark cherry custom Rutt cabinetry a fresh, clean white. They reconfigured plumbing and electrical. They replaced outdated appliances with stainless steel. And then they moved on to other rooms and other updates.

Fast forward to 2018, and the Van Mols were ready for a kitchen revamp, this one largely cosmetic — and decidedly more fun. “We just wanted to brighten it up a little bit, have something that was a little more up to date,” says Derek, President and Founder of Van Mol Restoration. “It was dark. The countertops were dated. The backsplash was terrible. But the footprint didn’t change — we had tackled all that in the prior renovation.”



BEFORE: The Van Mols felt their kitchen had some features that felt dated — but that with a few minor changes, it could feel refreshed and updated.



AFTER: Their inclinations proved correct. A new tile backsplash and countertops, along with some fresh paint and added touches, like a traditional carpet runner between the island and cook station, breathe new life into the kitchen, giving it a brand new feel.

With many homeowners right now choosing to renovate rather than move and face the rising price tags in the residential real estate market, Van Mol Restoration's VP of Marketing Mari-Kate Hopper says Derek and the Van Mol team are seeing plenty of projects similar to the Van Mol family's own kitchen revamp. "Most of the people we talk to love their homes and want to stay in their homes. They just want them to be current and be functional for their families," Mari-Kate says. "Derek and Marcie's kitchen was dark, it looked a little dated, and we were able to very quickly freshen it up – and it looks like a completely different space."

Keeping the white cabinetry intact, Derek's team tore out the dark granite countertops and replaced them with Aurea Stone quartz in Epitome, which has the look of classic white marble.

"I did a lot of research on different kinds of materials for countertops," Derek says. "I do that for my clients anyway, so I kind of knew where I wanted to go. I wanted quartz, which is man-made, non-porous, very durable. You still have to maintain it, but it's not like putting marble in your kitchen – though it gives the same look. And with the backsplash, I did go with marble to accent the veining in the countertops that I chose."

Derek laid the Carrera marble backsplash tile in a herringbone pattern for added visual impact. Marcie chose the Serena & Lily woven barstools, which complement the marble to give the space a chic, French patisserie feel. And Derek chose the Sherwin Williams Network Gray accent color for the base of the island. "The island had been white," he said. "The Network Gray was to add a little color. It helped pull everything together."



BEFORE: A functional island offers additional seating and space for homework.



AFTER: It's amazing how much brighter the space is with new backsplash and countertops.

A traditional carpet runner from One King's Lane between the island and cook station adds another layer of warmth and color to the space. The Van Mols' style is a mix of old and new, modern and classic. The couple split their time between Nashville and New York City and previously lived in Brooklyn. Their time in New York has influenced not only their tastes, but also their cadre of resources. The pair of industrial-style pendants that light the island are one example. "We saw something similar to those years ago when living in Brooklyn and decided to integrate them into our home here," Derek says. "And now they're becoming popular around here."

Another feature that adds splash is a pair of hand-hammered, polished stainless steel sinks. Derek first spotted them at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas, and ever since, he's waited for the perfect project to use them. "Finally I was able to, and thankfully it was in my own home," he says. "There are a lot of different kinds of sinks out there, but stainless steel has always stood the test of time. This is stainless steel with a little bit of character – with this hand-hammered feature from Thompson Traders – and they're fantastic." The sinks were a small way to make a big visual impact, Mari-Kate adds. "They really pop out of the room. They're really something special."

Because the Sub-Zero integrated refrigerator, Thermador professional-grade range and Bosch microwave were among the additions the Van Mols made in their first renovation, they were able

to avoid those big-ticket items this time around, which allowed them to splurge on the cosmetic details.

“Our mission at Van Mol is to take your house and make it into a home,” Mari-Kate says. “Our clients have lovely homes, and they don’t want to tear down and start over. They want to keep these homes that have good bones on a great lot in their existing area of town.” Derek and Marcie’s home is a perfect example of what Van Mol Restoration strives to accomplish for all its clients, she adds. “Their kitchen was fantastic and worked great for them for a long time, but they wanted to change it slightly,” she says. “The bones were there. We changed it and made it better, but we didn’t tear out walls. You can stick with what you have and make it work for you.”



The industrial-style pendants remind the Van Mols of their time in Brooklyn, where lighting fixtures like these were popular. “And now they’re becoming popular around here,” Derek says.



Two hand-hammered, polished stainless steel sinks by Thompson Traders are a favorite feature in the kitchen. Derek first spotted them at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas, and ever since, he’s waited for the perfect project to use them. “Thankfully it was in my own home,” he says.

Derek emphasizes that no two projects are ever alike because no two families are alike. He works with clients to make selections that fit their tastes, lifestyles and family needs. “There are so many options out there, and it can get overwhelming,” he says. “That’s why I’m here – to help [clients] rein some of that in.”

As for his family’s own kitchen, Derek and Marcie wanted a space that fit the functionality and style needs of themselves and their two daughters, ages 11 and 14. “We were going for a clean, fresh look, and it fits our personalities now,” Derek says. “It’s not modern by any stretch, but it has some modern touches.” It’s also a fun, functional spot the whole family can enjoy. “My daughters bake, and I love to cook, as well,” Derek adds. “It’s a fun thing we do together.”

To learn more about the services offered by Van Mol Restoration and how you can freshen up – or completely overhaul – your own home, visit vanmolrestoration.com.

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