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Lafayette Juniors Kitchen Tour Cooks Up Delicious Designs

By Catherine Kauder



A stainless steel backsplash and industrial light fixtures mix modern and classic touches. Photo Todd Taylor Photography and Pottery Barn catalogs. Homeowner Amy Peterson's light and airy kitchen mixes modern and classic elements to create a tranquil yet stylish environment that is perfect for cooking and entertaining.

The kitchen has two honed Calacatta marble islands that provide a contrast to the industrial light fixtures and the stainless steel counter and backsplash behind the six-burner stove. Custom millwork built around the cooking area forms a mantle that holds a collection of green glass vases.

"I wanted something very clean and simple," says Peterson, who teaches at the Active Reading Center in Walnut Creek.

At one the end of the kitchen is an eating area with a banquette under a large picture window that looks out into a beautiful garden. The home's reclaimed white oak floors and soft palettes of grays, blues and yellows in the furniture add to the soothing environment. Modern touches, like Eames by Herman Miller wire chairs around a tile-top table, are contrasted with one-of-a-kind finds like a charming antique trolley bench in the hallway.

"I like mixing the modern with the traditional," says Peterson.

In the Reliez Valley section of Lafayette, homeowner Kelli Blocker designed her kitchen with the help of Lafayette's Premier Kitchens as part of a complete home renovation. Blocker transformed a tiny, 1950s kitchen into a large, inviting space that overlooks her family room and yard and is ideal for entertaining friends and family.

The maple cabinets are painted a creamy Cottage Lace and are accented with bronze hardware. Dark gray Neolith countertops line the edge of the kitchen while the large center island has a Burmese teak top with a hazelnut finish. The backsplash and wall space above the counters feature cream-colored 2x4 subway tiles, which are smaller than traditional subway tiles and add a bit of texture to the space.

Fans of beautiful kitchens, art, design and delicious food are in for a treat this year as the Lafayette Juniors host their 17th annual Kitchen Tour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 14.

The tour will feature six beautifully constructed kitchens in homes around Lafayette with style influences as varied as farmhouse chic, mid-century ranch, timeless classic and traditional Cape Cod.

The Juniors are also highlighting local women-owned businesses this year by serving appetizers prepared by Lafayette chef Aimee Ames and freshly-made cookies by local favorite, baked. Some homes on the tour will also feature works of art from Lafayette's Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery and unique tablescapes set by Effortless Hostess.

Among the kitchens on this year's tour is one often featured as the backdrop for television commercials

and Pottery Barn catalogs. Homeowner Amy Peterson's light and airy kitchen mixes modern and classic elements to create a tranquil yet stylish environment that is perfect for cooking and entertaining.

Contemporary touches like a stainless steel farmhouse sink and industrial-style metal barstools give the kitchen a modern edge while still maintaining its warm, rustic feel.

"We wanted something light and bright but cozy," says Blocker, who said that the size and functionality were what she liked most about her kitchen.

These two kitchens will be featured on this year's tour along with four other homes located in Happy Valley, Reliez Valley, Hidden Oaks and the Trail neighborhood of Lafayette.

Tickets for the tour are available for sale to the general public for \$40 (\$35 tax deductible). Tickets can be purchased online at www.lafayettejuniors.org or at Premier Kitchens, 3373 Mt. Diablo Blvd., in Lafayette.

Proceeds from this year's Kitchen Tour will go to support Lafayette Juniors' four non-profit beneficiaries: Youth Homes, Diablo Ballet's PEEK Outreach Program, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, and Lamorinda Spirit Van. These organizations were selected for the exceptional support they provide to children, families and seniors in need throughout the East Bay.

Founded in 1953, Lafayette Juniors is a non-profit organization made up of local women dedicated to raising funds and supporting other non-profits that serve children, families, and seniors in need throughout Contra Costa and neighboring counties in the San Francisco area.



Above, the "Farmhouse Chic" look of the Blocker Kitchen. Below, the Peterson's kitchen is Pottery Barn-ready. Photos Todd Taylor Photography



The Blocker kitchen, with the large stained -teak island at the center, is ideal for entertaining. At right, the Petersons' kitchen has two marble islands. Photos Ohlen Alexander



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