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OF THE YEAR

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HOMETOWN BOY

THE SHRINKING
MIDDLE CLASS

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MAGAZINE



BEST CHEF: DAVID GUAS

BEST
of ARLINGTON
2014

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BEST *of* ARLINGTON

BY WENDY KANTOR, WALTER NICHOLLS, KIM O'CONNELL & AMY BRECOUNT WHITE

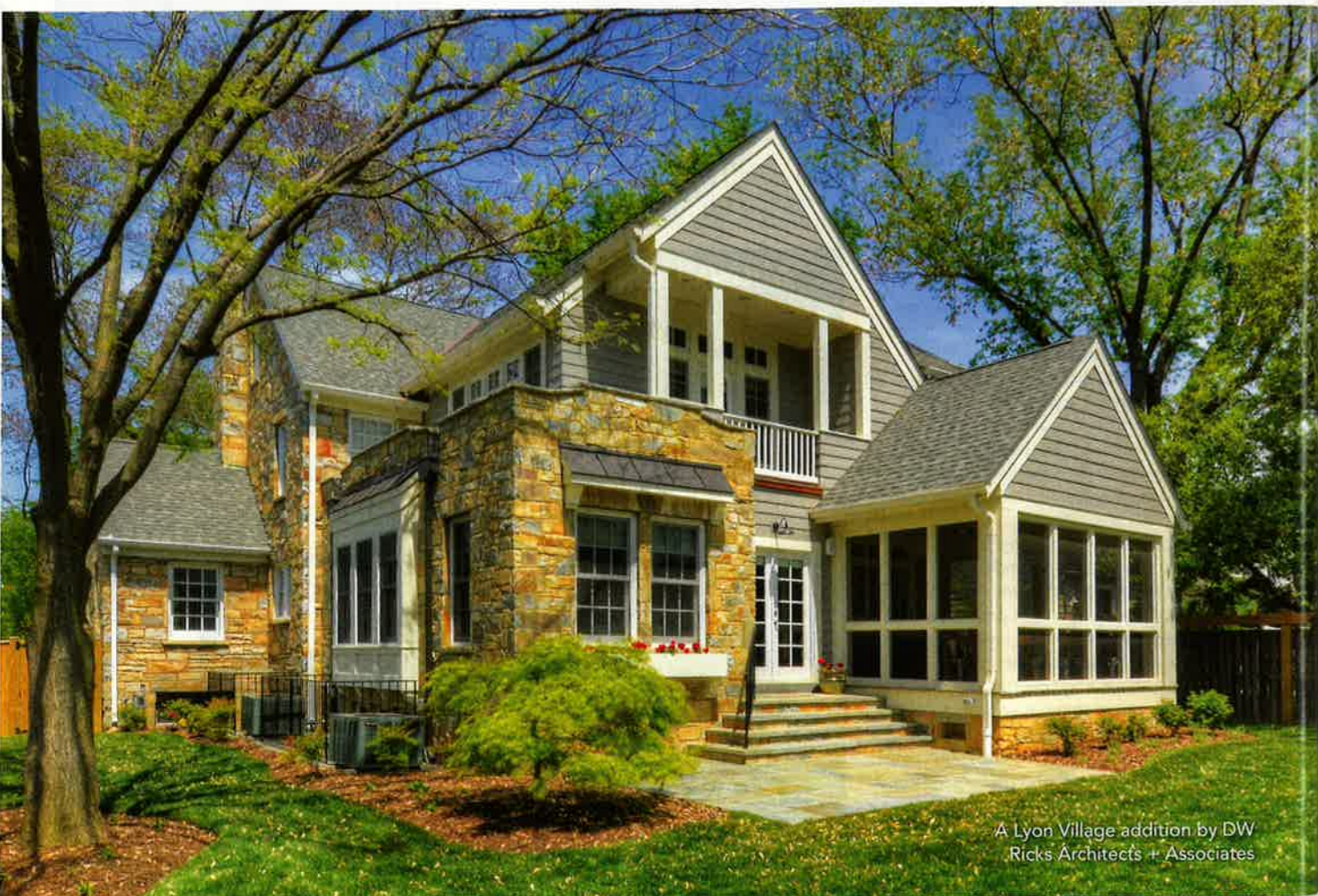
Our second annual readers' poll asked locals to identify their favorite restaurants, doctors, home services, shops and more. Survey says?

JONATHAN TIMMES

"Best Chef"
David Guas of
Bayou Bakery



HOME



A Lyon Village addition by DW Ricks Architects + Associates

BEST ARCHITECT

DW Ricks Architects + Associates

3300 North Fairfax Drive, #200, Arlington, 703-525-0156, www.dwricksarchitects.com

Some creative types find it liberating to work with a blank canvas. But not architect David Ricks. He prefers to draw inspiration from what's already there.

Whether he and his colleagues are designing a brand-new house or an addition, they always put the project into con-

text and consider its surroundings. Such was the case when the firm added on to a stone house on a prominent corner in Lyon Village (see above). The team took care to preserve the structure's proportions as they faced the street and extended the stone exterior around the most visible parts of the addition.

"We don't come to the table with a preconceived notion of what the design will be," says Ricks, whose eponymous firm is based in Clarendon. "The design is informed by the project site, the street, the lot, the owner, the budget. You assim-

ilate all that information to come up with an appropriate design."

After working in commercial architecture, Ricks founded his own practice in 1988. The award-winning firm has remained small over the years—with never more than six employees—on purpose. Ricks likes forming close connections and "shared aspirations" with clients when it comes to their houses. "The styles are many, and the solutions are diverse," he says. "But whatever we do, we want it to be a hand-in-glove fit." —K.O.

COURTESY OF DW RICKS

ERICK GIBSON

Back row, from left: Dina Hart, Judy Niepold, Kelly Jennings, Judy Rhodes, Robin Carney, Kristin Stocksclaeder, Lisa Merman; Front row, from left: Kate Stoyek, Melanie Whittington, Angela Sentz



BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT

Wylder Brothers

OTHER TOP VOTE-GETTERS:

- Karen Close
- Billy Buck
- Adam Gallegos
- Natalie Roy
- Keri O'Sullivan

BEST PLACE FOR A SECOND HOME

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

OTHER TOP VOTE-GETTERS:

- Bethany Beach
- Outer Banks
- Deep Creek Lake

BEST INTERIOR DESIGNER

Whittington Design Studio

2499 North Harrison St., Arlington, 703-533-3705, www.whittingtondesignstudio.com

As a girl, Melanie Whittington liked to rearrange her room—a lot. Eventually, she made a career of it. Her interior design firm, which opened in 2005, includes about a half-dozen designers who collaborate with clients on everything from redecorating a single room to full-home renovations.

Whatever the project scope, Whittington usually tries to find a starting point that she can build a space around. "It can be anything from fabric to a piece of art or something that is special to the client," she says. "It can be the way they use the room." (She has even designed a few rooms around pets, adjusting specifications such as bed heights and upholstery choices to accommodate both human and furry family members.)

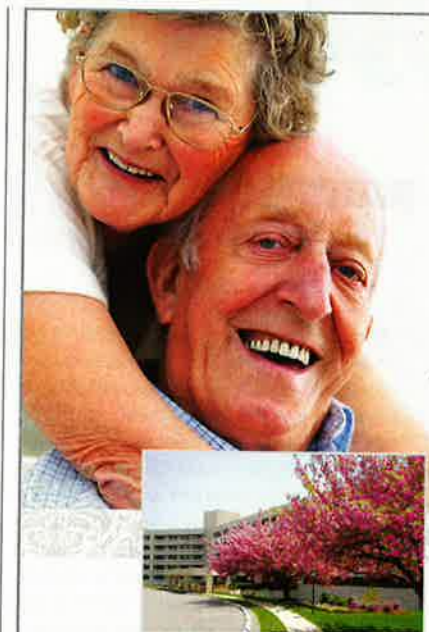
The most successful designs, she says, tend to nudge homeowners just slightly out of their comfort zones while still reflecting their personalities and lifestyle preferences. She often starts with neutral palettes that are then layered over with pops of color and pattern. Functionality is always a consideration.

Such was the case with one high-powered couple with children who had little time to focus on design. Their kids were creative but never had dedicated spaces for arts and crafts (instead, their projects took over tables and countertops here, there and everywhere). Following a nine-room overhaul, the kids had a customized craft room, and the family room became a comfortable uncluttered place that was conducive to quality time.

"They were literally crying when they saw it," Whittington says. "Interior design can really change people's lives." —K.O.

OTHER TOP VOTE-GETTERS:

Helena Peck, InDesign Home



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