

The Symphony Guild of Charlotte's 2nd Annual Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour



Every year in Charlotte there's a handful of not-to-be-missed events. The Symphony Guild of Charlotte's Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour on October 17 is one of those happenings.

For many years, Charlotteans flocked to The Guild's award-winning Showhouse annually to see the latest trends in home décor, renovations inside and outside the house, and to lunch with friends. Alas, in 2011 the tour fell victim to a poor economy and slow housing market, but legions of loyal fans never forgot how exceptional those signature fundraising designer houses were and dreamed of their return.

In 2014 The Guild excitedly responded by debuting a reimagined concept: Instead of a tour that only incorporated one house and grounds over several weeks, why not a tour of more than half-dozen homes and gardens in a day? And not the entire home, just the heart of it, the kitchen.

Barbara Kopald and Mary Staton, co-chairs of the Kitchen Tour committee, and other Symphony Guild members looked around the south for inspiration and found it in Augusta and Atlanta, two cities with successful charity-fundraising kitchen tours. They copied the model but of course took their inaugural Kitchen Tour to another level last year, with a unique

Charlotte mark.

The concept is simple. Find five to eight innovative kitchens that have been created within the past 36 months and design a self-guided, one-day only tour. Let attendees start at any house and set their own pace. Give them a stunning guidebook outlining each kitchen and the specifications that make them special. Just for fun throw in almost two dozen local celebrity chefs and other food vendors offering wonderful tastings along the way. Add a small army of talented young classical musicians. Results? A truly not-to-be-missed, sensory-overloaded Charlotte event.

The Oct. 17 tour features eight homes encompassing multiple kitchens within each location. Some feature as many as three kitchens inside and out. You will surely discover inspiration and ideas for your dream kitchen.

Color is a big new trend in kitchen décor. The classic all-white kitchen has been punched up with terrific accents of colorful stone, upholstered furnishings, artwork, lighting, appliances and cabinetry. But don't despair, white kitchens are still extremely popular and well represented on the tour.

Several kitchens have been created by some of Charlotte's most talented designers such as Jeanine

DeVaney, Gray Walker and Tracy Lyash, while others were designed and decorated by the homeowners. Each so superbly executed that it will be difficult to tell the DIYers' designs from the professionals'.

First thing you will notice is that kitchens are no longer square boxes that the mom goes to at 4:30 and doesn't see the family again until the dinner bell rings. Today, just as the tour proclaims, the kitchen is the heart of the home. It's filled with light, a variety of colorful seating options, access to other rooms and family activities.

Butler pantries are back in style. We may not have a butler, but we do love having space to store small appliances, large pots and extra dish sets and glasses. Creative use of space make these handy storage solutions a reality.

Refrigeration has taken on an entirely new profile. Side-by-sides have been replaced with refrigerator towers, drawers and coolers chilling wine to the perfect temperature. Some homeowners opted for specialty coffee machines to feed their love of gourmet coffee and specialty drinks. Quality appliance brands are well represented like Viking, Wolf, Thermador and La Canche.

Designers and homeowners are creating spaces that really mirror each family's unique lifestyle. This



is never more obvious than on this year's "Heart of the Home" Kitchen Tour – from wall-sized bulletin boards featuring family art creations to a pool bar that connects the inside to outdoors via a retractable aluminum and glass garage door-style window.

If "green" is more your style, not the color but the concept, you'll love the reclaimed wood, solar features, and concrete. You'll discover new Smart Home technology that allows these homes to operate more efficiently and economically.

The 2015 Symphony Guild of Charlotte's Oct. 17 "Heart of the Home" Kitchen Tour is designed to delight your senses, rive up your creative juices and inspire you to make changes, large or small, within the heart of your home, or all around. Honorary Chairs are the CSO Maestro Christopher Warren-Green and his wife Rosemary, also a renowned violinist.

Tickets are \$25 in advance online through Oct. 15 (\$30 at the door) at www.symphonymusicguildcharlotte.org, or at Blis Uptown, Plaza-Midwood's Bistro La Bon, Olive This! in Piper Glen and Oggi's restaurant near Ballantyne.

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Proceeds benefit the Charlotte Symphony,

Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestras and The Guild's array of youth music education programs. The Symphony Guild of Charlotte, Inc. is a 501(c)3 and has raised over \$6 million to support symphonic

music in the Charlotte region since its founding in 1950. For more information visit symphonyguild-charlotte.org/kitchen-tour.



