

## BROAD VISION

Coastal Fortified  
Homes provides a  
storm-resistant  
alternative.

Page 60

# MHB

MODERN HOME BUILDER

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WINTER 2015

## ULTIMATE DESIGN

Lori Carroll &  
Associates delivers  
the 'ultimate  
experience.'

Page 76

# DREAM BUILDERS

Hobgood Construction

Page 18







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**LISA SULLIVAN**  
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**Cell:** 843-421-0102

**eFax:** 866-791-7009

**Email:** [LSullivan@GuildMortgage.net](mailto:LSullivan@GuildMortgage.net)

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# THE NEW HOMEBUYERS



*Smart builders, designers and developers know the importance of looking into the future to see how to adapt their businesses. This, of course, is not an exact science, but the industry doesn't need a magic ball to realize that millennials are entering the homebuying market, and their tastes differ quite a bit from their parents'.*

During the International Builders' Show in late January in Las Vegas, panelists predicted that the grow-

ing numbers of first-time homebuyers will drive down home size in 2015. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) also discussed the results of a survey asking millennials what features are likely to affect their homebuying decisions.

NAHB's list of millennials' most-wanted features included a separate laundry room at the top of the list, as well as storage – with linen closets, walk-in pantries and garage storage all in the top 10. The group also wants Energy Star certifications, and is willing to pay 2 to 3 percent more for energy efficiency in their homes, as long as they can see a return on their power bills. To cut the costs of their first home, millennials said they would sacrifice extra finished space or drive farther to work, shops and schools, although they would not compromise with less-expensive materials. A seamless use of technology also is important for this generation.

Regardless of what millennials choose for their homes, builders will be there to meet their needs. There are so many examples in this issue of homebuilders, designers and developers who not only listen to their customers, but work in partnership with them to ensure their wants and needs are met. That, in fact, is the trademark of Hobgood Construction, this issue's cover story (page 18), and its dedication to customers is allowing it to celebrate its 25th anniversary this year.

**Staci Davidson**

CHIEF EDITOR

Staci.Davidson@phoenixmediacorp.com



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## MODERN HOME BUILDER

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### EDITORIAL

#### EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

John Krukowski  
John.Krukowski@phoenixmediacorp.com

#### CHIEF EDITOR

Staci Davidson

#### SPECIAL SECTIONS EDITOR

Chris Petersen

#### SENIOR EDITORS

Alan Dorich, Russ Gager, Jim Harris,  
Janice Hoppe, Jamie Morgan, Eric Slack

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jeff Borgardt

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Cannon Christian, Jennifer Cover, Matthew Michel

### ART

#### ART DIRECTOR

Erin Hein

#### LEAD DESIGNER

Megan Green

#### AD DESIGNERS

Jonathan Lyzun, Vida Soriano

### PRODUCTION

#### PRODUCTION COORDINATORS

Travis Garth

### RESEARCH

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT Walter Sledz

EDITORIAL RESEARCH MANAGER Melvin Eagleton

#### PROJECT COORDINATORS

Dan Bess, Ken Ellis, Melvin Eagleton, Kory Nedza, Ravi Tate

### SALES

#### VP OF SALES

Steve Campagna

#### DIRECTOR OF WEB AND REPRINT SALES

Dash Blankenship

Dash.Blankenship@phoenixmediacorp.com

---

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79 W. Monroe, Suite 400  
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**P. 10**



WINTER 2015

## COLUMNS

### 8. TRENDS IN WOOD DESIGN

An insider's take on the value of wood products for multifamily design.

### 10. RENOVATION TRENDS

There are many home renovation trends that will please owners and the market.

### 12. TEAM EFFORT

To provide clients with the best results, architects and construction managers must each learn to use their unique skill sets to their advantage, delivering results that meet and exceed expectations.

### 104. LAST PAGE

The Cotroneo brothers – the founders of Artista Homes – are closely involved in every aspect of the homes they build and take on different aspects and roles within the company.

## SECTIONS

### 16. HOMEBUILDERS

Designing for baby boomers requires a focus on active lifestyles, according to a new survey.

### 74. DESIGN

Reissued provides designers with a one-stop online shop for one-of-a-kind vintage goods.

### 92. DEVELOPERS

Brookfield Residential supports its market leadership with recognition from the industry.



Hobgood Construction celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and credits its founder's longevity and persistence with its ability to build custom, luxury homes. PAGE 18





# PROFILES



P. 24



P. 40



## HOMEBUILDERS

### 18. HOBGOOD CONSTRUCTION

Celebrating 25 years in business, Hobgood Construction takes pride in the reputation for quality that it has built in South Florida.

### 24. CHRISTOPHER SCOTT HOMES

Christopher Scott Homes has become a well-regarded, high-end custom home-builder in the Indianapolis market thanks to its personal touch.

### 26. HERITAGE HOMES

Heritage Homes says it keeps clients happy with its 'woman-centric approach.'

### 31. HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF GREATER LANSING

The HBA of Greater Lansing, Mich., supports its market in a number of ways, including helping with the development of the local workforce.

### 34. GM CONSTRUCTION INC.

GM Construction builds custom luxury homes along the west coast of Hawaii Island that offer modern amenities with an exotic flair.

### 40. RS&P PROPERTY GROUP

RS&P Property Group has studied the residential market to design the right homes in the right markets.

### 44. DESCO FINE HOMES

Descos Fine Homes' owner and founder still is just as involved in the company's work as he was more than 30 years ago.

### 46. DREES CUSTOM HOMES

Drees Custom Homes is expanding into Houston to offer homeowners a range of home plans and true customization.

### 48. ARTISTA HOMES

The brothers behind Artista Homes take a personal stake in the Winnipeg home-builder's projects.

### 55. HEMPHILL BUILDERS

Hemphill Builders has found more than 30 years of success with its quality construction and French country-style homes that feature a unique split-face natural graystone.

### 58. EAST LAKE BUILDERS

East Lake Builders constructs custom lake houses and summer cottages while paying great attention to detail.

### 60. COASTAL FORTIFIED HOMES

Coastal Fortified Homes aims to provide homeowners in coastal regions with a storm-resistant alternative.

### 66. JONNA LUXURY HOMES

Jonna Luxury Homes uses trusted construction practices to bring out the best of each home.

### 68. PRATT HOME BUILDERS

Pratt Home Builders specializes in building semi-production customized homes for customers throughout the greater Chattanooga area.







P. 94



P. 97



P. 102

## 70. MENARD CONSTRUCTION CO.

Menard Construction has built a unique niche for itself while working in two New Jersey regions.

## 72. THOMSEN HOMES LLC

Thomsen Homes thrives in the growing Fargo, N.D., market thanks to ongoing innovation and a strong internal culture.

## DESIGN

## 76. LORI CARROLL & ASSOCIATES

Lori Carroll & Associates delivers the 'ultimate design experience' for clients throughout Arizona.

## 85. DEVITO & COMPANY

DeVito & Company takes pride in delivering top-notch quality in one of the nation's most demanding homebuilding markets.

## 88. DRURY DESIGN

Drury Design offers a full range of custom cabinet designs and styles, and caters to homeowners, builders and architects.

## DEVELOPERS

## 94. CB JENI HOMES

CB JENI Homes prepares for continued growth as the market takes notice of its customizable luxury homes.

## 97. MCNAUGHTON DEVELOPMENT INC.

Suburban Chicago's McNaughton Development is thriving by serving the midrange eight- to 50-lot residential development niche.

## 100. CAPSTONE DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC

Capstone Development Group makes property acquisitions and oversees projects with the future in mind.

## 102. BLOOMFIELD DEVELOPMENT CO.

Bloomfield Development Co. is dedicated to building homes of its clients' dreams.



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# TRENDS TO WATCH: MID-RISE WOOD CONSTRUCTION

*An insider's take on the value of wood products for multifamily design.*

—

BY JENNIFER COVER, MS, PE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WOODWORKS

*After a recession that exacted a large toll on the design* and construction industry, a significant increase in multi-family housing is offering a reason to be optimistic. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) anticipates 326,000 multifamily starts in 2014 and predicts even higher starts next year – driven by the trend toward greater urban densification and the growing need for affordable, student and senior housing. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, an estimated 75 million people over the age of 60 will be living in the United States by 2020, which is about 30 million more than there were in 2000.

In the face of this burgeoning market, many multifamily designers are finding that wood-frame construction strikes the right balance of performance, cost effectiveness, occupant well-being and reduced environmental impact. More specifically, wood is gaining the attention of design professionals nationwide, who see it as a way to achieve higher density housing at lower cost, while reducing carbon footprints and delivering high-performance building projects.

For example, JSSH Architects leveraged wood as an affordable solution for Applewood Pointe, a high-end, 123,964-square-foot senior housing project in Roseville, MN. Operating under a tight budget, wood accounted for a base cost of less than \$80 per square foot, offering flexibility, affordability and speed of construction for the design team. The 48-unit, four-story structure was completed in just 11 months during the winter season.

Wood also provides unique aesthetic properties that can contribute to occupant health and well-being. In the Drs. Julian and Raye Richardson Apartments, an affordable housing complex designed to provide permanent residences for low-income, formerly homeless adults, wood was left exposed to add warmth, variety and texture to the common spaces. This classic mixed-use, urban infill project achieved GreenPoint Rated certification and was a 2012 WoodWorks Wood Design Award

winner. In terms of carbon footprint, the wood in this project is storing an estimated 1,014 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> (equivalent), while using wood instead of steel or concrete resulted in 2,156 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in avoided greenhouse gas emissions. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, that equates to a year's worth of emissions from 606 cars or from the energy to operate a home for 269 years.

Likewise, wood is a preferred choice for student housing projects, which are often viewed as an extension of the college or university – and are required to meet the same objectives for cost, quality and performance.

Recently, Mahlum Architects illustrated the value proposition for institutional organizations in its design for the West Campus Phase I student housing project at the University of Washington in Seattle. Located at the intersection of the academic campus and the bustling University District, the mixed-use student housing development was required to accommodate nearly 1,700 students, while also achieving environmental sustainability in support of the aggressive Climate Action Plan adopted by the university.

The decision to use wood framing was made early in the design process. When asked about the designs, Anne Schopf, project architect with Mahlum, said they did some initial cost analysis, at one point considering concrete. "But UW needed residence halls with flexible configurations which could be changed as the University's housing needs change," she said. "Plus, we were trying to make these new halls affordable so they could be leased out at a reasonable rate. We briefly looked at other options, but immediately chose wood."

The architecture community has responded in kind. The multifunctional benefits of wood showcased by the West Campus Phase I student housing project, particularly the resulting aesthetics, have earned the project multiple awards for design innovation including the 2013 WoodWorks Multi-Story Design





Award, the 2013 AIA Housing Award and the 2013 Residential Architect Design Awards – Grand Award, among others.

The appeal of wood for multifamily projects is undeniable. The International Building Code has always allowed five-story wood-frame buildings in the United States (five and a half if you include a mezzanine), but designers across the country seem to be maximizing their allowable height more than ever before. With interest in new technologies and building systems such as cross laminated timber – and a growing body of research demonstrating the potential for wood or hybrid structures up to 30 stories tall – the industry is poised to expand on this momentum and drive awareness throughout the broader design community about the benefits of wood as a value-add material in multifamily structures. ■

**Jennifer Cover**, MS, PE, is the executive director of WoodWorks, an initiative of the Wood Products Council established to provide education and free project support related to the design and construction of non-residential and multi-family wood buildings.

*Many multifamily designers have found that wood-frame construction strikes the right balance of performance, cost effectiveness, occupant well-being and reduced environmental impact.*





# RENOVATE TO REJUVENATE

*Home renovation trends to please the owner and the market*

—  
BY CANNON CHRISTIAN



*Renovation trends are constantly evolving, making it* difficult for remodelers, contractors, builders and other professionals to keep up with the latest and greatest in today's market. Unsure clients whose personal tastes and preferences get in the way of which renovations will actually increase value can make the job even tougher.

But there doesn't have to be a compromise between adding value and also matching a homeowner's personal style. Professionals can assist clients during the renovation process by suggesting some of the following home renovation trends that add style and boost home value.

## LESS IS MORE IN THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is the centerpiece of the home. It often connects the living and dining spaces and is almost always the favorite gathering spot for family and friends. Homeowners are picking up on this pattern, and are tearing down and bumping out walls to get rid of barriers. REALTOR Magazine listed open layout kitchens as a top housing trend for 2015, citing that younger demographics want a feeling of simplicity and intimacy in the home. What started out as a trend a decade ago is becoming a main component of modern homes.

Additionally, many homeowners are leaning towards con-



temporary, minimalistic kitchens that include sleek or even no handles on cabinets, drawers and appliances. A sleek and simple kitchen will also prove valuable if the homeowner ever decides to sell. Potential buyers view the simple kitchen as a clean slate that can be easily altered to fit their tastes.

## OUTDOOR LIVING

The California Association of Realtors reported that 54 percent of women and 46 percent of men say their top attribute in a home is an outdoor living space. Both men and women are seeing the outdoor space as an extension of their home and want to create an environment for leisure and relaxation.

Deck additions are increasingly being planned by homeowners and provide a strong return on investment. While this may be out of a client's budget, adding garden sitting areas, outdoor dining spaces and fire pits are other great ways for homeowners to spruce up their yards and also add value.

## NO MORE BEIGE

Gray is the new shade of preference because it provides a neutral backdrop for homeowners to mix and match with pops of color, wall art and more. Money-savvy homeowners are opting for gray because they can easily change the feel of a room by swapping accessories with bright pops of color instead of taking on another painting project in the future. Visit any major paint provider's website or store, and versions of gray will be in the trending colors for 2015.

Gray is being used in all rooms in the house, so be prepared to have swatches of different shades of gray on hand when meeting with clients. You may want to think about bringing a sample of complimentary colors, like coral, soft blues and yellow, to show clients how to energize rooms with new color combinations. Shades of gray with undertones of blue and green are also popular choices.

## COUNTERTOPS

Quartz countertops are overtaking granite in kitchens and bathrooms due to its many favorable qualities. Quartz is just as durable as the once-popular granite, but does not chip or scratch as easily and resists stains much better than granite because it is non-porous. Quartz can be manufactured in a large variety of colors, allowing homeowners to play into their personal tastes and existing home décor.

Square-edge counters are also a popular choice for homeowners and fall under the trend of "less is more" kitchens. A basic square profile will keep a countertop looking clean-lined and simple. If a client is looking for a thick statement piece, square mitered countertops are complimentary for both traditional and modern homes and can be a great addition to make countertops the focal point of the kitchen.

These four trends are adaptable to fit a homeowners' vary-

ing tastes while avoiding cookie-cutter house styles. Use these trends as a starting point when deciding on renovations with clients, but be wary of renovation trends that seem over-the-top. These are likely to turn into fads, leaving the homeowner unhappy and decreasing the home's future value. ■

**Cannon Christian** is a licensed real estate broker and president of Renovation Realty, a full service residential renovation contractor and real estate brokerage with offices in San Diego and San Francisco. The company adds monetary value to customer homes by using its own capital to renovate the property before placing it on the market for sale as the listing brokerage, with no out-of-pocket costs to the homeowner. For more information, visit [www.renovationrealty.com](http://www.renovationrealty.com).





# MAKING A CONNECTION

*Construction managers and architects need to use their skills to deliver.*

—

BY MATTHEW MICHEL

*Today's construction process is a team effort. Gone are* the days when architects passed off their project plans to the construction team and hoped for the best. Now, more than ever, collaboration throughout the project is key to its success. Of course, collaboration is not always easy, especially between industries that have been somewhat at odds in the past. As an architect, I know that I sometimes have a very different vision of a project's end result than the construction team may have. Our project goals may not align, and completing a project may be challenging if we have competing interests along the way. However, as our industries evolve, we can no longer afford to be at odds. The troubled economy of the past few years has left our clients with tighter budgets and stronger demands. To provide our clients with the best results, architects and construction managers must each learn to use our unique skill sets to our advantage, delivering results that meet and exceed expectations.

But how can our industries most effectively work together? Establishing trust early on in the project, communicating clearly throughout the process and knowing how to use technology effectively and efficiently can ensure a successful relationship between architects and construction managers.

## BUILDING TRUST

The architect and construction manager should strategize together to find areas where inefficiencies in the process can be reduced or eliminated. In addition, they should collaborate over where design deliverables can be phased to allow procurement and construction of time-critical items to begin at the same time as designs are completed.

Traditionally the center of tensions between architects and construction managers revolves around getting answers from the architect in a timely manner in order for the project to be priced accurately and built on time by the construction manager. The architect probably feels that the con-











struction manager doesn't understand what a designer needs to do to get to an answer. To be fair, answers are rarely simple to arrive at and require coordination of many factors. But the construction manager has a tight schedule to keep. Architects sometimes forget how important timely answers are to ensuring the project stays on schedule and on-budget.

When all stakeholders sit down to develop priorities and strategies, and continually review them together, there is a greater degree of "buy-in" and commitment to seeing it through. Establishing the relationship early helps both parties

establish trust, which makes tough conversations easier. Because business conditions require this close collaboration more than ever in the past, architects should also stress that building owners engage construction managers as early as possible on projects, even if only for pre-construction services.

## **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Frequent and effective communication between the parties is essential, and this communication should include regular in-person meetings and phone calls, not just emails. At my



WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT  
SITTING DOWN AT A TABLE  
TOGETHER IS SOMETIMES  
THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO  
MOVE FORWARD.



office, we have a three-email rule. Once an email has gone back and forth three times, it's time to pick up the phone and call. Whether a project is completed using Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) or more traditional project delivery methods, each team will find the right balance of when and how often to communicate.

Typically, I've found that architects and construction managers speak the same language. The jargon and terminology we use is the same, and the project issues we face are very often interconnected. As technology advances it helps our coordination efforts but it can also result in communication becoming less personal; we just need to remember that sitting down at a table together, rather than emailing back and forth, is sometimes the most effective way to move a project forward.

#### USING TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY

While technology can sometimes hinder communication, it does have its advantages. Virtual Design and Construction (VDC) technologies make it easier for architects and construction managers to pinpoint challenges in advance, saving time and money during project construction. As technologies like VDC have emerged, project teams have sometimes found it more helpful to gather everyone into one room to work together on completing a project, using the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) approach. In the years ahead, I predict this convergence will continue, and I look forward to the increased speed, accuracy and collaboration it will bring to our projects.



These traits all help to build a strong relationship between architects and construction managers. I also have some advice for construction managers as they think about the type of architect they want to do business with. Good architects should take initiative, contributing ideas about a project's success without having to be asked. They also should be adaptive, willing to be a problem-solver to meet the needs of clients, construction managers and other stakeholders. We all become attached to our ideas and project visions, but these visions are meaningless if they do not meet the objectives of the client or the goals of the entire group.

At the end of the day, we are all working together to please the same clients, and the success of our collaborative efforts ensures the success of the project. We are partners in our efforts to build and design something beautiful. ■

**Matthew Michel** is a principal and architecture team leader at Spagnolo, Gisness & Associates Inc., in Boston. Michel effectively influences the planning and performance of all of the firm's architecture projects while collaborating with clients, construction managers and consultants to move projects ahead on-time and on-budget. For more information, visit [www.sga-arch.com](http://www.sga-arch.com).



# HOMEBUILDERS



Hobgood Construction P.18 / Christopher Scott Homes P.24 / Heritage Homes P.26 /  
Home Builders Association of Greater Lansing P.31 / GM Construction Inc. P.34 /  
RS&P Property Group P.40 / Desco Fine Homes P.44 / Drees Custom Homes P.46 /  
Artista Homes P.48/ Hemphill Builders P.55 / East Lake Builders P.58 /  
Coastal Fortified Homes P.60 / Jonna Luxury Homes P.66/ Pratt Home Builders P.68 /  
Menard Construction Co. P.70 / Thomsen Homes P.72





# Get Moving

Designing for Baby Boomers requires a focus on active lifestyles, according to a new survey.

*The adage “youth is wasted on the young” doesn’t apply to today’s single, female Baby Boomers. In fact, 76 percent of single women over 55 feel younger than their age, according to new data from Del Webb, a national brand of PulteGroup Inc., one of the nation’s largest homebuilders.*

The first data in a series of new results from the recently conducted Del Webb Baby Boomer Survey of single, Baby Boomer women, finds that 74 percent of respondents are as happy, or happier, than they were at age 35 and nearly half (45 percent) believe their best years are yet to come.

Building specifically for homebuyers ages 55 and older, Del Webb is America’s largest builder of active adult communities with more than 50 communities in 21 states. Of the 76 million Baby Boomers, recent U.S. Census data shows that as many as 28 million (or 37 percent) are single females. Del Webb has conducted more than 10 Baby Boomer surveys since 1996. The 2015 Baby Boomer Survey is the first time ever that the company has exclusively surveyed this unique demographic to take a closer look at who they are and what really matters to them.

“Boomer homebuyer preferences and trends have changed dramatically in the 55 years since the first Del Webb community opened, but none stand out more than this generation’s movement toward an active lifestyle that rivals people half of their age,” says Ryan Marshall, executive vice president of homebuilding operations, PulteGroup. “Single, female Boomers have emerged as a powerful demographic. They have diverse needs, and it is incumbent on us to develop communities that offer an overall experience that reflects all that they want out of life.”

The study finds that the single, female Boomer demographic is incredibly confident. According to the 2015 Del Webb Baby Boomer Survey, not only do 80 percent of respondents rank having self-confidence as “very important,” but 76 percent are more empowered now than they were at age 35. In fact, more than one-in-five (22 percent) say they also feel more attractive than they were at 35.

That confidence may be attributed to the fact that 54 percent of single, female Boomers are as active or more active today than they were at 35. The 2015 survey shows that four-in-five (81 percent) of single, female Boomers rank being physically healthy as “very important,” and 68 percent of respondents rank a healthy lifestyle as their first priority, after time with family and friends.

Healthy lifestyle habits among this demographic include a number of high-energy activities, including some that may be unexpected. Nearly two-thirds (59 percent) of respondents report exercising at least a few times a week.

“The lifestyle that single, female Boomers are embracing may be surprising to some, but it embodies what we see every day among our residents and prospective homebuyers,” says Lindy Oliva, division president, PulteGroup. “Understanding that Del Webb residents demand a lifestyle defined by independence, vibrancy, engagement and fulfillment, has shaped the community designs and amenities offered in Del Webb communities for the past five decades.” ■



“We have a unique opportunity to do something special, and we are committed to building a legacy of excellence.” **DAVID HOBGOOD**



*Working with innovative designers and architects, Hobgood Construction enjoys building in many of the most exclusive communities in South Florida.*

# Dream Builder

Celebrating 25 years, Hobgood Construction takes pride in the reputation it has established as a premier, luxury homebuilder. **BY STACI DAVIDSON**

## PROFILE

### HOBGOOD CONSTRUCTION

[www.hobgoodconstruction.com](http://www.hobgoodconstruction.com) / Headquarters:  
North Palm Beach, Fla. / **Employees:** Less than 10  
**Specialty:** Luxury custom homes

*It is rare to hear of someone who really embodies the American Dream. But sometimes it happens — where hard work yields prosperity and success. The family of employees at Hobgood Construction is proud to promote the company's founder, Wilbur Hobgood, as the embodiment of the American Dream. His employees believe he deserves every bit of success he has achieved and that his work is a perfect example that people still value someone who works hard and demonstrates how much care he puts into his work.*

*“You can not replace the reputation that Mr. Hobgood has built with this company,” stresses Edward Naugle, Hobgood's son-in-law. “In this industry, you see a lot of businesses fail quickly in challenging economies, and few have what it takes to endure. We are grateful for the lifetime of hard work and the tremendous reputation that Mr. Hobgood has developed that has led us to such an amazing opportunity to carry it on. We are privileged to build*



spectacular homes in some of the most exclusive communities in South Florida, and work side by side with some of the most creative and innovative design professionals in the industry.”

The “we” that Naugle refers to consists of himself, David Hobgood, Wilbur’s son, and the remaining employees. Naugle explains Wilbur Hobgood is not letting go of the reins, but he is sharing the company’s responsibilities. He will continue to mold the company’s future and will still be on project sites daily, working directly with his loyal subcontractors.

Wilbur Hobgood founded Hobgood Construction in 1990, creating one of the premier luxury custom homebuilding operations in South Florida. He began working in communities such as Admiral’s Cove, Lost Tree Village, Wellington, Jupiter Island and Palm Beach. While the company may be celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Hobgood himself has more than 40 years of construction experience. That experience guides the decision-making on every project. He is able to combine an owner’s perspective with a veteran builder’s insight. Under his guidance, the family-owned company remains dedicated to every relationship and every project. Hobgood Construction has a lot of satisfied customers, strong partners and an award-winning portfolio of projects. “David and Wilbur are such a unique paring with their down to earth personalities, tireless work ethic, and relentless pursuit of continually evolving our processes and procedures,” Naugle says. “They truly make a great team and truly have the best interest of every team member at heart.

“We work with incredible designers and subcontractors,” Naugle adds. “Our job is to bring it all together by communicating with owners and transforming it beyond their dreams. We understand this is a tremendously competitive niche, but we are dedicated to continuing a legacy of excellence.”

## PROVEN TRACK RECORD

Hobgood Construction’s excellence begins with its work and approach with customers. Naugle stresses the company maintains a client-centered culture because that is how Wilbur Hobgood oper-

ates, and that is what this business requires.

“When you are working in the custom home market, first-class quality of construction and the owner-builder relationships are what separate builders,” he says.

As a result, Hobgood Construction



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*Because of the custom nature of its work, Hobgood Construction works closely with its clients throughout the entire process.*

constantly works to ensure full understanding of their vision from the beginning, as well as continuously communicating the often-changing demands of clients.

"Our clients are usually committed to a year or more for the type of building projects we do," Naugle explains. "We establish up front what the path is going to be and we stick to that because this is a family business, and our word is everything to us. Hobgood Construction was built on integrity. We have a proven track record of uncompromising quality and that has left us in a great position during this time of an improving economy."

In addition to custom luxury home construction, Hobgood Construction has an equally extensive renovation and remodeling resume. Many times, this leads to new construction business. Wilbur Hobgood brings great creativity and a wealth of talent to scenarios where clients prefer to remodel.

"We keep the client first in mind, always," Naugle says. "At the start, it is important that they fully understand the entire process. Custom homebuilding presents creative opportunities for innovation, as no two homes are the same and the options are limitless."

The Hobgood Construction team gives its clients all the tools they need to make informed decisions. The company also aggressively pursues value-engineering opportunities on behalf of the client, and most importantly, it teams with architects and designers who will help deliver the style and end product that they want.

"It can be daunting for our clients to have to select every material for the house and they might not be thinking of the minor details, so it is our job to make sure that no detail is left behind," Naugle says. "In today's world of Internet shopping, portfolio gal-

leries and television sensations, it can be overwhelming. We are there to help them to the finish line. We try to keep them focused on the critical path in an effort to try to minimize their worries and maximize the process that can be more enjoyable, as it should be."

"It is really a total team effort," he continues. "We each handle various facets of each project. All three of us work together with our clients, and collaborate constantly helping them through this process."

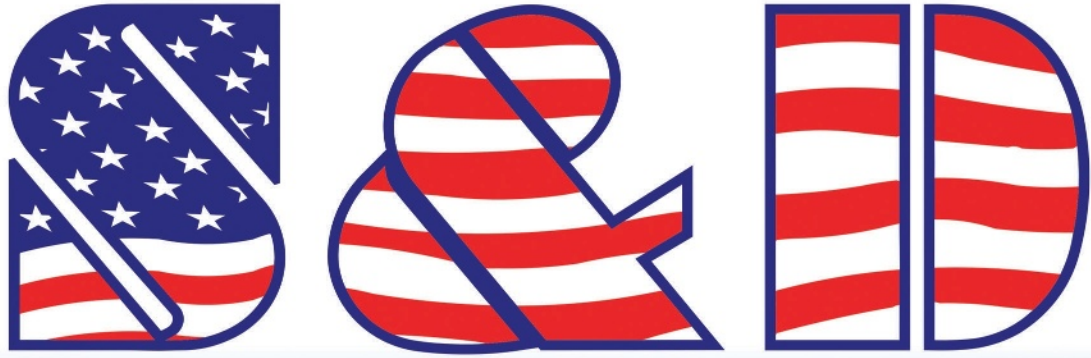
## FUN AND TRANSPARENT

Wilbur Hobgood established the company's focus on the customer when he founded Hobgood Construction, but it continues on with the second generation of the family. Naugle explains the company doesn't want the construction of a client's home to be "a burdensome process," and working closely with its customers is the key to that. David Hobgood has been tremendous in developing great and long-lasting, repeat relationships with clients. This quality is definitely something that customers appreciate, as evidenced by the many referrals and letters of gratitude Hobgood Construction has received.

It's not just testimonials, but the nature of the business that leads Hobgood Construction to understand it is building clients' dream

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homes. The company loves hearing the feedback and sharing years of friendship when the business is done.

"We don't want the project to be stressful for our clients. We want it to be fun," Naugle says. "As a result, we work to be as transparent as we can, and we pass on as many discounts from our loyal vendors as we can. We succeed in this business because we offer innovative solutions based on experience and we work with some of the most outstanding subcontractors and vendors in South Florida. We are very focused on developing long-lasting relationships."

## LONG-TERM LOYALTY

Referrals have been a cornerstone in Hobgood Construction's longevity, and have been most important in with the South Florida economy that is everchanging. Naugle explains many of the company's customers have hired it to build multiple homes, and many of the area's industry leaders have selected Wilbur Hobgood to build their homes. They value his honesty, his work ethic and his fairness.

Southeast Florida gives people from all over the opportunity to capitalize on potential investments. "Waterfront property is a limited commodity and people are investing in homes on some of the most gorgeous waterways the country has to offer," Naugle says. "There is a lot of investment here, and that is a nice niche for us. By being aggressively priced, Hobgood is able to help them maximize their return on investment."

Hobgood Construction is able to continue to educate owners in the latest trends. "No two homes are the same, but our enthusiasm is always the same," Naugle says. "All of our homes are custom to



each owner, their family and their lifestyle. We coordinate the exact team that will deliver what they want – every project is a major collaborative effort. We walk side by side with owners through the process and streamline it so they can build as elaborate or unique of a home as they desire, as cost effectively as possible.”

He stresses this level of dedication goes back to Wilbur Hobgood. Naugle explains Hobgood is direct and known for always working in the best interest of the homeowners. He does not cut corners, and the company is always available to clients – working weekends and nights to cater to their needs. Hobgood has set a tremendous example for the rest of the company to keep pace with.

“There is a complete client-centered attitude here – that is our culture,” Naugle says. “We live it, breathe it, believe in it, and start each day with that in mind. We are persistent, tenacious, steadfast and committed to the greater cause. We will always follow through, and do what we say we will do. Mr. Hobgood has done all of that for more than 25 years – he is a true professional.”

He notes that Hobgood also contributes to the company’s success because he is “so much fun to be around.” Clients form long-term relationships with the company because they enjoy spending time with the Hobgood family.

“Our core values start with ‘family first,’ and we balance that with our business,” Naugle says. “They consist of honesty, integrity, respect and teamwork. We do not take Mr. Hobgood’s hard work for granted, because it has been his dedication and persistence that has built this business, and has changed the lives of so many families. He started this company from scratch and he built it with his wife, Velyn, at his side. We are taking what they have done and trying to continue to build the Hobgood brand. He provides us with every ounce of support that he can, and that is why he has so many supporters. It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help carry on the ‘Legacy of Excellence’ set forth by Wilbur Hobgood.” ■

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# Attention to Detail

Christopher Scott Homes has become a well-regarded high-end custom homebuilder in the Indianapolis market thanks to its personal touch. **BY ERIC SLACK**

“We believe that no one knows jobs better than the people whose names are on the company.”

**CHRISTOPHER CARNELL,**  
**OWNER**



## PROFILE

CHRISTOPHER SCOTT HOMES

[www.cshomes.com](http://www.cshomes.com) / Headquarters: Carmel, Ind.  
Specialty: High-end custom homes

*Christopher Scott Homes sets itself apart through creativity and giving proper direction to subs.*



*Having been in business for more than a decade, Christopher Scott Homes specializes in creating high-end custom homes in Indianapolis and the surrounding suburbs of Zionsville, Carmel, Noblesville, Geist and Westfield. Co-owned by Christopher Carnell and Scott Bates, the company's projects range from \$700,000 to \$3 million homes.*

"We try to cater to the customer and help them understand what they are getting from the beginning so there are no surprises," Carnell says. "We were ranked as the fourth-largest custom homebuilder in the area by the *Indianapolis Business Journal*, and we did that through 12 quality homes. The others on the list did 40-plus projects to get to around the same revenue. Scott and I are always on site, and we have two supers working on jobs. We believe that no one knows jobs better than the people whose names are on the company, which is why we are always on site."

### LASER FOCUS

Christopher Scott Homes operates as a true general contractor, with only a handful of employees to keep overhead low. The company sets itself apart through creativity and ideas along with giving subcontractors the proper direction needed to put projects together. "Our subcontractors understand that we focus on quality, not speed," Carnell says. "We want the best."

The company has always believed in keeping overhead and risk low, although it is one of only a few contractors in its market that will build million-dollar spec homes.

"We'll look to have one spec project and some contracts ongoing at the same time," Carnell says. "We spend a lot of time choosing the right spec projects so we know it will sell. We were fortunate in the recession that we didn't have a lot of inventory, and that helped us weather the storm. We are stronger now than we were before the recession."

### STAYING CURRENT

Christopher Scott Homes is paying close attention to the changing trends in its market as well as the changing nature of its customer base. The company is finding that it is often serving a younger generation of buyers in the 35- to 50-years-old range. In addition, new energy codes and changing attitudes around energy efficiency are also becoming more prevalent.

"We do a lot of research on new products and attend shows to get new ideas," Carnell says. "We want to think outside the box and be creative, looking for improvements we can make to our designs that would benefit the homeowner."

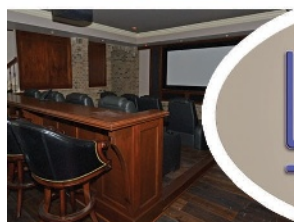
Internally, the company has invested in an office in Carmel, Ind. Additionally, the company has invested in software that helps it track projects and communicate with customers. For example, the company can upload pictures to share progress with customers. "Scott and I both have technology backgrounds, as he used to work

*"Our subcontractors understand that we focus on quality, not speed. We want the best."*

**CHRISTOPHER CARNELL, OWNER**

with IBM and I used to be a software developer," Carnell says. "We are both very technical, and we believe that our ability to be forward-thinking has helped us succeed."

Overall, Christopher Scott Homes wants to have a solid pipeline of projects that will allow it to continue to give individual attention to each customer. "We want to maintain the status quo and get our name out there so people will know us as the best choice for high-end custom homes," Carnell says. "As owners of the company, we provide personal attention to every project from start to finish." ■



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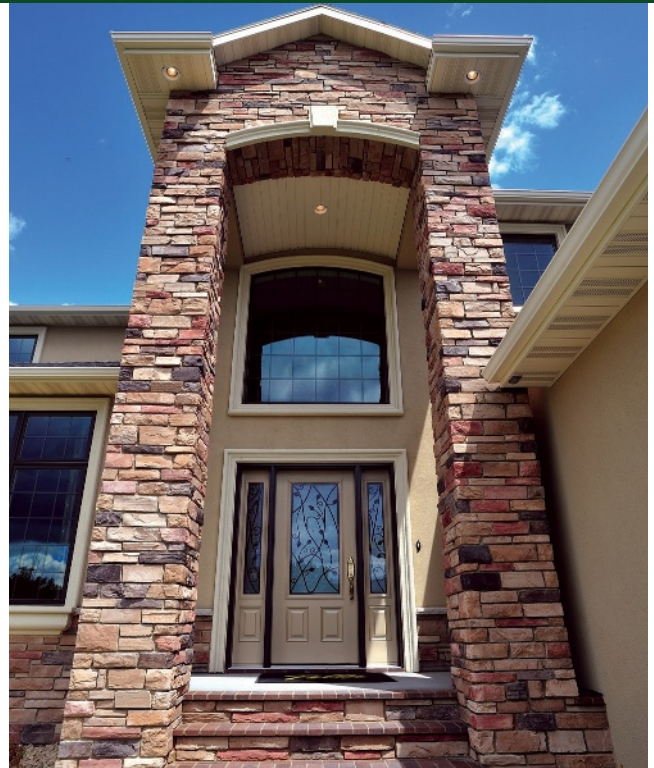
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“It’s about having fun, doing what we passionately love to do and working alongside a team.”

**TYRONE LESLIE,  
PRESIDENT AND OWNER**



To completely understand its clients' wants and needs in their homes, Heritage Homes starts each project by giving clients the Finally About Me™ quiz, which allows it to gather all of the information it needs for the design.



### PROFILE

#### HERITAGE HOMES

[www.heritagefargo.com](http://www.heritagefargo.com) / 2014 sales: \$22 million / Headquarters:  
Fargo, N.D. / Employees: 26 / Specialty: Homebuilding



# Satisfying Customers

Heritage Homes says it keeps clients happy with its 'woman-centric approach.' **BY ALAN DORICH**

*After 20 years, Heritage Homes has no plans of staying stagnant.* President and owner Tyrone Leslie says, "We always want to improve as a builder. When you take on that philosophy, success follows."

Based in Fargo, N.D., Heritage Homes both designs and builds custom homes locally and in the surrounding areas. A native of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Tyrone has 28 years of experience within the real estate industry. "My family has been involved in it for forever," he notes.

After owning and operating a real estate firm for years in Canada, Tyrone's father and mother transitioned to the United States when they decided to build the Ramada Plaza & Suites location in Fargo, N.D., in 1994, along with their oldest son, Norman. Once the hotel opened, they started making plans to get into the residential side of home building.

Tyrone had a successful career selling homes in Winnipeg, but decided he wanted to be closer to his family, so he joined them in Fargo, in 1998. "That's when we decided to take it even more seriously," he remembers, noting that his involvement along with his family upped the company's project rate from around 6 homes to more than 60 a year, to date.

Today, Tyrone is the sole owner of Heritage Homes, which employs 26 team members. "We're very team-oriented and have a lot of fun doing what we passionately love to do, working alongside one another."

## ENJOY THEIR JOURNEY

The team at Heritage Homes makes every effort to understand its clients and this starts with the Finally About Me™ quiz. The quiz provides insights into style – contemporary, traditional or



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## HERITAGE HOMES



*Heritage Homes maintains strong relationships with its trade partners because they work so closely together and add to the company's quality reputation.*

perhaps a combination of both, and lifestyle – lots of kids, empty nesters, rambler or two-story. Once it has all of this information, it pulls in its talented team to create a 3-D rendering of the home that it then can make adjustments to in real-time with the homeowners in planning meetings. This quiz can be taken at [www.HeritageFargo.com](http://www.HeritageFargo.com).

### LOVE YOUR LIVABILITY

Heritage Homes takes a "woman-centric approach" to the design of its homes. "What that basically means is we understand more about livability, and don't just build a beautiful home that looks good," Tyrone says. "You want your home to perform for you and how your family lives.

"Our woman-centric approach revolves around truly knowing our clients," Tyrone continues. "Women are the sole or primary decision makers in 91 percent of new home purchases. Once we understand how she wants her family's home to perform, we can do what we need to satisfy the must-haves and the wish list."

This includes looking at the home through different 'lenses,' such





as how it entertains a family, how the home stores their belongings and how the home will help them de-stress – think private theater, spa or hobby room.

Just as important, is understanding what rooms in the home need to be flexible. This includes the possibility of if the hobby room can turn into a work out room or a den can double as a guestroom. “It gives us a true understanding of our buyers to maximize the efficiency and, ultimately, the livability of a home,” he says.

#### FOUNDATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Heritage Homes also forms strong relationships with its trade partners. “We’re blessed to work with all of them every day,” Tyrone says. “In some cases, they’ve been with us 17 years.

“These are true relationships where our thoughts and ideas run parallel to theirs,”

he continues. “When you get that kind of relationship, you honor it.

“We’re very fortunate and do our part to make sure they’re happy,” he states. “It’s a great foundation to work from.”

Heritage Homes provides re-

wards for its trade partners’ good work, which includes an annual trade appreciation picnic, which can attract hundreds of guests. “They come and we take care of them,” Tyrone continues. “That’s what we do at this company.”



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Heritage Homes is proud that its work strongly impacts the lives of its clients.

## HERITAGE HOMES HELPERS

The Heritage Homes team believes it is "important to give back to our community," President and owner Tyrone Leslie says, adding that the company has participated in three "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" projects. "When you're asked by ABC to be involved, that's pretty cool."

The company contributes through its motto of "Time, Talent & Treasure" to local organizations, which includes Big Brothers Big Sisters, YWCA, Habitat for Humanity, United Way, local schools and various community events. "Giving back is one of the things that we do religiously," he says with a smile.

## EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

Heritage Homes' latest project is The Aspens at Timber Creek, a community that will be located in south Fargo. The project is designed for a homeowner that wants to downsize, while keeping a luxury feel.

The homes will feature beautiful roof-scaping, breathtaking family rooms with lots of light and spacious kitchens with features that range from granite countertops to top-of-the-line appliances, fixtures and flooring. The homes will also have incredible master bedrooms with walk-in closets. "There's nothing like this in town," Tyrone says.

The company plans to break ground on The Aspens this spring with its first model home opening in the month of September. "There's only a total of 26 units available, and we know they will go fast," Tyrone explains. "Six clients already committed to buying homes."

"The value on these homes will truly be seen," Leslie notes. "They'll get an exceptional value for their dollar and the construction of the home will be second to none."

## REWARDING WORK

Tyrone is mindful that Heritage Homes' work has major impacts on the lives of its clients. "There's nothing more emotional than building a new home," he states. "Being part of that process is very rewarding."

Despite the fact that Tyrone has been involved in the construction and sale of more than 1,000 homes, "It's as emotional today as when we built our first one," he continues. "We just sold another one today, and I still get that tingling on the back of my neck."

Looking forward, "I can see us being more entrenched in doing what we love, continuing to improve that and building better homes," he says.

Tyrone wants Heritage Homes to do more projects like The Aspens. "We could do one every year in different market segments," he states. ■



# New Recruits

The HBA of Greater Lansing, Mich., supports its market in a number of ways, such as by developing the local workforce. **BY STACI DAVIDSON**



*As the homebuilding market in central Michigan comes back, builders are working to meet demand.*

*Many communities across the country were hit hard during the recession* that began in 2008, and some are just now coming back. Examples of this are seen throughout Michigan, but that doesn't mean the state continues to be down and out. Like much of the rest of the country, Michigan is coming back, and the Lansing community is one example of that, helped in part by the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Lansing.

There are more than 800 local homebuilder associations throughout the country, and the HBA of Greater Lansing is similar to them in that it strives to enhance the image of the industry, participate in legislative issues, promote the professionalism of its members and remain active in its communities. These are ongoing concerns

“We want to change the perception and show students this is a great opportunity to be in the trades – we just have to make it hip again.”

**JASON GROSSMAN, MEMBER**

## PROFILE

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF GREATER LANSING

[www.hbalansing.com](http://www.hbalansing.com) / Headquarters:

Okemos, Mich. / Specialty: Industry support





The HBA of Greater Lansing's goal is to attract high school students and people looking to switch careers, in an effort to boost the local skilled workforce.



for the non-profit organization, but one of its core focuses at this time is on developing the area's workforce.

"It was hard — from 2008 to 2011 and 2012, our industry took a big hit," CEO Cindy Kosloski says. "But eventually we saw housing starts increase, and the builders were looking for workers. We started trying to find a pipeline for young people in the industry to get involved. Not every kid is cut from the same cloth, and we want students to understand they had options in this industry."

She notes this was a major concern of the association's board members. "During the recession, a lot of people left the state," explains Michael Flory, 2014 president of the HBA and owner of Custom Built in Okemos. "So many people relied on the building of new homes to make their living, and the majority of the workforce had nothing to do. Additionally, baby boomers are retiring. As individual business owners, we saw a lack of people in the local workforce, but we also saw that young people weren't coming up in the trades."

## LOCAL PARTNERS

The HBA of Greater Lansing created a taskforce to build relationships with other organizations that could assist in its goal of developing the local workforce. Its focus included:

- Regional career centers that target high-school students who can spend half the day at school and the other half learning a trade;
- Area community colleges to go after students who had graduated high school; and
- Greater Michigan Construction Academy (GMCA), which targets high school students, as well as people looking to switch careers or learn a trade.

"We knew we didn't have to reinvent the wheel," Kosloski says. "There were a lot of opportunities in the area and schools for trades, so we knew we could work in collaboration with all of these groups."

Jason Grossman is a member of the HBA and is a teacher at the GMCA. He also is a graduate of GMCA and the founder of Boomer's Contracting and Design in Dimondale, Mich. He graduated from GMCA in 2010 and saw the market's struggles first-hand.

"When I was a student, everything seemed to be going downhill and everyone was trying to get out of the trade or doing pretty poorly," Grossman says. "Now being a teacher and a business owner myself, I can't find any help. There is tons of work but I can find the skilled labor force to come back to it. That's why I joined HBA. We want to change the perception and show students this is a great opportunity to be in the trades — we just have to make it hip again. It's important to make kids see it as something exciting and appreciate the true craftsmanship because society seems to be straying too far from it."



Jim Phillipich, owner of Meridian Plumbing of East Lansing, has been a member of the HBA since 1985 and spent nine years on the board of directors. Now he is a member of the association's workforce development committee. He is familiar with this with his own company, but acknowledges it is "extremely important" for the local industry.

"We took a census of our field staff – either technician or installer – and found the average age is 41.5 years and the median age is 40.5 years," Phillipich says. "We had been successful previously in recruiting younger individuals. We would get them right out of high school by sponsoring workforce learning and internship programs in their junior and senior years of school, and once they had their cap and gown they came right to work here. We have gone full court press with the local career center, and last year we had three from that institution on our payroll. We were good at it in the past and ramped up our effort again."

#### LONG-TERM FOCUS

The HBA understands internships are important in attracting young talent, so it is helping its members start internship and apprenticeship programs by educating them about the opportunities.

"Some members to scholarships and get involved with school councils," Kosloski says. "We are developing a full schedule to get in front of high school students and get access to them. We are working with school counselors and creating Construction Day programs at schools. Our members are very positive about this. They appreciate that we are focused on this issue and they are thrilled that we have a plan in place."

She admits that workforce development will be a long-term issue and it will take a lot of work. But HBA of Greater Lansing's members have a lot of ideas on how to build up the skilled workforce, and that is something they don't plan to give up on.

"If a business owner is really going to find young, future talent, they can not pay lip service to this," Phillipich says. "You have to devote time and resources to it."

"I've personally been to student showcases, open houses, mock interview sessions. And you also have to meet and get to know the parents of these prospective tradespersons. That's one reason we concentrate on high school. You really have to get the entire picture with the parents and prospects in that sophomore or junior year of high school. If parents are convinced you're genuine, it makes the task a lot easier." ■

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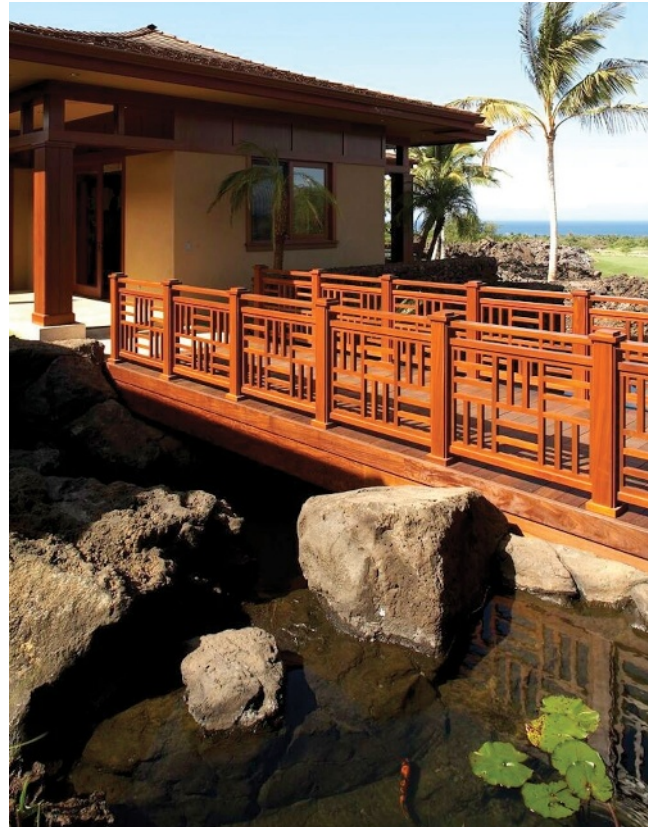
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# Life in Paradise

GM Construction builds luxury homes along the west coast of Hawaii Island that offer modern amenities with an exotic flair. **BY JANICE HOPPE**



A majority of GM Construction's custom single-family homes are located in the Hualalai Resort in Kailua-Kona that provides a secure and tranquil and ocean-side retreat of individual communities.

“We are flexible and quickly assess the change impact and advise our clients to clearly develop their understanding and expectations.”

**GREGG TODD, *PRESIDENT***

## PROFILE

GM CONSTRUCTION INC.

[www.gmconstructioninc.com](http://www.gmconstructioninc.com) / **Headquarters:** Kailua-Kona, Hawaii / **Employees:** 77 / **Specialty:** Custom luxury homebuilder





*From the jet-black sand on Punalu`u Beach to the green rainforests of the Hamakua Coast, it is easy to be awed by the splendor of Hawaii Island. GM Construction Inc. strives for that same breathtaking reaction with its custom luxury homes that are scattered along Kailua-Kona's 40-mile oceanfront.*

"The projects we undertake are in the same caliber of the most expensive residential projects in the world with the most exotic products and systems being installed," President Gregg Todd says. "Our clients expect us to craft their homes with the most skilled workers and to turn over to them a finished product that is consistent with the level of investment they contributed to the project."

Guy Mular founded the Kailua-Kona-based company in 2001 with a focus on building custom luxury homes along the west coast of the Big Island. Todd joined the company in 2003 as a project manager and just two years later received his contractor's license and purchased stock to become vice president. Todd was named president this year.

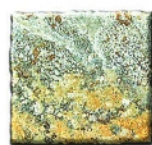
A majority of GM Construction's custom single-family homes are located in the Hualalai Resort in Kailua-Kona. Located on the Big Island's renowned "Gold Coast," the resort provides a secure and tranquil and ocean-side retreat comprised of individual communities that each possess a unique character and ambiance. The Hualalai Resort is ideally located just 10 minutes north of the Kona International Airport and 15 miles north of the city of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

On the Kona-Kohala Coast, Hualalai's swaying palms hide the rooftops of the beachfront bungalows and contemporary Hawaiian designed homes, where the outside landscape is part of the architectural design. Dramatic green fairways cut through the lava and drop to the coast to hug the sea, and pathways wind through open dunes by ancient Hawaiian fishponds and flowering gardens that perfume the air.

With topography rising from sea level to 225 feet in elevation, Hualalai is comprised of individual communities that each possess a unique character and ambiance while all offering spectacular vistas and cooling tradewinds.

The resort includes amenities that provide an environment and experience unlike any other in the world. The Hualalai Club, for example, offers a 15,000-square-foot fitness spa, the signature Jack Nicklaus golf course, a members-only Tom Weiskopf golf course, tennis, dining and watersports. The property also includes

**/Texture, Inc./** Texture Inc. is a premium natural stone supplier specializing in procurement of high quality building materials. With over 15 years of experience in the stone industry, Texture is proud to provide meticulous quality control, timely delivery, and unmatched personal service. Our goal is to provide a more efficient and cost effective solution to meet the unique needs of each client. From the everyday to the exquisite, Texture is committed to providing a viable procurement solution to meet the most discerning standards. For more information call 808-294-8833, e-mail [camron@textureinc.com](mailto:camron@textureinc.com), or visit [www.textureinc.com](http://www.textureinc.com)



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GM Construction and its owners have constructed 93 single-family residences in the Hualalai Resort that start at \$4 million and will begin construction on five more homes starting in 2015.

the Four Seasons, a AAA five-diamond hotel that captures the essence of Hawaiian design, culture and tradition. This luxurious lifestyle is available only through ownership in Hualalai real estate.



All of us at Aloha Light & Design would like to congratulate Gregg and our partners at GM Construction for all of your success. We are honored and proud to be a part of your team.



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Today, Hualalai Resort is developed well beyond the half-way mark. GM Construction and its owners have constructed 93 single-family residences in the Hualalai Resort that start at \$4 million and will begin construction on five more homes starting in 2015. For example, one of GM Construction's homes in the resort encompasses 2,900 square feet and takes advantage of the fantastic weather and great outdoors. The home sits in Hualalai Resort's signature kauhale neighborhood and architect Bing Hu went for the Lanai island lifestyle where private gardens, open views and interior spaces are blended to bring the outside in.

A major design objective of this home was to maintain a low roof profile, using forms of traditional Hawaiian architecture. The finish materials were selected to blend seamlessly with the home's natural surroundings. Retractable walls reinforce the notion of indoor/outdoor living and open the home to one of the fairways of the Jack Nicklaus signature golf course and the ocean beyond.

#### BUILDING QUALITY

Todd's company GT Design Inc., a Kailua-Kona-based designer of tropical Hawaiian homes, works as the design wing of GM Construction to assist clients in creating their dream homes.

"We pride ourselves in giving our clients a custom design/build





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## GM CONSTRUCTION INC.



experience," Todd says. "Our solid team of motivated professionals adds a great value to our company."

To ensure it maintains clear communication with clients, GM Construction holds weekly conference calls to provide details on the homebuilding process as well as schedule updates and photos.

If client changes arise, the company emphasizes how they might affect the schedule, cost or quality, Todd says. "Changes are expected with custom homes built at this level," he explains. "We are flexible and quickly assess the change impact and advise our clients to clearly develop their understanding and expectations."

Homeowners are requesting their homes have a modern and contemporary design using more man-made products like quartz, as opposed to stone for flooring and countertops.

Although bright, open spaces for the living room and kitchens in the homes have become essential, that seems to no longer be the case in the bedrooms.





*“We are flexible and quickly assess the change impact and advise our clients to clearly develop their understanding and expectations.”*

GREGG TODD, PRESIDENT



Homeowners are requesting their homes have a modern and contemporary design using more man-made products, as opposed to stone for flooring and countertops.

“Clients seem to desire more bedrooms instead of having fewer bedrooms, but ones that are more spacious,” Todd says.

Working alongside some of the island’s most creative and respected architects and designers, GM Construction also incorporates a variety of unique building materials in its homes, including exotic woods like cumaru, zebra wood and mahogany.

With rare items that come from all around the world and have long lead times, GM Construction likes to keep owners, designers and architects updated on procurement. One way of doing this is by working closely with its vendors.

GM Construction requires Texture Inc., a premium natural stone supplier based in Kailua-Kona, to send weekly reports with tracking information and bills of lading for stone materials being shipped. The stone supplier specializes in the procurement of high-quality building materials for commercial, luxury residential and custom projects.

With more than 15 years of experience in the stone industry, Texture prides itself on providing meticulous quality control, timely delivery of material, and unmatched personal service.

“Our goal is to provide a more efficient, cost-effective solution to meet the unique needs and requirements of each client,” the company says. “By leveraging low overhead cost and quarry direct pricing we are able to offer significant savings over the retail market. From the everyday to the exquisite, Texture is committed to providing a viable procurement solution to meet the most discerning standards.”

Moving forward, GM Construction looks to continue building on its reputation in the community as the preferred custom homebuilder. The company has become a trusted name in custom luxury homebuilding because it consistently provides high-quality work, is fair with its employees, subcontractors and suppliers and pays on-time for work completed. “Inspect, observe, monitor and verify always,” Todd says. ■



“We are designing and building houses where people want to live.”

**ROBERT SHERIDAN, *PRINCIPAL***



*RS&P Property Group designs its homes so many of the rooms benefit from natural sunlight streaming through the windows.*



#### PROFILE

**RS&P PROPERTY GROUP**

**[www.rsppg.com](http://www.rsppg.com) / Headquarters:** Oak Park, Ill.

**Specialty:** High-end homebuilding



# Right on Target

RS&P Property Group has studied the residential market to design the right homes in the right markets. **BY JAMIE MORGAN**

*Robert Sheridan and Richard Berry have been in the homebuilding industry since the 1970s, so when the market began spiraling down in 2006, exiting was not part of their strategy. However, transforming their company, Robert Sheridan & Partners Property Group (RSPPG), to remain profitable certainly was.*

“The national recession may have started in 2008 but it hit real estate in 2006,” Sheridan says. “When the recession started to clobber the industry, we took some time to find a new strategy that made sense in terms of the residential real estate climate. It was a process that started in 2006 and continued to evolve until 2011.”

RSPPG switched focus from the condominium sector to designing and building custom homes (on spec) that are equal to their custom-designed BTS (build to suit) cousins. The company decided to build exclusively in Chicago suburbs with the best schools in the region – initially the North Shore suburbs of Glenview and Northbrook, and the western suburb of Hinsdale. Sheridan says the reason RSPPG focuses on these villages is simple. “The principle reason people leave the city is for better schools,” Sheridan explains. “It’s not complicated. We are designing and building houses where people want to live. It doesn’t get talked about very much, but real estate values go up sharply the closer you get to really good schools. And that’s particularly true for good elementary schools.

“We are not building starter homes. Our demographic consists of young, high-income families looking for good schools and larger, high-quality homes with a superior level of finish.”

RSPPG’s thought process figured that young families with the financial means to buy a custom home do not always have the two years it takes to find the land, design the home, get it permitted and then get it built. Speaking from reality, Sheridan says, “If your child is in kindergarten and starting first







grade soon, you want to get into that district now, not two years from now while you wait for your home to be built. The same is true for relocating executives and their families. We build with the belief that there is an appetite for new, high-quality construction.”

It’s also a less risky proposition for homebuyers. To build a custom home, the homeowner takes on considerable financial risk. By building custom-quality homes on spec, RSPPG uses its own financial resources and builds homes that give buyers that new custom home feel and functionality without the time, effort, decision-making, emotional strain and risk.

RSPPG tested the concept beginning in 2011. With the real estate recession still in full swing, the company started its first two “test” houses. When they went on the market in 2012, both were sold within two weeks of being completed. Today, the average RSPPG Signature Home is on the market for 53 days before being sold.

“Our beliefs are being reinforced by our experience. This is

*“We don’t have any cookie cutters in our tool chest. Each one is separately designed and built.”*

ROBERT SHERIDAN, *PRINCIPAL*



RSPPG designed this master bath (left) with a skylight to create an open, airy style for the homeowners, and the design of the expansive granite kitchen (right) became a focal point of that home.

proof that we’re not crazy and that there is a market for what we do,” Sheridan says. “We think those results are extremely positive.”

The strong reception has spurred RSPPG to increase its output. The company doesn’t have ambitions to go into production homebuilding but plans to ramp up to building eight to 10 houses a year. “Our numbers will stay limited because every house is a one-of-a-kind,” Sheridan says. “We don’t have any cookie cutters in our tool chest. Each one is separately designed and built.”

#### GETTING IT RIGHT

RSPPG’s approach is to get the fundamentals of homebuilding right and then build on them. RSPPG purchases single lots in desirable neighborhoods. It then works with a preferred architect who specializes in single-family homes to design one that fits the property and neighborhood. Although each home is different, Sheridan says there are some residential design trends that top buyers’ lists.

“We try to create a lot of light coming into the house,” he says.



“And we design with the knowledge that Chicago has many gray days during winter months, so we provide lots of windows. This results in a home that is light and airy at all times — even on those overcast winter days. The floor plans are open and we are very concerned with where and how we allocate space. Living rooms are shrinking, functional mud rooms are popular and the great room and kitchen are where the action is. That’s really where families entertain and spend most of their time.”

RSPPG’s Signature Homes also have many functions in common. For example, they are all fitted with smart technology that allows the homeowner to control functions such as the sound system, HVAC, lighting, door locks and security system from a tablet or smartphone.

The group markets its homes featuring its “Quiet House” program and believes that spending the money on high-quality materials, equipment and technology upfront pays off for the homeowner in the long run. So beyond insulating roofs and walls, RSPPG goes a step further and insulates in between floors and wraps all of the home’s plumbing. Sheridan says wrapping the plumbing pipes not only makes water heaters more efficient, but it also reduces the sound of water traveling through the pipes. Of course, high-end, energy-efficient sound-dampening doors and windows are an important part of the Quiet House program.

Another key feature of RSPPG Signature Homes is the “Water Penetration Protection System.” Exterior and interior drain tiling is installed along each home’s perimeter. The houses are also fitted with dual sump pits and sump pumps, as well as a stand-by electric generator. It kicks in automatically after there is a 30-second power outage to ensure sump pumps and all critical equipment keeps running. It is not that unusual for power outages to last for days so back-up batteries are not an adequate answer.

“Because my partner is an architect and I am a mechanical engineer, we take waterproofing very seriously,” Sheridan says. “Over the last couple of years we’ve seen very heavy rains and it’s not too difficult for a single sump pump to be overloaded, which is why we put in two. It may not sound sexy, but it does make for a drier house.”

It also makes for a house that Sheridan himself says he would like to live in, which is always the goal. Sheridan and Berry not only build homes, they have both lived in comparable homes for decades, and know, first hand, what makes a house a home. When they set out on a new project, they try to put themselves in the homeowner’s shoes. This enables them to design homes that are attractive, comfortable, highly functional, energy efficient and have a unique identity.

“We’ve been in this business for a long time, so we understand what’s important to homeowners,” Sheridan says. “We know that low-maintenance, long-term life only comes with proper design, workmanship and materials. And that’s the only way we build.” ■



RSPPG says its craftsmanship “is as obvious as it is impressive,” and big, functional mud rooms (below) are an RSPPG signature feature in many of its homes.





“I still have my hands in the pot and oversee everything.”

**DAVID GOETTSCHKE, *PRESIDENT/OWNER***



*Desco Fine Homes doesn't believe in cutting corners when building luxury custom homes in the Dallas area.*

## Living the Dream

Desco Fine Homes' owner and founder still is just as involved in the company's work as he was more than 30 years ago. **BY CHRIS PETERSEN**

### PROFILE

#### DESCO FINE HOMES

[www.descohomes.com](http://www.descohomes.com) / **Headquarters:** Dallas  
**Specialty:** Custom homebuilder

*David Goettsche was fascinated with building from a very early age, but he didn't begin to realize his dream until a chance encounter while operating a landscaping company. According to Goettsche, he noticed a customer was building an office addition onto his house. The customer, who was a builder himself, noticed Goettsche's interest in the project and offered to help him learn the homebuilding business. At the age of 22, Goettsche was on his way.*

Today, Goettsche is president and owner of Dallas-based Desco Fine Homes, one of the city's leading custom homebuilders. For more than 35 years, Goettsche has provided customers throughout the Dallas area with high-quality custom homebuilding as well as remodeling services. Goettsche says the key difference-maker for the company in a market as competitive as Dallas is the fact that he has never lost the drive and passion for the work that he had when he started the company.



## HEAVILY INVOLVED

Goettsche describes the homes Desco Fine Homes typically builds as upper-end homes for upper-end customers, and even within that elite market the company faces a lot of stiff competition. However, he says, a lot of the competition offers low prices by cutting corners on materials. Although this means a lower initial price for the customer, it also means they are left with an end-product that costs them more in the long run due to repairs. Goettsche says Desco Fine Homes doesn't believe in cutting corners. "I don't do it that way," he says. "I don't want to have to go back and make repairs."

The other advantage Desco Fine Homes brings to its customers is integrity. Goettsche says the company always uses realistic numbers in its estimates to prevent surprises, and it always deals with customers in an honest and straightforward manner.

The main reason why Desco Fine Homes holds true to its values in every customer interaction is because Goettsche remains just as heavily involved with the company as when he started it. "This is all I've ever really done, and I've done it since 1977," he says. "My mind is really wrapped around it."

Goettsche says he takes a hands-on approach to every project Desco Fine Homes builds. Because he is so involved, he says, he can see what's going on first-hand and identify ways to do things better. "I still have my hands in the pot and oversee everything," Goettsche says.

## PERFECT PORTFOLIO

Desco Fine Homes' portfolio is filled with high-end luxury homes from all over the Dallas area, and the care and quality the company puts into every project can be seen in a pair of its most recent and prominent projects. One, located in the Winding Lake community in Dallas, is a 5,449-square-foot, four-bedroom home designed in the manner of a Tuscan villa. According to the company, this home features a private courtyard entry and an open floor plan designed for entertaining. The kitchen opens to the family room and features antiqued cabinets, a large central island, granite counters and professional-grade stainless steel appliances. The family room features a cast stone fireplace and carved stone columns.

Another example of the company's work is located on top of a ridge in Ellis County. The four-bedroom, four-bathroom home features three fireplaces and a resort-style pool. The home's oversized four-car garage provides space for hobbyists, while its covered and screened rear patio is an ideal space for outdoor activities. The company also boasts that the home is Energy Star-rated and includes the latest in heating, cooling, insulation and water filtration technology.

## MORE WITH LESS

Although the traditional thinking is that luxury equals more space, Goettsche says the trend in custom homes right now is downsizing.

The recent economic trends have homebuyers looking to do more with less, and as a result are designing homes with less formal space and more multipurpose areas. "The formal living room is fading, and the formal dining room is being relocated," Goettsche says, adding that ornate décor also is giving way to a more relaxed modern look exemplified by retailers such as Pottery Barn.

Goettsche goes on to say that more of Desco Fine Homes' clients are trying to maximize the space they can afford, and that means increased attention to outdoor living spaces. No longer are patios and backyards seen as space for the occasional barbecue, but outdoor spaces are seen as extensions of the main living space within a home. "I haven't done a built-to-suit for years where they didn't put thought into the back patio," Goettsche says. "It's no longer called the patio, it's 'outdoor living.'"

Even though competition has increased over the last several years thanks to customers' use of the Internet to find builders, Goettsche says Desco Fine Homes expects to see an increase of at least 50 percent in volume for the company over the next few years. He says he remains as dedicated to the business as he was in the beginning, and that should continue to be the difference for the company going forward. ■



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“We consider ourselves a high-end production/custom builder.”

**DAVID HARBIN,**  
**TEXAS REGIONAL PRESIDENT**



Drees Custom Homes is one of the largest custom homebuilders in the country, and it is expanding its footprint in Texas to include the Houston market.



## Houston-bound

Drees Custom Homes is expanding into Houston to offer homeowners a range of home plans and true customization. **BY RUSS GAGER**

### PROFILE

#### DREES CUSTOM HOMES – TEXAS DIVISION

[www.dreeshomes.com](http://www.dreeshomes.com) / **Average home price:** \$505,000 in Dallas to \$625,000 in Austin / **Projected 2014 revenue:** \$250 million / **Headquarters:** Fort Mitchell, Ky. / **Employees:** 125 in Texas / **Specialty:** Custom single-family homes

*In-house design and customization of production homes* are competitive advantages of Drees Custom Homes, the Texas division of national homebuilder Drees Homes, says Texas Regional President David Harbin. “We give our customers personal attention, and we have outstanding architectural plans,” Harbin says. “It all begins with strong designs and our ability to execute on the highest quality results for our customers. We allow our homebuyers to customize based on their lifestyle and preferences. Most builders in the production category will not offer this level of customization. We consider ourselves a high-end production/custom builder, and we’re heavily focused on delivering our ‘Custom Homes Made Easy’ brand promise.”

Drees Custom Homes opened its first office in Dallas in 1984 and in Austin in 1998. Drees Homes is ranked as the 23rd-largest national home builder by *Builder* magazine, and besides its Texas locations, it has homebuilding operations in Cincinnati, Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio; Nashville, Tenn.; Raleigh, N.C.; Frederick,



Md.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Indianapolis; and Washington, D.C. In 2015, Harbin expects the Texas division to build more than 500 homes and Drees Homes nationwide to build more than 1,600 homes.

The company is entering the Houston market by building in three existing Houston communities. These communities are Woodtrace, where Drees' first Houston model home is now underway; the new East Village of Harper's Preserve, which features premium home sites; and Summer Lakes, which is located in Rosenberg. Drees Custom Homes will be offering its Austin and Dallas floor plans along with developing new plans specifically for Houston.

Due to the many exceptional developers in Texas, Drees Custom Homes hand-selects developers to work with rather than developing its own properties.

#### START WITH A PLAN

Customers building a Drees home first select one of the company's home plans. "We have extensive customization options for every plan," Harbin says. "We allow them to make changes to expand their family room, or add media rooms, for example. If they want to further personalize it, we allow them to do that, too. We have an in-house architectural team based in Fort Mitchell, Ky., that will redraw plans specifically as desired for individual customers."

When plans are finalized, customers then visit the Drees design center in their metropolitan area to select their colors and finishes and make other choices. Once construction starts, Drees' employees called "builders" coordinate construction of the home with customers and subcontractors that the company considers its trade partners. "We've got to have a high-quality vendor base that knows and appreciates how we do things," Harbin stresses. "We negotiate with them to get the best price we can; yet we always make sure that we're running our business so that our trade partners are also profitable."

Harbin relies on the experience of the company's builders. "We've got a really

strong production group," he declares. "The average tenure of our builders is an impressive 13 years, not including the three we just hired for expansion reasons. Part of our success in having and retaining exceptional builders is our commitment to our college recruiting and builder trainee program. It's an excellent program because graduates are trained on how we do things. That has proven to strengthen the quality of our product and our team as a whole."

Preconstruction meetings are held with customers, and changes can be made until a cut-off point before construction starts. "A salesperson or marketing manager can write a change order and send that out to whoever needs it, but we do have parameters that we have to operate under to ensure efficiency," Harbin insists.

Once construction starts, the builders speak with customers weekly. They also review with them the entire house's mechanical and electrical systems before drywall is installed. "The pre-drywall walk-through is really critical for catching any changes that need to be made," Harbin declares.

#### AWARDS WINNER

The Dallas Builders Association announced the winners of its 35th Annual McSAM Awards on April 10 at a gala held at the Hotel InterContinental. The McSAM Awards are held each spring to recognize "maximum creativity in sales and marketing." Drees Custom Homes won several awards, including the prestigious "Builder of the Year" honor.

Industry experts from around the country judged more than 300 entries that were submitted this year. The awards were presented by the Dallas Builders Association in partnership with PIRCH™.

Drees has been one of the few to receive the home building industry's "Triple Crown" – National Builder of the Year, National Housing Quality Award and America's Best Builder. Locally, Drees builds in more than 20 communities throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. ■

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“We build clients’ homes the way  
we would build our own.”

**FRANK COTRONEO, CO-OWNER**



*Artista Homes' owners serve as project managers on the homes they build for clients, in an effort to ensure the highest level of quality, as well as demonstrate the company's dedication to customer service.*







# All In The Family

The brothers behind Artista Homes take a personal stake in the Winnipeg homebuilder's projects **BY JIM HARRIS**

*Frank Cotroneo and his three brothers developed their passion for building at a young age. As children, they would watch as their father, Antonino Cotroneo, a native of Italy and a trained stonemason, would work on homes and other projects. "The pride he showed in his work and the work he was creating gave us insight into what we wanted to do when we got older," Frank Cotroneo says.*

Antonino Cotroneo would continue to guide his sons as adults by sharing the knowledge he had gained during his more than 60 years in construction. Frank Cotroneo and his brothers Enzo, Tony and Gino along with their brother-in-law Fabio, began to put this knowledge to use in 2003, when they founded Artista Homes.

Today, Artista Homes is known for building custom, luxury homes in the region surrounding its home base in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Cotroneo brothers are closely involved in every aspect of the homes they build. "We're one of only a few luxury homebuilders in Winnipeg, so we have a niche market in the city," Frank Cotroneo says. "All four of us take on different aspects and roles within the company and we are the project managers on the homes we build."

The Cotroneos work directly with suppliers and contractors, many of who have a long-established relationship with the company. Although the company employs sales representatives, the brothers are also available to clients as needed and frequently are on project sites. "Building a home is a huge investment for most families," Frank Cotroneo adds. "I think we're able to give our customers a level of comfort; when they choose us they're in good hands. We build their homes the way we would build our own."



## PROFILE

### ARTISTA HOMES

[www.artistahomes.com](http://www.artistahomes.com) / Headquarters: Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Employees: 7 / Specialty: Luxury custom homes





The company has made its mark in a number of notable developments in and around Winnipeg, including the Deer Pointe, Bridgewater Forest, Sage Creek, South Pointe, Oak Bluff, River Park South and Waterford Green subdivisions.

“We love challenges and enjoy building unique homes suited to our clients’ needs and wants,” Cotroneo says. “They are confident in our ability to deliver a beautiful home, on time and on budget.”



*Artista Homes builds in many of Winnipeg’s most desired subdivisions. The company always maintains its focus on building unique homes that reflect clients’ needs and wants, while remaining on schedule and budget.*



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## DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENTS

Artista Homes builds homes in many of Winnipeg’s most desirable developments. These include Bridgewater Lakes, which offers homes built alongside three lakes, paved walkways and abundant green spaces, including a central park that serves as the focal point of the neighborhood.

“Stunning homes blend traditional neighborhood style with distinctively modern architectural features and provide a feeling of welcome and a natural draw for singles and families alike,” Artista Homes says. “Each street will feature a variety of home designs that provides character and natural charm, and underscores the uniqueness of the neighbourhood.”

Another neighborhood where Artista has recently completed homes is South Pointe, a 450-acre, master-planned mixed-use community that includes 25 acres of multi-family development. “South





Pointe will have something for everyone, whether it is a family looking to set down roots, or empty nesters looking to build their dream home,” Artista Homes says.

South Pointe incorporates a wetlands

*“All four of us take on different aspects and roles within the company and we are the project managers on the homes we build.”*

FRANK COTRONEO, CO-OWNER

concept into a new linear greenway system, which combines wetlands, creeks, ponds, parks, trail and other amenity features, the company adds.

#### UNMATCHED QUALITY

The company’s homes range in size from 1,600 to 4,000 square feet for a single-story bungalow. Two-story homes range in size between 1,900 to 8,000 square feet.

Artista Homes regularly makes new floor

plans, home styles and finish options available to clients in its catalog, but also accommodates and specializes in creating dream home plans for their clients. “We believe as far as value, quality, creativity and customer service go, there’s no one in our market that can offer what we do,” Cotroneo says.

The quality of Artista’s homes can be viewed in its show homes, which are available for viewing six days a week. The com-

Diverse influences and a stylish fusion of inspiration with attention to detail, Curtis Carpets continues to set the standard for quality and innovation with their valued supplier Kraus Canada Flooring.

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Artista's show homes feature a number of unique elements, such as themed theater rooms and a seven-foot wide aquarium.



pany builds a small number of show homes, which are also on the market. "We don't build a crazy amount of homes hoping to sell them; we're more of a pre-sell company," he adds. "We don't get wrapped up in a lot of unsold inventory."

One recently completed show home, located at 124 Lake Bend in Bridgewater Lakes features a number of unique elements. The home's exterior includes a metal roof, as well as balconies on both its front and rear. A spiral staircase leads from the second story to the rear yard that boasts a putting green, fire pit, and a pond with fountains. The home's interior includes a football-themed theater room complete with mannequins outfitted in NFL uniforms and a turf floor patterned after a football field. The home also features a metal-plated fireplace and a seven-foot wide aquarium at its entrance, Cotroneo notes.

Another recent home, located at 11 Trailside Crescent in the South Pointe community, includes a large chef-style kitchen, a



### 'WEB OF SAFETY'

*Artista Homes maintains a high rate of safety on its construction sites, co-owner Frank Cotroneo says. He notes that the company has earned Certificate of Recognition Program-certification, which verifies its safety program meets national standards*

*Not only does the company regularly conduct toolbox talks, it employs a safety coordinator who trains the tradespeople on site. "Safety is paramount, and we want to insure the safety of our trades," Cotroneo asserts.*

walkout lower level and a second floor loft with a balcony. "Located in the Heart of South Pointe on a beautiful natural lake setting, this multi-level two story home is marvel of design and functionality," the company says.

Artista Homes gets the ideas for its designs from a broad range of influences. While it is often inspired by trends in contemporary architecture, most of the home designs and ideas come from within the company.

"We don't really follow one certain style," Cotroneo asserts.

"We try to [take] the traditional style and blend it with different elements. We have our own touch."

The unique elements and overall quality of all Artista homes earned the company recognition by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) as one of the nation's best homebuilders. Artista in 2014 was presented with the association's SAM award for a home it had completed the previous year.

The SAM award honor "outstanding achievement by new home builders, renovators and developers and by their marketing teams," the association says.

"We've won many awards locally, but being recognized across Canada makes us very proud, and it was a defining moment for Artista Homes," Cotroneo says. ■

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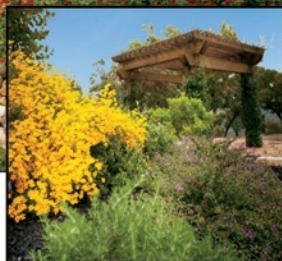
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“People are especially looking for that quality craftsmanship and customization when you get into the demographic that I’m in.” **DANIEL HEMPHILL**



Many of Hemphill Builders' homes feature a split-face natural graystone, which is difficult to find in its Midwest market.

## French Accent

Hemphill Builders has found more than 30 years of success with its focus on quality and French country-style homes. **BY RUSS GAGER**

*Everybody wants quality in the homes they buy and the latest technology, but sometimes, the older techniques and products are better.* “We still do many things the very old-school way,” President Daniel Hemphill says. “Some of our methods are methods that a lot of guys won’t or don’t use because they take a little longer or may be a little more expensive. These are the same methods that used to be passed down by craftsmen through generations, but lately are passed down less and less.

“Our tile is still all mud-set,” he continues. “Not a lot of guys are doing it. It takes longer and is more labor-intensive, but you can’t beat the end-result. Our painters are also excellent plasterers. I don’t know too many guys that still even know how to work with plaster in the way plaster was used in the gilded age mansions of the 1920s, for example.”

Homes by Hemphill Builders – which was founded in 1979 – frequently use cedar shake, slate, asphalt architectural shingles, or copper or metal roofs. “The sky’s the limit when it comes

### HEMPHILL BUILDERS

[www.hemphillbuild.com](http://www.hemphillbuild.com) / Average home price:

\$800,000 to \$10 million-plus / Headquarters:

Birmingham, Mich. / Employees: 3 full-time, 10-plus part time / Specialty: Custom single-family homes





Many Hemphill homes use construction techniques that have been passed down by craftsmen for many generations to ensure a high level of quality.



to the roof,” Hemphill says. “That’s really determined by the customer’s budget.”

The level of craftsmanship exhibited by Hemphill Builders on the roofs over its customers’ heads is equaled or surpassed in all other areas of the homes the company builds. Many of the company’s homes feature a type of split-face natural graystone unavailable in the Midwest that Hemphill’s father, Jerry, and his mother found in another area of the United States.

Where did they find this stone? “It’s a carefully guarded secret,” Hemphill declares. “People have tried to duplicate it. There’s just

nothing quite like the real thing.” Hemphill’s reliance on the stone began years ago when it was featured extensively on the first home in a subdivision called Bridge Valley in Clarkston, Mich.

“It was the home that set the tone for that development, that style of home, and people responded to it – they were blown away,” Hemphill recalls. “It’s something that really sustained us. A lot of our customers when they did come to us and still come to us say, ‘We like that style, and we know that you’re the guys that execute that style the best.’”

## NO MODEL

Hemphill Builders’ market primarily is high-end custom design/build. For approximately 15 years, the company has been building French country cottage-style homes utilizing reclaimed brick, limestone, cedar shake and the secret stone. Hemphill uses no working model homes.

“We have excellent relationships with many of our past customers, who are gracious enough to allow us to show off the house that we built for them to any potential new customers, which I think is a bit of an advantage,” Hemphill says. “People can see the home that’s actually being lived in with the nice touches that make it a home instead of just a house.”

Hemphill Builders does the carpentry, painting and drywalling on its homes and hires, plumbers, electricians and mechanics. Depending on the size and scope of a project, sometimes the carpentry also is subcontracted. The average home usually needs the services of eight to 10 subcontractors.



"We do quite a bit of work with Renner Bros. Construction," Hemphill says. "Not only are they capable of executing any type of roof style or material we may have requested for our clients, but their service is unmatched, as well. They are always my first call for a roofer when we have a new job come in. My father had used them for years, and like so many of our subs, he passed them on to me when I took over. I have not been disappointed."

## REPEAT CUSTOMERS

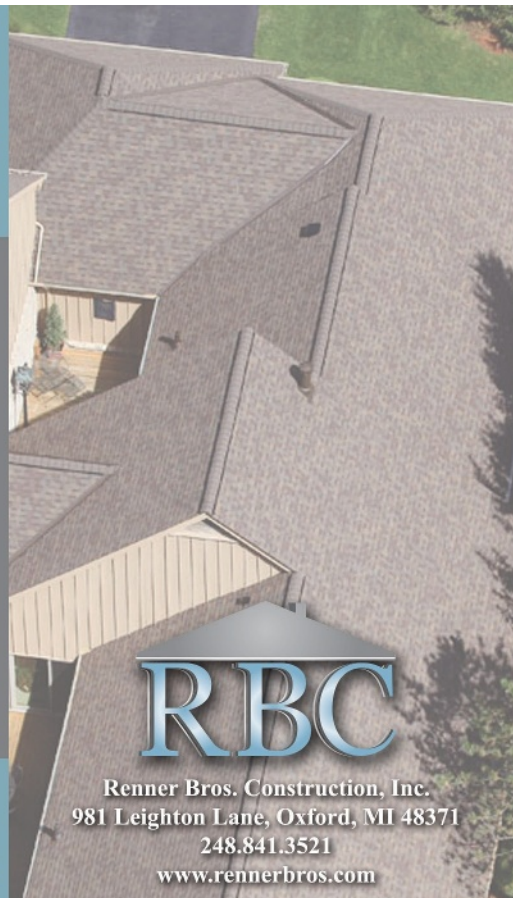
Approximately 80 percent of the company's business is from repeat customers, Hemphill estimates. The company benefits from word-of-mouth for much of its marketing, but it has started to advertise in print. "Hemphill has been around a long time in this industry, and there's a very strong reputation attached to the Hemphill name," Hemphill maintains. "A lot of people in metro Detroit have heard of us. It's just a matter of making sure that Hemphill Builders is still out there doing as good work as we've ever done and broadening our reach."

Besides being managed by the second generation of Hemphills, the company even has second-generation customers. "We have one family my dad built the father's house for and his kids now are

grown and all have professional lives, and we've built houses for all of his kids and for their cousins, brothers and neighbors' kids," Hemphill says. "Within the last five years, we're seeing a lot of younger people in their mid-30s to 40s, a lot of which are still referrals from customers we built for before, or homes of ours that they've seen that they just fell in love with."

The company builds three to five houses annually, but its goal is to double that to eight to 10 homes in 2015. "Future plans for the company definitely include geographic expansion," Hemphill says. "We are in the planning stages of expanding to the metro Atlanta area with offices based in Buckhead, the metro Nashville area with offices based in Franklin, Tenn., and the northwestern Michigan area with offices in Petoskey, Mich."

"Beyond 2015, we are consistently seeking affluent areas throughout the country to possibly expand to," Hemphill continues. "We research these areas extensively, assessing several factors to determine if the area may be a good fit for our unique offerings. People are especially looking for that quality craftsmanship and customization when you get into the demographic that I'm in. I've been in houses we built 10 years ago, and you would have thought they were built yesterday." ■



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“We have the ability and skills to provide custom images and bring design to life.”

**RICK MILLS, OWNER**



East Lake Builders completes three to five custom home and cottage projects each year, as well as an assortment of kitchen and bathroom remodels. The company offers an in-house design staff to help its customers.



### PROFILE

#### EAST LAKE BUILDERS

[www.eastlakebuilders.com](http://www.eastlakebuilders.com) / Annual revenue: \$5 million  
HQ: Port Huron, Mich. / Specialty: Custom homes



# Lake Views

East Lake Builders constructs custom lake houses and summer cottages while paying great attention to detail. **BY JEFF BORGARDT**

*East Lake Builders, a general contractor on the eastside of Michigan, has been building custom homes along the shores of Lake Huron for more than 20 years. Brothers Rick and Anthony Mills of East Lake Builders in Port Huron, Mich., “build high-quality custom homes that stand the test of time.”*

As brothers, they have taken many trips to old neighborhoods filled with historic charms from the turn-of-the-century with Victorian-era vibes. With cameras in hand, they observe the high-level of craftsman that allows those homes to last more than a century and they mirror it in their own work. “This is the foundation of East Lake and what our slogan ‘creativity and craft’ was built on,” says Rick Mills, owner.

## HURON'S SHORE

East Lake Builders completes three to five custom home and cottage projects per year along with an assortment of kitchen and bathroom remodels and other renovations.

“Over the last several years, we have developed a few specialty niches,” Rick Mills says. These include loft apartments as well as unique, ‘one-of-a-kind’ specialty stores and restaurants. “We work hard on several projects,” he explains. “We are just finishing our second microbrewery project,” says Anthony Mills. The high-profile project comes on the heels of East Lake’s successful completion of the Thumb Coast Brewery. “The brewery is doing so well that we are now drawing up plans for a larger brewing facility,” he says.

## HIGH END

While East Lake Builders acknowledges a market need for affordable housing, the company enjoys working with clients who dream of building 1920’s inspired cottages in a wooded setting, a Nantucket-style beach house or a coffee shop with a Chicago-style loft above.

East Lake Builders consists of an in-house design staff for architectural, residential and commercial design services. This allows the company to improve the building process and produce better-end product for clients, with a quick turnaround and higher quality and design of work. “It is not just a drawing on a piece of paper,” Rick Mills says. “We have the ability and skills to provide custom images and bring design to life. This allows our customer to see and understand what their project will look like when it is finished.”

The Mills brothers say they pay close attention to detail and pride themselves working side-by-side with customers. This in-

cludes close communication pertinent to all phases of building including matters they might not have considered.

For example, the design staff at East Lake Builders has the ability and knowledge to produce renderings that will show the ideal positioning of a home by tracking the paths of the sun throughout the day. “This is something that most people do not take into consideration when deciding where their house will go on the property,” Rick Mills explains.

East Lake Builders are pleased to meet any customer requests or specifications. For example, the company recently installed a commercial-size elevator for a client.

“We are in it for the craft,” the Mills brothers say. “We love architecture and bringing a clients dream to life.” ■



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## COASTAL FORTIFIED HOMES

“The objective is to create relevant, competitively priced housing for responsible living.”

**STEVE BERKUS, CEO**



CFH can use technology in concrete casting to mimic wood siding to the point where a difference can only be found through close examination. In addition, its building system provides sustainability.







# A Broad Vision

Coastal Fortified Homes aims to provide homeowners with a storm-resistant alternative.

BY ALAN DORICH, SENIOR EDITOR, AND TODD CAPPS

*As of 2010, 39 percent of the nation's population lived in counties directly on a coastline. This number is projected to increase by an additional 10 million people or 8 percent by the year 2020. The low-lying coastal regions of the United States remain a steady magnet, drawing a growing population of residents and vacationers to unsurpassed beauty, lifestyle and recreational opportunities. But life near the coast is not always a day at the beach.*

These regions have been consistently pummeled by severe storms generated in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, which few structures are built to withstand. Meanwhile, the frequency of storm events continues to increase. Ten of the top-15 most active Atlantic hurricane seasons, and the most named storms, from 1851 to the present, have occurred since the year 2000. These conditions are made worse by rising sea levels.

## PROFILE

### COASTAL FORTIFIED HOMES

[www.coastalfortifiedhomes.com](http://www.coastalfortifiedhomes.com) / Headquarters:  
Santa Barbara, Calif. / **Specialty:** Precast concrete homes





Each Coastal Fortified Home is engineered to withstand a Category 5 hurricane with wind-speeds of up to 200 miles per hour.



A 2014 National Climate Assessment reported that tidal waters worldwide have climbed an average of eight inches over the past century, caused mainly by the volume of water added to oceans from glacial melt and the expansion of that water from rising sea temperatures. As a combined result of increased storm frequency and sea-level rise, entire communities have endured the agonizing pattern of destruction and rebuilding many times over, often at taxpayer expense through the aid of state and federal agencies.

Federal disaster recovery assistance has exceeded \$124 billion since 2004, according to a May 2014 study by the Congressional Research Service, mostly for damages caused by hurricanes. A recent report by Reuters calculated that annual property losses from hurricanes and other coastal storms in the United States now exceed \$35 billion.

“There is that classic definition of ‘insanity’ as ‘doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results,’” says Steve Berkus, CEO of Coastal Fortified Homes® (CFH) and Resilient Home Building Systems™. His pilot project of eight precast insulated concrete homes, currently under construction in Port Aransas, Texas, is designed as an innovative solution to the costly cycle caused by coastal storms repeatedly defeating traditional construction methods and materials.

Each Coastal Fortified Home, while architecturally designed for flexibility and livability, is engineered to withstand a Category 5 hurricane with wind-speeds of up to 200 miles-per-hour, and the accompanying floodwater. “The objective is to create rel-



evant, competitively priced housing for responsible living within low-lying coastal regions,” Berkus explains.

In talking with Berkus, it becomes clear that a broader vision exists beyond the practical solution his building system provides – that of re-imagining what it means to live in the most vulnerable regions of the coastline. Apart from safety, security and quality of life, there is the question of taking responsibility for choosing to live in harm’s way, vs. relying on the aid – and often life-threatening bravery – of others to come to the rescue when nature strikes.

“While we are not in the business of telling people where they should and shouldn’t live, part of the personal reward in providing CFH as a resilient and secure alternative is knowing that we are helping individuals mitigate the risks themselves, and take greater responsibility for the survival of their home, their possessions and most importantly, their safety,” he says. “As far as the benefit this may also provide the American taxpayer in decreased emergency assistance funding, for every dollar spent on greater resiliency, \$4 in costs are saved later on, according to a National Institute of Building Sciences report.”

In addition to the advantage his building system provides to the

homeowner and taxpayer, Berkus affirms that a commitment to helping advance comprehensive coastal resilience, in balance with natural systems and habitats, is central to the company’s mission and business model. “The traditional approach does not contribute to a sustainable pattern,” he explains. “The cost of which includes more than the taxpayer aid of state and federal agencies, but also has a horrible effect on surrounding ecosystems via debris, pollution and the environmental impacts of repeatedly rebuilding.”

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*“Part of the personal reward in providing CFH as a resilient and secure alternative is knowing that we are helping individuals.”*

STEVE BERKUS, CEO

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CFH's building system provides advantages to both the homeowner and taxpayer, including decreased emergency assistance funding.





CFH intends to engage prominent regional architects to contribute to the Resilient Home Design Collection with their own visions for home designs.



### LEGACY IN HOUSING

Despite its current debut, Resilient Home Building Systems and CFH stand on a 50-year legacy in housing through Berkus' late father, the internationally esteemed architect and innovator, Barry Berkus. It was Barry who began his study of building systems in the late 1960s.

Steve Berkus' brother and acclaimed architect in his own right, Jeffery Berkus, coupled with their father's portfolio of designs, have created a Resilient Home Design Collection of proven plans that, according to Steve, will be a key component to the system. CFH intends to engage other prominent regional architects to contribute to the collection with their own unique interpretation and vision for home designs.

On that note, "The clear mission to this collective and collaborative approach is to work with top housing industry experts in order to create the smartest building system possible," Berkus says. Strategic alliances between the residential industry leaders in manufacturing and consulting represent another key aspect to the Resilient Home Building Systems platform.

As of the writing of this article, relationships have been established with RMax, a provider of polyiso insulation; PGT Industries, which builds impact-resistant windows and doors; Poly-Tuff Systems International, which develops exterior coatings and sealants; and AxisPointe, a third-party quality control management firm.



"AxisPointe has always found innovative ways for builders to push new technologies to the field," AxisPointe CEO Stan Luhr explains. "We are proud that Coastal Fortified has selected our In-Site Mobile platform to manage field operations and deliver outstanding quality."

Effectively addressing the anticipated demand for this Resilient Home Building System requires consideration of geographical locations, and the logistics of cost-effectively shipping the concrete sandwich panels (all within a 300-mile radius), as well as aligning CFH with the top qualified precast producers. In response, the company has established exclusive alliances with Heldenfels Enterprises covering the Gulf Coast of Texas, and Gate Precast Systems covering the stretch of coastline from Louisiana on the Gulf to Maryland along the Atlantic, and all states in-between.

In addition to precasters, another central aspect of the company's approach is the selection of builders and developers who are prequalified to complete the proprietary building system as a "kit of parts" package and program. Resilient Home Building Systems provides support each step of the way to ensure utmost quality and compliance. With the pilot project in Port Aransas, Texas, nearing its scheduled completion of late April 2015, Berkus and his team have already set their sights beyond the Gulf Coast. "We intend to fully explore the marketplace," Berkus explains, "building the puzzle on a national scale."

Recent meetings with Gate Construction Materials Group, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of architectural and structural precast concrete systems, yielded interest in forming an exclusive alliance for much of the East Coast of the United States, similar to that with Heldenfels on the Gulf Coast.

Berkus also has engaged the interest and participation of structural engineering consultant William Coulbourn. Considered one of the nation's experts on building in coastal areas, he has provided design solutions for clients in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey and New York. Coulbourn will be bringing to the program his experience of having "inspected many structures that failed under the forces created by hurricanes, tornadoes, storm surge and waves." He has turned those experiences into written design guidance and contributes to engineering standard and building code development.

## A 'WIN-WIND SOLUTION'

An insulated precast concrete roof and walls constitute the structure of the home. Berkus is aware that the concept of living in a concrete home initially gives some people "a false sense of living inside an oversized brick." This is a preconception he looks forward to the pilot project dispelling.

Port Aransas, a quaint coastal town near Corpus Christi, provided the ideal low-lying location to showcase the pilot program currently under construction for CFH. The pilot program is an

eight-home enclave where each home provides 1,600 square feet of two-story living space as well as a rooftop terrace.

"We are able to use today's technology in concrete casting to mimic wood siding, and when painted, you'd have to look very closely to distinguish between the two," Berkus says. In addition to the fortified construction, the pioneering building system provides sustainability through higher energy efficiency, durability and resistance to mold, mildew and termites.

Traditionally, insuring homes and structures in these locations has been a major obstacle. But Berkus and Luhr are currently working with other leaders in the insurance industry to recognize the building system's lower probability of risk management, and thereby grant CFH a unique classification with considerably lower insurance premiums.

The insurability, coupled with the other savings, will substantially reduce the overall cost of operation.

"Yet even with these unique engineering features," Berkus continues, "the homes are inviting and livable, thanks to strong architectural design. There is no compromise on pride of ownership. We like to call it a 'win-wind' solution." ■



*An insulated precast concrete roof and walls constitute the structure of CFH's homes, which are both inviting and livable.*





*Jonna Luxury Homes boasts a 100 percent success rate, which it credits to the company's focus on giving customers everything they want now and in the future.*

“One thing that we excel at is managing expectations.”

**JOSEPH JONNA, OWNER**

# The Art of Construction

Jonna Luxury Homes uses trusted construction practices to bring out the best of each home. **BY JAMIE MORGAN**

*Jonna Luxury Homes keeps a keen eye on design trends, and right now open, accessible and connected homes are on the top of homeowner wishes. Coincidentally, those key words also happen to describe the way Jonna Luxury Homes conducts business.*

The company was formed and is led by Joseph Jonna, who comes from a family of real estate developers based in southeast Michigan. He garnered extensive experience in commercial and residential building while working for his family's group of companies. In 2012, Jonna recognized the residential market in southeast Michigan — specifically in Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills — was beginning to make a comeback. He also saw a gap in the market Jonna Luxury Homes could fill.

“This is the area where my family lives and works and we saw an opportunity to enter the market,” Jonna says. “There’s a lot of product out there for sale, but not as much new product. The people who want to buy right now want new homes. That’s our niche in the market. We can give them something new that ends up being exactly what they want.”

We have a 100 percent success rate because we give the homeowner everything they want, and the things we anticipate they’ll want in the future because we stay on top of cutting-edge technology and building trends. Our job is to identify the products and materials a homeowner may overlook.”

## BEGINNING TO END

At Jonna Luxury Homes, giving homeowners specifically what they want not only speaks to the end product, but to the overall construction process, as well. The homebuilder holds its clients’ hands through the entire homebuilding process beginning with lot selection and moving to architectural services, building and furnishing. When the client is comfortably settled in, Jonna Luxury Homes continues the relationship with estate management services and extended maintenance.

“There are a couple of things we’re really good at and one of them is managing expectations,” Jonna says. “Construction is not a perfect science so you have to communicate with the customer and help them understand how the process works, what challenges may come up and what’s expected of them. The way

## PROFILE

**JONNA LUXURY HOMES**

[www.jonnaluxuryhomes.com](http://www.jonnaluxuryhomes.com) / Headquarters:  
Birmingham, Mich. / Specialty: Luxury homebuilder





*Jonna Luxury Homes says its market in southeast Michigan is demanding new homes, so it works closely with its customers to deliver exactly what they want. The company always works to do this while remaining on budget.*



we do that is through a high level of customer service from the office and the field staff.”

Another key differentiator for Jonna Luxury Homes lies in the way it handles the design process. The homebuilder predominantly works with architectural firm Krieger Klatt of Royal Oak on most of its projects. When it comes to spec homes, Jonna Luxury Homes takes into account the neighborhood and space to determine what a potential homeowner might want in their layout. Some of the signature selling points of Jonna Luxury Homes are kitchens attached to a great room to create a flowing open space, and bedroom suites with walk-in-closets and full bathrooms to create a private sanctuary for each family member.

“We spend hours on each home, playing with the space and kicking ideas around to get a grip on what customers are looking for in that market,” Jonna explains. “When a client buys one of our spec homes we can switch some things around to an extent depending at what time in the construction process they purchase. We will also delay some of the finishes and leave some things inten-



tionally incomplete knowing the homeowner will want to pick out certain colors and finishes, such as countertops that reflect their personal style and taste.

## FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

In regard to Jonna Luxury Homes’ custom homes, it’s pretty much anything goes, as long as that anything follows a meticulously planned budget that has been approved by the homeowner.

“Another thing we’re really good at is delivering a complete product with little or no extras to the homeowner,” Jonna explains. “If someone buys before the home is complete, we are intentional about not going back to them for extra items. We spend a lot of upfront time designing what they want and pricing it accordingly so there are no surprises.”

Jonna Luxury Homes is evenly split between custom and spec homes. The company always is looking to grow but will only do so in a manner that strengthens its standing in its current markets of Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills.

“We work in a hyper-local market and while our long-term plan for growth could involve extending into other regions, staying ahead of the market we are in now and maintaining profitability regardless of the amount of homes we build will strengthen our brand,” Jonna explains. “We want our work to lead to referrals and we want our main portion of growth to happen through word of mouth.” ■



# Stay at Home

Pratt Home Builders specializes in building semi-production customized homes in the greater Chattanooga area. **BY RUSS GAGER**

“Since the recession, we’ve had the most profitable years we’ve ever had.”

**WIN PRATT,  
PRESIDENT AND OWNER**



*Pratt Home Builders strives to be attentive to every detail in its design centers to make the homebuilding process simple and easy for its customers.*

*Pratt Home Builders aims to make the homebuilding experience as easy as possible for its customers. “Building a home is a scary thing for most people,”* President and owner Win Pratt concedes. “Home ownership in our country is at a pretty high percentage, but very few people have actually built new homes. Since it’s such a large purchase – the largest purchase most Americans typically make in their lifetimes – it’s sort of intimidating to most folks, particularly people who haven’t done it before or done it and had a really bad experience.”

Pratt says his company is aware of all that emotional baggage and tries “to be very attentive to detail in our process in order to make it as simple and easy as possible for our customers and painless to get a new home built.”

One way that Pratt Home Builders reduces stress for its customers is by providing them with a web portal for their home that they can access any time. “Customers look at progress photos, and as part of the preconstruction process, they can view records online of all the selections they’ve made for the nice things that go in their homes,” Pratt explains. “Once they get moved in, the system integrates into our peace-of-mind and customer-care process. They use the same site to make requests for service with our customer care people for concerns or issues about after-the-fact kinds of things.”

## PROFILE

### PRATT HOME BUILDERS

[www.prattliving.com](http://www.prattliving.com) / **Projected 2014 revenue:**  
\$34 million / **Average home price:** \$300,000

**Headquarters:** Chattanooga, Tenn. **Employees:** 30

**Specialty:** Semi-production customized homes





With its comprehensive Peace of Mind Warranty, Pratt Home Builders demonstrates its commitment to customer satisfaction.

That Peace of Mind Warranty Plan extends coverage for materials and workmanship for one year from closing and includes warranty reviews scheduled 90 days and 11 months from closing. Specific warranty items can be requested online. “I think we’re progressive and very committed to customer satisfaction,” Pratt emphasizes.

The web portal also is used by the approximately 25 subcontractors that Pratt – acting as construction manager – employs to build each home. “We use really good software and are able to manage the project from start to finish,” Pratt stresses. “It helps us manage our project from the sales process through the accounting and purchasing, estimating, drafting and warranty process.

“All the information – the purchase orders and work orders, plans, specifications – are posted on a web portal,” he explains. “All our different subcontractors can log in and download or view information that they need to execute their trades. They can do that in the field and download or view the information there onsite on any type of tablet device, which helps eliminate duplication in efforts and mistakes.”

#### 10 PERCENT GROWTH

Pratt Home Builders has approximately 25 plans for homes in the craftsman style that it can customize. The family owned company develops many of the lots on which its homes are built. “We seek out parcels of land in strategic areas of town,” Pratt says. “We will buy lots anywhere.”

Since pulling back from its home construction work in Nashville, Memphis and Knoxville, Tenn., and Savannah, Ga., when the recession hit, Pratt Home Builders’ business has grown at approximately 10 percent annually in the Chattanooga, Tenn., area where it is headquartered. “When the recession hit, it wasn’t profitable to continue in those markets, so we refocused and reenergized,” Pratt recalls. “Since the recession, we’ve had the most profitable years we’ve ever had.”



“At the end of the day, we’re just a very aggressive, progressive, detail-oriented company with a lot of really good employees,” Pratt concludes. “We’re just kind of the all-American family that likes to work hard. We all love what we do, and at the end of the day, we try to do what’s right and fair for our customers and give them what we promised.” ■

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“On our new homes, it’s a compliment to me when people say, ‘I can’t believe it’s not 100 years old.’” **TOM MENARD, OWNER**



*Menard Construction's expertise in restoring and recreating unique homes is helping it rebuild Jersey Shore neighborhoods that were hit by Hurricane Sandy.*

## Skills to Rebuild

Menard Construction has built a unique niche for itself while working in two New Jersey regions.

**BY JAMIE MORGAN**

### PROFILE

**MENARD CONSTRUCTION CO.**

**[www.menardconstruction.com](http://www.menardconstruction.com)**

**Headquarters:** Mountain Lakes, N.J.

*Tom Menard's history in the homebuilding industry hasn't* just been about building houses, but restoring and preserving communities. After five years of managing multimillion-dollar commercial projects in Baltimore, Menard switched gears and returned to his hometown of Mountain Lakes, N.J., to start Menard Construction Co. in 1993. The young company began with small projects – kitchen and bathroom renovations – and soon moved into building new homes, but not just any kind of new homes. Mountain Lakes happens to be historically significant, with one of the largest groupings of craftsman-style homes in the United States. Menard has a passion for these historic gems.

“Because there is a large collection of historic homes in our town, our specialty really became restoring craftsman-style homes,” Menard explains. “And even when we build new homes, many owners wanted us to mimic the old homes in the town. We’ve become the go-to construction company for true-to-form historic home restorations and also homes that mimic the details



of the older homes. On our new homes, it's a compliment to me when people say, 'I can't believe it's not 100 years old.'"

## BY THE SHORE

Menard Construction's expertise in restoring and recreating unique home identities isn't limited to craftsman-style, however. For the past two years, Menard has rallied along with other contractors to rebuild the Jersey Shore neighborhoods that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

"I had a home in Brick, N.J., that because it was newer wasn't affected dramatically, but homes all around us were devastated and homes up and down the shore were all badly damaged and pretty much destroyed," Menard explains. "Many had to be lifted and rebuilt, so we set up a second office there to help in the reconstruction of the Jersey Shore."

Menard says there are two ways to go when it comes to rebuilding homes on the Jersey Shore — lift and restore or tear down and start anew. Choosing one way or the other depends on the existing condition of the house and how badly it was damaged in the storm.

Whether it's a restoration or new construction, each home is constructed to meet FEMA's new guidelines. The flood water during Hurricane Sandy was over 10 feet above sea level, but the first floors of most homes averaged 6 to 7 feet above sea level. They are now being raised to 10 to 12 feet above sea level. Foundations on houses that are close to the ocean are fitted with breakaway walls, designed to break away on heavy wave impact, allowing water to pass through the house.

"In other locations where we're not as concerned with waves but just the flood elevation, we are doing conventional masonry foundations but putting in flood vents that allow water to go into the crawl space," Menard says. "Without the flood vents, it could push the walls over because of the water pressure."

Homes along the Jersey Shore are also being built to new wind-resistance codes. After two years of helping to rebuild the shore, Menard says the region is starting to shape up. "Two years ago it looked like a war zone," he says. "Houses were knocked off foundations into big piles of rubble and pushed into the bay. Ninety-five percent of the homes that were visibly damaged have been demolished, so now we are working with empty lots and construction is going on everywhere. It's really coming alive again." ■

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“When you walk into one of our homes, you can truly tell the difference.”

**CHRIS THOMSEN, *PRESIDENT***



*In addition to its dedication to old-fashioned craftsmanship and quality, Thomsen Homes is known for being among the first to use new technology because the company understands how innovation supports its success.*



## A Little Extra

Thomsen Homes thrives in the growing Fargo, N.D., market thanks to innovation and a strong internal culture. **BY CHRIS PETERSEN**

### PROFILE

#### THOMSEN HOMES LLC

[www.thomsenhomesllc.com](http://www.thomsenhomesllc.com) / 2013 revenue:  
\$25 million / Headquarters: Fargo, N.D.  
Employees: 16 / Specialty: Homebuilder

*Fargo, N.D., doesn't often make the list of the most dynamic places in the United States, but that's only because most people aren't looking closely enough. Thomsen Homes LLC President Chris Thomsen says his company has found much to keep it busy in and around Fargo thanks to the area's diverse economy.*

Of course, there's more to the company's success than simply being in the right place at the right time. Thomsen says the company has built a reputation for providing homebuyers with high-quality construction and highly desirable features at a reasonable price. That goes hand-in-hand with the company's willingness to be innovative and put the latest technology to work for it. All of this adds up to make Thomsen Homes one of the leading builders in the Fargo market, Thomsen says.

### THE THOMSEN DIFFERENCE

The company was founded in 2007 after Thomsen spent several years in the real estate business and recognized a need in the Fargo area. He says there was an underserved niche in the area for





affordable, high-quality homes that came with a little extra when compared to other homes in the same price range. Thomsen says the company's homes start at \$180,000, but come with amenities that are not often found within that price point.

"When you walk into one of our homes, you can truly tell the difference," Thomsen says. Among the included features found in the company's homes are custom alder cabinets with granite countertops in the kitchens, knock-down ceiling texture, and micro-beveled laminate flooring in the kitchen and dining spaces.

As important as old-fashioned craftsmanship is, Thomsen Homes also understands the importance of staying current with technology. "We're a real innovative company, utilizing technology to its fullest," Thomsen says.

One recent example of this is what the company calls "The House that Likes Built." Thomsen says everything about the house, from the lot selection to the finishes and amenities inside, was selected by the community through voting on Facebook. Thomsen says the point was to show potential homebuyers what the process of building a home through Thomsen Homes was like.

Thomsen Homes also uses the Internet to coordinate the work with its subcontractors, vendors, and homeowners through BuilderTREND web-based software. "Our entire business is run off of this platform," Thomsen explains.

## CORE CULTURE

Supplementing the quality work the company builds and its innovation is the strong internal culture within Thomsen Homes. Even though the company is a construction management firm, its key personnel have years of experience in general contracting, making it possible for them to know everything about what goes into a successful project. Thomsen says Thomsen Homes also is the kind of office where it's not unusual to see people working late into the night to ensure they do the best work possible.

"We all care so much about what we do," Thomsen says, adding that the company's dedication has resulted in its rapid growth, nearly doubling the number of homes built each year in the past six years. "It wouldn't have been possible without our unbelievable team which has also multiplied."

Thomsen says the company built more than 100 homes in 2013 and as of late October had already surpassed that total for 2014. He says that although some of that is due to the rapid growth and expansion in the Fargo market, it's also a testament to the strength of Thomsen Homes and its team. Last year, the company became the second-largest single-family homebuilder in Fargo, and Thomsen says the company is proud of this unprecedented feat. "For our company to grow from a startup business to the second-largest single-family home builder in the market within seven years is unreal," Thomsen says. "This is a tribute to the Thomsen team delivering a product that the market is wanting."

Thomsen says the company's focus over the next few years will be on perfecting what it does as well as finding new opportunities. Thomsen Homes is looking at branching out into multifamily and commercial projects in the near future. "We've got big plans for growth," Thomsen says. ■

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# Unique Resource

Reissued provides designers with a one-stop online shop for one-of-a-kind vintage goods.

*Designers take pride in their resources and ability to gather the best products and materials for their clients, and a new site is making all that easier.* Reissued, which launched as a social marketplace app in 2014, launched an online shopping and editorial platform at [www.reissued.com](http://www.reissued.com) in late February. Within the growing resale industry, Reissued offers consumers an online destination to shop the world's most unique curators of vintage and one-of-a-kind fashion, accessories and home goods. The new website will bring weekly curated sales, featured sellers, seasonal collections and numerous editorial stories to life via its e-commerce platform and article library.

The company was founded by interior designer, tastemaker and vintage collector Jennifer DeLonge, and is headquartered in Encinitas, Calif. With a 10-year career in furniture and licensed product design, DeLonge is now focusing her attention solely on Reissued, as it's truly the only platform of its kind in the online retail space.

Along with DeLonge, the Reissued team consists of an impressive mix of e-commerce, fashion, and marketing veterans from the likes of Fab, Polo Ralph Lauren, Design Within Reach, backcountry.com and ASOS. CEO Scott Ballantyne and DeLonge have brought together:

- Cat Birch as vice president of merchandising;
- Sally Norman as director of e-commerce;
- Jenna Lilak as Account Manager to curate weekly sales; and
- Scott Richardson and Sam Lund to run their creative marketing as creative director and editor-in-chief respectively.

"After launching the Reissued app just a few short months ago, I am beyond thrilled to now expand our marketplace online," DeLonge says. "The community we are building has asked for it and we are here to deliver. With invitation-only merchants in fashion, home, lifestyle and accessories, you can now find a curated selection of the best vintage, rare, and one-of-a-kind items all in one place."

"It's a joy to join Jen and to bring her vision to life," Ballantyne says. "We are creating a truly unique marketplace for our merchants and collectors."

"Our platform has been designed from the ground-up to connect, educate, and bond this growing community. A fully responsive web experience married with an iOS app covers both consumers' and merchants' needs for daily product uploads and a flawless shopping experience."

New to the Reissued offering is exclusive featured content, interviews, and curated sales by Los Angeles-based Lot, Stock and Barrel, New / Found's Richard Wainwright, and Eden & Eden, to name a few. At launch, the site features more than 140 sellers who have been hand picked by the Reissued team. ■



"I love working with a team." **LORI CARROLL, *PRESIDENT***



Lori Carroll & Associates specializes in high-end interior design for residential and commercial clients throughout Tucson, Ariz.





# Ultimate Design

Lori Carroll & Associates delivers the 'ultimate design experience' for clients throughout Arizona.

*When Lori Carroll launched her design firm Lori Carroll & Associates in 2000, she could not have predicted how successful it would become. With hundreds of notable projects throughout Arizona, Carroll has left a definite impression on the region and says that's due in no small part to the careful approach and collaborative spirit her team sets in motion on every project.*

As a graduate of the University of Arizona's interior design program, Carroll spent a short time working for a local furniture store before breaking out and establishing her own company. Working alongside two partners for more than twelve years, Carroll's business was flourishing when she decided to set out on her own once again. Today, Lori Carroll & Associates specializes in high-end interior design for residential and commercial clients throughout the Tucson area.

Over the years, Carroll and her firm have developed a reputation for delivering what she calls "the ultimate design experience." Lori says this is possible because of the focus she and her staff of design professionals have when providing clients with the complete realization of their ideas. "I would say, as I look back at my projects over the years, it's important to listen to what the client's needs, wants and desires are, and help them fulfill their dreams."

For example, a gorgeous custom home site in one of Tucson's most desirable neighborhoods; add an incredible floor plan and enterprising clients and this is the dream scenario for any interior design professional. Surrounded by nature and finding a way to integrate it in to a design plan is what inspires Lori Carroll; a fresh new perspective for each project, from the outside looking in.

To illustrate, an open-concept kitchen surrounded by

## PROFILE

LORI CARROLL & ASSOCIATES

[www.loricarroll.com](http://www.loricarroll.com)

Headquarters: Tucson, Ariz. / Specialty: Interior design





incredible views, a master bathroom as the ultimate place to relax and unwind and a powder room being the perfect spot for a little design drama are the benchmarks that drive Lori Carroll's success. Architecturally, one of Lori's favorite properties has it all; spacious floor-plan, limitless natural light, a stunning multi-level



Lori Carroll says her firm is dedicated to providing clients with designs that meet and exceed their visions for their spaces.



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ceiling and an overall style that fit the personality of the client. The versatility of materials like Brazilian multi-color slate flooring or Avalon polished quartzite countertops from Cactus Stone & Tile were the ideal foundation for unifying these spaces. The steel blue background along with tinges of rust in the slate reflect the divine landscape just steps away. For a client who loves to cook, a complete Viking kitchen from Arizona Wholesale Supply provided the ultimate in "performance and design." A home of this size needs cohesiveness, so selecting products and finishes was contingent on the fact most rooms are visible both inside and out. "Dendrites" or branching patterns in the quartzite covering walls and floors throughout the master retreat resemble graceful twigs and leaves, creating a soothing, au naturel effect. Distinctive plumbing fixtures from Ferguson Enterprises embody the spa-like appeal. You

**/Cactus Stone/** Cactus Stone has differentiated itself from all other natural stone importers in the U.S. by employing a product selection process that uses very specific criteria. The result speaks volumes. Only the best slabs are admitted into The Cactus Stone Gallery. Truly the "best in class," according to the vast majority of those who visit.

Lori Carroll & Associates, the internationally renowned design firm, as well as their clients, have experienced the excitement of discovery when walking the aisles of The Gallery.

Congratulations to Lori and her staff for their pursuit of excellence in design! For more information, call 602-914-2202, email [stone@cactustone.com](mailto:stone@cactustone.com) or visit [www.cactustone.com](http://www.cactustone.com).



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*The partnerships Lori Carroll & Associates has formed with many local Tucson vendors and suppliers have been key to the firm's ongoing success.*



can find hidden bonuses behind every door too; custom closet and storage systems from Tucson's Closet Trends. From floor to ceiling, a client can have it all. Interesting patterns, rich colors, textures and an enchanting allure; homes like these make a statement.

### THE RIGHT LOOK

Whether designing a living space or a place of business, Carroll says she doesn't believe in over-designing; preferring a simplistic, less-is-more approach for just the right look. Just because her creative philosophy is more streamlined doesn't mean Lori's designs are minimalist. Drawing inspiration from her surroundings, she isn't afraid to mix and match styles in the same space if they blend well together. "I think an important factor we bring to the table is the ability to intermix interesting combinations of color and texture; flawlessly incorporating them into the overall design."

**/Today's Interiors/** Today's brings more than 75 years of combined experience to the window motorization projects they manage for many of the Southwest's most esteemed clients, Interior Designers, Architects and Luxury Home Builders. Our team is particularly honored and privileged to be the exclusive window treatment supplier for Lori Carroll and Associates.

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Many times, Carroll says, she strives to develop a focal point contrary to the predictable. Lori points out, in many cases features like flooring or cabinetry become the focus simply because they take up so much space. Although some interior designer's might take this as a given, Lori works to bring distinctive pieces to the forefront, taking the emphasis away from the expected and introducing something unique to catch the eye.

With this in mind, dust off the good dishes; the formal dining room in a newly built custom home is set for fine dining. There is something nostalgic and romantic about enjoying a meal in a place dedicated to dining. This space was designed to be sophisticated enough for elegant dinner parties, yet casual for weekend breakfast. A commanding iron chandelier became the focal point,

suspended over a beautiful wood plank table. Surrounded by sculptural hall chairs and graceful draperies fabricated and installed by Arizona's premier window covering expert, Today's Interiors, each element complements the other.

## TEAM SPIRIT

Carroll says the internal culture at Lori Carroll & Associates is based on providing the highest level of customer care, and that is made possible by building a strong team of professionals. Teamwork goes beyond simply collaborating and extends to supporting and encouraging each other whenever possible. Carroll explains her associates often share "spirit tags" in the form of notes that recognize a co-workers' efforts whether inside the office or when interacting with vendors or clients. These messages encourage everyone to reach even further on the next project.

The nurturing and supportive outlook within Lori Carroll & Associates not only results in a fun work environment but ultimately benefits the client as well. "I love working with a team," Lori says. "The results are a highly successful experience for our clients which makes for the ultimate end-product."

**/Arizona Wholesale Supply Company/** Sub-Zero and Wolf are the industry leaders in premium refrigeration, wine storage and cooking equipment. Arizona Wholesale Supply Company has been providing exceptional products and services to the Tucson and Phoenix area for the last 70 years. Together, these two companies deliver the perfection that Lori Carroll & Associates demand from their partners. The Living Kitchen at Arizona Wholesale Supply in Tucson showcases each Sub-Zero Wolf product in full-scale kitchen settings with all the resources Lori Carroll & Associates need to create the kitchen of their customer's dreams. Lori Carroll & Associates set the highest standards which is why they use Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances.



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## MAKING IT COUNT

Carroll explains, keeping the budget manageable for each particular client is something she is always aware of on a project. Her insight and creativity attracts clientele, however, Lori says "A lot of times, I find myself working with and incorporating a lot of exclusive materials and products and uniqueness comes with a price."

This is especially true with larger, custom built homes that have more square footage to work with. By approaching a project with an open mind and willingness to explore one-of-a-kind design solutions, clients are assured the outcome will be distinctly "them."

One particular project that started out as a quick color consultation, developed in to an extensive interior design assignment. After a devastating fire destroyed the family home, a determined couple vowed to build again; bigger and better. What transpired was more than they ever imagined. After raising three children; now as "empty nesters," they could actually envision a home that would be less about practicality and more about style. Initially the client's had tried to do the design work on their own but then put their trust in Lori. Consequently, joining the project later in the process was a challenge. Making creative changes ensured cohesiveness, however, required the client re-evaluate their budget.



*The firm typically starts out by identifying a focal point in the design and then working out from the center.*

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*A team atmosphere within Lori Carroll & Associates is one of the firm's most important elements of its success, Carroll says.*

### LOOKING GOOD

Lori and her team will continue to explore new opportunities in an effort to generate a fresh appeal for prospective clients.

In fact, Carroll describes the recent increase in requests to design and complete interior design renovations for some of Tucson's

most iconic resorts and destination hotels. Lori says the work she is doing for these properties, along with industry partners such as Dal-Tile Corporation and others, is an advantageous sampling of her design sensibilities. She is looking forward to garnering more attention in the specialized hospitality platform.

No matter what direction Lori Carroll and her team take moving forward, she stresses that she will remain committed to delivering the highest-quality designs for her clients and continue the highly collaborative approach with team members who truly believe in each other.

"Our goal is to continue designing distinctive properties for clients in a range from mid- to high-end," Carroll says. "I want to be a part of showcasing the very best that Arizona has to offer." ■

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A photograph of a modern outdoor patio area. In the foreground, there is a large, light-colored sofa with a patterned backrest and two striped pillows. A small, square coffee table is in front of it. To the right, a wooden dining table with a metal base is partially visible. The floor is covered in large, light-colored square tiles. In the background, there is a glass door leading to the interior of a house, and a small potted plant is on the right.

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“The Hamptons are hot right now – I do not think it, I know it.”

**FRANK DEVITO, OWNER**



*Devito & Company has completed more than 400 successful projects in the Hamptons and other East Coast locations.*

## High-End Homes

DeVito & Company delivers top-notch quality in one of the nation's most demanding homebuilding markets. **BY CHRIS PETERSEN**

### PROFILE

DEVITO AND COMPANY

[www.buildsmarterli.com](http://www.buildsmarterli.com)

**Headquarters:** Southampton, N.Y. / **Employees:** 18

**Specialty:** Design/build, restorations and renovations

*The Hamptons feature some of the most desirable real estate in the country, and therefore the competition to build the homes and estates that occupy that real estate is some of the fiercest in the custom home industry. To survive and thrive in the Hamptons, a builder needs to be able to keep up with the latest trends and build with high degrees of integrity and quality. These are the qualities that Devito and Company owner Frank Devito says have kept the company at the forefront of the custom home market in the Hamptons for more than 30 years.*

Devito started building in the area in the early 1980s with partner and longtime friend Timothy Penatello. The original company, known as D&P Construction, built hundreds of homes on the eastern end of Long Island before being sold in 1989. From there, Devito went on to establish Bay Meadow Millwork, which focused on custom millwork, cabinetry, windows and doors. Over time, Devito moved into custom building and historic restorations, and today Devito & Company has





*Devito & Company was one of the first builders in the region to embrace sustainable building concepts such as engineered lumber, sustainable forestry and selective harvesting in its projects.*

completed more than 400 successful projects in the Hamptons as well as New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C., and other locations on the East Coast.

Devito says working in the Hamptons is one of the most demanding situations a homebuilder can operate in, thanks to the elite nature of the properties, the high expectations of the clientele and the intensity of the competition. Nevertheless, Devito & Company has proven time and again that it has what it takes to count itself among the top builders in the Hamptons. "It's where the who's who wants to be," Devito says.

#### **DETAILS ARE KEY**

The keys to success in a demanding market like the Hamptons generally are the same as they would be anywhere else, Devito says. Paying close attention to the details, providing the highest levels of quality possible and staying true to the quoted

estimate are all essential, and Devito & Company strives to accomplish these no matter where it builds. "The main thing is working within the budget," Devito says.

To make that happen, Devito & Company leaves nothing to chance. Devito says one of the company's greatest strengths is the fact that it has the capabilities to perform a majority of the work in-house. With its in-house designers, carpenters, laborers and foremen, Devito & Company can provide a full hands-on experience for its customers, ensuring that the company has as much control over the work being done as possible. When the company does use subcontractors, Devito adds, it works extremely closely with them to make sure the work is done to the highest quality and in the most efficient manner. "Nobody's paying for mistakes or wastes of time," he says.

The company's in-house capabilities also come into play when it comes to the details inside the homes. In particular,



Devito & Company's extensive experience with millwork is a major plus for a custom homebuilder working in an environment such as the Hamptons, where luxury and high quality are not only valued, but expected. The company's in-house millwork capabilities mean Devito & Company can provide these services at a lower cost than many of its competitors, according to Devito, and customers are starting to put greater emphasis on high-end custom millwork.

"The market's not just a bare-bones market anymore, people are looking for a lot of details," he says.

### FOCUSED ON GREEN

One of the most significant ways Devito & Company stands apart from its competitors is the company's commitment to green and sustainable building. Devito says the company was one of the first in the region to embrace sustainable building concepts such as engineered lumber, sustainable forestry and selective harvesting. The company also has developed significant experience in the installation of geothermal cooling systems, as well as passive and active solar technologies.

"Exceptional quality and green building practices provide substantial benefits to our clients," the company explains. "The homes we build for our clients today are more comfortable, are more healthy, use less energy and have a smaller carbon footprint than what was possible in the past."

*"Be honest with your clients.  
Don't tell them what they  
want to hear – tell them what  
they need to hear."*

FRANK DEVITO, OWNER

### STILL GROWING

Although Devito says the cost of labor and materials continue to be a challenge for the entire construction industry, he foresees growth in Devito & Company's future. However, that growth will be handled with care, as the company doesn't want to overextend itself the way many of its competitors have, only to find they aren't ready to handle the additional demands. "We're looking for a slow, steady growth," Devito says. "Tell it like it is. Be honest with your clients. Don't tell them what they want to hear – tell them what they need to hear."

Maintaining a more measured rate of growth will be import-



ant for the company moving forward, because the Hamptons aren't experiencing the same type of building slump as the rest of the country. By continuing to build custom homes that meet the needs of this demanding clientele, Devito says, Devito & Company can expect to stick around for a long time to come. "The Hamptons are hot right now," he says. "I do not think it – I know it. There's still money being spent here." ■

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**GAIL DRURY, *PRESIDENT***



President Gail Drury (left) estimates that approximately 60 percent of the 100 projects the company completes annually are kitchens, but she explains that Drury Designs works in any area of the home that has built-in cabinetry.



### PROFILE

#### DRURY DESIGN

[www.drurydesigns.com](http://www.drurydesigns.com) / **Average kitchen remodeling price:** \$70,000 to \$150,000 depending on size, cabinetry and other materials / **Headquarters:** Glen Ellyn, Ill. / **Employees:** 14  
**Specialty:** Luxury kitchen and bathroom design and sales



# Design Specialists

Drury Design offers a full range of custom cabinet designs and styles, and caters to homeowners, builders and architects. **BY RUSS GAGER**

*Landing repeat and referral customers is a sign of any company's success.* Building a reputation that has sustained Drury Design's success over the past 27 years takes expertise, tenacity and longevity. "Being in business for over 25 years, some of our repeat clients are people that have moved during that time, and we are doing second kitchens for the same clients," President Gail Drury says. "Some are redoing their kitchens we previously remodeled because they are just ready for a change."

Drury Design was founded in 1987 by Gail Drury, who is certified as a master kitchen and bath designer (CMKBD) by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. Her husband, Jim, co-owner and studio manager, joined the company in 2001, the same year the company opened its second location, a 7,500-square-foot showroom in downtown Glen Ellyn, Ill.

The showroom features up to 15 room settings called vignettes that demonstrate the company's design ability. It also features two "live" kitchens that double as demo and prep kitchens during events held in the large showroom. Drury Design has completed more than 2,000 kitchens in its history, and in the last 10 years, it has won more than 50 design awards.

"We are proud to feature Grabill Cabinets in our design work and value our longstanding working relationship with them," Jim Drury says. "Grabill's responsiveness to our design ideas and work is outstanding. Regardless of the application, Grabill Cabinets has provided custom solutions with durable, beautiful, hand-fashioned cabinetry and finishes that stand up to the test of time. As a result, Drury Design has consistently been one of Grabill's top dealers throughout our 20-plus-year history with them."

Although Gail Drury estimates that approximately 60 percent of the 100 projects the company completes annually are kitchens, she emphasizes that the company's expertise in the home extends far beyond that room. "We do any area in the house that has built-in cabinetry," Gail Drury explains. "I've done whole houses, kitchens, master bathrooms, large libraries, mud rooms, master bedrooms, home offices, pool houses, computer centers, family and theater rooms." The company works in new construction and remodeling of existing homes.

## WORKING TOGETHER

Approximately 75 percent of Drury Design's projects are remodels that are contracted directly with clients, and the rest

are contracted with builders and architects. When the company's employees are chosen to design and provide cabinetry and other elements for new construction, they often work with other professionals.

"Depending on the size and cost of a new house, we are often working with the client's builder and their team," Drury says. "It often includes a builder, an architect, an interior designer and a lighting specialist."

For such projects, one or more of Drury Design's six in-house senior designers and an in-house assistant designer often lead the design process with the input of the interior designer, builder and architect.

"Frequently, we are working with builders and their clients after the architect has completed the majority of design work,"



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Drury reports. “We take care of the final space-planning and cabinet design meetings with the designer. On occasion, builders are involved in these meetings, but most of the time, we just keep the builder apprised of the final cabinet designs. The homeowners’ and builders’ budget constraints are always taken into consideration.”

Drury Design also has its own cabinet installation department, which includes a project manager supervising all installations and approximately six crews in the field. “In either construction or remodeling situations, we strongly recommend that we do the cabinet installation,” Drury emphasizes. “When we are acting as the cabinetry designer and supplier on new construction with builders, we want to make sure that our cabinets are installed by our expert installers – who are familiar with our design work – to ensure the best outcome and

to recover quickly from any supplier errors or oversights as it relates to our finished project.”

When working as full-service remodelers – which is the majority of Drury Design’s work – its own crews perform all of the work. That includes tear-outs, build-outs, plumbing and electric. Drury Design works with specialists when needed on projects such as home theaters and wine cellars.

## STEP-BY-STEP

Drury estimates that more than 80 percent of the company’s work is within the Chicago metro area – a 30-mile radius of its showroom – but it has designed kitchens as far away as Bermuda, New York and Maryland, and this year it has three projects in Michigan.

The remodeling process begins with a customer meeting at which the client’s ideas and goals are explored at his or her home and a budget analysis created with a low and high range of estimated costs based on this discussion. At a second meeting, up to four completely different floor-plan layouts are presented. Their individual merits are discussed to leave no stone unturned to achieve the ideal layout.

For the third meeting, those merits are combined into a final floor plan and the beginnings of a full set of drawings, including elevations, renderings, floor plans and electrical plans. These are presented to the customer along with a preliminary budget. Throughout the process, material options – styling, colors, architectural details – are shown and brought into the design discussion for consideration.

During the fourth meeting, the project’s final costs are determined, and the details of the project are fine-tuned. At this point, final tweaks are made, and value engineering is completed as necessary to bring the costs down. Then the project goes into the preconstruction phase. A work schedule is created, and all the materials are ordered and gathered in the company’s warehouse in advance of the confirmed construction start date.

Drury attributes the company’s success to its customer service. “At the end of the day, this is not a design business, this is a people business,” she says. “We have built our design and sales business through our service, earning referrals and repeat business. Our expertise and work examples get us the opportunities, but it is keeping our word and providing the type of service that you would like to receive that sustains our business. And if you take care of people and execute, you have something valuable to offer.

“We take care of people,” Drury stresses. “We’re the company that people come to when they want somebody to help them through the whole project – from where to get started to the very end and beyond. We do things on time, and we stand behind our products and service.” ■



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# DEVELOPERS

A vibrant outdoor courtyard scene. In the foreground, a large, light-colored stone patio holds a wooden lounge chair with a thick cushion and a patterned pillow. A rolled-up white towel rests on the chair. Next to it is a decorative stone table with two patterned mugs and a small potted succulent. A large white patio umbrella is partially visible at the top. In the middle ground, a rectangular swimming pool with clear green water is bordered by a light-colored stone deck. Beyond the pool is a lush green lawn with several wooden armchairs and a small table. In the background, a two-story house with white stucco walls and red-tiled roofs is visible. The house features red shutters on the windows and a small balcony with a black railing. A tall, white chimney with a red-tiled top stands on the right side of the house. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

CB JENI Homes P.94 / McNaughton Development Inc. P.97 /  
Capstone Development Group LLC P.100 / Bloomfield Development Co. P.102





# Getting That Gold

Brookfield Residential supports its market leadership with recognition from the industry.

*Brookfield Residential Properties says it is distinguished in the marketplace by its innovation, integrity and passion, noting that “when you make a difference in peoples’ homes, you make a difference in their lives.”* The company describes this as “the Brookfield difference,” and it is definitely being noticed, most recently when Brookfield Residential Properties’ greater Los Angeles and San Diego divisions won four Gold Awards at The International Builder’s Show. Recognized for excellence in design, planning, merchandising and marketing by the National Association of Homebuilders, Brookfield Residential competed with the top homebuilders from across the United States. The Gold Awards were announced January 20, 2015 at The Nationals in Las Vegas.

Brookfield Residential’s Gold Awards winners are:

- Best Attached Community of the Year – Camden at Playa Vista, Los Angeles
- Best Architecture 3,500 – 4,000 square feet – La Vita, Residence 4, Orchard Hills in Irvine, Calif.
- Best Interior Merchandising 3,500 – 4,000 square feet – La Vita Residence 4
- Best Graphic Continuity – The Domain, Anaheim, Calif.

“We are overjoyed to receive the highest honor in our entire industry, and very proud of all our team members,” Brookfield Residential Vice President of Marketing Mercedes Meserve says. “These recognitions are a testament not only to homebuilding excellence, but to Brookfield Residential’s extraordinary range of design: from luxury single-family residences to urban flats and townhomes.”

LaVita, for example, was singled out for its “cultivated coolness and rustic warmth.” Camden in Playa Vista exhibited “a compelling lifestyle that feels, comfortable, airy and uplifting.” And The Domain expressed “a new, vibrant, urban destination.”

“In so many ways and so many places, the Gold Awards prove these are the best places to call home,” Meserve says.

Brookfield Residential Los Angeles describes itself as “a premier lifestyle provider comprised of a dedicated, knowledgeable team of professionals with the passion and experience to craft exceptional new homes, neighborhoods and communities.” From the goals of first time buyers to the prestige of luxury homes, the company takes pride in offering opportunities that embrace a diversity of aspirations. With a reputation for being an award-winning innovator, Brookfield Residential Los Angeles is recognized for delivering consistent quality, design details and an outstanding customer experience.

Brookfield Residential Properties is a leading North American land developer and homebuilder with operations in 11 major markets. “We entitle and develop land to create master-planned communities and build and sell lots to third-party builders, as well as to our own homebuilding division,” the company says. “We also participate in selected, strategic real estate opportunities, including infill projects, mixed-use developments, infrastructure projects and joint ventures.” ■





*The strong family culture throughout CB JENI Homes is fitting because families are its focus when building high-quality, energy-efficient townhomes and luxury single-family homes in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.*

“We are a unique builder with two distinctly different product lines.”

**RICK DAVIS,  
DIRECTOR OF CONSTRUCTION**

# Standing Out

CB JENI Homes prepares for continued growth as the market takes notice of its customizable luxury homes. **BY JANICE HOPPE**

*Family is the foundation on which CB JENI Homes was built.* In fact, the company's name was derived from the initials of President and founder Bruno Pasquinelli's wife and five children. The strong family culture throughout the company is fitting because families are its key focus when building high-quality, energy-efficient townhomes and luxury single-family homes in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

“Bruno created a family atmosphere starting with the name of his company and with the original four employees who had all worked with Bruno in the past,” Director of Construction Rick Davis says. “We all knew each other very well and are very close-knit. Our biggest asset is our people. Our award-winning team of seasoned professionals is committed to accomplishing our business plan and goals. As we grow, it is key to continue adding more people to our team with the same values.”

The Plano, Texas-based company began in 2009 with 14 lots on which it built CB JENI lifestyle-driven townhomes. Today, CB JENI Homes has grown to 55 employees who fit into the “family,” and will complete 350 homes by the end of the year. “Every year it seems we double in size,” Davis notes. “We have seen rapid growth since 2009 and anticipate closing 400 homes in 2015. We have had a good start to a long-term goal.”

CB JENI Homes builds two different products under two brands: CB JENI luxury townhomes that range in price from \$190,000 to \$340,000 and Normandy single-family detached homes that range in price from \$280,000 to \$600,000. CB JENI townhomes total about 65 percent of the company's business. “We are a unique builder with two distinctly different product lines,” Davis adds. “We build townhomes for those seeking a luxury, low-maintenance lifestyle and single-family homes for move-up buyers interested in customizing their new home to match the needs of their family.”

The company's target markets are move-up buyers and homeowners looking to downsize with its Normandy brand. Its CB JENI brand attracts those looking for a maintenance-free lifestyle, in terms of the exterior upkeep. “We capture people who live in

## PROFILE

### CB JENI HOMES

**www.cbjenihomes.com / Revenue:** \$70 million  
**Headquarters:** Plano, Texas / **Employees:** 55  
**Specialty:** Townhomes and single-family homes



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larger homes that are ready to downsize,” he explains. “There are a lot of baby boomers and empty nesters looking to ‘right-size’ into a more manageable and energy-efficient home in an active community close to everything.”

## CREATING DISTINCTION

CB JENI Homes is a production builder that offers a variety of floor plans and customizable options to meet each family’s needs and ensure its homes are stylish and functional for the way people live today. Some CB JENI townhome designs offer master bedrooms downstairs, for example, and some offer large game rooms and flex spaces. “We offer diverse townhome designs that offer spacious kitchens and open concept designs that are perfect for the way people entertain and live,” Davis notes.

Although a production builder, Normandy Homes offers many choices that appeal to homebuyers. “People are looking to be able to buy a home and customize it as much as they can with the products and features we offer, such as tile, carpet, cabinets, lighting, trim and doors,” Davis says.

Normandy also customizes the elevations and expects its architectural work to stand the test of time. In the Dallas/Fort Worth



CB JENI Homes is a production builder that offers a variety of floor plans and customizable options to meet each family’s needs.

area, homes that were built 20 years ago often look it, Davis says, but Normandy Homes is trying to change all that. “We create and offer a variety of distinct styles, such as French Country, Georgian, Craftsman and English Tudor,” he explains. “Our architectural elements are timeless and elegant.”

## STANDARD LUXURY

CB JENI Homes includes a number of energy-efficient products in both of its product lines that come standard. “The energy codes have come so far over the last eight years that you don’t have to utilize Energy Star to give a great product,” Davis says. “CB JENI hires a third-party consultant named Systemhouse that inspects each home throughout the construction process to ensure that the products and materials are installed properly for maximum efficiency.”

CB JENI Homes performs a lot of value-engineering in its homes by pre-wiring them for televisions, phones and speakers, including the Ecobee WiFi thermostat. “It’s an energy-savvy thermostat that reads temperatures from outside to set the internal temperature,” Davis says. “It’s a high-tech thermostat that you can communicate with from your smartphone or tablet. It’s really quite unique and a standard feature in our homes; it’s not an upgrade.”

The company also provides a 10-year parts and labor warranty on the Rheem heating and air conditioning units, which Davis says, “is unheard of in Texas. It gets so hot here and the units work so hard that providing 10-year free maintenance is amazing.”

Moving forward, CB JENI and Normandy Homes is expecting to grow significantly. “On the CB JENI side, we are the No. 1 townhome builder in this market and we want to maintain that,” Davis says. “Our Normandy Homes brand is growing in popularity, as well. We have developed several new home design series that are built in the most highly sought after master-planned communities throughout north Texas. Our plan is to generate two distinct and strong product lines in our market to sustain significant growth while expanding our marketshare over the next five years.” ■



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“We are seeing a general pent-up demand that is going to be released here soon.” **PAUL MCNAUGHTON JR., GENERAL COUNSEL**



*McNaughton Development achieves quality on its homes with solid oversight and good subcontractors.*

# Infill Development

Suburban Chicago's McNaughton Development is thriving by serving the midrange eight- to 50-lot residential development niche. **BY JEFF BORGARDT**

*Since the early 1980s, McNaughton Development has established a commanding reputation in its region's residential construction market.*

The southwest and western suburbs of Chicago are dotted with McNaughton-built luxury, custom-designed homes. Primarily a high-end residential builder, McNaughton specializes in custom-designing dream homes on well-suited home sites. The company was founded on the premise of providing quality construction and floor plans as unique as the families that buy the homes, with function and aesthetics always in harmony.

## PROFILE

MCNAUGHTON DEVELOPMENT INC.

[www.mcnaughtondevelopment.com](http://www.mcnaughtondevelopment.com)

Annual revenue: \$20 million / HQ: Burr Ridge, Ill.

Employees: 10 / Specialty: Residential development





*McNaughton Development sees an under-supply in the residential market and demand for the company's own inventory appears high.*



Founded in 1983, the company began in the custom residential homebuilding business, eventually branching out into residential land development. The developments have included numerous communities in the south and west suburbs of Chicago, with 100 to 200 lots featuring 3,000- to 4,000-square-foot homes.

With McNaughton as the land developer, the company's coterie of semi-custom builders often purchased five- to 10-lot packages in its developments. When the recession of 2007 brought the housing market to a near halt, "we hunkered down and sold inventory,"



Paul McNaughton Jr. says. "We continued to build homes, did renovations and got through the recession."

Today, the firm is focused on small- to medium-sized infill developments ranging from eight to 50 lots. "That's our sweet spot," McNaughton says.

Rather than developing the land and selling parcels, the company is now building-out its subdivisions to fully capitalize on infill land that is in short supply. This adds value to the developments and increases revenue for McNaughton Development, McNaughton explains. The approach appears to be a smart one, because McNaughton homes have won more than 50 Golden Key Awards from the Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago.

One current project is Heatherdale of LaGrange Park, in which eight homes of approximately 4,000 square feet have been sold and one remains. Kaila's Crossing of Westmont is another current project featuring homes in the 4,500-square-foot size range.

In a sign of how much the residential market has improved, the company recently sold a 5,800-square-foot house in Burr Ridge. Another 7,600-square-foot seven-bedroom home is on the market in Burr Ridge Estates.

## EACH HOME UNIQUE

"My father, Paul Sr., started this business and he wanted to build every home with something unique about it," McNaughton says. The company continues to achieve this goal as well as maintain top-quality





ity construction in two primary ways. First, it maintains long-term relationships with subcontractors. “We have been working with some contractors 10 to 20 years or more,” McNaughton says.

The second way to achieve quality is with solid oversight, he says. “On every project we develop we have a project manager who handles all the office details such as ordering materials and working with customers, and we also have a site superintendent responsible for the job-

site,” McNaughton explains. “The superintendent provides direction to subcontractors and assures jobs are completed on time and correctly.”

McNaughton is optimistic about the market his firm serves. “We believe

that indicators are good,” he says. “Interest rates have remained low. There is not a lot of supply of new construction, so without a lot of inventory we are seeing a general pent-up demand that is going to be released here soon.” ■

**/Choice Cabinet Chicago/** With over 30 years’ experience, McNaughton Development has established a commanding reputation in the residential construction market and features home construction with top-shelf finishes. Primarily a high-end residential builder, McNaughton has specialized in designing custom luxury dream homes that feature quality construction and floor plans that harmoniously bring together function and aesthetics. McNaughton Development has won over 50 key awards for Excellence in Design from the HBA (Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago Area). Choice Cabinet Chicago has proudly teamed up with McNaughton to provide exclusive designer cabinetry to fulfill the McNaughton customer’s dream kitchen! [choicecabinetchicago.com](http://choicecabinetchicago.com)



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“We’re looking for markets that are not only strong today, but forecast that way into the future.” **BILL LUCHINI, PRESIDENT**



*Gerhart Lofts is a historic rehabilitation project of the "Gerhardt Block" in St. Louis. It will have retail space at the street level.*

# The Long View

Capstone Development Group makes property acquisitions and oversees projects with the future in mind. **BY JIM HARRIS**

## PROFILE

CAPSTONE DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC

[www.capstonedev.net](http://www.capstonedev.net) / 2014 development costs:  
\$52.5 million / Headquarters: St. Louis / Employees:  
50 / Specialty: Residential property development

Capstone Development Group LLC believes in making a long-term commitment every time it acquires a new property. For the St. Louis-based developer, the success of its communities is measured over the course of several years and not just when its apartments begin to go on the market. “We develop land that we hang on to for a long time,” President Bill Luchini says.

The company specializes in affordable housing for seniors and families. For Capstone, “affordable” does not mean “cheap” when it comes to materials and finishes. “We’re able to build good-quality homes that don’t look any different than market-rate apartments because of the financial incentives we bring into the deal,” Luchini says.

The company is experienced with a number of affordable housing finance tools including tax incentives. Capstone regularly partners with state housing finance agencies, lenders, nonprofit entities, equity syndicators and local housing authorities on its projects, often using more than one form of financing. “We’re very good at utilizing multiple financial tools within a deal,” Luchini says. “It’s





The Chandler Bay Apartments in Missouri achieved LEED certification by using energy-efficient techniques.

rare that one of our projects wouldn't have some form of tax credit involved."

Since its establishment in 1976, Capstone has completed 325 neighborhoods in 17 states containing roughly 12,500 homes. "We're looking for markets that are not only strong today, but forecast that way into the future," he adds.

### GREEN QUALITY

The company's affordable housing and market-rate projects are both built with sustainability in mind. "We're constantly working to build the most efficient dwellings that we can," Luchini says. "We're proud of our ability to build sustainable units. Earning certifications, especially on affordable housing developments, is not easy to do."

The company last year began work on a \$8.5 million renovation of the Gerhart Block in St. Louis, a two-story brick building built in 1897 and located just west of

St. Louis University in the city's mid-town neighborhood. "That part of the city has seen a resurgence of activity recently," Luchini says, citing its location near an Ikea store slated to open later this year, as well as other commercial activity.

Luchini anticipates a number of other projects in the near future. "We have a number of deals already in the pipeline," he says. He attributes the company's success to his staff. "We have a strong team of people in the office who are the best at what they do, as well as strong financial partners such as banks and equity partners." ■

**/Morrissey Construction/** Morrissey Construction Company congratulates Capstone Development Group on their visionary leadership in affordable green housing, and continued success in developing high-quality communities that families and seniors can call home. We are proud of our 15-plus year relationship with Capstone and look forward to many more.

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*Bloomfield Development builds custom homes ranging from \$500,000 to \$3 million for clients on the North Side of Chicago and on the North Shore, which consists of affluent suburbs north of the city.*

“We stayed small so I could be involved in all our projects.”

**JIM SCHUELLER, PRESIDENT**

# Home Sweet Home

Bloomfield Development Co. builds its clients' dreams. **BY JANICE HOPPE**

*Bloomfield Development Co. owner Jim Schueller lives and breathes real estate. After spending years as a real estate attorney for a large law firm and developing a few properties in his spare time, Schueller realized his passion was in homebuilding. In 2003, he founded the Chicago-based custom homebuilding company.*

“I was involved heavily on the legal side of things from commercial to residential development and got to know a lot of developers, architects, engineers and brokers in Chicago as their lawyer,” he says. “I eventually decided to follow my passion to start my own company.”

Bloomfield Development is an industry leader in craftsmanship, innovation and architectural significance, he says. The company not only incorporates technological and environmental advancements in its custom and spec homebuilding and renovations, but it also ensures the highest standards of construction and design.

The company's reputation is its greatest asset, Schueller says, which has been achieved through unparalleled service and uncompromising quality. “I am involved with the clients on all projects,” he explains. “We stayed small so I could be involved in all our projects. And because I come from a legal background, our clients appreciate the way I manage their projects, looking at it in an organized, professional manner.”

The company mostly builds custom homes ranging in price from \$500,000 to \$3 million for clients on the North Side of Chicago and on the North Shore, which consists of many affluent suburbs north of the city that border the shore of Lake Michigan. “Quality to our clients means attention to detail,” Schueller says. “That means attention to their project, their concerns and their budget, and simply caring enough to pay attention to them as clients. They come to us because they want a quality builder who listens, answers the phone and cares.”

## PROFILE

**BLOOMFIELD DEVELOPMENT CO.**

**www.bloomfielddevelopment.com / Revenue:** \$20 million

**Headquarters:** Chicago / **Specialty:** Custom and spec homebuilding

## FIVE STEPS

Bloomfield Development sees itself as both its clients' adviser and builder, guiding them through all aspects of the homebuilding process. “When clients make changes we roll with the punches and whatever they want is fine, but we advise them about the change in cost and time,” Schueller says. “I never say no to clients.”



The company divides its custom homebuilding process into five manageable phases. An initial consultation is phase one, which involves listening to the client's ideas about architectural design and determining what floor plan fits their lifestyle. This first step opens the lines of communication and builds trust.

Phase two is focused on finding the perfect location based on critical elements, such as lifestyle, schools and transportation. After the neighborhood is chosen, Bloomfield Development helps its clients choose the right lot by considering size, zoning, setbacks and utilities.

During phase three, the client works with the company to design their new home. This process determines the number and placement of bedrooms, bathrooms, whether they want an attached garage or not, storage needs and mudroom options. "The trend right now is mudrooms," Schueller notes. "Everyone in the city and suburbs wants a mudroom. I've also had clients choose cork plank flooring instead of carpet because it looks like wood, but is still soft and warm." Other trends include sustainability features such as LED lighting, efficient HVAC systems, foam insulation and ultra-efficient gas water heaters such as the Rheem SPIDERfire series.

Phase four begins after the architectural plans are complete with the company obtaining proper permits, surveys and municipal approvals. The final stage is building the client's new home.

### STAYING SMALL

Bloomfield Development is optimistic about the future of the real estate market because of an increase in demand for high-end residential homes. Schueller attributes this change to an increase in buyer confidence now that banks have loosened their financing restrictions. "Small to mid-size banks have started opening up," he explains. "Their requirements were much stricter a few years ago and now they are easing, which is allowing more people to build."

Bloomfield Development fared well during the recession and was building homes valued between \$2 million and \$3 million. "I am most proud of our reputation and that it carried us through the recession," Schueller says. "Most of our clients are referrals."

Bloomfield Development plans to continue growing, but will do so slowly and only by performing its work in good locations around the city and suburbs. "I've seen too many people grow too fast and the quality of work suffered," Schueller says. "We will carefully manage our growth and continue investing in Chicago." ■



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