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Excellence
Awards

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Opportunities

Sometimes the best way to educate yourself is to ask questions. We wanted to know what you and your clients are talking about, so we asked you. We posted a poll on our website last month which asked the simple question, "What are customers interested in?" This is what you said: Future work – 46 percent; No one's calling/talking to us – 28 percent; Killing time/Just looking – 15 percent; Starting work today – 11 percent.

The results as I see them are mixed. The best news is a total of 72 percent of you are actually *talking* to clients, even if it's for future work or they're just killing time. More good news is about half the clients you're talking to (46 percent) are interested in doing business with you. Yes, you're discussing future work, but it's work.

There's only one way to look at these results, and that's through a glass that's half full. The way I see it, every conversation is an opportunity to sell. So maybe the clients you're talking to don't want to break ground any time soon, but at least you're talking. Sometimes finding someone to have a conversation with can be the biggest challenge.

Do you sense that a new home is what your clients want but can't afford? Have you offered to provide design-only services? If they don't have money for construction, maybe they have enough to get a set of drawings done. Can you scale back their project and still deliver their dream?

Have you asked if you can provide remodeling work as an alternative to a new home? What about a detached structure? Do they need a pool house? A tool shed? A dog house? A playhouse for their children? Can you offer outdoor living design assistance? A place for them to store their boat, jet ski or 4-wheeler? Think of projects you don't typically tackle.

Have you considered throwing a party for the clients you're talking to and their friends you haven't met? It would be an opportunity to network. Invite current and past clients. Tell them to bring friends or family who might be interested in design, remodeling or new construction work. Ask each of them to bring two or three people to the party and you just tripled or quadrupled your client network. Plus, think about how many people they'll talk to the next day.

We cohosted such an event with a builder in June for more than 100 people. Talk about a room filled with opportunities. It was an effective way for the builder to surround himself with colleagues and potential clients. See for yourself how the event turned out by visiting rdbmagazine.com/margarido.

The opportunity to impress is out there. Take it.

2009 Design Excellence Awards

Speaking of impressing people, once again we are proud and excited to present you with the winners of our 2009 Design Excellence Awards. The competition was as tough as ever, and this year's class of winning projects stands up to the best from previous years.

Be inspired by this year's winners. Read about the challenges faced by your fellow designers and builders, and how these challenges were overcome. The editorial begins on page 14.

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What your clients really want

Keep clients focused on the big picture while you make fine-tuning adjustments using the skills for which they're paying you

By Luis Jauregui, AIA

One of the biggest fantasies of many architects and designers is expecting the client to provide the extensive detail and specificity that will translate into the new home of their dreams. In actuality, what the client really needs and ultimately wants from the architect is guidance and leadership through the design process, which can be particularly daunting and overwhelming to the client.

Achieving a thorough understanding of the design program is imperative. Rather than assign homework to the client via a multipage questionnaire, allocate an hour or two to thoroughly discuss the clients' lifestyle, their likes



and dislikes, and how they live in their home. Take them out for drinks or dinner to put them at ease and delve further into the project. As the expert, you know what you need to know to properly profile your client.

Engage the client in the big picture and leave the minutia for the design table and your experienced design sensibilities. While clients will most often find a comfort zone talking about the small details, it's important to focus the conversation on

broader issues. Gather essential program criteria; keep the meeting short and the client fresh.

It's up to you to create design momentum to move the project forward. I have found over the years that the sooner you can bring thoughtful design solutions back to the client, you will be rewarded with quick, well-targeted feedback and have fewer redesign issues. The overall experience will be more satisfactory to everyone and bring you closer to project construction.

I think sometimes architects and designers take on the role of information processor, connecting the dots rather than optimizing function or enhancing aesthetics. When clients bring pictures and clippings of what they like, the easy approach is to take things literally. As an alternative, create a general profile and express a greater aesthetic. It's not about the specific front door or the tub in the picture, but the creation of a unique, individual lifestyle statement.

Don't ask your clients where they want to keep their everyday dishes, or how they prefer to store their toothbrushes. You know best how to organize a functional kitchen or bath and elements of this nature. While I exaggerate a bit, my point is we architects possess the expertise and professional maturity to resolve these questions. Be the guide, and also be prepared to address conflicting issues. If a material or feature is way beyond project budget, it's better addressed early in design rather than after construction documents are completed.

I don't mean to advocate arrogance — far from it. We should not feel like it's our way or the highway, or that it's our mission to tell clients how to live. Rather, the process is all about good communication. Empathize with your client. Actively dialogue and seek specific information. Listen carefully to what is said and sharpen your skills at reading between the lines. Provide sage advice and alternative solutions.

This concept is reflected in a Kohler advertise-

ment in which a client steps into an architect's office and flops a sink faucet on the table and says simply, "Design me a house around this." The folks at Kohler had a different agenda behind their message, but this really encapsulates what an architect should do. Develop an edge that, with enough information and intuition, enables you to design a house they haven't yet imagined.

I find in my experience that fewer than 10 percent of my clients have the personality or inclination to direct the design process, much less arrive ready to tell me what they want. The majority of clients are coming to our office for guidance on how to get from A to Z. For those few clients who want to take charge, be patient and remain flexible. Many times these personalities come full circle back to your leadership. If you're getting more than 10 percent of these clients, there's something you're doing to attract them and you need to evaluate your approach.

Good design requires a higher level of complexity than our clients comprehend. It's as much about the client's agenda and lifestyle as it is about professional guidance and knowledge. We are our client's advocate, providing solutions within a vernacular that resonates with them and, hopefully, remains true to our own design tenets. And, as they say, "That's why they pay us the big bucks." ▀

Luis Jauregui, AIA, has been a member of the local and national chapters of the American Institute of Architects for more than 20 years. He is an active leader within the Homebuilders Association of Austin, Texas, serving as president, and as director at the local, state and national homebuilders' association levels. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com.





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Do you want this exposure?

Is there real value in showcasing a design/build firm's services in prominent retail space on Main Street?

By Jay Grant

In 1866, in a small town about 40 miles from Manhattan, a builder selected a site at One Main Street to build a retail building in the center of Mendham, N.J., a town established by European settlers in 1750. Back then, towns were called hamlets, the horse and buggy was the luxury mode of transportation, and the main commerce was farming and the local grain mill. In 1999, that retail building was dilapidated, crumbling and condemned by the town due to unsafe conditions within the structure. I bought the 9,000-sq.-ft. building, renovated it and secured leases for the three apartments and six retail spaces. It is one of my best investments because it satisfies the first three rules of real estate: location, location and location!



Would you showcase your business here?

One of my tenants who rents the most prominent space in the building has become a casualty of this recession. Now I'm faced with wondering if I should seize an opportunity to showcase my custom home and remodeling business in this store-front building in the center of my hometown. I have been researching the idea and weighing the pros and cons.

When in doubt, reach out ... for help! A consultant I hired a few years ago pointed out that one sign of a successful leader is knowing when to ask for help. So, for help determining the right answer I consulted with Pat Fiore, president of Fiore Associates, a local marketing firm with a 27-year track record of helping her clients succeed. My marketing director, Lauren and I met with Pat for a brainstorming session. Some interesting ideas flowed from this meeting.

My business has been successful for 20 years while operating out of my home office. What can I do to ensure success in this space? We agreed that we did not want to open a traditional showroom featuring kitchen displays and small room vignettes featuring the latest tile, floor and door samples. My business is about building high-end custom projects so the focus needs to be on creating an environment that makes people feel comfortable enough to establish a relationship with me and my company. Pat said, "Your goal is to help excite your audience, get them to dream and have them come away with great new ideas on creative new lifestyles."

We discussed using part of the space for a comfy couch with a living room feel and maybe adding a fireplace. We discussed building one stone wall and a partial wine cellar to further set the tone for an environment of creativity. We discussed a conference room with a large flat-screen TV or monitor with a constant flow of new jobsite photography taken of various jobs in progression. To avoid a feeling of stagnation within the space, we envisioned a collaborative working environment within which we host architects and designers that join us on a rotating basis. Pat asked; "Why not use the space to create a center for developing lifestyles?

Host seminars, bring in guest speakers, and provide an environment that makes prospects feel relaxed?"

Is it realistic to implement this atypical use of a retail space in these trying times, and to make it an economically rewarding enterprise? Candidly, I don't know. I like the ideas and I am definitely intrigued. We are seeking feedback from local architects, builders and interior designers to try to understand what may be missing from our vision and what needs to be our true focus.

I'd also like to get your opinion. If you have any thoughts on the concept of using a retail location as a think tank for initiating the creative part of the design/build process, I would love to hear from you. And if you decide to run with this idea in your home town, please be sure to stay in touch and let me know what's working for you and what's not. It is time to think out of the box and be willing to take risks that you haven't taken before. I can't wait to find out if I do or not.

Send e-mail to granthomes@msn.com. Also, an online discussion about Jay's situation is going on in RD&B's group at LinkedIn.com. It's free to join; your thoughts are welcome. ■

Jay Grant, president of Grant Homes, a residential design/build firm in Mendham, N.J., focuses on building luxury custom homes and renovations/additions. He is the recipient of more than 20 industry awards including best website for granthomesusa.com. Grant is available for business consulting. Send e-mail to granthomes@msn.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com



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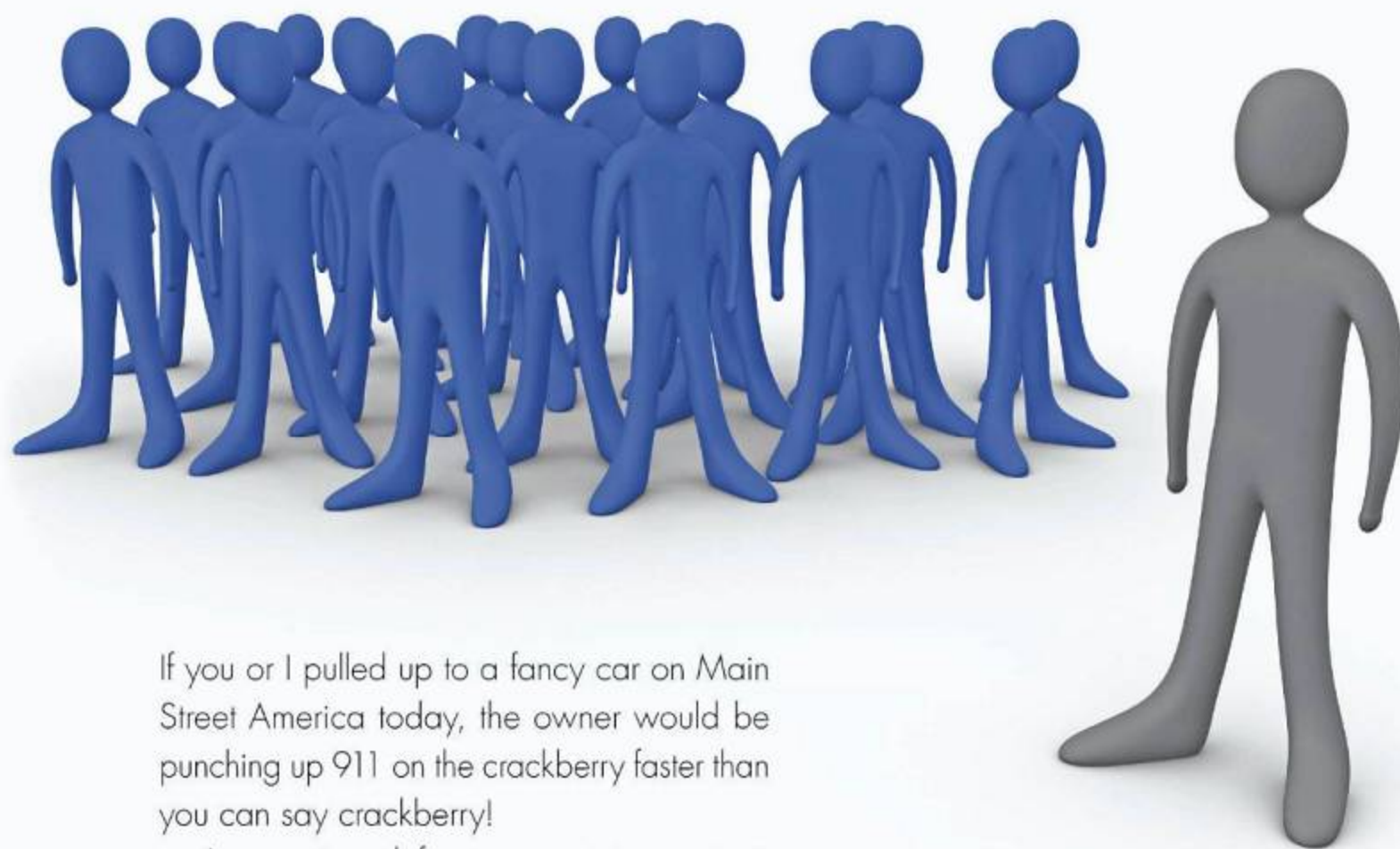
The pride of lions

To work within an elite group of any kind, you must provide value to its members

By Joseph Dellanno

"Pardon me, would you have any Grey Poupon?" As I think of this commercial from years ago, I remember the fancy chauffeur-driven cars carrying wealthy men eating five-course meals in the backs of their Roll Royces. As I gazed at their wealth and social status, I wondered, "Who are these people driving around town having a mid-day meal and asking their wealthy friends for fancy mustard?"

I call this segment of the population the pride of lions, and tapping into the remodeling segment of the pride is not an easy task. Life in the suburbs where manicured lawns and luxury homes dot the landscape is similar to life on the Serengeti plains of Africa. Lions are one of nature's top predators. They travel in prides which include an elite group of female hunters and one dominating male who is king of the jungle. When a stray lion enters the



If you or I pulled up to a fancy car on Main Street America today, the owner would be punching up 911 on the crackberry faster than you can say crackberry!

As you travel from project to project, you most likely drive through a few different upscale neighborhoods that might have a few bottles of Grey Poupon lying around. Driving through these upscale neighborhoods, some of us might start to wonder how a design/build new construction company could tap into the upper end of the remodeling market. Do I need a new fancy truck or car? Would I need to lose 20 lbs. and have my stomach stapled, or would I need a whole new wardrobe and start to look like a banker?

pride's territory, it's the male's job to drive the intruder away. The stray is unwanted and is an unknown risk to the pride's blood line, and has nothing to offer the pride.

The upper residential market is similar to the pride of lions of the Serengeti. You can find prides of lions gathered at an exclusive golf club, polo clubs, yachting clubs or racing their Ferraris at the track. No matter where

they are or what they might be doing, we know they are doing it with other members of the pride.

If you're fortunate to get a call from a homeowner who lives in a desirable neighborhood, you have a great potential project and a chance to meet a homeowner who is a member of the elite pride. This could be a big opportunity if you can make a strong connection with the homeowner, or it might be a disappointment if you cannot provide professional service that is perceived by the pride as having real value.

Remember, these homeowners are fully aware how some people in our industry will quote the street address and not the project. This is often a common pitfall and companies that continue this practice will always look like a stray to the pride of lions.

So how does a stray successfully design and build within the pride? First, it's important to know how to service the pride's members. They are looking for our input and expertise, but want their ideas to be heard. They are willing to pay for service but do not want to be taken to the cleaners. They want to feel like you have their best interest at heart and you will take care of problems before they can begin.

Many of us are qualified to provide goods and services for the upper-end client, but connecting with them socially, politically and professionally is where some of us fall short. To be considered a member of any type of pride, you must be a real asset who will increase the value and well-being of the group's existence. ■

Joseph Dellanno is the founder of My Design/Build Project, a web communication application for design and build teams, and president of My Design/Build Coach, providing design/build business training. He is also president of Design Solutions Inc., a national design firm. Send e-mail to info@mydesignbuildproject.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com.





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For more info circle #7

Ignore greenwash

Evaluate products based on five basic, common-sense principles of green building

By John D. Wagner

Ritz-Carlton counts among its properties many hotels that most of us couldn't afford without the help of PowerBall. So you'd think they would spare no expense when training their workers, right? After all, when you drop several hundred on a luxury room, it better have more than just nice, fluffy towels.

So, how does Ritz-Carlton train its staff? They start by giving them a principle by which all actions should be judged. It goes like this: "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies

and gentlemen." When faced with a service decision, they can refer to that principle and ask, "Is what I'm about to do something a lady or gentleman would do?" If the answer is yes, then the action is appropriate.

But what's fluffy towels, staff training and \$500-a-night hotel rooms have to do with greenwashing? A great deal of the confusion around green building is created by product claims that are not based in common-sense principles about green building. Aren't there common-sense green principles that we can refer to, like the Ritz-Carlton philosophy, that will give us a reality check in the face of the

esoteric, academic distinctions and wild claims made every day about green products? Yes, there are. I've found five that emerge again and again across many of the green building standards. No matter what label a product carries, a product is green if it is in accordance with these principles. They don't always apply, but mostly they do. A product is green if it:

1. Improves indoor air quality.
2. Uses recycled/recyclable materials.



3. Reduces water consumption.
4. Is sustainably harvested.
5. Reduces fuel consumption (carbon footprint) during manufacture, delivery, installation and use.

So let's put this Ritz-Carlton approach to the test on the following products:

Trusses. Are they green? Yes, on two or three counts. They are made with secondary-demand lumber, the material is recyclable and certain trusses (raised-heel trusses) contribute to making the structure energy efficient. So, spec trusses as green products with confidence.

Insulation. With or without a green label,

the answer is yes because it reduces carbon footprint. It's especially green if it doesn't have formaldehyde, or has formaldehyde that's third-party certified not to emit at harmful levels, thereby improving indoor air quality.

Lumber. Unless you are specifying non-plantation-grown tropicals, you likely are choosing FSC, SFI, CSA or American Tree Farm wood; all of these are solid programs. Lumber is inherently green (renewable, recyclable) and it corresponds with green tenets 2 and 4 above.

You see, you can get around greenwashing if you develop critical judgment and knowledge of basic green principles. When you do this, you'll find that green building really is a rather old-fashioned approach to building. It produces tight, well-vented, low-maintenance structures that don't use lots of fuel to heat and cool themselves, and contain nontoxic products and materials that don't permanently deplete their sources when harvested.

Greenwashing is nothing more than marketing acrobatics that go on high above where the real work takes place: in your design shops and on the jobsite. And it's likely the green tenets listed above were already guiding your building practices and product purchases long before the USGBC or NAHB started going green.

The good things third-party rating agencies have brought to the industry are verification and documentation systems that serve as evidence architects and builders can pass along in the sales process. With this evidence, a premium return on investment can be made on green homes, so no one gets caught in the square-foot pricing trap that stacks premium green homes against nongreen homes that are comparable only in their square footage and not their quality. ▀

John D. Wagner is an award-winning author of many books and articles about construction, and a frequent contributor to the industry's leading trade magazines. A sought-after speaker for industry events, he can be contacted at JohnDWagner.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com.



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For more info circle #8

As business activity in the housing market slowed almost to a halt within the past 18 months, custom home designers and builders refused to sacrifice on quality. This year's crop of award-winning homes that have been named winners of the *Residential Design & Build* 2009 Design Excellence Awards reflects the high level of skill used by those who designed and built them.

The group of expert judges who served on this year's panel (pictured below) chose 20 entries as award winners. Judges included: John Anstad, AIA, principal architect, Anthony Perry Designs & Builds; Craig Ciaglia, general manager, Homes by Pinnacle; Tracy Holmes, president, Studio H Designs; Mark Perlman, president, Empeco Custom Builders; and William Styczynski, architect/president, Styczynski Walker & Associates. Judges are pictured below.

Take a look now at this year's star projects. ▶

2009 Excellence Awards



The 2009 Design
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Judges of the 2009 Design
Excellence Awards are: (left to
right) William Styczynski, Mark
Perlman, Craig Ciaglia, Tracy
Holmes and John Anstad, AIA.



ZACK/DE VITO ARCHITECTURE

San Francisco
zackdevito.com

Project name: Laidley Street Residence
Project location: San Francisco
Square footage: 2,988
Total project cost (not land): \$1.55 million

Custom Home less than 3,000 s.f.

This single-family residence peers over a steep downhill slope with fabulous views of the city. Light floods through the central skylight and translucent stair bringing light to all three levels. The open plan is composed of two side-by-side volumes; the larger, more public space pushes farther out toward the view. Using a consistent palette of materials and detailing techniques,



the project exemplifies craft.

The house is sustainably designed and built with high fly-ash concrete, engineered lumber, FSC wood, and more. The house is powered by PV and solar hot water panels. Using panelized construction, 85 percent of the framing was built off-site and



Photos: Bruce Damonte Photography, San Francisco

installed in three weeks.

The site posed the most challenges, both physically and in obtaining approvals. Like most San Francisco infill sites, there is the ever-present challenge of fitting the program into a restricted space and getting light into the middle of the building. An important goal was to maximize sustainability while maintaining the integrity of the overtly modern design and integrating some form of modular construction into the project. The height and length of the house, as well as its volume on the south side, were reduced to preserve the neighbors' views, light and air.

The amounts of the reduction were designed after lengthy communication with all of the affected neighbors. The assumed detriment of reduced space was turned into positive attributes of more

side-wall windows and higher ceilings. A large operable skylight over the central, translucent acrylic stair brings light to the middle of the house. As the narrow infill site was not appropriate for modular construction, a system for panelized construction was implemented. ▀



MCNEIL CO. BUILDERS

Omaha, Neb.
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Project name: Fahey Residence
Project location: Omaha, Neb.
Square footage: 3,962
Total project cost (not land): \$1.7 million

Custom Home 3,000 to 3,999 s.f.

The homeowners had a lifestyle in mind: They wanted casual living with an emphasis on entertaining, both inside and out. Tuscan architecture fit their design taste and style of living. The home was designed around both a front courtyard and an extensive outdoor living area at the rear, with a deep granite pool, screen porch with Phantom screens and an intimate fireplace area. The home surrounds the pool with French door access from the foyer, great room, dining and master bedroom. The open flow

of the kitchen, dining and great room give the space a grand yet functional feel.

The home is situated on Boystown Lake with a walking path surrounding the lake. Privacy from the walking path was an issue. The challenge was to capture the breathtaking views of the surrounding area, yet maintain the privacy of the homeowner. This was accomplished with the secluded pool and fireplace area overlooking the natural views. Privacy from the walking path was achieved by integrating low privacy walls in the design of both the pool and courtyard areas. It's easy to forget you're in Nebraska when you step out into this resort-like oasis. The home's theme of casual elegance was artfully achieved with architectural details. ▶



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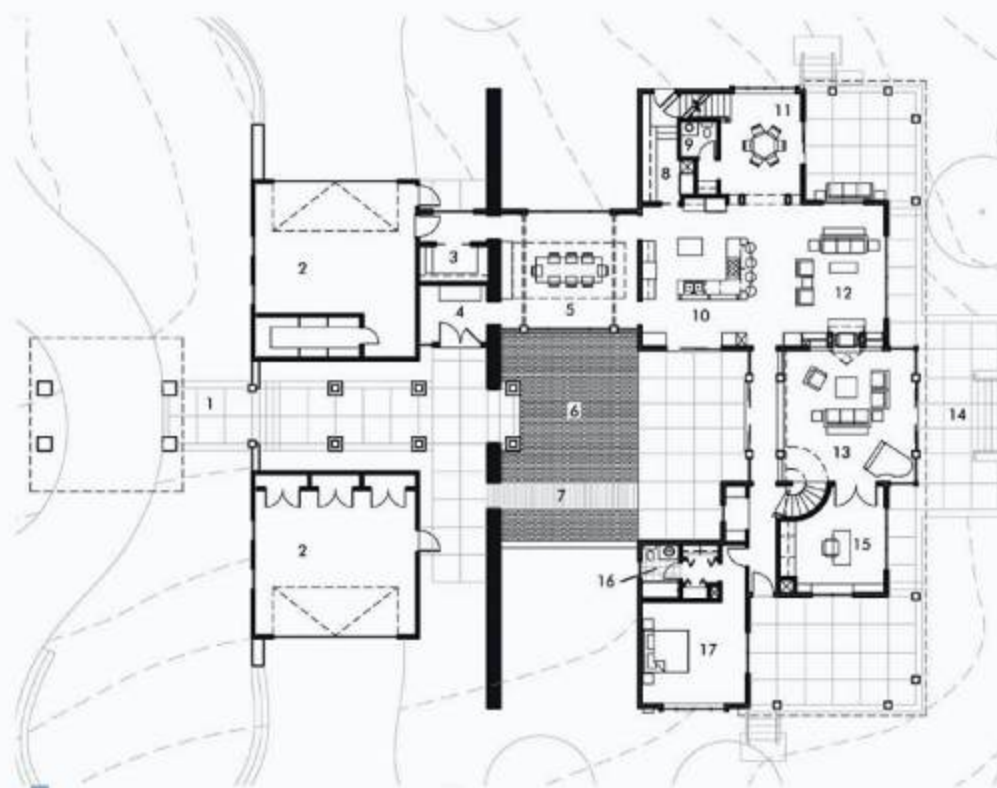


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NEAL PRINCE ARCHITECTS
Greenville, S.C.
neal-prince.com

Project name: The Courtyard House
Project location: Roebuck, S.C.
Square footage: 4,950



Influenced by the flow and motifs of the modernist tropical homes of South Asia, this home is articulated as a loose collection of individual interior and exterior rooms ordered around an intimate outdoor courtyard and reflecting pool. The house is sited along the axis of a long ridge sloping down to a small freshwater lake. The 4,950-sq.-ft. heated space is divided over two stories that allow for a variety of spatial experiences, from a double-story great room to a 10-sq.-ft. low-ceiling family niche for contemplation. The dining room and great room are particularly notable in their paired window walls that allow for full transparency and a constant engagement with the natural characteristics of the site. Simple materials and neutral color selections provide a coherence of tone to the rooms that further encourage an outward focus.

The client's request to live in a courtyard house was made particularly challenging by a sloped site. A low-maintenance home with two, two-car garages allow for accommodating a drop in grade. Overall, the result is a low-slung front, and a more commanding view to a lake at the rear of the house. Clay roof tiles, stained concrete decks and stucco siding form a tough, wear-resistant exterior palette of materials. ▶

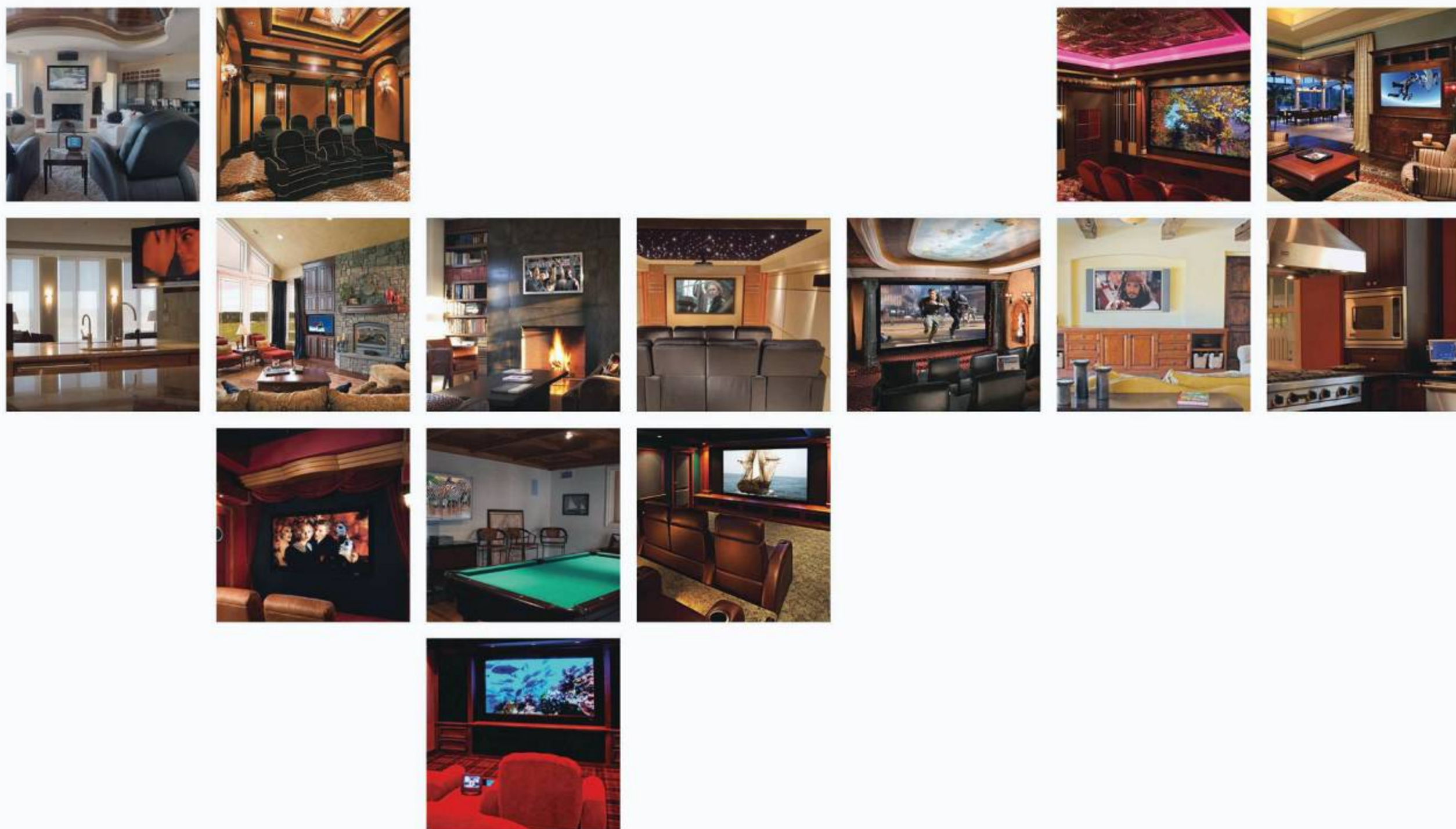
Custom Home 4,000 to 4,999 s.f.



Photos: Taylor Architectural Photography, Winter Park, Fla.



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MONOGRAM BUILDERS
Clearwater, Fla.

Project name: Culbreath Isles Residence
Project location: Tampa, Fla.
Square footage: 5,560
Total project cost (not land): \$4 million

Custom Home 5,000 to 5,999 s.f.

This custom home is located on a small island which is in an exclusive gated community in Tampa Bay. The main objective was to create a warm, inviting family home that functions for sophisticated entertaining, as well as for everyday life. The building site offered exceptional waterfront views, and taking full advantage of these became integral to the design. A secondary objective was to design a space that would showcase the

client's vast collection of paintings and sculptures.

A significant challenge was the site located in a V-zone, which required the structure to be designed to withstand 120-mph winds. The client wanted the home to be sophisticated with modern furnishings, while blending the architecture and the Western art collection. The desire to take full advantage of the view also presented challenges, with concerns about properly protecting the artwork, and privacy being chief among them.

Influence for the design was drawn from Frank Lloyd Wright. Floor-to-ceiling windows and stone columns wrapping from the outside-in allow for the convergence of the interior and natural worlds. The V-zone requirements led to the use of laminated glass with special details to minimize framing required for impact resistance.



Photos: Rixon Photography, St. Petersburg, Fla.



Artwork is displayed throughout the home using a gallery system that allows for ease of rotation. A large gallery off the main foyer is used for sculptures. For artwork protection and privacy concerns, a double roller-shade system is used. ▀



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NEAL PRINCE ARCHITECTS
Greenville, S.C.
neal-prince.com

Project name: The Bridge House
Project location: Landrum, S.C.
Square footage: 5,050



Photos: Taylor Architectural Photography, Winter Park, Fla.

Custom Home 5,000 to 5,999 s.f.

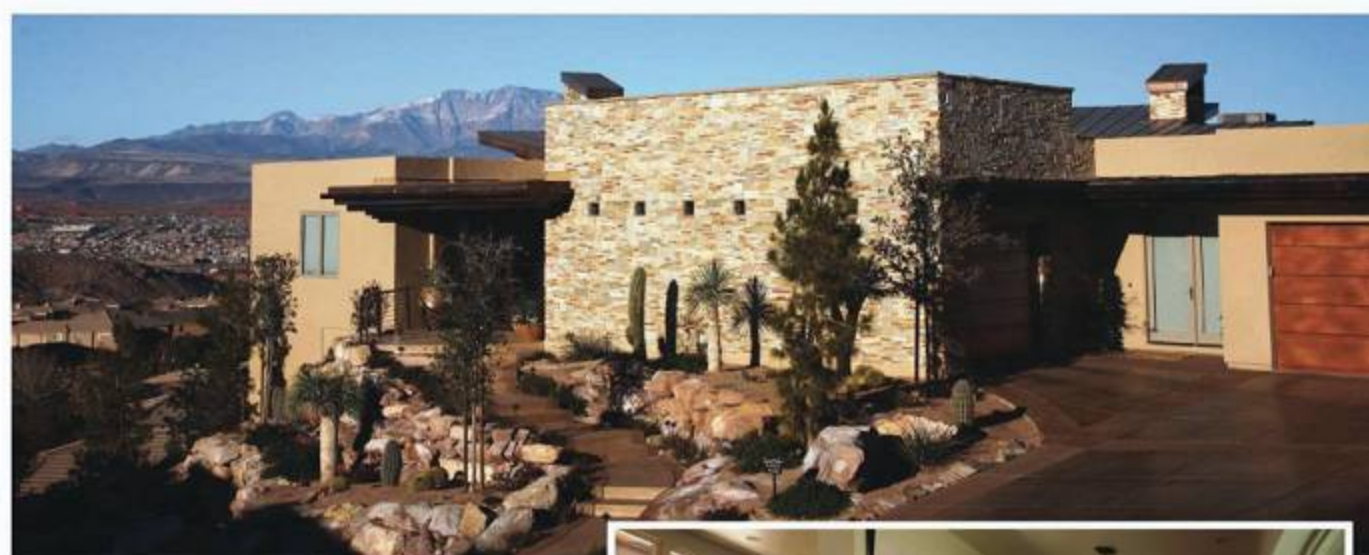
The design was conceived as a viewing platform for a picturesque mountain lake and valley below. In the spirit of sustainability, the design defers to the natural beauty of the site by claiming the lone clearing on the property, leaving the remaining heavily wooded area undisturbed. Emerging from a severe slope that dominates the site's topography, the house appears to grow as it moves out over the terrain. Rooms are ordered to maximize the long views, resulting in a linear plan featuring a "bridge room" that transverses a rolling spring, evocative of the surrounding mountain streams and waterfalls that characterize the setting.

A series of heavy totemic masonry elements — chimneys, columns and retaining walls, are ordered to provide punctuation and further anchor the home to the site. The residence is comprised of 5,000 sq. ft. of heated space divided over three stories. The bulk of the everyday living space — master suite, kitchen and great room — is allotted to the main floor, with the uppermost and lowermost floors designed for less usage.



J.M. WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATES
Salt Lake City, Utah
jmwa.com

Project name: Millar residence
Project location: Saint George, Utah
Square footage: 6,970
Total project cost (not land): \$2.7 million



Custom Home 6,000 to 6,999 s.f.

A doctor and his wife wanted a home that would take full advantage of the 180-degree vista, provide privacy where needed, be ideal for entertaining friends and associates, provide ample space for visiting family members, and could also be considered a work of art and architecture. A winding stairway provides a breathtaking view of the valley and leads to a decorative entry gate. Passing through the gate one enters a desert oasis. The ceiling opens up to the blue sky while a walkway curves around a large reflection pool which is surrounded by stone walls on one side and curved glass walls on the other. The glass walls look through the interior stone columns, through the house and the entire valley as well as the distant mountains and sky. The courtyard is also seen from inside the house, and at night the light

from the pool dances on the stone wall.

The interior of the home is open and flowing. All living spaces on both levels have breathtaking views. Although much of the home is glass, privacy is maintained where needed. The windows are protected by the sun through use of large overhangs and decks. The roof cantilevers as much as 16 ft. in some locations. There is also a sun shelf which provides shade from direct sun and allows indirect sun for lighting. Clerestory windows add to the light, airy nature of the home.



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SCHOLZ DESIGN
Toledo, Ohio
scholzdesign.com

Project name: Sienna Manor
Project location: Pittsburgh
Square footage: 10,806



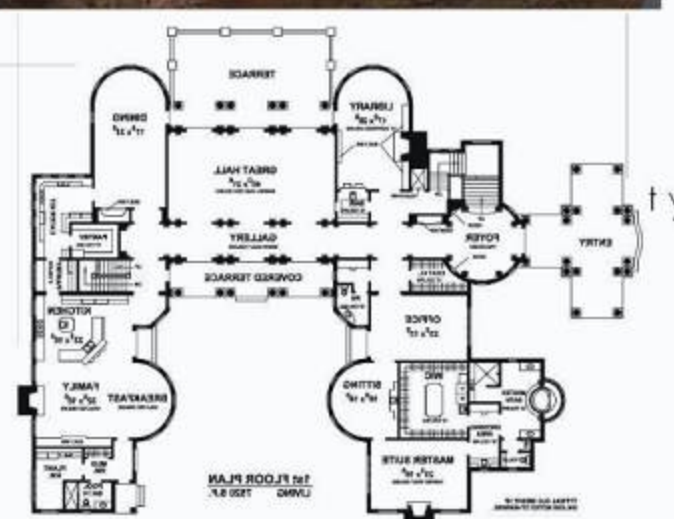
Photos: Beth Singer Photographs, Franklin, Mich.

Custom Home more than 7,000 s.f.

The 36-acre hilltop site was chosen for its panoramic views of the equestrian countryside and distant metropolitan city. The Italian villa is for a hectic CEO and spouse, both passionate patrons of the arts, and their four active, at-home children. The villa was to be an everyday livable home and anchor an estate that would become a destination for extended family and friends, yet be an appropriate venue for a variety of intimate or large-scale formal and informal events.

Family activities include entertaining, swimming, fitness, horseback riding and a menagerie of pets. The home also hosts a variety

of functions including symphony concerts; therefore, the living room possesses acoustics fit for Grammy-winning artists. Final architecture was critiqued by a renowned university historian.



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KOLLIN ALTOMARE ARCHITECTS
Long Beach, Calif.
kollinaltomare.com

Project name: Watson Residence
Project location: Seal Beach, Calif.
Square footage: 7,239
Total project cost (not land): \$4.3 million



Custom Home more than 7,000 s.f.

The plan was to design a signature soft-contemporary residence to capture the clients' desire for cutting-edge technology, simplicity of elements, environmentally friendly design and most of all to be unique in style yet comfortable and livable. This custom beachfront home is three-stories high plus a gorgeous fourth-level sun deck. This 7,239 sq. ft. home features six bedrooms, seven bathrooms, a home theater, gym, wine room, library, game room, spa room, two kitchens and multiple living rooms. A custom elevator and wrap-around staircase provide vertical access to all levels while skewed floor plans offer an interesting journey through the home within a rectangular boundary.

The objective was to make this home simple yet strikingly interesting and blend new with old. As with most beachfront projects, this

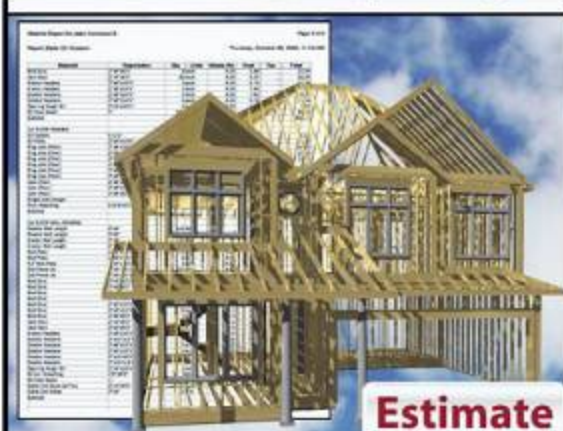
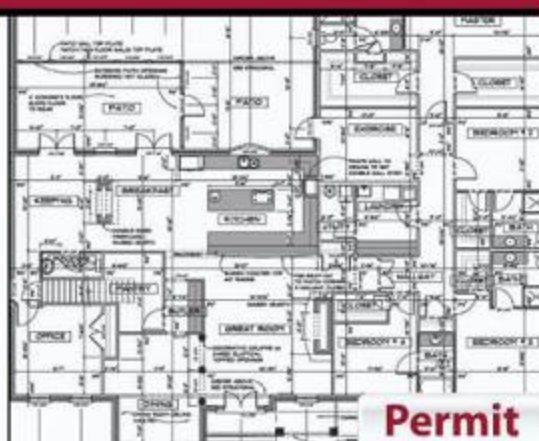
site has height limitations, area limits, tight setbacks to maintain along with wind and sun considerations. ▶



Photos: RMA Photography, Tustin, Calif.

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PHIL KEAN DESIGNS
Winter Park, Fla.
philkeandesigns.co

Project name: The Evergreen
Project location: Winter Park, Fla.
Square footage: 3,050
Total project cost (not land): \$750,000

Green Home

The objective was to build the first LEED Gold-certified home in central Florida and to make every element/product/function of the home have a green story behind it. Another goal was to show that a home can feature good design while also being green.

The scope was three bedrooms, four baths, an office, outdoor living areas, low utility bills, a rainwater collection system and rooftop terrace with a small green roof. The home was built as a LEED experiment and as a green showcase home. Challenges included finding the right products and systems, and evaluating the cost vs. benefit for each one. Regarding materials, each trade was asked to provide green options with supporting documentation. These products ranged from concrete that uses fly ash to



Photos: Brilliance Photography, Atlanta



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Cost vs. benefit examples include: choosing not to use photovoltaics as they would not pay for themselves quickly enough, but using a solar water heater which pays for itself in one to two years.

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LAUGHLIN HOMES & RESTORATION
Fredericksburg, Texas
hillcountrybuilder.com

Project name: Sandy Ranch Cabin
Project location: Fredericksburg, Texas
Square footage: 1,300
Total project cost (not land): \$260,000

Vacation Home

The objective was to build a getaway for a young, single software CEO that would reflect the character of the pioneer homes in the area while blending into the native surroundings of the Hardwood Creek bottom. The design needed to be small in scale and respectful of the budget, but roomy enough to accommodate gatherings of family and friends that camp on the surrounding ranch.

To reduce the construction impact, salvaged building materials were desired where possible, providing a historic feel while being environmentally responsible. Due to rocky canyon walls, the cabin was to be located within the flood zone of the creek bottom to minimize the impact on the land and budget. Special permitting was required for the building placement and on-site sewage facility. Vehicular access was not

possible and a considerable portion of the budget had to be used to build creek crossing to reach the site. Although comparable in purchase cost, the use of reclaimed materials required additional labor to prepare and install compared to conventional materials. ▶



Photos: Pangea Software, Austin, Texas



LAUGHLIN HOMES & RESTORATION
Fredericksburg, Texas
hillcountrybuilder.com

Project name: Elm Grove
Project location: Fredericksburg, Texas
Square footage: 4,400
Total project cost (not land): \$1.3 million

Spec/Model

Inspired by the land, the project was designed in a style that respects the rural heritage of the area while meeting the demands of today's modern lifestyle. The objective was to nestle the compound into a hillside elm grove, blending with the countryside — not dominating it. Deeply covered porches protect large expanses of glass that welcome the outside in and provide access to an alfresco kitchen and dining area. Spray-foam insulation, low-E glass, high-efficiency HVAC and on-demand water heaters were used to reduce operating costs. The home showcases reclaimed timbers, native stone, wood and concrete floors blended with granite counters and stainless appliances.

The supplied plans arrived four months later than promised. With a 10-month deadline cut to six and more than 8,000 sq. ft. under roof, keeping as many as nine trade partners working simultaneously

with 15 to 20 carpenters was a challenge in itself. The site required 400 tons of sub-grade to be imported and extensive landscaping. Receiving 30-plus in. of rain in a 16-week period further delayed the project. The project was completed in less than six months.

Native plants, not requiring irrigation due to the minimal amount of water available, were used to blend into and restore the site. The color palette is sophisticated, yet reflects the natural surroundings and distant vistas which can be enjoyed throughout the home and outdoor spaces. ▶



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Project name: Cherokee Park West
Project location: Sarasota, Fla.
Square footage: 4,450
Total project cost (not land): \$1.3 million

Outdoor Living

The design concept was to extend the interior architecture by creating a series of intimate, exterior spaces within an elegant, unified outdoor area. Just as the courtyard architecture of this home brings the outdoors in, the landscape extends the interior and mimics the architecture in both style and function. The challenge was to create a sequence of outdoor rooms: a moon garden, swimming pool, outdoor kitchen, courtyard, master bedroom garden and formal lawn. The outdoor rooms would need to be designed as warm and unique, yet harmonious and cohesive.



Photos: Camille Poyne Photography, Venice, Fla.

The solution was to artfully define each space using architectural and landscape elements, while integrating the composition through form, repetition, views and materials. Architecturally, simple volumes are created of whitewashed stucco, while the floor plan creates an indoor/outdoor connection. The landscaping incorporates Florida-friendly plants and water-wise irrigation practices to articulate the outdoor spaces. Tree canopies create ceilings, hedges create walls, shrubs accent the rooms and hardscape elements form the floor. The result is an outdoor area of six unique spaces. ▀

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CG&S DESIGN-BUILD
Austin, Texas
cgsdb.com

Project name: Bowling Pool House
Project location: Austin, Texas
Square footage: 1,109
Project cost (not land): \$106,000

Detached Structure

The clients were interested in completing the final phase of their outdoor living area. The original project added an arbor to the west side of the house for shade and outdoor seating. An organically shaped swimming pool and spa were added in Phase II. In response to the clients' need for an outdoor grill, dining area and storage building, a new pool house was constructed adjacent to the pool and arbor in the final phase. The challenge was introducing a large detached structure into a limited area without overwhelming the existing house and alienating the neighbors. The most suitable location for the pool house was over an existing septic system drain field, and the clients reluctantly agreed to the substantial expense of relocating it. The new pool house is finished in natural stone and a painted metal

roof. It includes an outdoor kitchen, dining and sitting areas, a pool bath with an outdoor shower, a storage area/loft, and a Rumford fireplace. The pool house is integrated seamlessly to the site and landscape through low-scale roofs, compatible materials, garden terraces and sweeping stairs. ▀



Photos: Greg Husley Inc., Austin, Texas

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ZACK/DE VITO ARCHITECTURE

San Francisco
zackdevito.com

Project name: Laidley Street Residence
Project location: San Francisco
Square footage: 2,998
Total project cost: \$1.55 million

Architectural Feature

The goal was to design a stair that was inventive, expressive of its materials, detail and craft and that allowed light to be transmitted from the large skylight above to the floors below. This three-level home is located on a steep down-sloping, urban infill lot so one of the primary challenges was to introduce daylight into the middle of the building and down to the lowest level which is half-buried into the hillside.

One project goal was to maximize daylighting in as many ways possible, to minimize the use of electric lighting despite the vertical nature of the project. A secondary goal was to utilize technology and off-site fabrication to lessen the build time and lower labor costs. To this end the architects designed an open-stair core with a stair of minimal structure: water-jet cut 1/2-in. steel stingers, translucent acrylic treads and risers with steel and glass guardrails. The minimal structure and translucency allow light from the large, operable skylight above to flood the stairwell with light through all three floors of the building. The mahogany handrail, supported by custom stainless steel brackets, provides a warm touch, tempering the hard-edge materials used for the structure and enhancing the user's experience.



Photos: Bruce Damonte Photography, San Francisco





Photos: Taylor Architectural Photography, Winter Park, Fla.

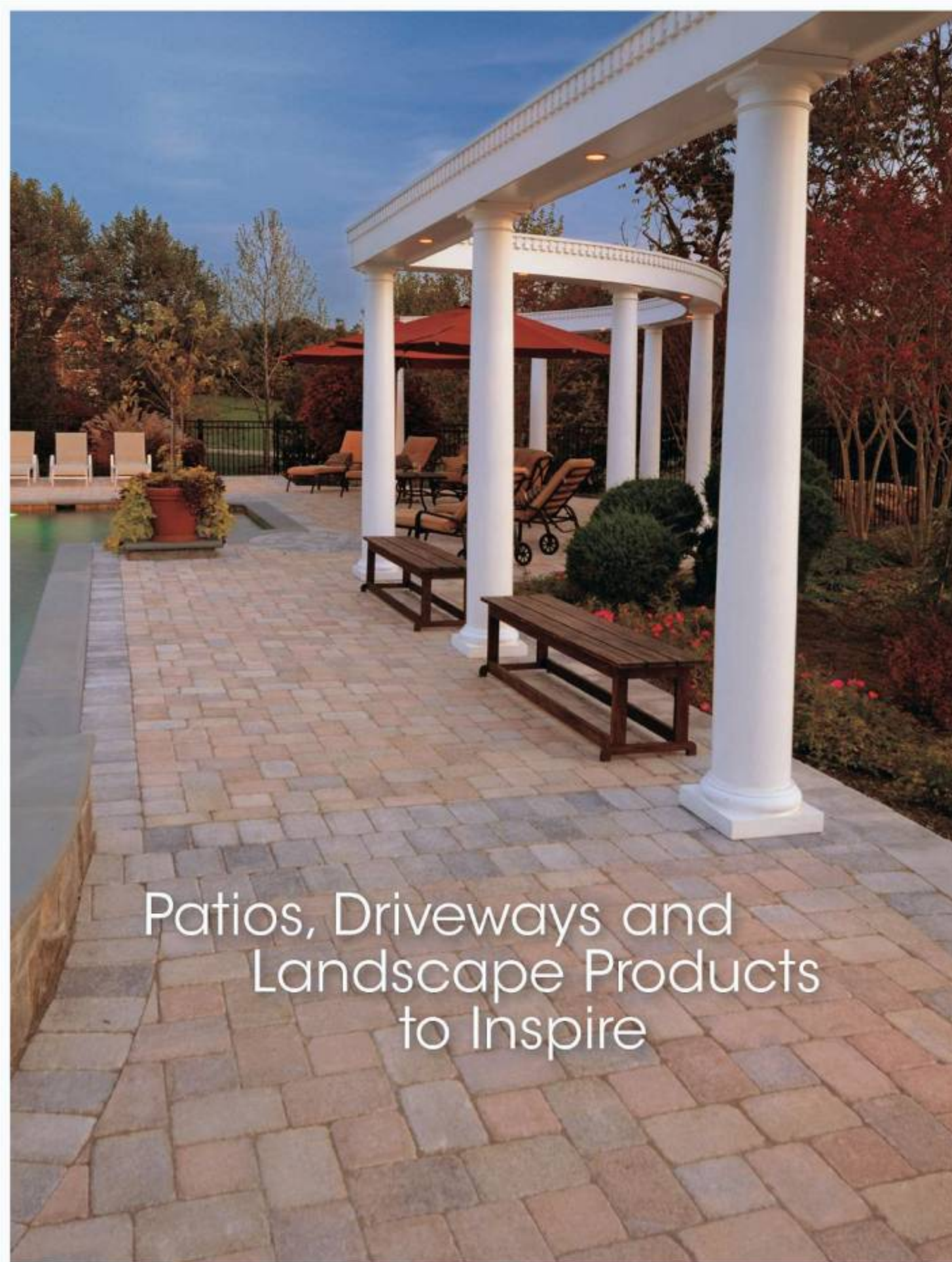
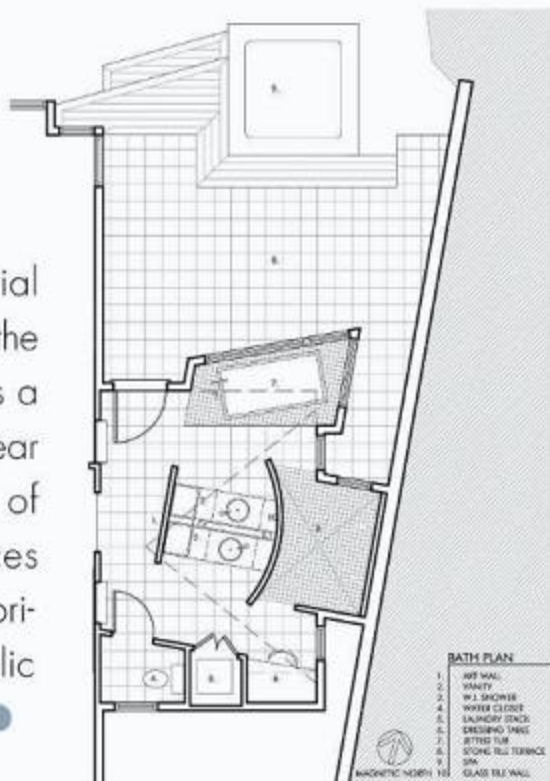


NEAL PRINCE ARCHITECTS
Greenville, S.C.
nealprince.com

Project name: The Bridge House
Project location: Landrum, S.C.
Square footage: 5,050

Bathroom

The bathroom takes advantage of existing site conditions by burrowing into the terrain to achieve privacy on a greatly exposed site. A long stone retaining wall holds back the earth to form the shower on the interior, and a private sitting terrace on the exterior. The focal point of the room is a curvilinear glass tile wall that separates the shower and the dry space, and anchors one end of back-to-back floating vanities. At the other end, an art wall greets the bather on a daily basis. These elements combine to form a "walkaround" piece that defines the spatial characteristics of the room, and makes a small space appear larger. A bank of utilitarian services provides further privacy on the public side of the bath.



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NEAL PRINCE ARCHITECTS
Greenville, S.C.
neal-prince.com

Project name: The Bridge House
Project location: Landrum, S.C.
Square footage: 5,050

Kitchen

This kitchen was conceived of as a place for gathering. The focal point of the space is a u-shaped island that serves as the command center for meal preparation, while also serving as a sit-at space for guests. An adjacent dining room provides a seamless connection using an open, airy feel. Clean lines and minimalist details allow a focus on contrasting materials of warm cherry floors and cabinets with a frosted glass countertop, and stainless steel hardware and trim.

Challenges included: 1) Clients' direction to design a home characterized by unexpected discoveries and uncommon features; 2) A site condition in which the steep slope of grade fell



Photos: Taylor Architectural Photography, Winter Park, Fla.

in a direction perpendicular to the best direction of view. The linear arrangement of rooms along an axis parallel to the view afforded a maximum number of rooms to enjoy the view. ▶



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WESTRIDGE BUILDERS
Waukesha, Wis.
westridgebuilders.com

Project name: Custom Media Room
Project location: Delafield, Wis.

Media Room

This theater room is part of an expansive lower level that has a focus on entertainment. The room has eight theater seats plus two bankette couches for more casual watching. The theater is sunken and tiered to give maximum visibility to everyone inside the theater room as well as outside of the room in the bar area. Specialty woods like albacore, walnut, bird's-eye maple and bubinga give a rich feel to the inside of the theater. Draperies, subtle lighting and soft carpeting add to the luxury theater experience.

Sound from the theater is an issue when entertaining in other parts of the home. Also, there must be proper clearance of the railings and chair tops so everyone watching the movies can see perfectly with no obstructions. The living room is directly above the theater so special

sound-deadening techniques were used. The ceiling is a concrete product called Spancrete which virtually eliminates noise above the theater. On the inside walls, solid-core foam insulation was used to contain the sound. Another area where special attention was paid was making sure the theater chairs, when reclined, gave a clear sightline over the railings to the screen. ▶



Photos: Edmunds Studios, Cedarburg, Wis.



ARCHITECTURAL MANOEUVRES
Boulder, Colo.
skillindesign.com

Project name: The Glass House at Bellevue
Project location: Boulder, Colo.
Square footage: 8,516

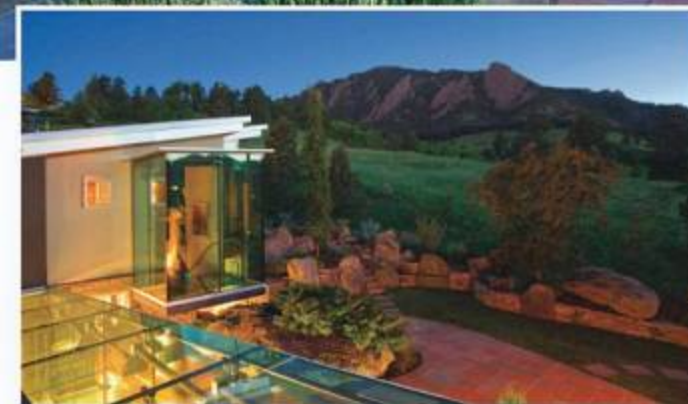
Use of Technology

The Glass House is designed to break through the constraints of what is possible in livable sculpture. To echo the edges of the Rocky Mountains, the architect crafted frameless Pilkington glass walls soaring outward. Structural integrity is ensured by three-story caissons.

Despite the large expanses of glass, energy usage is 44 percent less than the same structure built to code. This is due to comprehensive ground-source heating/cooling, low-E materials and rainwater collection systems. Each living space opens directly onto trails and native gardens. Seamless transitions are furthered through the incorporation of existing boulders as water features in Colorado's arid climate. The Glass House is located in a prominent and visible location above Boulder, Colo., and directly adjacent to the nationally historically landmarked Chautauqua

Historic District. The site is steeply sloping from west to east. Fluctuations in weather require versatility and durability of materials.

To address the steeply sloping site, the house is built into the hillside to reduce its massing and visual impact. East, west and north walls are composed principally of frameless, low-E Pilkington glass to extend the landscape into the boundaries of the home. An automated geothermal exchange system monitors temperature fluctuations to ensure comfort and energy efficiency. ▶



Photos: Marcia Photography, Seattle



WESTRIDGE BUILDERS
Waukesha, Wis.
westridgebuilders.com

Project name: Custom Lower Level
Project location: Delafield, Wis.

Lower Level

The lower level of this custom home was designed to be an entertainment haven. The owners wanted the main focus to be on the bar/theater area. This space has a sitting area and an expansive bar that is open to the theater. Other areas include a temperature-controlled wine closet that leads to a card room, a playroom for the children, a sauna, lap pool, exercise room, motorcycle room and a gallery that leads to guest quarters. The back of the home provides access to the outside patios and pool from a variety of rooms in the lower level. Because of the amount of different rooms for different activities, the main challenge was getting each room to flow into the next from a traffic and design perspective.

Another challenge was controlling the different temperature require-

ments for the lap pool, exercise room, wine closet and main entertainment areas. Keeping the humidity of the lap pool area contained is crucial to protecting the elegant wood and paints from damage. The walnut wood floors continue from the gallery on one side of the lower level through the bar, living room and to the pool area. Different heating and cooling units on individual thermostats ensure proper temperatures. Solid, sealed doors help maintain temperature and humidity. ▶



Photos: Edmunds Studios, Cedarburg, Wis.



CRAYCROFT DESIGN
Santa Cruz, Calif.
craycroftdesign.com

Project name: The Wave House
Project location: La Selva Beach, Calif.
Square footage: 3,240
Total project cost (not land): \$600,000

Challenging Lot

Challenges on this project included designing a beach house large enough to accommodate visits from extended family, with open living areas, a high ceiling, decks and a modern, innovative design that reflects the site; also, to explore the use of curves to reflect the site and views of the rolling hills and surf. Shaped roughly like a parallelogram, the lot slopes sharply downward 50 percent from the road, dropping 120 ft. on both sides, and at one lower corner an erosion scar measures nearly 40 ft. across.

The combination of the steep slope, the erosion scar, and the local planning department setbacks left an actual building envelope only 60 ft. wide by 40 ft. deep, and was too steep for a driveway. And the site's soil presented its own problems; it was pure sand. An elevated driveway was designed with 12-ft. retaining walls to support it. The driveway

leads to a garage, with most of the home's living area placed below. The

erosion scar was stabilized by filling it with rock and incorporating it into the drainage system. The foundation is a pier and grade beam with more than 50 concrete piers drilled up to 24 ft. deep. ▶



Kolbe Provides Old World Style and Modern Performance to Help Create Award-Winning Home Design

The award-winning Belcaro Woods residence combines the architectural elegance of English Tudor manors with the comforts of modern American living. Weston Construction Corporation designed and built the home to last for generations, while incorporating the proportion, scale and detail of generations past. The National Association of Home Builders recognized this accomplishment with a 2009 Silver Medal, and the Denver Home Builders Association named the project its 2008 Custom Home of the Year.

Located on Belcaro Dr. in Denver, this three-story, eight-bedroom, eight-bathroom, single-family home spans more than 8,000-square-feet above ground plus another 3,000-square-feet below ground. The home's brick and stone exterior offers a stately welcome with a presence that conveys a sense that the structure has been there, and will be there, for a very long time. "These homes are designed and built to last. They are large, but warm and friendly," says Weston's Michelle Miller. Miller's partner, Rick Crum, agrees and says, "We're evoking a classic architectural look, while still performing at a modern level."

Suppliers and specialty contractors on Weston's projects are chosen not just for their experience, craftsmanship, and creativity, but also for their knowledge and willingness to find new answers to old questions. Weston relied on Central Trim & Supply's Kevin Sausker as its partner to provide Belcaro's 151 windows and four, oversized French

doors. These products were chosen from Kolbe's Ultra Series line of premium, aluminum-clad wood windows.

"To some, a window's a window. When you take a closer look, you start to see the proportion of the sashes and the grids within the window itself. It's the subtle scaling of these details that help make it beautiful. These are the details to which people unconsciously react," explains Crum.

"We looked at a full range of window options before choosing Kolbe – from bronze-clad, completely custom windows, to semi-custom, to standard. Kolbe's push-out is a standard window with a good price, which meant we could afford to customize it," adds Crum.

"They're put together well and had the look we wanted," echoes Miller. "Great design is not necessarily the most expensive choice, but the most appropriate choice for the project at the best value."

The windows also balance between indoor and outdoor, old world and new world. Both Crum and Miller emphasized the importance of Kolbe's narrow sash and thin 5/8-inch PDLs (performance divided lites) to resemble historic, steel casements and the true divided lites. "Kolbe's push-out casements look more traditional and European, especially combined with the antique bronze lever hardware selection," says Crum.



"Most of the windows don't have screens like most windows in Europe," says Miller. "Denver has virtually no bugs, except for at night if there's a light." For these few areas, like the bedroom windows, Weston and Central Trim & Supply specified Kolbe's retractable screens. "When you don't need them, they disappear, which is fantastic."

All of the windows' profiles contour to seamlessly match the exterior, sandstone masonry surrounds are finished in a dark bronze anodize for low-maintenance durability. Crum reiterates, "Kolbe's windows offered the comfort, performance and durability we wanted."

Kolbe's Ultra Series products come standard with energy-efficient



LoE2-270 double-pane insulating glass units with argon, achieving maximum visible light, while blocking 86% of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. This protects furniture, fabrics and other valuable interior items from fading.

The LoE2-270 glass enables Kolbe's windows to meet or exceed ENERGY STAR® guidelines in all climate zones. The home's 20-inch-thick walls also play a significant role. According to Miller, "The energy efficiency is astounding." Living and working from the property, she sees \$200-250/month energy bills for a house in excess of 12,000-square-feet.

KOLBE
■ WINDOWS & DOORS ■

For more info circle #1

Six toilet-planning mistakes

While toilets are not the centerpieces of well-designed bathrooms, they must be addressed with careful thought

By David Newton, CMKBD

Have you noticed that very few award-winning bathrooms feature the toilet as a focal point? The toilet is a necessity, however, and few builders and designers spend enough of a client's budget properly designing a decent setting for it.

Toilet-planning design errors can be divided into six categories: plumbing, noise, odor, code/clearance, placement and replacement. All six are addressed below:

Plumbing. For the past several years we have worked with 10-, 12- and 14-in. rough-in dimensions. The 12-in. rough-in is the most common and unless you tell plumbers otherwise, they typically will position the closet flange for that dimension. Often, in remodeling jobs, someone fails to measure the hold-down bolts of the existing toilet. Then, a toilet is ordered for the wrong rough-in dimension. The project is delayed while a new toilet is ordered. Fortunately, Kohler, American Standard and others have 10-, 12- and 14-in. sizes for their most popular models. Many designers assume that if the trapway is

concealed, the toilet can be adjusted for the required rough-in. This is not always true so check the rough-in requirements.

Noise. Sounds originating from the toilet compartment can be a problem if the toilet is located near the living area of the home. One solution is to sound-proof the bathroom walls. If the flushing action is the objection, select a toilet that has a low acoustic reading. If the ventilation fan is an issue, look for one with a low sone rating.

Odor. Designers need to address odor in one of two ways; Cover it up or remove it. The most common method of removal is to place a vent fan in the ceiling, centered in the bath space or the toilet compartment. Consider placing the fan low on the wall between the toilet and the wall in a half-bath or toilet compartment. It will be out of sight and close to the origin of the odor. Also consider connecting the ventilation unit to a timed switch to save energy.

Some add-on toilet seats contain an air purifier that will also help eliminate odors. This will require a 120-volt connection near the toilet. The 2009 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show featured a new concept introduced by Smith Innovations. The Odorless Toilet removes odor while the toilet is in use. Before sitting, the user pulls up on the flush handle to activate a fan inside the tank which redirects the odors into the sewer system. When finished, the toilet tank lever is pushed down to flush and deactivate the fan. The system can operate by battery power if an electrical connection is not available.

Code/Clearance. The National Kitchen & Bath Association recommends the center of the toilet be at least 18 in. from a vertical surface such as a cabinet, additional fixture or a wall. However, code requires no less than 15 in. Since this is a code issue, the side clearances generally are not the problem. It is the distance between the wall and the back of the toilet tank

that can create expensive plumbing changes. The rough-in dimension (mentioned earlier) is the space from the center of the hold-down bolts to the back of the tank. If the house plan indicates half-inch drywall behind the toilet but you convince the client to add a ¾-in. beaded board wainscoting in the toilet compartment, the toilet will not fit. Always communicate any deviation to the original plan to all trades.

Placement. The toilet should always be out of view from people sitting in dining areas, kitchens, living rooms and other related spaces. If the bath space is small, the designer might consider the door hinge location as a way to hide the toilet. Many clients even prefer toilets in their own compartments. The single exception to hiding the toilet may be a small hall bath with more than one entrance.

Replacement. A common mistake is replacing a standard rim toilet with an elongated bowl toilet. After the toilet is replaced, the door that opens at a right angle to the toilet will not close. Always measure the space in front of the toilet to avoid any obstructions. Another issue is replacing a standard close-couple toilet with a low-profile, one-piece toilet. Be aware that the shut-off valve most likely will need to be lowered. This could require access to the wall behind or beside the toilet. Consider the wall material and difficulty of access. ▀



Total wall thickness must be taken into account, including add-ons such as wainscoting.

David Newton, CMKBD, has been in the kitchen and bathroom industry for more than 36 years. His experience includes cabinet building, project installation, kitchen design and layout, and sales. Newton has served homeowners, builders and developers. In 1989 he formed David Newton & Associates and devoted 100 percent of his time to training kitchen and bath designers.



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Bank of America Home Loans is committed to helping Americans realize the goal of homeownership - responsible and sustainable homeownership - and are here to support you in your work to make that goal a reality for your clients.

Check the sidebar at right for several tips to help your clients move more smoothly through the lending process:

Tips for Helping Your Clients Prepare for the Home Loan Process

Online Resources

To understand lending criteria and how a home loan fits into an individual borrower's overall financial picture, have your clients visit Bank of America's Home Loans Guide, part of a new interactive web site at bankofamerica.com/homeloans.

The interactive guide walks customers through the entire home loan process - from understanding affordability through loan options to the loan process itself. Designed to demystify the lending process, this tool educates consumers about the true costs of becoming a homeowner so that customers can better determine how much home they can reasonably afford.

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The Star range hood from Elica is designed to make a dynamic statement. It's the centerpiece — the light of the kitchen. As the central space of most homes, the kitchen demands design that can stand up to the scrutiny of so many friends and family.

As the star of the kitchen, the Star generates light for the room and energy for the house; it can become a source of power for anyone near it, says Matt Holmes, vice president, sales and marketing, Elica Inc. in Chicago. Elica's international headquarters is in Fabriano, Italy.

Elica views the range hood as an architectural and design complement for the home. Products are designed with the intention of making a statement and being functionally better by operating efficiently and providing a

higher quality of life for users, Holmes says.

"Elica's range hoods are designed for any type of home," he continues. "They're not just for one style of design and not others. We intend for our products to work in contemporary and traditional homes. Many of our hoods lend themselves to the contemporary style, but moving forward you will see Elica come out with products oriented toward the traditional side because North America in general is more traditional."

Those walking the aisles at this year's Kitchen/Bath Industry Show in Atlanta liked the Star from Elica so much they gave it the People's Choice award, which Elica is proud to accept.

Controlling the Star is done with the Magic Wand, a simple steel bar that protrudes

below the hood a few inches. At the diameter of a pencil, the steel rod has two simple buttons on it. One controls fan speed and the other controls lighting. "It takes a light touch; you barely touch it," Holmes notes. A remote control is provided to enhance convenience for users.

Air filtration and venting is handled inside the Star; air enters the bottom, is cleaned and then vented out the top. Holmes points out that 98 percent of the air that comes out is clean. "For a recirculating hood, that's remarkable," he adds. The steel mesh filters are dishwasher-safe, and designed to last up to three years before needing replacement.

For more information about Elica and the Star, visit elica.com or circle 6 on the inquiry card. — Rob Heselbarth

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