

residential design & build

inspiring architects and custom builders

10.09

Blending art and design

Pioneering the perfect getaway
2009 Business Excellence Awards
Systems approach to insulation
Choosing a kitchen faucet

Colors

Charcoal

Escape Gray

Gridiron

Pewter Gray

Thunderous

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Contractor: Affordable Constructions Company,
Norman, OK

Distinction Slate Color: Distinction Slate Blend -
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Distributor: Spec Building Materials Corporation,
Oklahoma City, OK

Above: The homeowners loved the
blend of Distinction Slate colors
Charcoal, Escape Gray and Gridiron.

Below: Two-panel Distinction Slate
allows for faster installation than
traditional products.



The Lightweight Alternative

Distinction Slate answered the call for this homeowner in Norman, Oklahoma; they were re-roofing and looking for the look of natural slate without the weight. Distinction Slate is the lightweight alternative to natural slate and offers the rich natural appearance of real slate with deep chiseled edges. The homeowner is very happy with the end result of the blended Distinction Slate roof.

Quick and Efficient Installation

The lightweight feature of Distinction Slate is what impressed Rob from Affordable Constructions Company. The roof is also easier to load and install because Distinction Slate is not as heavy as natural slate. Affordable Constructions Company installed a Distinction Tile job in the neighborhood a few years back, and the job still looks just like the day it went on.

Colors

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Escape Gray

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Reasons for pride

Earlier this month I attended the National Association of Home Builders' board meetings in Chicago. The Sheraton on the Chicago River was filled with builders from every part of the country. Most of these builders told tales of struggle, but they also shared stories of survival. It's no surprise that these builders who have successfully managed their businesses through the housing downturn are in leadership positions within NAHB.

One of these builders, David Werschay from Minnesota, recently was able to secure financial backing for a new spec home by being persistent and creative. He tells the short version of his story in a video in the Readers Speak Up section of our video library at rdbmagazine.com/video.

The day before I shot the spec home video, I recorded Tony Crasi, president of a design/build firm in Ohio, telling me how his ability to design and build has kept him in business. A client was ready to postpone a project until the spring, but Tony pulled out a piece of paper and drew a solution on the spot that resulted in moving forward on a \$100,000 project.

Another builder, Mary Schroeder of Miller Homes in Wisconsin, was telling me the various ways she has adapted her business to survive. She mentioned the smaller projects she is tackling, and the creative networking that is keeping her in business.

When looking for good people to be proud of, you don't need to look further than the designers and builders volunteering their time to serve the housing market through the NAHB. Learn more about joining the NAHB at nahb.org.

2009 Business Excellence Awards winners named

We are proud to present the winners of the *Residential Design & Build* 2009 Business Excellence Awards, beginning on page 22 of this issue. Three firms were chosen for their excellence in business administration and community involvement.

Groninger Custom Homes in Winter Park, Fla., realized it needed a better system for managing the flow of project information. A simple yet effective system was created to increase efficiency and therefore profit.

Jauregui Architecture Interiors Construction is a full-service design/build firm in Austin, Texas, that exudes class at every stage of the custom home process. As an architect-led design/build firm, Jauregui offers clients exceptional drawings, real-time costs, selections during design, and furnishings, too. Nothing is left to chance.

Charles Ross Homes in Williamsburg, Va., takes community involvement seriously. This team found a way to bring developers and conservationists together in a fruitful effort. A new community was created that both preserves the character of the region and provides housing that enhances the area's value.

Congratulations to this year's winners. ▀



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inspiring architects and custom builders

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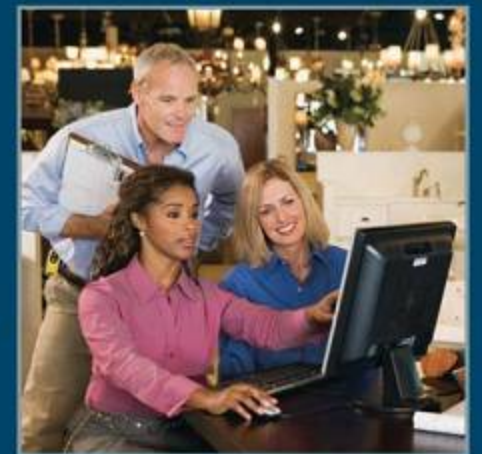
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Weighing in on construction

Architects and builders discuss the pros and cons of cost-plus and fixed-cost construction methods

By Luis Jauregui, AIA

Recently I served as moderator for an open-mic session that consisted of local AIA chapter members asking questions to a panel of three residential architects and three custom home builders. It was a successful forum and generated a lot of interest and good will among the two groups.

I was especially interested in one of the questions from the audience pertaining to stipulated sum (fixed-cost) vs. cost plus methods of contracting. Since this is an issue more associated with construction than with design, it's not an everyday point of conversation among architects and it was interesting to hear the panelists' varying opinions. The audience followed up with questions to which the panelists responded with experiences relating to actual contracts and clients.

The first architect to respond was a seasoned and notable residential architect associated with luxury homes of high design. His predilection for cost plus contracts was somewhat expected, I think, but his explanation was enlightening and substantiated one of my theories about cost plus: Owners are

going to experience significant sticker shock with this more open-ended contract method.

The reasoning behind his preference pertained to his commitment to fluidity of design. While he is committed to providing complete, well-documented plans and specifications to the builder, the architect also enjoys every opportunity to refine his design during construction. He views cost plus as a more flexible operating system that allows him to tweak the design without dealing with the hassles of change orders inherent with fixed cost contracts.

Personally, I think the reason clients are drawn to cost plus is because they think it's going to save them money. They don't take into real consideration the concept of contingencies and being responsible for both the good and the bad. The rule of the game is "owner beware" because even with complete drawings, clients are still exposed when the entire team's fluidity is at the cost of the owner's wallet.

On the other side of the table, we had a young builder with about five years of experience who is very professional and espouses all the right tenets. He shared with the audience that all of his construction contracts are cost plus, which he favors as an opportunity to be an open book to his clients. It also relieves him of explaining the process again and again, but most importantly it becomes a shelter from the risk of underbidding projects. He doesn't have to provide exacting bids or costs for which he might not have the necessary historical cost information.

Some of the architects and builders in the group favored fixed cost. Their comments related to keeping

the client unburdened from making decisions they're not prepared to make. They felt that it's better left to the professionals and is in the best interest of the client in the long run. It keeps management tight, the budget under control and assures no deviation from plans unless by change order signed by the client.

I feel that fixed cost requires architects to do extraordinary jobs in documenting their projects, and requires builders to have solid knowledge and experience from which to take risks. Clients should come to expect an extensive set of drawings with no allowances, and everything selected and costed prior to construction. In this way the contract is performed as per highly detailed documents and there are no issues left to interpretation. Everybody is well protected and there are no unwelcomed surprises.

It has been my experience that no matter how deep the pockets, clients do not fully understand nor accept the concept of contingencies. I'd much rather risk making less margin and keep a good relationship with my client than have to explain every overage and wage war for payment. I think it goes back to putting your client's best interests at the forefront. Keep the client out of your books by providing fair and proper management; You'll both be happier. ▀



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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RECOGNIZED THREE YEARS IN A ROW



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Let the seller beware

Opt for compromise, but be prepared to fight

By Jay Grant

Do you have a custom home or remodel client who repeatedly creates problems for you to solve? Is he playing hardball with you? Is he changing the rules as stated in your working contract? Does he ignore the rules that do not suit him and expect you to constantly adapt to his new rules?

Case in point: About three years ago, I was attending a realtor open house luncheon to promote one of my for-sale homes. One of the realtors commented that she and her husband were in the final stages of planning their dream home. Subsequently, she introduced me to her husband, Steve, who brought his 7,500-sq.-ft. custom design to my office. Steve proudly explained that the home was entirely his vision. He demonstrated an uncanny grasp

of all of the details as well as an unusual ability to envision the spaces from the drawings. Clearly, I was on notice that Steve would be heavily involved in all aspects of the project.

Steve signed my open-book construction management contract in 2006 BRC (Before the Real estate Crash).

From the onset, budget discussions were adversarial. Steve insisted the home he designed could be built for \$1.8 million and our budgets were in the \$2.2 million range. Eight weeks into construction he finally agreed to modify some significant cost reductions, swapping stone details for brick and reducing specs in key areas. After rebidding the house while it was under construction and reducing my builder management fee by 15 percent, we had a realistic budget of \$1.75 million.

A pattern quickly unfolded. We proceeded with the building of his home and Steve scrutinized everything, from scheduling to budgets to construction details. Worst of all, payment funding was a consistent problem. Eventually, we completed his home but unfortunately he failed to pay his final bill. That was one year ago.

Since my company was building on his lot, we could not prevent him from moving into his home. Steve persuaded the town building official to issue a Certificate of Occupancy once the home was completed. A week later, I had a glimmer of optimism when he paid one-third of his open balance. After months of double-talk, I reluctantly retained a lawyer to lien his property.

The lawyer and I were successful in placing the liens, but his legal bills came in at four times his original estimate. Since Steve was unable to convert his construction loan to a permanent loan, my liens have yet to yield the next payment to my company.

Over the past several months, I interviewed

four lawyers to find the right one to proceed with more legal maneuvers. I have fielded countless calls from vendors who are owed money on his home. I have had more than one settlement discussion with Steve. Recently, I met with him and told him he could have a discount on his balance equal to the estimated \$25,000 fee my new lawyer promised he would not exceed in order to prosecute my case. I told him he had two weeks to pay or we would initiate the lawsuit in New Jersey Superior Court. I had my lawyer prepare the lawsuit and brought a copy to make it clear to him that I was committed to suing him. We agreed to let our lawyers talk about him signing a consent order to pay. I remain warily optimistic. I know that a zebra does not change its stripes.

When dealing with your Steve, remember, he will not be offended when you play hardball right back at him. He expects you to and may even think you are weak if you do not stand up to him. My natural disposition is to lean heavily toward compromise and reconciliation. Now that I am living through this saga, I am much more willing and able to respond to any future "Steve" clients who force me outside my comfort zone. I hope you will too. ▀



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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Lowering expectations

Questionable business practices and bad judgment by a few bad apples are dragging down the rest of us

By Joseph Dellanno

For many of us who adopted the design/build business model in the early 1990s, we helped homeowners shift their buying attitudes toward designing, building and remodeling their homes. The seduction of design/build offered accountability, control of the financial investment and buildability of the project to name a few benefits. Today we continue to reshape the American homeowners' buying attitudes toward design/build.

For the past six months I have been meeting with homeowners and their builders to help design their projects. Typically we meet with the potential clients for about an hour. After a lovely tour through their home, our next step is to review their design needs. Based on the scope of work, design goals and their financial investment range, we provide the homeowner with a fixed cost to design and estimate their project. This is where the meeting completely falls apart.

The homeowners for the past six months have been saying the following as if they have all been reading the same script. "We think your design fees are too high." This in itself is just a statement. We know enough to start asking questions and not get sucked into defending our fees. If you defend your fee you will do it for free.

Meanwhile, we are witnessing our industry sinking to a new low which is producing unprofessional business practices and unqualified designs just to keep the lights on in some places. This poor business behavior is corrupting the design/build community.

For the past year I have had the displeasure of reviewing extremely poor plans landing on my desk month after month. This includes additions drawn with no thought, window placement which has no rhyme or



reason and "improvements" that will devalue the home. Most projects are not built because of poor layout, planning and the inability to financially qualify the plans.

Most often the design professional has been paid in full, the contractors and subs have wasted their time chasing down pricing, and the homeowners have wasted their time and money. Nobody wins except for the design professional, but I guess that's the new American way: Get mine and who cares about anybody else.

This stressful time in America is revealing some business professionals' true colors. I am beginning to understand why everyone wants to get green but not go green. We are also seeing building professionals discounting their prices by \$20,000 to get the project. This is the biggest joke today which means just another construction project disaster in the making.

I understand that people have to make a living and keep food on their tables and a roof over their heads, but we are only helping homeowners corrupt the housing marketplace with this panicked business behavior and are hurting ourselves professionally in the long run.



You are a design or build professional and you deserve to be treated like one. Find the homeowners' emotional trigger points before you tell them your design fee. Offer a compelling story about why people pay for your services before discounting your fixed cost to build their addition. If you don't you could be leaving money on the table and adding to the chaos and confusion in the market.

Is it too late to turn back the clocks when people seem to have a greater sense of responsibility to the larger picture? Choose to design and build only if you can design a win-win situation. If only one person wins, that means hundreds will lose in the bigger picture. You are part of a bigger picture that helps us all stay connected. Help others to win and in return they will help you win. ▀



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

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Spray foam: The dream app

Know the two types and where they make the most sense

By John D. Wagner

When I was a working contractor, I remember how daunting it was to walk into a large project, bare studs for walls, knowing that I had to work (with a crew of course) to stuff each bay with fiberglass batts. I remember thinking — like a boy wishing he could fly — if we could only liquefy the insulation and spray it in place the job would go much faster. It would also get the insulation into every nook and cranny and save me from using duct tape in an attempt to remove the itchy glass from my arms and neck.

That was in the 1970s, and little did I know that by the time I got out of the blue collar side of building, just such a thing would be invented in the form of spray foam. I mean, let's face it, you couldn't design a better dream product. The stuff flows on as a liquid, fills up every crack and what's best, teams of guys in white jumpsuits apply it in one day's time. Heaven.

It's also very green. The problems with propellants have been largely worked out, and there now are water- and soy-based products as well as isocyanate-free, formaldehyde-free alternatives to suit the greenest

customer. Once in place it doesn't leak or off-gas harmful emissions, and all foams are good at reducing noise transfer and sound penetration. What's not to like?

Here's how you differentiate among the two different types of foam, and the attributes for each product category.

OC-SPF. Open-cell spray polyurethane foam cures in place, stays soft and is designed to slow convection (the transfer of heat through the movement of warm matter like air) by leaving irregular bubbles that fill with trapped, ambient air. Weighing in at 0.5 lb. per cu. ft. and scoring around R-3.5 per in., the foam

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tends to have an R-value close to captured, still air. Although it has less mass (and is therefore less expensive) OC-SPF isn't a good vapor barrier, and it gets knocked for this.

CC-SPF. Closed-cell spray polyurethane foam cures in place and stays rigid. But unlike open-cell products, its bubbles aren't irregular or open. The bubbles form by trapping "reaction gas," which offers insulation properties. With the higher-density foam you get higher R-value around 7 per inch. CC-SPF

weighs in at 2.0 lb. per cu. ft. and partially because of its greater mass, it costs more per R than open-cell foam. Unlike its open-cell cousin, CC-SPF is a good vapor barrier and is often code-approved as such. What's more, CC-SPF can add to the sheer strength of a wall, and in recent tests when sprayed under a roof decking it can help defeat roof uplift (Google search University of Florida, Dr. Prevatt, foam).

By the way, the polyurethane foams you

see in molding are of even higher density than CC-SPF, weighing 30 to 40 lb. per cu. ft.

Even after you compare cost and vapor barrier performance, note that some foams are inappropriate in certain applications. Open-cell foam should not be used below grade because it can absorb water. Since water is a poor insulator (relative to air), foam that is soaking wet has dramatically compromised thermal performance. You'll also want to spec closed-cell foam in tight areas or around utilities where you can't get the bulk and thickness required by an open-cell product to achieve the designed R-value. ■



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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Blending art and design

Oceanfront views, drama and a full-size art gallery highlight this Wright-inspired Florida home

By Rob Heselbarth, editor

The story of how this home came into existence is not new — the client on several occasions over many years came close to pulling the trigger on a total rebuild, choosing instead to endure a few rounds of remodeling. Then one day the owners were ready to break ground on their dream home.

For Fleischman Garcia Architecture in Tampa, Fla., the relationship with the clients began in 1984 and continued until two years ago when the existing home on the property was torn down to make room for the Wright-inspired masterpiece that sits in its

place. The owners wanted a one-story home that maximizes ocean views on one side and canal views on the other. Fitting the home onto a pie-shaped lot was challenging, but Sol Fleischman Jr., AIA, was prepared.

"There are only two rooms in the house that don't have a bay view; the study in the front which has a view of the landscaped courtyard, and one of the guest bedrooms in the front. All the other rooms have water views. It was a priority to have as many rooms with views as possible, but in a one-story house that's always a challenge," Fleischman says.

Hybrid style

The owners' appreciation for Frank Lloyd Wright's work lent itself nicely to a home in Tampa, Fla., with deep overhangs to shade windows, for example, where the late afternoon sun can be brutal and overhangs help keep it cool inside.

"The style of this home is a hybrid of prairie, Craftsman and some rustic California with horizontal lines, deep overhangs, a low hip roof, stacked stone, iron work and more," Fleischman explains. "It also has a contemporary influence with stainless steel cable railings, which are used to maximize the views

Carefully designed landscape lighting accents the deep roof overhang as well as the exterior stone to provide an orchestrated sense of drama at night.





The owners needed a proper space to display their world-class collection of Western art, so this full-size art gallery sits prominently at the front of the home directly off the main entrance.

of the water from the house; it's minimal and doesn't interfere with the views or conflict with the architecture."

A main feature of the home is the clients' art collection, so Fleischman and his team designed plenty of places throughout the home to display it in style. "We created art niches wherever we could. We used concealed lighting to highlight it, which makes the kitchen a gallery of its own," he says.

The extensive Western art collection is dominated by several large bronze sculptures displayed in the large gallery designed into the front of the home (above). As one enters the house and looks right, the gallery room resides where traditionally a formal living room would be. Gallery-style adjustable ceiling lighting in the main gallery and throughout the house highlights the art.

Design/build magic

Once the builder was brought onto the project, the design/build process worked its magic, Fleischman says. The builder, Tim Stroyne, president/owner of Monogram

FLEISCHMAN GARCIA ARCHITECTURE PLANNING INTERIOR DESIGN

Tampa, Fla.
fleischmangarcia.com

MONOGRAM BUILDERS

Clearwater, Fla.

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

EXTERIOR

Roofing: Englert Metal Roofing
Stone: Eldorado Stone
Doors: WeatherShield
Insulation: Icynene
Skylights: Solatube

INTERIOR

Motorized shades: Lutron
Fireplaces: Isokern
Tile: Walker Zanger, Sonoma Tileworks, Sintesi, Ceramic Solutions, FAP Ceramiche, Vitrium Tile
Flooring: Walker Zanger, BR-111, Ann Sacks, Ceramic Solutions

KITCHEN

Sinks: Elkay
Faucets: Dornbracht
Range, Oven, Drawers: Wolf
Refrigerator, Wine storage: Sub-Zero
Dishwasher: Miele

TECHNOLOGY

Home control: Crestron
Lighting control: Lutron
Structured wiring, Security: GE
Theater projector: Pioneer
Media server, Touchpanels: Crestron



Even the kitchen in this home includes plenty of nooks and niche spaces in which to display the owners' art collection. Gallery-style lighting adds the proper highlights to each piece.

Photos: Rixon Photography, St. Petersburg, Fla.



The foyer is the architect's favorite element of the home. It features clerestory illumination, warm stone and views into three rooms.

The living room ceiling hangs above the space and mirrors the wood ceiling in the master bedroom and the outdoor living space. Up-lighting is disguised inside the v-shaped beams adding drama to the room.



Builders, Clearwater, Fla., provided input on materials and buildability in a collaborative effort which included the owner. "[The owner] wanted to be involved with every decision; he wanted to be part of the solution. I've worked with plenty of clients, and this one was as involved as any other we've worked with," Fleischman adds.

Stroyne was brought in during the design development phase when the schematic was completed but far from working drawings. "Most architects prefer the owner bring the builder in early for cost control, material advice and input on design details. They'll pick our minds during the design phase. It's my belief that ultimately it's an architect's job to educate the client on real costs, not the lowest costs."

On-the-fly redesign was not necessary on this job, Stroyne says, because everyone knew the challenges going in, including how his team would pull off many details. "But it doesn't mean it was easy," he says.

Details included elements such as no casings around doors. "Those details might look simplistic in approach, but they are far from it. Those interior doors must be hung in three stages, and it's complicated. We self-perform all our framing and rough-in and painting. Our guys are put to the test," Stroyne says.

The door jambs are on the same plane as the wall with a half-inch space between the jamb and the drywall, Stroyne explains. "That required so much accuracy, we had our

trim carpenters install the drywall. We took it upon ourselves to install the right material."

A detail that didn't require as much accuracy but adds a wonderful effect is the wood ceiling over the back patio (see cover photo). "If we didn't do anything with the ceiling over the back patio, we would have had lots of white out there," Fleischman says. "So to create warmth and a homey effect I designed this wood ceiling with furniture-grade wood stained and varnished to a high luster. It's gorgeous and it warms up the outdoors making it a true outdoor living room.

"The outdoor ceiling ties into the master bedroom ceiling which is adjacent to the terrace. The master bedroom has glass French doors through which you can see the terrace and its ceiling. The master bedroom ceiling is stained ash. The living room features a hanging wood grid that helps carry the wood feeling throughout the home," he says.

A metal roof was chosen for this home to add something distinctive that also will not blow off in a hurricane and is compatible with prairie-style architecture. It's in a custom color to match the aluminum framing. Stone is used through the home to warm up the house. "We warm it up on the outside with a contrast with the smooth stucco. Stone adds color and texture, especially at night when the landscape lighting shoots up the stone and illuminates the

roof overhangs," Fleischman says.

The drama at night created by the lighting is an important part of the design, Fleischman notes. "I coordinated my work with the landscape designer's to make the house sing."

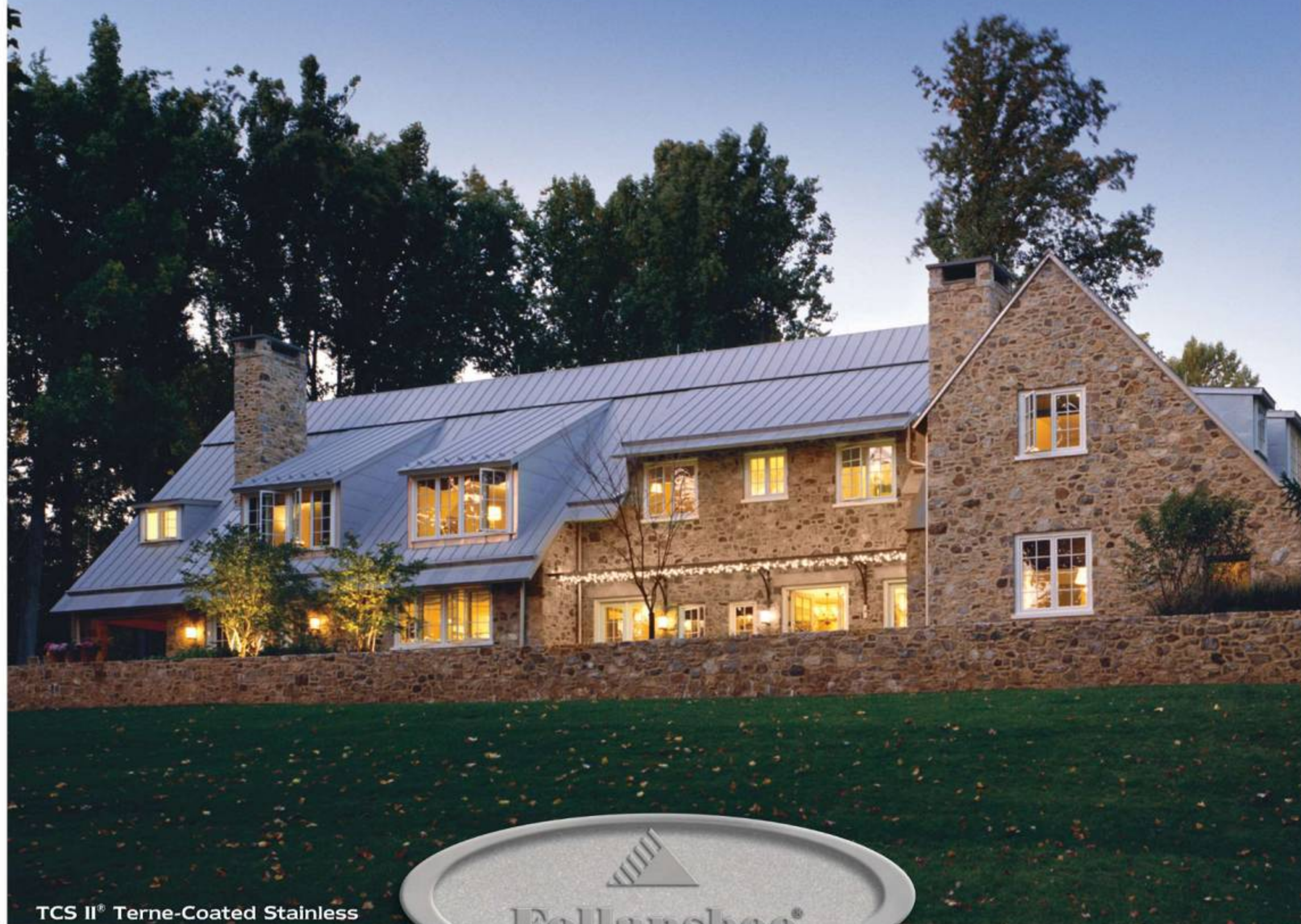
The most challenging aspect of this home was designing to V-zone requirements which call for withstanding the full brunt of hurricanes from the west. "One requirement is standing up to 120-mph wind, and another is putting the house on pilings like a commercial building. All glass is laminated impact glass, so in the event of a hurricane they do not need to cover windows with plywood."

Designer's favorites

Fleischman has designed hundreds of residential projects in his career but this home is one of his favorites. It's one of a few homes he has designed he would enjoy living in, he says. "This is a home that is comfortable, livable, has large rooms for gatherings and small rooms for cozy living. It's a good size."

His favorite part of the house is the foyer which ascends almost two stories, includes clerestory light filtering down from above, plenty of stone, coved lighting illuminating the upper walls, a wonderful dish chandelier, detail and views into three other rooms. ▀

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Pioneering the perfect getaway

This Hill Country vacation home is the right size, the right style, in the right place

By Rob Heselbarth, editor

Laughlin Homes & Restoration nailed the authentic look of an 1850s-era pioneer style. The extra-deep window seat provides storage and a place for someone to sleep if needed.

The owner of this vacation home — a getaway cabin, really — wanted to relocate an existing structure to this site and call it a day. His budget, however, could not accommodate the expense. Plan B was to design and build a new 1850s-era pioneer-style home in Texas Hill Country, which is what happened.

Every effort was made to replicate not only the mid-19th-century style the owner wanted, but also the way families used the popular material of the day to expand their homes every few decades. This process resulted in homes consisting of multiple sections that while physically connected to each other don't mesh stylistically; the result is mish-mosh to some, charming to others.

"We see homes with five or six different materials that were used at the time the work was done," says Richard Laughlin, president, Laughlin Homes & Restoration in



This getaway cabin in Fredericksburg, Texas, is designed to replicate an 1850s-era home, including decades of additions using popular materials of the day.

Fredericksburg, Texas. "And because we do 25 percent historic restoration work, we have a natural feel for the size and scale of buildings from that era."

Conventional framing with OSB on interior and exterior walls was used to construct this retreat. The exterior is clad with 1¼-in. thick

log siding to create the visual effect of a home built following different methods.

Salvaging materials

A big part of Laughlin's success at replicating historic design is using salvaged material. A side benefit is the green aspect of this

Photos: Pangea Software, Austin, Texas

practice, which he is quick to bring to the attention of clients. "We're after aesthetics predominantly, but it's a bonus for the client," he notes.

For example, the bead board siding on the staircase comes from homes torn down mostly in north Texas. Timbers came from old timber-frame barns in Wisconsin, and the floor boards for the loft and the ceiling in the dining/kitchen area were harvested from old cotton warehouses. "Also, the corrugated roofing for the second floor ceiling is salvaged. It looks like there's no insulation, but that is a faux ceiling. The doors are salvaged at random; we buy them any time we get a chance, and end up with a lot of inventory," says Laughlin, who credits lead carpenter Douglas Grona with much of the success on designs like this.

"The result you see is part of the reason we like design/build so much," Laughlin proclaims. "A lot of the finish work is done by myself and the carpenters on the site. That's really the 'chrome' on the house. We don't do shop drawings on that. We work with salvaged materials we bring in. My salvage suppliers know what I expect, but I never know what I'll be getting. And that's why we love design/build, for the freedom of not having a stack of drawings 30 pages high. It gives us the flexibility to let a house like this evolve."

Many of the materials used in this home are salvaged, which aids architectural accuracy but also adds a hint of green to the home. These stairs lead to a loft with a generously sized landing area.

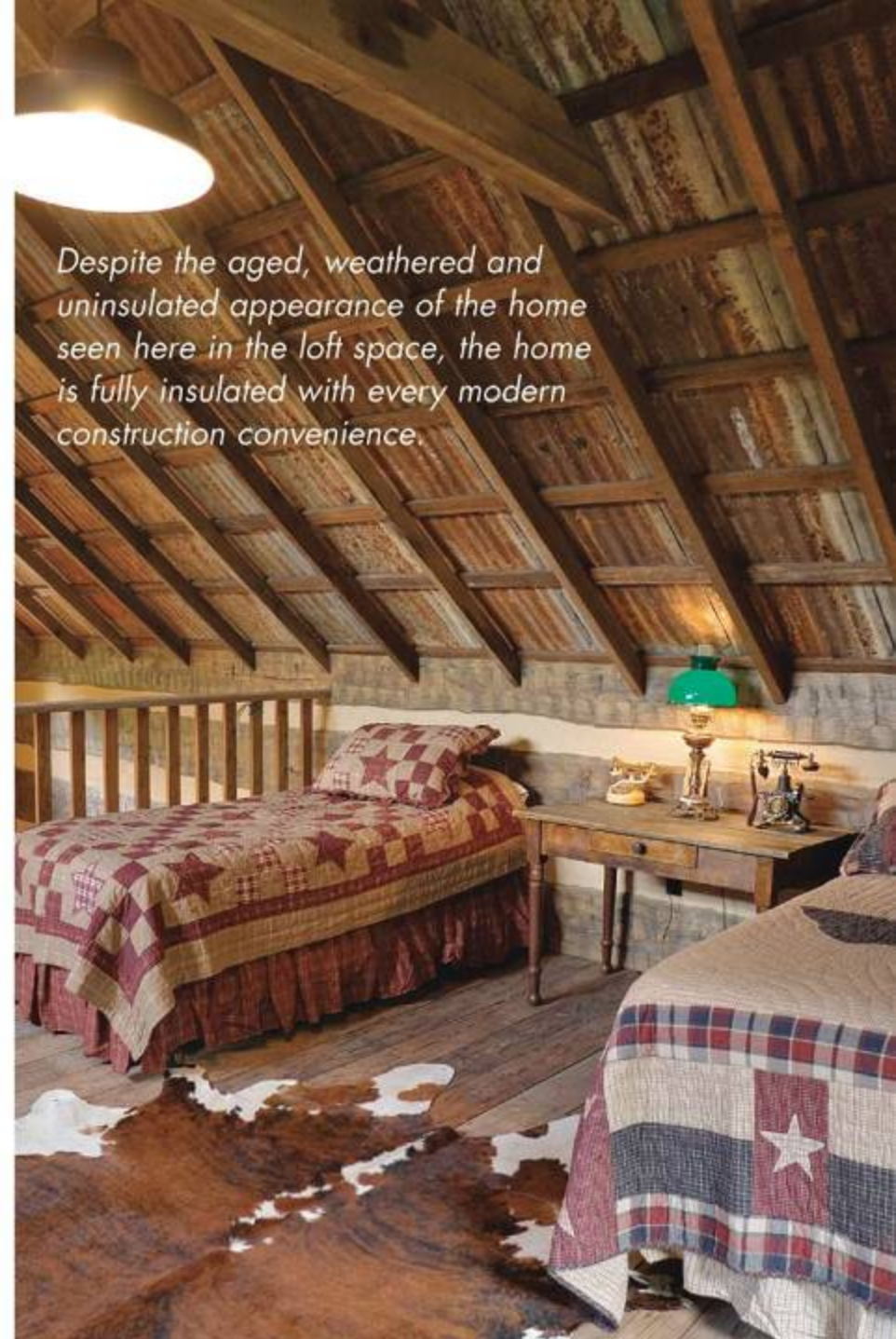
Part of the evolution was the loft area which contributes to the home's ability to comfortably sleep nine people with only one true bedroom, says Shayna Thompson, project manager. "By creating that loft we could keep all of the home's rooms open, yet it still has a quaint feel. At the same time it blends together well and doesn't make the home feel too small."

Finishing touches

The owner incurred the expense of burying electric lines three-eighths of a mile to avoid the unsightly appearance of overhead wires. For a special splash of authenticity, Laughlin worked with the owner placing boulders around the property. "We went around the 113-acre property with a Bobcat and two guys and hauled boulders half a mile back to the site. We backfilled the foundation and brought in gravel and created a berm to blend the house in with its surroundings," he explains.

All Laughlin projects are the result of teamwork. "When we meet a new client, we ask for a list of 10 things they want out of their home, whether that's a view or a certain style or whatever it might be. We interview the client and Shayna starts sketching. By the time a client leaves, we have it laid out. Then we go back and forth and finalize everything together. We'll sit with the owner for hours

Despite the aged, weathered and uninsulated appearance of the home seen here in the loft space, the home is fully insulated with every modern construction convenience.



and brainstorm to pull ideas together."

In the end, when it all comes together, it's rewarding when not only the team at Laughlin Homes & Restoration appreciates what it created, but the owner or the people delivering appliances tell them how much they love it, Thompson says. "They want to bring their wives and friends out to see our work. That makes a house special when others can see what you've put into a design." ■



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

EXTERIOR

Siding: Texas Architectural Timbers/Perma-chink
Windows: Jeld-Wen
Doors: custom

INTERIOR

Doors: salvaged
Flooring: stained concrete
Locks, Hardware: Van Dyke's Restorers/
House of Antique Hardware

KITCHEN

Cabinets: Kingwood Cabinetry
Countertops: Granite
Sinks: Kohler
Faucets: Delta
Appliances: Frigidaire
Exhaust hood: Braun
Microwave: KitchenAid

Architects and builders continue to find ways to improve themselves and their businesses. The Residential Design & Build 2009 Business Excellence Awards honor the best business practices in the custom home market. Here are this year's winners.

The 2009 Design Excellence Awards are brought to you by



GRONINGER CUSTOM HOMES

Winter Park, Fla.
groningerhomes.com

Business Administration

Project management tool streamlines data flow

After years of supervising projects themselves, the team at Groninger hired its first rookie superintendent and soon realized that changes would be necessary. Even though the firm was organized, it was discovered that information was being kept in nine different places.

"We tried a few different standardized construction management systems, but never

found one with all the answers," says Keith Groninger, AIA. "Hence, our own system has evolved into four components: a cost accounting system; the construction schedule; a hierarchy of files and templates; and a document we call JobNotes."

Cost accounting and construction scheduling software systems aren't revolutionary. Several good options are available, but Groninger felt the key to success is dependent on how the information those programs generate is organized and distributed. "Likewise, we think our use of JobNotes is innovative," he confesses.

Unique to Groninger's system is the personal website created for each new project. Each site provides an access point for clients and asso-

ciates to find project information, either from within the Groninger office or online. All related documents are stored on our office server and uploaded to the website. Daily, weekly and monthly procedures ensure all information in the JobNotes system is current. Once a project's initial setup is complete, no special skills are required to store and update project files.

"We use this as a marketing tool and we demonstrate the features to our potential customers. It also allows us to add functions that become available for our customers as their homes progress. Finally, the system allows us to apply ideas we learn from every project and use them to improve the process for the next one," Groninger explains. ▀

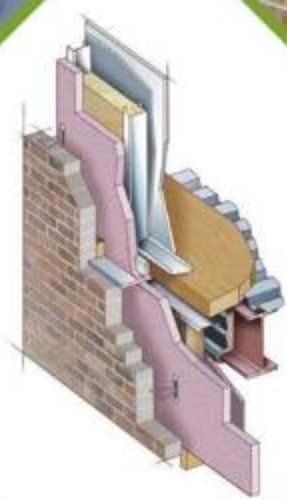
The JobNotes system created by the Groninger staff consolidates information about homes like this in one place, thereby streamlining project management.



Projects like this master bathroom are managed much more efficiently, thanks to the JobNotes system.



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**JAUREGUI ARCHITECTURE
INTERIORS CONSTRUCTION**
Austin, Texas
jaureguiarchitect.com

As a full-service design/build company with offices in Austin and Houston, Jauregui Architecture Interiors Construction provides single-source design and construction for high-end homes, as it has for more than 25 years.

Led by award-winning architect Luis Jauregui, AIA, the company brings together the expertise of architects, interior designers, builders, managers, estimating and sales/marketing professionals as a single entity. Its solid foundation derives from a strong sense of integrity and professionalism combined with a focus on exceptional client service.

Design creativity, team management, uncompromising execution and attention to detail are reflected in each of the company's unique design/build advantages. These include:

Exceptional drawings. "We consider drawings and specifications to be our contractual agreement with the client and tradesmen.

The team at Jauregui includes (counter-clockwise from the upper left): Jennie Lane; Jim Gandy; Austin Pitner; Sarah Wilson; Maria Abarck; Bethany Ferguson; Luis Jauregui, AIA, president; Susan Jauregui, vice president; Jennifer Bailey; Tracey Smith (in red plaid); Lisa Peters (stripes); Gail O'Kelly; and Jessica Schmer. Standing, far right, front to back: Lauren Youngs; Crystal Montelongo; and Lorna Gardner.



Every dimension, cabinet detail and tile layout is reflected. Construction flows smoothly and the client is happy," says Luis Jauregui, AIA.

Cost during design. Periodic cost updates are provided during the design phase so clients can make informed decisions and

sticker shock is eliminated. Construction start is immediate and 95 percent of projects convert to construction. The relaxed client is informed early about budget.

Selections during design. "Our designers lead the client in preselection of all finishes, which we cost and incorporate in highly detailed specifications. This eliminates change orders and unwelcomed cost overruns. The client has fun instead of stressing out during construction," Jauregui says.

Furnishings, too. Jauregui's designers propose a furnishings plan during design and work with the client to select and acquire furniture, window treatments and accessories. The team then installs furnishings and transitions from construction site to sophisticated interiors, and the client is overwhelmed with joy.

Exceptional execution. "We bring all of the expertise, combined with multiple layers of well-honed management, so the client doesn't have to worry about anything," he says. "The client receives lots of TLC as we continually push ourselves toward greater levels of excellence in every area of the company." ■



Beautiful high-end custom homes like this are possible thanks to Jauregui Architecture Interiors Construction's full-service design/build process.

Photos: Paul Finkel, Pison Design, pistondesign.com



CHARLES ROSS HOMES

Williamsburg, Va.
charlesrosshomes.com

Community Involvement

Conservationists and builders can get along

The mild climate, cultural and recreational opportunities in Williamsburg, Va., make it a popular retirement destination. Most newcomers choose to make their home in one of the area's master-planned communities. Unfortunately for developers and home builders, the majority of newcomers prefer to "shut the door behind them" to preserve the character of the area. Ironically, new development projects are opposed by area newcomers.

As both a conservationist and managing director of a residential design/build company, Timothy Cleary, president, Charles Ross Homes in Williamsburg, Va., believes a reasonable middle ground could be achieved between the no-growth position advocated by conservationists and minimally restricted growth supported by the development community.

Cleary was already active in the local home builders association when he joined the Williamsburg Land Conservancy (williamsburglandconservancy.org), a land trust working to protect and preserve scenic, historic and agricultural lands in Virginia's Historic Triangle. He was elected to the conservancy's board of directors in 2003, and in November 2008 was elected chairman of the board, he says.

"Throughout my tenure, I've worked both to alter the conservation community's perception of developers and to ensure the conservancy is a rational and respected voice for conservation," he says. "My efforts to bring the two groups together have produced benefits for each. The Williamsburg Land Conservancy now holds permanent conservation easements on more than 3,000 acres, and the development community can now point to a number of projects which demonstrate that progress and preservation are not mutually exclusive."

River's Bend at Uncle's Neck (riversbendva.com) is a 350-acre community that includes

more than 200 acres of open space protected by conservation easement. Immediately after the raw land was purchased in 2006, Cleary approached the developer and pitched the idea of preserving a large portion of the property and making the preservation a marketable point of difference for the community.

"By working with the Williamsburg Land Conservancy and agreeing to integrate open space in the design, the developer was able to gain widespread citizen support for the proposed development, and even a few concessions from local government during the approval process," he says. "We've shown that with thoughtful design, quality development can occur while preserving the important character of the area, and we have a model process for future developments to follow." ▀



The Charles Ross Homes management team includes: (sitting l to r) Charles Ross; Charlotte Ross; Keith Sobczak; and (standing) Tim Cleary.



One of the missions at Charles Ross Homes is to bring conservationists and home builders together in an effort to conserve land and its character while developing it in a responsible way.

Photos: Kelly Mihalcoe, kellymihalcoe.com



Systems approach to insulation

Insulation saves energy and money; green follows naturally

By Kenneth W. Betz, senior editor

Insulation, of course, is green by virtue of its energy-saving attributes, but green is not necessarily the No. 1 or only reason more and more homeowners are installing or upgrading insulation in their homes.

Saving money — by limiting dollars spent on heating and cooling and through a variety of tax credits and local incentives — is often the foremost reason homeowners will show interest in insulation.

To be sure, green is the proverbial elephant in the room. The resurrected term has gone mainstream and has engendered responses that range from skepticism — as evidenced by the term greenwashing — to hostility from those who think the issue is overrated and insist the concept of global warming is hot air or worse.

Certainly, being green and saving money will resonate with most homeowners, but architects and builders would do well to proceed carefully with the green part of their sales pitch until discovering their prospective clients' mind-set on the matter.

Nevertheless, major insulation manufacturers are seriously committed to making sure their products are competitively green. "Products that deliver green benefits have increased in importance since last year, with energy efficiency being the most important benefit," says Teresa Crosato, marketing communications supervisor, Icynene.

Green building is here to stay, she says, quoting Jason Hartke, the U.S. Green Building Council's director of advocacy and public policy, who says green building "is at the nexus of creating jobs, saving energy and saving money."

Sorting out green claims

However, shopping for green products is a growing concern for homeowners who have to search for the truth behind manufac-

Icynene LD-R-50 is an eco-conscious alternative that's made with castor oil in place of a portion of the petroleum-based polyol. The product is classified as an air barrier and is ideal for use on the underside of a roof deck to create an unvented attic assembly.

Johns Manville has two loose-fill products for different applications. Climate Pro is designed for attics, while JM Spider is a very fine, short fiber for filling walls.

turers' green product claims, Crosato says. She points out that according to the BBMG Conscious Consumer Report, "Redefining Value in a New Economy," 23 percent of U.S. consumers say they have "no way of knowing" if a product is green or actually does what it claims. But, 77 percent agree they "can make a positive difference by purchasing products from socially or environmentally responsible companies," and they are actively seeking information to verify green claims.

"A focus on retrofitting, rather than new construction, is likely to be one way in which the green building movement will continue to gain momentum," Crosato says.

"Consumers are looking for products that offer rapid payback," she says. Hot, humid climates are where clients can recoup their insulation investment by creating an unvented attic using an air-impermeable insulation, such as Icynene, to seal soffit vents and create an



attic containing indirectly conditioned space," she says.

"Because the heating and cooling equipment is often situated in the attic, creating an unvented attic design is a major way to deliver significant energy savings. By insulating the underside of the roof deck and attic walls with Icynene, duct leakage (and energy dollars) is encapsulated within the home envelope rather than escaping to the outside. Research by Building America shows that unvented attic spaces result in energy savings by as much as 50 percent," Crosato continues.

In addition to rapid payback, "homeowners are also looking for health and environmental benefits such as no harmful emissions or off-gassing," Crosato says. She notes that Icynene's latest product, Icynene LD-R-50, is a renewable-based insulation and air barrier that is 100 percent water-blown, HFC-free and PBDE-free. Made with natural castor oil, it is a healthier and more eco-conscious alternative, she says.

The castor oil used in the product requires no chemical additives, uses a low amount of

energy in its production, is grown in nonirrigated fields and is renewable, requiring less than a 10-year regrowth time frame.

Systems approach

Today, there is clearly a systems approach toward insulation, says Eric Brown, director

of marketing, CertainTeed. Creating a great acoustically insulated wall and leaving a gap under the door, he says, will negate the great acoustical wall. "Similarly, in a thermal insulation application, if you don't treat the whole wall as a system and properly air seal it — use an appropriate air barrier for the climate

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¹ Visit <http://www.irs.gov>.

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CertainTeed's InsulSafe SP is a fiberglass blowing insulation used in residential and commercial construction as a thermal and sound-absorbing insulation. It is designed for pneumatic installation in open (attic) and closed (sidewalls/floor) construction cavities.

you're in — you're going to have problems no matter what kind of insulation you use in the wall," he says.

Changes in building codes and building science over the past five to eight years have changed how vapor retarders are installed, Brown says. Depending on the geographical and climatological area, polyethylene sheets might have been used. In other areas, kraft facing was the preferred material.

CertainTeed has addressed the problem with a product especially in regions with extreme seasonal fluctuations in climate and humidity where there's no foolproof way to keep moisture from getting into a wall. MemBrain changes its permeability with the ambient humidity condition, acting like a traditional vapor retarder to protect wall cavities, but also allows closed building envelope systems to dramatically increase their drying potential with seasonal climatic changes, according to CertainTeed.

There isn't anything wildly new in the insulation business, Brown says, although he does see an increase in the popularity of spray foam. CertainTeed launched its CertaSpray foam, both open- and closed-cell, last year.

"Of course, fiberglass is the 800-lb. gorilla and owns a huge majority of the marketplace because of its cost-effectiveness and thermal performance, but spray foam has grown faster than any other product category of the past

several years," he says. One of the reasons for its popularity is that it performs two tasks at once by providing thermal protection and being an air barrier at the same time.

There are still areas of the house where you have to air seal and caulk even if you use spray foam, Brown cautions, such as base and top plates, band joists and knee walls.

Insulation and air sealing

Owens Corning, likewise, emphasizes a systems approach with its recently introduced Energy Complete insulation and air sealing system, which consists of Owens Corning's Pink fiberglass insulation — either batts or blown-in loose insulation — and Spray Foam with Flexible Seal Technology.

The sealant is particularly safe and easy to apply, says Owens Corning's Gale Tedhams. While with some foams the home must be vacated during application because of off-gassing that occurs, this is not necessary with the Owens Corning product. Installers do not need to wear the same protective gear that is required with some other foams.

"As you look at the building science around high-performing homes, it's really important to

The Pink foam-based air sealing component of Owens Corning's Energy Complete system addresses air leakage, a major cause of energy loss, to help reduce a home's heating and cooling bills.



have that good air sealing as well as adequate insulation," Tedhams says of the system.

Installers are trained and certified by Owens Corning. "We provide extensive training," Tedhams says, "to make sure that they understand how to use the system, how the machine works and where to do the sealing. We've found places in the home where it's very important to seal and which are often overlooked."

Owens Corning also provides sales and marketing tools for contractors to help them, including online information about tax credits.

In addition, Owens Corning announced it has started manufacturing zero ozone-depleting Foamular Extruded Polystyrene (XPS) rigid foam insulation. The company says the new blowing agent technology meets the requirements of the Montreal Protocol which requires the phaseout of the hydrochlorofluorocarbon 142b, an ozone-depleting compound, by January 1, 2010.

One size doesn't fit all

When it comes to insulation, one size — or one type — of insulation doesn't fit all applications. Johns Manville, for example, has two loose-fill products, Stephen Crouch, residential marketing manager, insulation systems, says. Climate Pro is designed for attics, while JM Spider is a very fine, short fiber for walls.

Recent performance tests comparing the fiberglass insulation to cellulose products were announced at the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Training Conference in Indianapolis. According to the company, JM Spider has 30 percent better airflow resistance at 2.2 lbs. per cu. ft. (pcf) than cellulose at 4.0 pcf. It achieves R-15 in a 2x4 wall at 2.2 pcf compared to an R-11.6 for cellulose at 4.0 pcf.

Speaking to the environmental aspects of fiberglass insulation, Crouch notes that a typical pound of insulation saves 12 times as much energy in its first year in place as the energy used to produce it, a ratio cited by many in the industry.

Crouch also says that JM's loose-fill insulation contains no binders or VOCs, and where binders are used they are acrylic-based and contain no formaldehyde, which helps maintain favorable indoor air quality. ■

INSULATION RESOURCES

BASF Corp.
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CertainTeed
For more info circle #10

Corbond
For more info circle #11

Dow
For more info circle #12

Icynene
For more info circle #13

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For more info circle #14

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For more info circle #19



Choosing a kitchen faucet

Faucet selection is affected by sink size and shape, client needs and many more factors

By Suzie Williford

A great kitchen faucet is like jewelry for your sink; the right one can transform utilitarian space and add pizzazz that pleases the eye. A wide range of styles, functions and finishes are available making it tricky to get it right. To begin, let's talk about a few of the basic choices in designer kitchen faucets.

The Pullout. The spray is part of the main faucet and the hose retracts into the body. It is a single-hole application and mounts well on most sinks.

The Widespread. Three holes 8-in. on center and is frequently available with a side spray that requires a fourth hole.

The Bridge. Two holes on 8-in. centers and is piped together externally. It features high design in looks and can run the gamut from Old World to high contemporary.

The Gooseneck. The high-arch spout makes a statement and those big pots are easier to fill up with this faucet.

The Wall Mount. This mounting style keeps the deck of a sink area clutter-free and can be dramatic; however one must be willing to sacrifice a side spray.

Pure Water, Instant Hot Water, Liquid Soap Dispenser. These convenience-based products have become popular because they are available in coordinating designs and finishes.

A kitchen sink area gets plenty of use and although aesthetics are an important part of the final equation, function reigns supreme. If the sink spout is too short to reach both sinks, if the sprayer is on the wrong side, if the soap dispenser is too short to reach a sink and

drips soap on the counter, if a cover plate must be used to hide unnecessary holes, or if symmetry is off or finishes don't match, it will detract from the beauty and functionality of your client's investment.

Putting the pieces together

Choosing a sink is step one of putting together a kitchen work area. Is it a drop-in or under-mount sink? Drop-in sinks have a rim and pre-drilled hole configuration that will determine where the faucet must be positioned. Sometimes the option exists of 1, 3 or 4 holes, so make your faucet selection before you commit to how many holes you need.

An under-mount sink provides flexibility of hole positioning, but each hole adds a little cost because it must be drilled out by the countertop installer. Next comes the configuration of the sink; one, two or three bowls plays a large part. If the bowls are equal size or offset, this will make a huge difference. If using a wall-mount faucet it is important that spacing between the back of the sink and the wall on which the faucet is mounted is not too far for the spout to reach the bowl.

Here are a few easy guidelines to remember when selecting and installing a kitchen faucet. The spout should be mounted as close to the centerline of the sink as possible, and if it is an offset sink it should be mounted on the divider between the bowls. The spout should be long enough to project one-third to one-half into each bowl. Any side spray should be mounted to the far side of the sink. If it's known whether the sink is being used by a right or left-hander (and you have the option) it

is a special treat to have the sprayer mounted especially for the user. The soap dispenser should be mounted on the side that will be filled up to wash dishes and have a spout that reaches into the sink.

Regarding faucet finishes, many are available. The most popular finishes are:

Chrome. A highly polished silver color that is extremely durable, easy to match and usually the most reasonably priced finish.

Satin (or brushed) Nickel. Popular because it has a soft, warm finish that coordinates well with stainless steel. This is also a durable finish and like chrome it usually is backed with a great warranty.

Polished Nickel. It has the warmth of satin nickel yet the shiny silver of chrome.

Oil-Rubbed Bronze. This finish has many names, is in the dark bronze family and has an Old World flavor. It is more difficult to match between manufacturers.

There are many wonderful kitchen faucet choices featuring designs and finishes in all price ranges. Make sure your choices line up properly with your client's needs so the faucet is as functional as it is beautiful. ■

Suzie Williford is 2009 president of the National Kitchen & Bath Association, and has served the decorative hardware and plumbing industry since 1975. An NKBA member since 1978, she has held a position on the board of directors since 2001. She is chair of the ad hoc DPH certification committee and previously chaired the finance committee. Williford is vice president, builder sales, Kiva Kitchen & Bath, Houston..



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The Pilar Pull-Down Kitchen Faucet with Touch2O Technology and Diamond Seal Technology from **Delta** is designed for a cleaner, more efficient way to work in the kitchen. With Touch2O Technology users can start and stop the flow of water with a simple tap anywhere on the spout or the handle, saving both water and energy. A magnetic closure called MagnaTite engages the spray head to its docked position. For more info circle #21

Franke has introduced its largest wide-ranging faucet line that includes traditional, transitional and contemporary faucets. Included in this launch are Franke's new Farm House Faucets for traditional kitchens and a pull-down category new to the United States with a dozen transitional and modern faucet designs. For more info circle #23



The new Woodmere pull-down faucet from **ShowHouse by Moen** features a traditional and sleek design. The single-mount design creates less clutter, making it an ideal choice for deluxe countertops. It is offered in three different finishes: chrome, LifeShine classic stainless and oil-rubbed bronze. For more info circle #24



The Jalama faucet from **California Faucets** features a spout and handles that sit atop round base rings, with optional square base rings for an angular geometric look. It is available in polished chrome, rustico bronze, mocha bronze or 24K satin gold. For more info circle #26



The Petaluma two-handle pull-down kitchen faucet from **Price Pfister** is designed with a clean, transitional look. It is offered with no deckplate for easy cleaning. It also features a ball joint spray head with a stream or spray option that allows flexible maneuvering. The faucet offers a 15½-in. total spout height for easy pot and pan clearance. For more info circle #22

The new single-control **Axor** Citterio Prep Kitchen Faucet by **Hansgrohe** features a shorter spout and a lower overall height. Intended as a secondary faucet, this prep faucet is ideal for installation on island countertops or bar sinks, while the larger Axor Citterio models handle bigger, main-sink applications. For more info circle #25



Kohler introduces an array of new finish options for its Karbon kitchen faucet. Now available in: black with polished chrome or vibrant stainless joint accents, gold with vibrant brushed gold or vibrant polished gold joint accents as well as bronze with vibrant brushed bronze joint accents. For more info circle #27

KITCHEN FAUCET RESOURCES

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KWC America
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Distinction Tile by **Trimline Building Products** is a lightweight alternative to natural tile featuring the authentic, traditional look of concrete and clay tile without the weight. The roof tile is backed by years of in-field performance and has a 50-year warranty. For more info circle #38



Follansbee KlassicKolors pre-painted, terne-coated stainless steel with Energy Star-certified Valspar solar coatings meets tax credit requirements. The corrosion-resistant cool metal roof is offered in green, red, blue, gray, tans, browns and custom colors. For more info circle #39



FusionSolar by **Custom-Bilt Metals** is a turn-key solar power system integrated into a standing-seam roof. All components, schematics and wiring specifications are included. No solar installer is required, so sheet metal and roofing pros can install it. For more info circle #41



MonierLifetile's online Energy Efficient Roof Calculator compares cost savings between concrete roof tile and traditional asphalt roofing. Find it at monierlifetile.com. For more info circle #43



Eagle Solar Roof with SolarBlend from Suntech harnesses the sun's energy while integrating seamlessly with concrete roof tile. A potential of a 30 percent federal tax credit for residential systems, state and utility rebates is possible. For more info circle #40



GAF Materials Corp. TruSlate roofing system combines hand-split slate and an installation procedure designed to produce attractive and enduring slate roofing. The slate eliminates overlapping. For more info circle #45



CertainTeed's Landmark Solaris line of solar reflective roofing shingles comply with Energy Star guidelines and are eligible for federal tax credits. A broader color palette will enable roofing contractors to offer cool roofing options without compromising aesthetics. The shingles repel the sun's rays and lower the roof's surface temperature. For more info circle #42



Tamko Building Products' Cool Colors lamarite slate composite shingles are rated by the Cool Roof Rating Council and are available in colors such as terra cotta, pale olive, cool grey, natural sand and almond shell. They are listed for impact resistance. For more info circle #44

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Versatex PVC Stealth Skirt Board is a multipurpose frieze board and starter strip engineered to help all types of sidings meet ground and masonry contact code requirements. The new 5/4-in. thick plank features an angled top ridge for the first course of fiber cement or composite siding to rest upon. This tapered edge also allows water to run off. Its PVC nature allows it to directly contact ground or masonry with no ill effects. For more info circle #31



Azek trim in both traditional smooth and rustic frontier texture is now available in a 1 1/4-in. thick trim product and a 1 1/4-in. thick cornerboard. This trim complements today's thicker siding products, giving architects, builders and contractors more design flexibility with deeper, richer shadow lines. Both product lines feature the manufacturer's Edge technology for precise sealed edges on all four sides. For more info circle #32



PVC Column Wraps by **Fypon** are designed to make installation faster and easier. The design uses a cleat that never touches the center post, allowing for flexible wrap positioning. The unique semi-assembled two-piece design of the floating wrap comes in a wide variety of styles, including fluted, raised panel, recessed panel and tapered plain. Craftsman-style caps and bases are standard with all tapered columns. For more info circle #33



MiraTec Treated Exterior Composite Trim is made from sustainable materials including 100 percent Northern hardwoods, which are a renewable resource. The wood used is of no commercial timber value and is the byproduct of other operations. This leftover wood is also detrimental to the overall vitality of the forest. No old-growth wood is used in manufacturing, and all wood comes from an area within a 200-mile radius of the production facility. For more info circle #34

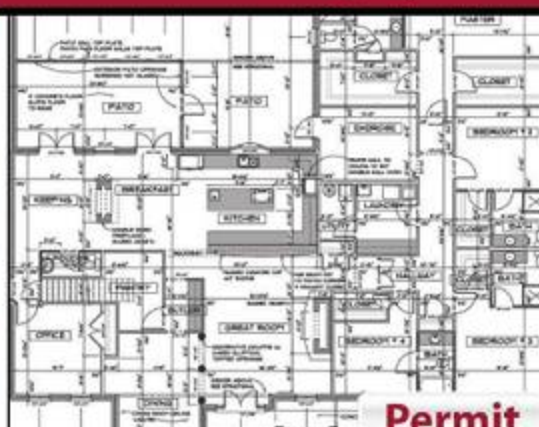
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The Allure collection of decorative trim mouldings from **Koma** is designed to complement the existing line of products while providing flexibility and versatility on the jobsite. The trim products include nine standard and four specialty profiles, and are designed to resist moisture and insects. For more info circle #35



For more info circle #36

Jeffrey Court Highlights Its New Chapter 8 Facets Collection

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2. What is NOT included?

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With some warranties, service is left to the contractor or dealer. At Milgard we handle all service claims, and work is performed by factory-trained technicians.

4. How much paperwork will you or your customers have to complete after you finish the project?

Many window companies require warranty registration after purchasing. Make it easier on your customers, and look for a manufacturer that does not require unnecessary registration.

5. Are there any hidden costs?

Make sure the manufacturer you select includes costs such as labor and shipping. Parts, shipping or labor needed to fulfill warranty work can be very costly for your business.

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A warranty is only as good as the company behind it. Milgard has been in business for nearly 50 years and we feel confident offering our extensive warranty because we build our high-quality windows to work well year after year.

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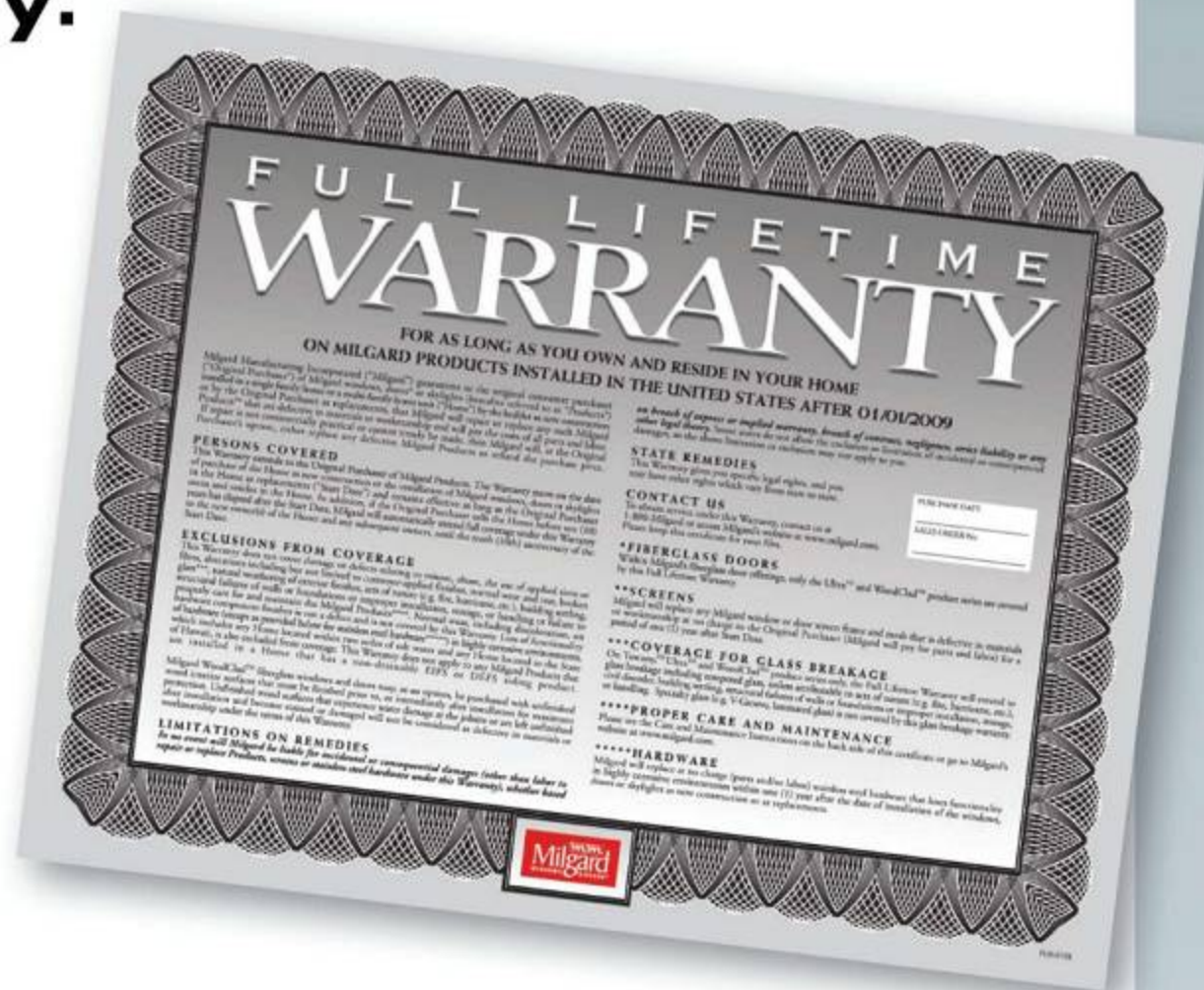
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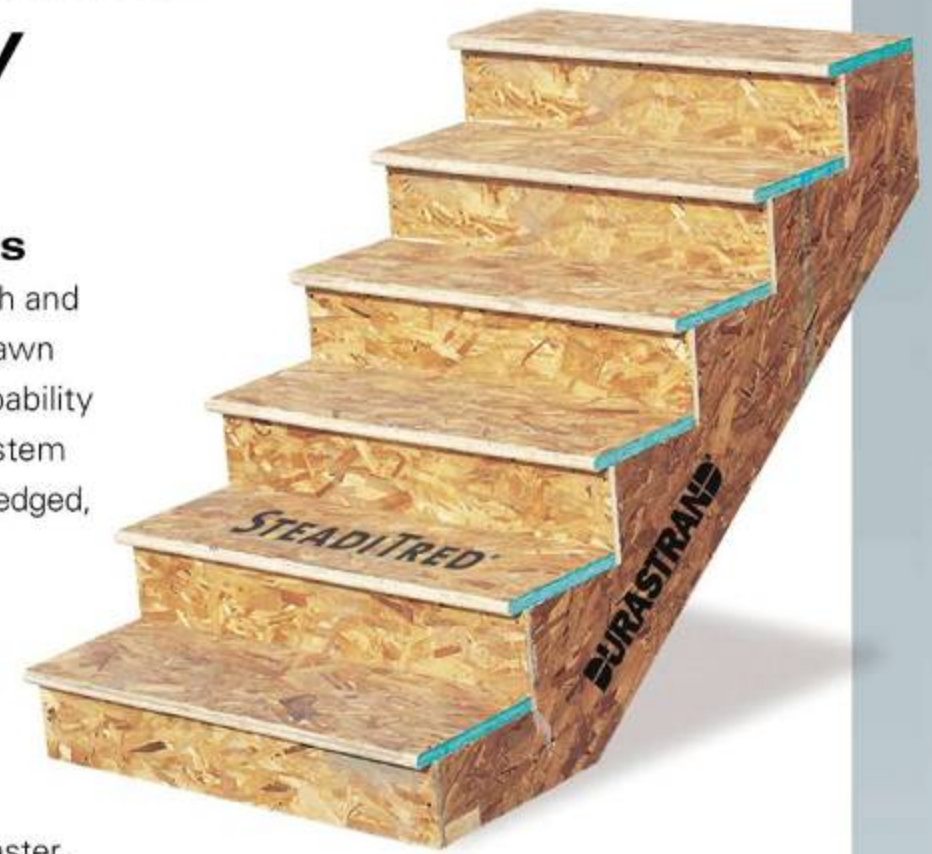
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The soft solution

PebbleFlex is a soft alternative solution for many outdoor, and some indoor, surfaces. It won't crack, fade or degrade in the sun and is soft to the touch.

PebbleFlex offers builders and architects a soft, safe surface that is UV-stable, doesn't fade, degrade, crack or shrink in the sun. The product has been around since 1994 and is installed mostly around pools and in other outdoor spaces, but also has been seen in kitchens, bathrooms and showers. Playground spaces including basketball courts are popular applications as well.

"PebbleFlex is mixed with a urethane binder which forms a chemical bond between individual pebbles, unlike urethanes mixed with rubber or recycled tires," says Frank Minutillo, managing partner, Flexible Floor Systems, Wilmington, N.C. "The benefit of a chemical bond is added strength so pieces don't fall apart. The resulting surface will not be squishy, exactly, but definitely will give a little. It's a soft feeling on the foot."

Custom colors and designs are available. Lines and patterns are not painted onto the PebbleFlex surface. Rather, they are integrated into the design using custom-colored pebbles with color that permeates 100 percent through each pebble. Any design is possible, and PebbleFlex handles the installation. Fifteen standard colors are available but custom colors are optional. "If an architect's client is a business owner who wants a company logo on a basketball court or poolside, we can do that, no problem," Minutillo says.

The surface arrives on-site in clear bags and is a pour-in-place product. Concrete on which the flexible surface is poured must cure for at least 30 days before installation. The most successful applications result from specification early in a project, and notification

to the entire design and construction team that it will be coming.

"We're trying to educate architects and builders about new and innovative ways to solve common problems that exist with current surfaces. When people see it or walk on it, they tell us this stuff is amazing. It's a good alternative to concrete because you can't customize concrete and there's no guarantee it won't crack the minute the truck backs out of the driveway. We guarantee our product for 20 years," he says.

PebbleFlex is not inexpensive, but it's designed to last. It's petroleum-based which affects cost, but it also can be recycled at the end of the lifespan. The product is made in the United States, Minutillo notes. For more information visit pebbleflex.com or circle 28 on the inquiry card. — Rob Heselbarth

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A hand is holding a magnifying glass over a white trim board. The magnifying glass is positioned over the center of the board, and the text "Finally trimboard that passes a white glove inspection." is written inside the lens. The background is a solid blue color.

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