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2008 BEST IN
AMERICAN LIVING
AWARD

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Ronald Kaplan, CEO

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february

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Photo: Richard Leo Johnson, Atlantic Archives, Savannah, Ga.

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We recognize the winners of the Best in American Living Award for a reason, and this year, it's easier than ever to implement their ideas into your homes now.

94 NUMBER CRUNCH

Guess how many entries we've received in 25 years of the Best in American Living Award: 4,500? 9,000? Keep going ...

ProBuilder.com

IT'S GREEN! IT'S HOT! It's the Green Hot Topics section of ProBuilder.com, and it's full of great products and ideas for the green homes you build. One of our readers' favorite features: the Project Green Home list, which you can tap for examples.

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Qualified Design Success

It's easier than ever to learn from the winners of the Best in American Living Award.

In today's market, builders are looking for any edge they can get. Without exception, the best edge is delivering the home experience the customer wants. We all know builders spend millions determining how to meet those needs, but often that marketing effort falls short. Ultimately, expending the serious capital necessary to develop and create a community desirable to home buyers carries such huge risks that you have to mitigate it.

What better way to mitigate that risk than to research and identify the most successful home building projects in the country. For the last 25 years, *Professional Builder* and the NAHB Design Committee have done just that through the Best in American Living Award. These design awards are unlike any residential design program because they require success in the marketplace as one of the judging criteria. It doesn't serve our audience at all for us to spotlight homes, communities and interior designs that are just pie-in-the-sky ideas without any real-world demand.

This year, we showcase the latest winners of the BALA awards both in print (see page 35) and at www.probuilder.com/bala. You can browse all the winners, collect ideas and make changes to the homes you're selling right now.

Without fail, BALA has been a predictor of the trends that are emerging in the marketplace right now. Checking out the winners can help you identify those trends, but if you'd like even more help, drop in online for a Webcast Feb. 26 at 3 p.m. EST to hear three of the judges talk about the trends from this year's judging. For more information, go to www.HousingZone.com/webcast. These judges gave the same presentation at the International Builders' Show in January, but now we're making it available to everyone.

When the forward-thinking members of the Design Committee founded BALA 25 years ago, they insisted that it carry a heavy educational component and not just be pretty pictures of pretty houses. The Webcast is only one portion of that effort. Members of the

Browse all the winners, collect ideas and **make changes** to the homes you're selling now.

design committee and NAHB staff have compiled a history of the last 25 years of design in a digital book that you can access at www.nahb.com/BALA.

Finally, I should note that this is an awards program, and the winners should be recognized and extolled for their achievements. In honor of the 25th anniversary of BALA, we created a Hall of Fame that notes those people and companies that have delivered extraordinary design, design service and execution of the design to the industry. Please check out the 10 members of the inaugural Hall of Fame on page 68. We will add new members every year.

Paul Deffenbaugh, *Editorial Director*
paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

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The Fix Housing First Coalition lobbied Congress recently to drum up support for addressing the problems in the housing industry. Past NAHB Chair Sandy Dunn (right) spoke with Republican Rep. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, asking for her support in an initiative that can help homeowners, home builders and everyone dependent on residential construction.

FIX HOUSING

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II

INSIDE

Cocooning calls to designers
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5 great land decisions [page 14]

.....

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Nesting Influences Design



The cocooning trend may be driving popular home features.

By Paul Cardis, Avid Ratings

When any crisis strikes, there's a natural inclination for people to retreat to the comfort and safety of their homes. It happened after 9/11, and it's happening again now as we muddle through the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Trends forecaster Faith Popcorn coined the term cocooning in the 1990s to explain the phenomenon of individuals' socializing less and spending more time at home. Popcorn identified cocooning as a commercially significant trend that would lead to, among other things, stay-at-home electronic shopping — and we all know how

as well as social networking.

More recently, rising fuel and food costs have made stay-at-home vacations a necessity and dining out a luxury for many people. Therefore, as builders re-engineer their homes to make them more affordable during the credit crunch, it's important they don't eliminate design features important to cocooning home buyers. Fortunately, the Third Annual "Home Design Drivers Survey," conducted by Avid Ratings, outlines the features that buyers deem must-haves — many of which speak directly or indirectly to the nesting trend.

More than 900 homeowners were surveyed via e-mail

in the survey focus on home cooking and entertaining. These include large kitchens, kitchen islands, granite countertops and energy-efficient appliances. Even a butler's pantry, a formal dining room and an outdoor cooking area were deemed "desireable."

This might seem contrary to the trend toward smaller homes. Rather, it simply means that home buyers are willing to compromise on square footage as long as it doesn't hinder their ability to play "Top Chef" at home. In fact, as more consumers stay home to cook and entertain, some retailers have reported increases in the sales of cookbooks and small kitchen appliances.

In these tough economic times, builders can't afford to build homes that don't perfectly meet the needs of new buyers. Retaining amenities that appeal to a nesting population should be a top priority. For complete findings from the Avid study, please visit www.avidratings.com. **PB**

Paul Cardis is CEO of Avid Ratings, a research and consulting firm specializing in customer satisfaction for the home building industry. You can reach him at paul.cardis@avidratings.com.

Cardis' Tips

CUT CAREFULLY.

Retain design features that speak to consumers' desire to nest.

SELL LIFESTYLE,

not products. The ability to entertain friends in style is an easier sell than the ability of a dishwasher to leave flatware spotless.

MONITOR HABITS.

Though nesting trends are leading the market now, things could change swiftly if the economy suddenly improves. Albeit, most predict an extended period of a depressed market.

Home buyers are **willing to compromise** on square footage as long as it doesn't hinder their ability to play **'Top Chef'** at home.

popular that has become.

For years, builders have appealed to new buyers with homes equipped with a range of entertainment features, from large kitchens and dining rooms to home theaters and outdoor living spaces. Meanwhile, a growth in home offices has addressed the increases in telecommuting and home-based businesses,

and asked about the importance of various design features should they suddenly find themselves in the market for a new home again. All of the survey respondents had moved into their new homes between 2005 and 2008.

With consumers rediscovering the pleasures of home, it's no surprise that many must-have features identified



To read more, visit us at www.probuilder.com

Great Land Decisions

A bad market doesn't mean bad land buys. Here's a snapshot of five land deals that worked.

By Jane Adler, Contributing Editor

IF YOU THINK GREAT LAND DECISIONS can't happen in this market, think again. It's more than possible, and as proof we've assembled five of the best.

What makes these decisions great is that they didn't just happen. Someone had the smarts to recognize an "A" location whether it had the makings of a waterfront enclave or a commuter hub.

What's also apparent is that great land decisions take a lot of backbone nowadays. It's hard to bring a vision to life; scrap a plan and start over; sell off pieces to stay afloat; or hang tough because of a once-in-a-life opportunity.

Whatever the particulars, a great land decision is where it all starts. Here are five examples.

Market Shift

Land on two canals in Florida was originally zoned for big lots and estate-style homes. The parcels were cut in half and the homes were downsized to lower prices and attract buyers.



Bradenton

Who: Developer: Camlin Home Corp.; Land planner: BSB Design, Tampa; Builder: Signature Homes, Bradenton

What: The 20-acre Bella Sole development had 18 estate-size waterfront lots that were re-platted for 37 home sites. The challenge was to reconfigure the lots around infrastructure that was already in place while maintaining water access for each home's site.

When: The land for Bella Sole was originally purchased in 1993 as part of a 400-acre deal. About 70 percent of the entire tract is built out. In January 2008, the developer decided to cut the lots at Bella Sole in half. Sales opened there in August 2008.

Where: Home sites are on two deep-water canals connected to the Manatee River in Bradenton.

Why: The developer, Camlin, had been successfully selling large waterfront estate homes at its other communities until the market turned. Camlin had tried to sell large lots at Bella Sole for a year without success.

How: Lots were cut from 95 feet wide to 45 feet wide. Homes were reduced to about 2,500 square feet from 7,000 square feet. Starting home prices fell from about \$1.5 million to the mid-\$500,000s. Homes still have high-quality design, construction and landscaping, and even after downsizing, each home still has a dock that accommodates a 70-foot boat. A model is under construction, with two sales so far and a list of 78 potential buyers.

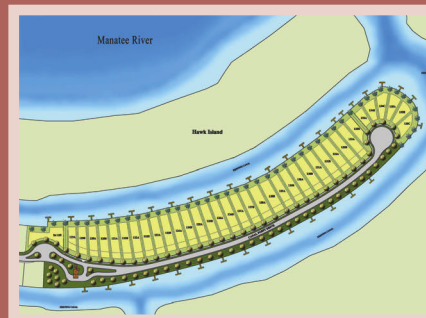
Lessons Learned: "We were able to think outside the box and do something that made more sense for the market," says developer Ken Keating at Camlin Home Corp. "People are looking for value. We were able to offer a smaller place with the same amenities as a waterfront estate."

Upside: More affordable product

Downside: Had to re-do plans

Bottom Line: Generated buyers

Illustration courtesy
BSB Design, Tampa



Bella Sole



Littleton

Brownfield to Greenfield

An environmentally troubled site near Denver was cleaned up for a new apartment complex of nine buildings and 350 apartments.

Who: *Developer: Trammell Crow Residential, Denver; Land Planner: Kephart Community Planning Architecture, Denver*

What: *Trammell Crow assembled three parcels totaling 13 acres. The main site had been occupied by an iron foundry for about 50 years. The seller cleaned the site, and Trammell Crow bought the land. Trammell Crow also purchased two small adjacent parcels so a connector road could be built to the west. The land had previously been somewhat isolated because it only had access on one side.*

When: *Trammell Crow purchased the land for \$8 million in July 2008. Construction started this past December.*

Where: *The project is located in downtown Littleton, a suburb of Denver. The area has light industrial and retail buildings. The site is situated between the two big employment hubs of downtown Denver and the Denver Tech Center.*

Why: *Trammell Crow recognized a winning location even though the land had environmental damage and poor access.*

How: *The property seller conducted the cleanup and obtained a state certification stating the land was suitable for any use. Trammell Crow did its own soil testing after the cleanup and found no hazards. The company also bought an environmental insurance policy in case residents make claims in the future.*

Lessons Learned: *"This property had a lot of challenges," says Scott Nguyen, managing director at Trammell Crow Residential. "Other developers looked at it and couldn't make it work. But we did."*

Upside: *Untapped location*

Downside: *18-month entitlement process*

Bottom Line: *Property value boosted*



Photo courtesy Trammell Crow Residential, Denver

Alexan Downtown Littleton

Ute Lake Ranch

Demographic Play

A sweeping site in northeastern New Mexico with a huge, one-of-a-kind lake is being transformed into a resort community for baby boomers and their kids.



Photo courtesy Wilkinson Brown, Manitou Springs, Colo.

Who: Developer: Carma Developers, Denver; JV Partner: Ute Lake Ranch Partnership; Land Planner: Nuszer Kopatz Urban Design Associates, Denver; Builder: Resort Custom Builders, Centennial, Colo.

What: The 25,000-acre site features a 13-mile long lake — an unusual asset in the desert West. Water and electric service had to be brought to the site. The first phase of 900 acres includes a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, a marina and 800 home lots. Positioned as an affordable resort community, Ute Lake Ranch features detached homes on the golf course from \$400,000 to the mid-\$600,000s.

When: Carma bought a 50 percent interest in phase one for \$10 million in August 2007. The developer made its purchase after the entitlement process was finished, saving Carma about three years of work with local officials. Sewer and electric service should be complete in early February. The first 180 lots; sewer and water; nine holes of the golf course; and a temporary club house should also be finished by then.

Where: About five hours from Denver and 90 miles from Amarillo, Texas. Tucumcari, N.M., on old Route 66 is about 20 miles away.

Why: The lake is a big draw for empty-nesters and families seeking a remote getaway with a desert feel. The site offers fishing, water skiing, golf, horseback riding and mountain biking.

How: After several banks backed out of construction loans because of the weak market, Carma invested \$30 million of its own equity to improve the land. Though it's a big investment, the property won't be taken back by a lender.

Lessons Learned: "This property comes along at the right time from a demographics standpoint," says Tom Morton, senior vice president at Carma in Denver. "Baby boomers are looking for places like this."

Upside: Exceptional water amenity

Downside: Today's weak market

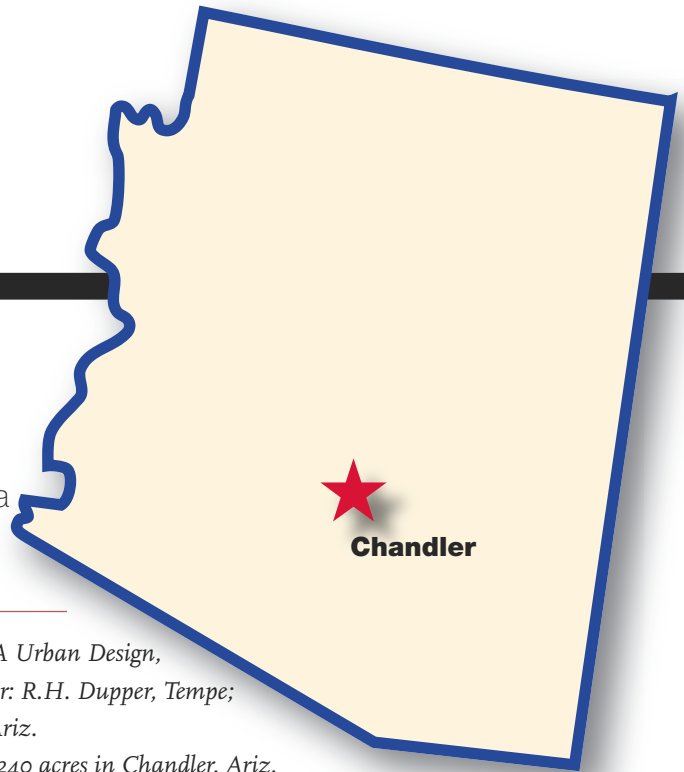
Bottom Line: A long-term play



Tucumcari

Slow and Steady

A wise land purchase years ago provides a regular flow of development with good margins.



Who: Developer: T.W. Lewis, Tempe; Land planner: LVA Urban Design, Tempe; Engineer: Sage Engineering, Phoenix; Landscaper: R.H. Dupper, Tempe; Grading contractor: Rummel Construction, Scottsdale, Ariz.

What: T.W. Lewis is developing the Valencia project on 240 acres in Chandler, Ariz.

The land price was negotiated seven years ago, and Lewis has been slowly building out the project, which has 405 lots in six gated subdivisions. The lots are large by Phoenix standards at about 70 feet by 130 feet. Valencia has about 290 single-family homes to date. Prices start at about \$650,000.

When: The land cost was negotiated in 2002 before prices skyrocketed. The actual closing took place in December 2004 after final engineering and plat approvals were in place.

Where: Chandler, Ariz., a Phoenix suburb

Why: During the building boom of 2004-05, Lewis decided to restrict the number of homes sold per month. This was done to make sure the homes were built with quality and also to conserve the land supply. Lewis made a strategic decision not to chase land deals but to methodically work what it already had. For three years, the company didn't buy land.

How: The final land purchase in 2004 came in at \$78,500 per acre. Comparable land at the height of the boom sold for \$375,000 an acre. Lewis plans to build about 30 homes at Valencia this year.

Lessons Learned: "Our land costs are still well under today's prices," says Pat Adler, vice president of purchasing acquisitions and development at T.W.Lewis. "Everyone was paying crazy amounts for land. But there was no reason to move with such speed."

Upside: Low land costs

Downside: Fewer homes built

Bottom Line: No unnecessary risk

Photo courtesy
T.W. Lewis, Tempe, Ariz.



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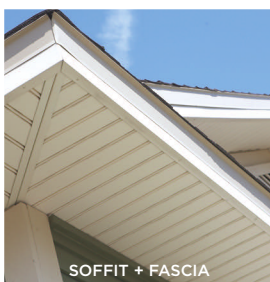
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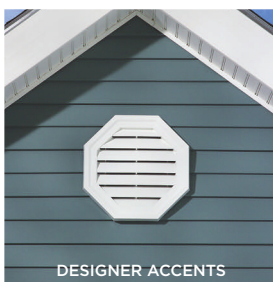
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The 'Vision' Thing

A master-planned community is being created on 2,000 acres on east side of Austin, Texas — a growth area in a fairly good market.



Who: Developer: Taurus of Texas, North Richland Hills, Texas; Land planner: Nuszer Kopatz Urban Design Associates, Denver; Engineering: Bury + Partners Engineering Solutions, Austin, Texas; Drenner & Golden Stuart Wolff attorneys, Austin, Texas; Consultants: Insight Real Estate Strategies, North Richland Hills, Texas

What: Whisper Valley will have 7,500 residential units, including single-family detached homes, attached homes and rental apartments. Average home prices will be about \$200,000. Selected builders can buy land or finished lots. The property will also feature 2 million square feet of office and retail space. Buildings will be clustered in a series of high-density villages with connecting open space and walking trails.

When: Taurus of Texas purchased the land in 2005. The land plan is currently being finalized. Infrastructure building should begin in six months to a year. Home building starts in 2010.

Where: Property sits about eight miles from downtown Austin along new state highway 130. This parcel represents the first major development on the east side of the fast-growing city.

Why: The city of Austin has designated the east side along the new highway as a preferred development area. Most of the city's growth has previously taken place to the north and south. The west side sits on aquifers, which have made development there expensive and difficult.

How: A year-long entitlement process has included weekly meetings with a team of city planners. A special property improvement district had to be created to help fund the \$100 million infrastructure package.

Lessons Learned: "The city's vision was similar to our own," says Douglas Gilliland, president at Taurus of Texas. "We took our vision and the city's and melded that together and came out with a plan that works for us and the city."

Upside: Growth market

Downside: Highly complex

Bottom Line: Worth the effort

Photo courtesy Insight Real Estate Strategies, North Richland, Texas



Whisper Valley



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SALES DNA

David Miles' career spans two decades, and he's won numerous local, national and international creative awards. The president of Denver-based Miles Strategic DNA (formerly Milesbrand) says it's time for builders to move beyond "heartless, inventory-driven communication that devalues our product and our brands."

"It's time to reconnect with people on an emotional level, get them re-excited, re-engaged with the value – the pleasure and excitement – of owning their own home."

Photo: Howard Sokol

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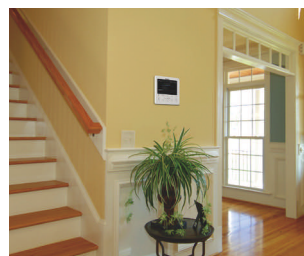


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[SALES & MARKETING]

How to Compete with Foreclosures



Don't be defensive when discussing the value of new homes versus short sales, or foreclosures.

By John Rymer, New Home Knowledge

A fact of life for new home sales professionals in 2009 is that 40 percent of home sales in many markets are not builder sales nor homeowner resales, but homes that are lost to short sales, or foreclosures. The first reaction of many new-home sales professionals is to become defensive when discussing or comparing their new homes to lender-owned housing.

But for the true new-home sales professional, that scenario is often one of the best ways to show value in the new home you're offering. So let's begin with the key differences

between a new home and a short sale: real-estate agent, who passes long information to the lender's representative, who passes long the information to the special assets manager, who passes the information along to the loan committee. As no one has ownership in the process or knows what the final agreement will look like, there is ample opportunity for bad or misleading information to be provided throughout the process.

2. Builders value home buyers' time. New-home sales offices are filled with customers who spent months working with on a short sale, thinking they had a deal

3. Builders value quality. Remind them, "We wouldn't provide a comprehensive warranty if we didn't believe in our quality."

4. Frustrated homeowners often leave "surprises." The experience of losing a home to foreclosure is not pleasant. Angry homeowners often leave surprises to get back at the lender, but the new homeowner is the one who must deal with the problems.

There is a story I like to tell about short sales: *"It's like deciding how to travel from Atlanta to Los Angeles. Some folks will work really hard to get the lowest price on a non-stop airline. We call them new home buyers. Others will hear about a deal at the bus station that promises the lowest price to Los Angeles but offers no guarantee on how many stops, when you might arrive or how much you will pay in other fees by the time you get there. I don't know about you, but I'm taking the plane."* **PB**

John Rymer is the founder of New Home Knowledge, which offers sales training for new home builders and real-estate professionals. You can reach him at john@newhomeknowledge.com.

Comparing **short sales** or **foreclosure** to your own business is often one of the best ways to show value in a new home.

only to learn their offer had been rejected by the lender. Sixty percent of top general Realtors in a recent survey responded by saying they would no longer work with short sales because they had no assurance they could get a deal executed. Not only is it time consuming, but it postpones the buyer's becoming a homeowner.

1. Builders value customer satisfaction. Builders value your satisfaction and are the decision makers. If they provide erroneous or misleading information, their reputations are ruined and their company will surely fail. In the case of foreclosures, you often deal with a daisy chain of a general

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frustrated homeowners often leave "surprises." Their anger becomes your problem when you move in.



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3 Pros Weigh In

We got three top sales experts talking about tips, closings and what salespeople can do now to improve sales — and they didn't always agree.

By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director



BOB SCHULTZ (TOP), MIRM, Fellow, New Home Sales Specialists, Boca Raton, Fla.; **BONNIE ALFRIEND**, MIRM, Fellow, Alfriend Sales & Marketing Solutions, Pebble Beach, Calif.; **RICK HEASTON**, MIRM, Touchpoint Selling, Greenwood Village, Colo.

Professional Builder

held a one-hour discussion with three leading sales consultants, and what they said is **worth a listen**. A highlight of the discussion follows, but you can also hear the entire one-hour conversation, which fleshes out their thoughts and insights, at www.probuilder.com.

{Professional Builder} Bonnie Alfriend, you're talking to builders, and you're seeing all kinds of things. What are the biggest mistakes they can overcome immediately?

{Bonnie Alfriend} The one that comes to the top of my list is seeing so many builders joining the panic and pandemonium of discounting and "Let's Make a Deal." We all know it is driven by fear and, of course, panic. They have gotten caught up in the frenzy of desperation.

Many of us have lost control. Certainly of our profits and control of our business — kind of lost the sense of self, if you will. Discounting has not increased sales or we would not have the inventories out there that we have.

{PB} Rick Heaston, are you seeing the same kinds of things with discounting or are you seeing some other mistakes out there?

{Rick Heaston} Bonnie is absolutely correct. I looked at the question

in terms of salespeople. What I noticed is that salespeople are panicking a bit. They're selling discounts rather than the products or the community. The discount becomes the product. And they're actually selling that when people walk in the door.

The other thing is that if somebody is going to give you \$400,000, they have to be able to justify that. The third thing is the lack of deep discovery. We find out what someone's after and then immediately go into a presentation about why they should buy our product.

{PB} Bob Schultz?

{Bob Schultz} I have suggested for years and years and years that as builders we should not think we are in the real-estate business; we must think we are the retail business. I suggest that discounting is bad because discounting simply says, "My price once was 250; now it's 200. I was overpriced to begin with." It also says that 200 discounted price is the new point of beginning for the person that wants to deal.

We suggest that an incentive is a better term to use — even though it may be a discount — because an incentive is an incentive only if the buyer has to do something by a certain date or time.

The biggest mistake I see builders make is about their inventory. They come up with a number — say 20 percent — then discount everything 20 percent. Why would you want to take 20 percent off the best inventory you have?

{PB} All three of you have mentioned panic. It seems to have seeped into the culture of sales teams and builders. How do managers overcome the panic in their sales forces?

{Schultz} You've got to take a step back and assess where you are in your marketplace. Then you've got to have a significant insight into how you are positioned in terms of your competition.

Builders also have got to be willing to be unreasonable. I see builders still refusing to make some of the changes they need to make, whether it's reducing their overhead or clustering sales centers together.

{PB} They're afraid to make these hard decisions?

{Schultz} Well, yes. Fear, panic, whatever it is. You just don't walk into your bank and say, "I can't make my payment." You've got to go into them with a plan, and in order to have a plan, you've got to know where you are in the market, how are you going to compete, and you've got to know how you're going to do it better than anyone else. That often gets down to the people you have in your sales organization.

{PB} Rick, there are a lot of people in this industry who have never seen anything like this in their lives.

{Heaston} I think Bob's 100 percent right as far as the research. As far as sales are concerned, I think it falls on management's shoulders. You have to start with a process guide that says what a particular strategy means, why they want to accomplish that and the techniques they use. That's coaching. Managers today really have to get out in the field.

{PB} Bonnie, are you with us still?

{Alfriend} I am. I wanted to start back a little bit with the sales manager's most important job, and that is recruiting and getting the best team. Unfortunately, we're going to have to replace any weak links. Selling new homes is hard work, and everybody must be ready, willing to do the right things now. That's not always the case.

{PB} I thought the weak links would have been gone by now.

{**Alfriend**} No. They are not.

{**Schultz**} I'll double ditto that.

{**Alfriend**} I'm amazed that they still have some very weak links controlling the whole thing. There're some great sales champions out there without jobs. To me, it's absolutely inexcusable for management to be still holding on to someone who is not teachable, who is still doing the same things.

{**PB**} What's the biggest complaint you're seeing from the ground up, from the salespeople?

{**Alfriend**} I don't know if you want to know this, but they're saying our prices need to go down. It's interesting to me how people panic when there's no traffic. You don't want 200 people at the shop. You want one person every hour and half. That's qualified.

{**PB**} Bob, would you agree? Is that what you're seeing as well?

{**Schultz**} I see the same things Bonnie sees. Unfortunately, it's not the salespeople's fault. When the market was hot, if you just showed up and didn't screw up, you could make a lot of sales. Then because of grossly improper compensation process, far too many new home salespeople were equating the size of their paychecks with their skill. So they carried around an attitude. We call it an attitude of entitlement. Now this is not all salespeople, but it's a lot of them.

I'm a firm believer in recruiting people who have no new home sales experience or minimal — that have experience selling things that are a lot tougher to sell and where they make a lot less money because they have an attitude of excitement.

In today's market, I could care less what their traffic is. If they have some traffic, they don't have a traffic problem.

{**Alfriend**} Right.

{**Schultz**} People are not coming out today in Indianapolis because they've got nothing else to do with their time. They're coming because they have an interest or they have a need or combination of both. Conversion ratios today are equal to if not greater than they were in some instances when the market was hot.

{**PB**} Rick, that makes sense to me. Do sales people recognize what a qualified lead is anymore?

{**Heaston**} You have to think about today's visitor. If somebody shows up today, they have an agenda. If we want them back, we've got to have the best sales process.

Second part of that is that today's customer is more knowledgeable and, unfortunately, more confused. They trust us less. Our sales process has to follow the customer's decision process. There has to be a tangible benefit for them spending time with you.

{**PB**} What kind of value-add can a salesperson offer?

{**Heaston**} We show them how to compare a floor plan. We show them how to define what a perfect decision might look like. We show them how to justify that decision. We're adding value to their visit. We're just not making a presentation and trying to make a sale. We're different.

{**PB**} Bob, Rick's describing this idea of building a level of trust. Is that the most important characteristic of a salesperson?

{**Schultz**} I think it has always been one part of it. The challenge I find with that is to try to build an entire sales process or philosophy around that idea. The simple fact is the smart salesperson today has to have high energy, has to be

a rather persuasive individual.

We teach to ask the question, "How long have you folks been looking for a new home?" If the person tells you they don't like looking and have been doing it for 3 weeks, we want the salesperson's radar to go up and say, "If I can put everything together, there is a possibility of a sale today."

They have to trust us but not in the absence of asking for the sale.

{**Heaston**} I tend to disagree. I stated four or five things salespeople must do. If you show them what to look for, you're differentiating. If you show them how to judge a floor plan, you're gathering information to close.

{**Schultz**} That's your presentation skills.

{**Heaston**} If you show them how to define what perfect means to them, you're building value. You're preventing them from going home and deciding on their own. You're closing. So actually, what you're doing has nothing to do with trust. It has everything to do with making the sale. What better thing could you do in today's market?

{**Schultz**} I've been doing that for 40 years. I get it. I understand that.

{**PB**} Bonnie, I'm going to let you jump in here.

{**Alfriend**} You asked where in the sales process do we see the biggest breakdown. I'm going to say the word "closing." Kathy Kelly, president of Personnel Profiles, Boulder, Colo., breaks down the performance of salespeople into categories of approach, qualify, demo, close, presentation and the general attitude. The lowest of all of the categories have always been the closing.

I've been doing surveys with Realtors doing both new and resale homes. In every single incident the answer was, "Buyers are in a wait-and-see mode. The



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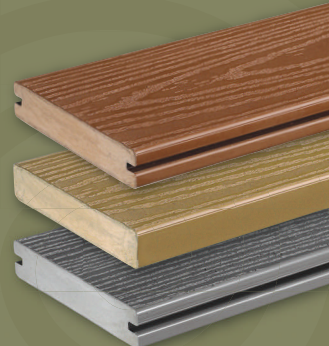
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long process from looking to making a decision is the thing that is keeping the market slow."

That says to me that consumers need assistance in making a decision.

{Schultz} What are some of the phrases you have taught salespeople to use that, in politeness, is a closing question?

{Alfriend} When we're out on the veranda and they say, "Wow. This is a great setting," I'm going to turn around and say, "So it seems to me you like this setting. Is that correct? Let's make it yours today." Any time they have any positive, they are saying they like that part, so we sell the veranda. We sell the living room. Does this make sense?

{Schultz} They're going to say yes or no and if they say yes, you move forward. If they say no, it's an objection.

{Alfriend} It's an objection, and we want to know that before they leave so we can clear that.

{Schultz} Rick, what do you mean when you say there's too much proof that asking for the sale doesn't work?

{Heaston} I really believe in closing, but I think we have to go back and say, "How do we make closing easy." All the things that happen prior to asking for the sale is where we fall down

{Alfriend} We do fall into bad habits. Bob had said earlier that he is seeing so many closing ratios up. Salespeople lose control of the presentation. That process is so critical, but they let the buyer have their own process.

It's tough. They're out there by themselves, and that's the coaching you talked about, Rick. The people are coming to eliminate, not to include. People want to see your prices and houses. If you know all of that, the presentation has to start with, "I bet you came for all of

our price points, our pricing strategies; we're going to get into that but first let me tell you a little bit about ourselves."

{Schultz} What I find more often than not is salespeople who don't close at all. We see people who close too soon, but it's far easier to rein in the thoroughbred than it is to get an old nag to run the Kentucky Derby.

{PB} Rick? Give me your final word on the closing issue.

{Heaston} Actually, I don't believe in fear of closing. I have to go back to say that we as an industry have to work harder in making closing easier.

{PB} Bonnie, we started with you. You get the final word.

{Alfriend} I want to make sure that when the presentation is over, the salespeople can look back and identify specific questions that demand a yes or no answer. A lot of times people think they're closing when they say, "You know, \$10,000 will hold this for you."

{Schultz} "Is this the home you'd like to own?"

{Alfriend} Absolutely.

{Schultz} "Yes or no?"

{Alfriend} Right. Make sure we do ask questions, and they must be a yes or no answer. **PB**



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GOOD WOODWORK

Canadians will appreciate these kitchen cabinets. Each knob is inset with a copper maple leaf – a polished Canadian penny – in a whimsical tribute to the homeowner's heritage. Made of cherry wood, the small drawers resemble those in an apothecary cabinet. The square pegs are also cherry and appear darker because of the exposed grain. Bensonwood Homes of Walpole, N.H., built the home and crafted the cabinets.

Photo: Jamie Salomon

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INSIDE

The 2008 Best of American Living Award winners [page 35]

A nod to BALA Hall of Fame inductees [page 68]

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Professional Builder and the NAHB Design Committee present the winners of the housing industry's most prestigious design competition.



2008 BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING AWARD

BALA

35

For the past 25 years, the staff of *Professional Builder*, the members of the NAHB Design Committee and a select group of judges have had the privilege of viewing some of the finest examples of residential design in the country. Literally thousands of homes and communities have been submitted for our approval. The winners serve as a barometer for what Americans are looking for in homes of all sizes, types and price ranges.

What's interesting about a long-running competition like the Best in American Living Award is that one can look back over a quarter of a century and track major trends — some timeless, others that quickly fall by

the wayside. From one year to the next, of course, there are no such dramatic changes, but we can pinpoint subtle shifts, the return of discarded trends and the birth of new ones. As the saying goes, the changes are evolutionary, not revolutionary.

This year, the BALA judges identified seven major trends:

- Outdoor living spaces continue to evolve.
- Modern/contemporary design elements, materials and forms are more prevalent.
- Fresh solutions to multi-story design are emerging, especially in urban areas.
- More attention to details and materials provides visual interest.

■ Well-appointed floor plans have a good balance of public/private spaces.

■ Architecture with an authentic style and character is still popular.

■ Massive windows, floor-to-ceiling glass and rustic materials help bring the outdoors in.

In addition to the Home of the Year — a wonderful rendition of Southern vernacular architecture — and Room of the Year, we've broadened the scope of BALA by introducing two new awards: Community of the Year and the Emerald Award for best sustainable design. In the following pages, you'll discover what struck a responsive chord with the 2008 BALA judges.



[BEST IN SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION]

[BEST ONE-OF-A-KIND, CUSTOM-BUILT HOME, 4,001 TO 6,500 SQUARE FEET]

Southern Accents

This South Carolina residence is a graceful interpretation of Lowcountry architecture: beautifully detailed, but not overdone.

By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

It's decidedly simple and true to its roots. Not a "Gone with the Wind" plantation but a laid-back, Lowcountry design, this home in Bluffton, S.C., earned the highest accolade from the 2008 Best in American Living Award judges: Home of the Year. As one judge noted, "You'd never get tired of driving up to this house and walking in."

The homeowners, a couple from London, England, are active adults who were looking for a second home in the United States. They decided to build in Palmetto Bluff, a conservation community located on an island between Hilton Head Island, S.C., and Savannah, Ga. The mild climate and coastal views promote a casual lifestyle that is expressed in homes with generous verandas, open interiors and ample windows.

Wayne Windham of Wayne Windham Architect in Johns Island, S.C., says the husband travels to the States frequently on business and is also an avid golfer. Consequently, Windham made sure the home had views of the community's Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course.

The owners, says Windham, wanted a home where the outside came in and the regional architec-

tural style blended with their furnishings, which are more minimalist than traditional. "Our goal was to create a crisp, clean, open-plan home, flooded with light, within a development where the exterior is required to be of a relaxed Southern vernacular architecture," he says.

To minimize its impact on the site, the 4,691-square-foot home is broken up into three smaller buildings: main house, garage (with guest apartment above) and guest house. Breaking a larger structure into smaller components also prevents it from looking like a sprawling mansion, which Windham wanted to avoid.

The garage is connected to the main house by a covered walkway, while the guest house stands alone, nestled between large pine trees. The three buildings are oriented so



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Palmetto Bluff Retreat

Location: Bluffton, S.C.

Designer/Architect: Wayne Windham Architect, Johns Island, S.C.

Builder: J.T. Turner Construction, Savannah, Ga.

Photography: Richard Leo Johnson, Atlantic Archives, Savannah, Ga.



as to create a private, wooded courtyard.

Faithful to their stylistic origins, the one- and two-story buildings are composed of simple gable forms. “In response to the Lowcountry environment, there are some very large, bracketed overhangs protecting the house from the rain,” Windham says. The overhangs are also green: they reduce summertime heat gain in the great room, which faces west and is almost all glass.

Built to code for a hurricane zone, the home is on a raised foundation with impact-rated windows and shear walls, notes Richard Young of J.T. Turner Construction, Savannah, Ga.

Contrast of dark and light

The BALA judges observed that the interior spaces are a good contrast of dark and light colors. This is most evident in the great room, where dark stained wood ceiling trusses complement white walls

ABOVE LEFT: Decorative ceiling trusses in the great room form a striking ladder design. **ABOVE RIGHT:** To humanize its scale and reduce site impact, the home was designed as three buildings grouped around a private courtyard. **OPPOSITE:** Muted exterior colors pick up the tones of nearby tree trunks.

and a stone fireplace. Indeed, the great room is the centerpiece of the L-shaped main house: a 35-by-19-foot space that extends out from the kitchen and breakfast room. Both Windham and Young say this room is their favorite place in the house.

“We’ve got light coming in because it’s only a single-room-wide entertainment area,” says Windham. “The combination of stained and painted wood really stands out well, especially with all the glass.”

To permit insect-free enjoyment of the outdoors, there are two screened porches: one off the great room and another off the kitchen with a built-in grill area for outdoor dining. The great-room porch has its own oyster shell tabby fireplace.

Also located on the first floor of the main house are a study, secondary bedroom suite and laundry room. An elevator core was roughed in to accommodate the owners’ future needs.

Upstairs is the master suite and another bedroom with private bath. A deck off the master bedroom overlooks one of the golf course’s fairways. The room also has a fireplace and window seat, providing a snug retreat on cool, wet days.

This home is being recognized as Home of the Year because it fits so well within its natural environment and is consistently well detailed, inside and out. Most of all, it lives the way people want to live today. To our minds, there’s no better way to express what BALA is all about.



[BEST URBAN SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY]

Scholarly Smart Growth

A community on the upswing and snappy architecture are brought to the forefront by Domus.

By Nick Bajzek, Products Editor

Conceived as an urban courtyard building that opens up and engages the community, Philadelphia's University Park has a new infill project in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania: Domus. The project integrates residential space with commercial uses and an impressive amount of public recreational land.

The buildings are broken up into three distinct outdoor rooms that transform from fully public to semi-private and private areas. Residences include amenities such as bamboo wood floors, white membrane roofing and private courtyards. Residents can also enjoy artist Dennis Oppenheim's "Wave Forms" out-

door sculpture.

"The three most striking things were that it was mixed use, infill and redevelopment of a blighted area," says Best in American Living judge and NAHB Land Use Planner Edward A. Tombari, AICP. University City in Philadelphia, where it's located, had a lot of under-utilized buildings and spaces, and it was also a high-crime area. Domus is part of the university's larger project to change that.

The greatest challenge of the eight-story project was designing the facades for use with a new thin precast system. Luis Bernardo, principal of Design Collective in Washington, D.C., says "The color technique we used in the mix gives it warmth and a texture-like brick. It's much more contemporary. As the building rises, it changes texture to a darker, almost gray finish. When it hits the courtyards it's more of a buff, almost limestone finish."

Principal Michael Goodwin says the firm had not previously used a thin precast system. In the case of

the Domus, instead of 6-inch heavy precast studs being hung off the structural columns and slabs with a separate 6-inch metal stud exterior wall, a 2-inch thin precast panel was fabricated to a 6-inch metal stud system, and the entire assembly lifted into place. The developer chose this system over brick or even conventional heavy precast due to speed in erection; the project had to be completed in one winter, not two.

It also didn't hurt any that the project is a mile from the central business district, one block away from a subway station and along a major pedestrian path.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Domus

Project Location: Philadelphia

Designer/Architect: Design Collective, Baltimore

Builder: The Hanover Co., Houston

Developer: The Hanover Co. and Metlife, Houston

Land Planner: Design Collective, Baltimore

Photographer: LaCasse Photography, Denver

[BEST SPECIALTY ROOM IN A HOME, 4,001 SQUARE FEET AND OVER]

Ibiza in Transition

This outdoor living room is an impressive transitional style full of Spanish Andalusia influences, minus the heavy elements. It's outdoor living at its best.

By Nick Bajzek, Products Editor

Open and free-flowing. You can't tell where the inside ends and the outdoors begin in this stunning outdoor living room. But it's as functional as it is beautiful — a natural pick for our judges for the Room of the Year accolade. The initial inspiration, says the project's architect, Phil Kean of design/build firm Phil Kean Designs, was to create a transitional Spanish/Andalusian home that incorporated clean lines with dramatic textural contrasts.

Evidence of this is in the floor plan itself. "The dramatic 3- by 3-

foot royal oyster marble laid in the classic running bond pattern was a nod to traditional Spanish architecture," says Rob Turner, interior designer and head of CRT Studio in Winter Park, Fla. "The proportions of the rooms were perfect for casual entertaining. They allowed plenty of space for large groups to gather and have plenty of seating," he says.

Outside is much more traditional. The duo treated the pool almost like a fountain to create a courtyard concept, which many of Phil Kean homes feature. Inside you see more transitional elements. The main lighting piece in the central "indoor" area looks more like a classic candelabrum, just more skeletal and modern. The Anodized aluminum, stainless steel and frosted glass chandeliers emphasize the transitional/contemporary feel the homeowner sought. "We used the same colors and materials inside and out. It's furnished with exterior furniture that has an interior look. And the interior furniture isn't as fragile-looking, so there's a less ob-

vious transition," says Kean.

Kean and Turner work together frequently. "During planning and construction I worked closely with his team to insure seamless connections between architecture and interior design," says Turner. "The clients really wanted something different, and Phil and I like to push the envelope. I was interested in doing a home that was something of a crossover."



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Ibiza Outdoor Living Room

Project Location: Winter Park, Fla.

Designer/Architect/Builder: Phil Kean Designs, Winter Park, Fla.

Interior Designer: CRT Studio, Winter Park, Fla.

Photographer: Michael Lowry Photography, Clermont, Fla.

ROOM OF THE YEAR



[BEST IN NORTH ATLANTIC REGION]

[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOME, 3,001 TO 4,000 SQUARE FEET]

Caped Crusader

Residence One at Five Lanterns offers a new spin on the classic Cape Cod style. The home fits into its New England surroundings while seamlessly blending indoor and outdoor living. Designed for affluent empty nesters, Residence One is decked out with high-end finishes and touches of Old World charm, as in the brick-lined great room with its wood ceiling beams and white oak floors.

Central to the home are the great room, kitchen and breakfast room. These connect to various outdoor spaces including a covered, octagonal living room with golf course views; a private enclosed courtyard with spa area; and a summer kitchen that opens to the courtyard via sliding barn doors.

Upstairs is a traditional sleeping porch surrounded by windows that offer treetop views. A guest casita above the garage, equipped with a mini kitchen, is accessed by a separate entry from the courtyard.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Five Lanterns at The Pinehills

Location: Plymouth, Mass.

Designer/Architect: Scheurer Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

Builder: The Green Co., Newton Centre, Mass.

Interior Designer: Color Design Art, Culver City, Calif.

Developer: The Green Co., Newton Centre, Mass.

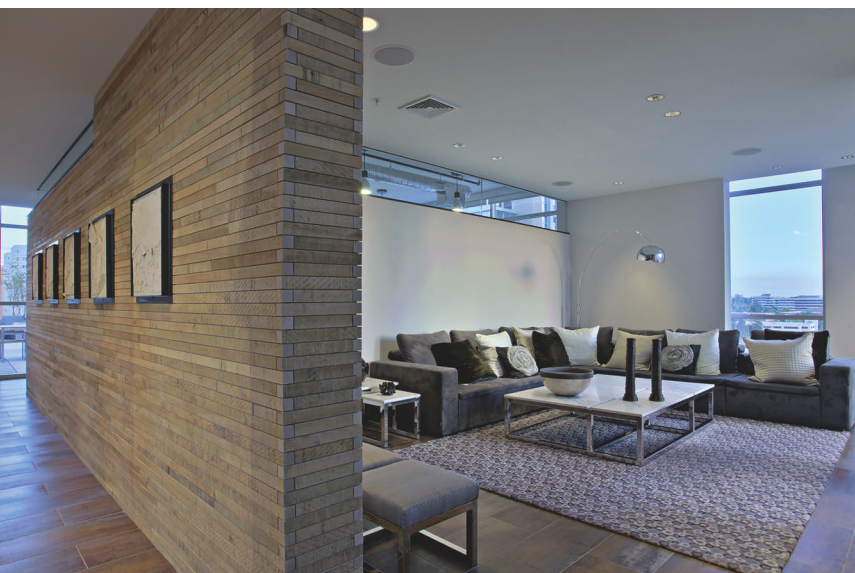
Photography: Brian Vanden Brink Architectural Photographer, Rockport, Maine



[BEST IN MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION]

[BEST MULTIFAMILY HIGH-RISE 6 STORIES AND OVER]

The Urban Loft Revisited



The Midtown North luxury condominium project has an elegant, urban loft feel that complements the ultra-chic atmosphere of Reston Town Center. The designers had to fit the building within a city block that already contained two high-rise condominium towers and a freestanding parking garage. Their solution was a nine-story building planned in a “C” configuration around the garage. A corridor runs through the interior perimeter of the garage, allowing for single-loaded units that maximize natural light and views.

The homes are a departure from the usual wood-and-exposed-brick look of urban lofts, instead reflecting a more modern, international style. Open floor plans, 12-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows are enhanced with exposed architectural elements and high-end finishes. Interior concrete columns and other structural features are incorporated into home designs. The building exterior is distinguished by fluctuating roof lines and window bays that project through gently curving precast panels.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Midtown North

Location: Reston, Va.

Designer/Architect: CMSS Architects,
Virginia Beach, Va.

Builder: Bovis Lend Lease, Reston, Va.

Interior Designer: ForrestPerkins,
Washington, D.C.

Developer: Kettler, McLean, Va.

Land Planner: Urban Engineering &
Associates, Annandale, Va.

Photography: Commercial Photographics,
Glen Arm, Md.

[BEST IN MIDWEST REGION]

New Spin on City Living

On a city lot zoned for five-story homes with no sideyard setbacks, Chicago architects Osterhaus McCarthy designed a contemporary residence amid existing Victorian-era bungalows that top out at three stories. The 4,253-square-foot spec home is planned around a central court that brings light and air into all the floors, creates views and avoids what could be oppressive massing in a building of this height.

The home, nicknamed the Urban Sandbox, takes full advantage of its 24-foot-wide by 150-foot-deep lot. Careful window placement ensures light-filled spaces while maintaining privacy. A terrace above the enclosed garage, which gives the family room direct access to the outdoors, is enclosed by a wood screen that acts as a buffer from the public alley and city noise.

An elevator offers easy access to the fourth-floor master suite and rooftop deck. The first floor is devoted to a study that is directly accessible from the street. The covered entry (a must-have for Chicago dwellers) adds curb appeal.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Urban Sandbox

Location: Chicago

Designer/Architect: Osterhaus McCarthy, Chicago

Builder: Jodi Development, Chicago

Developer: Jodi Development, Chicago

Photography: Osterhaus McCarthy, Chicago



[BEST IN CENTRAL REGION]

[BEST ONE-OF-A-KIND SPEC HOME, 4,001 TO 6,500 SQUARE FEET]

Updated Farmhouse

A rural Nebraska site with views of sweeping valleys and rolling hills is the perfect setting for this family home, a farmhouse with a transitional feel. Deep verandas in the front and rear and a side patio embrace the views.

A private courtyard with a potting shed and detached garage welcome visitors to the home. The paneled foyer opens to a spacious gathering room and dining room. Reclaimed

wood trusses and oversize wood-work temper the volume of the space, bringing it down to an intimate scale.

Just off the great room is the den, which features a unique sliding barn door that can be closed for privacy when needed. The central staircase has custom iron and wood railings for a modern touch, and a traditional lighted newel post illuminates the path upstairs.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Cottonwood Creek Spec

Location: Blair, Neb.

Designer/Architect: Curt Hofer Construction, Omaha, Neb.

Builder: Curt Hofer Construction, Omaha, Neb.

Interior Designer: Interiors by Joan & Associates, Omaha, Neb.

Developer: Jasperstone Partners, Omaha, Neb.

Photography: Tom Kessler Photography, Omaha, Neb.





[BEST IN SOUTH CENTRAL REGION]

Developed With Care

44



The site was a beauty: about 20 acres of hillside covered with cedar and oak trees and boasting views of downtown Austin. But therein lay a major challenge, because nearly all the indigenous trees had to remain intact. Texas limestone beneath a thin layer of topsoil limited cuts in the land to four feet. And due to impervious cover regulations, there wasn't much room for roads and parking.

The design and building team walked the site numerous times to

determine the best placement for 101 single-family attached units, ranging from 1,015 to 2,395 square feet. They fit the buildings between the trees and worked with the grading requirement by varying the building footprints. The resulting structures sit lightly on the site and follow the contours of the land while rising just high enough above the treetops to take advantage of the views. A mix of stone, wood and metal on the exteriors gives the project a distinctive, rustic look.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: The Hillside

Location: Austin, Texas

Designer/Architect: JZMK Partners, Irvine, Calif.

Builder: Sendero Construction Services, Austin, Texas

Developer: CSGM Canyon Ridge, Austin, Texas

Land Planner: JZMK Partners, Irvine, Calif.

Photography: Chris Cooper Photography, San Antonio, Texas

[BEST IN MOUNTAIN REGION]

Severe Slope Solution



Built for a young couple expecting twins, this home rests on a hillside with a steep slope to the south. Due to its location in a neighborhood of 1950s homes just north of downtown Boulder, Colo., there were height limitations. The floor plate had to be very compact yet maximize the square footage to meet the needs of the clients.

The architects met these challenges by designing a house with three stories, including a walkout lower level. The main level is designated for family living, bedrooms are on the third floor and the lower level has a home theater, bar, game area, exercise/spa space and guest suite. Outside is a splash pool and hot tub.

The character of the house is very contemporary, matching the clients' taste in art and furniture. The de-

sign is suffused with natural light from all directions. High bands of glass at the ceiling level of the main and upper floors maintain privacy, while floor-to-ceiling glass on the south side is a window to the views. To allow for high ceilings yet comply with Boulder's height regulations, the flat roof appears to float on the bands of glass.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Chanin Residence

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Designer/Architect: Knudson Gloss Architects, Boulder, Colo.

Builder: Chanin Development, Boulder, Colo.

Interior Designer: 3-By, Denver

Developer: Chanin Development, Boulder, Colo.

Photography: Erik Paulsrud Photography/
Michael DeLeon Photo; Boulder, Aurora, Colo.





[BEST IN PACIFIC REGION]

[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOME, 1,801 TO 2,400 SQUARE FEET]

Small Plan Lives Big

Presented with the challenge of designing livable detached homes for a tight infill site, Dahlin Group Architecture Planning created a three-story plan that looks like a two-story elevation from the street. The community, Morgan Square, has an overall density of 13 units to the acre.

Residence Four is an alley-loaded home with an open floor plan that makes its relatively small square footage (2,000) feel larger. Volume ceilings, generous amounts of glazing and decks also add to the sense of spaciousness and provide places to relax and entertain. The

third floor, which is set back from the front elevation to minimize the height of the building, is devoted entirely to the master suite. There is both a home office and a home management center to accommodate the busy schedules of a working couple.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Morgan Square

Location: Fremont, Calif.

Designer/Architect: Dahlin Group Architecture Planning, Pleasanton, Calif.

Builder: Summer-Hill Homes, Palo Alto, Calif.

Interior Designer: Creative Design Consultants, Costa Mesa, Calif.

Photography: Jeffrey Aron, Aron Photography, Foothill Ranch, Calif.





[BEST IN PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION]

[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED HOME]

An Elegant Pair

This pair of homes in the Seattle suburb of Renton is designed with a Northwest contemporary flair that complements the lakefront site. Floor-to-ceiling windows and large decks expand living areas outdoors. On the inside, rich wood and stone finishes reflect the natural surroundings and inject a traditional ambience.

From the sunny entry hall, a sculptural staircase draws the eye

upward through all three levels of the home. The master suite's vaulted ceiling is expressed on the outside in a dynamic roof form that appears to be taking flight.

The gourmet kitchen features an L-shaped island with a raised glass breakfast bar, cooktop, prep sink and wine refrigerator. This large space flows into the adjacent dining and living rooms, creating the perfect arrangement for entertaining.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Barbee Mill — Mill Pond

Location: Renton, Wash.

Designer/Architect: Hackworth Group
Architecture/Planning, Seattle

Builder: Conner Homes, Bellevue, Wash.

Interior Designer: Conner Homes,
Bellevue, Wash.

Developer: Conner Homes, Bellevue, Wash.

Photography: Doug Scott Photography,
Burlington, Wash.





[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOME UP TO 1,800 SQUARE FEET]

Small House, Big Impact

Located in a traditional neighborhood development called Habersham, the Erickson residence is designed for livability and entertaining. It's only 1,449 square feet but lives much larger by taking advantage of outdoor living. There is a covered front porch, as well as a screened porch with a fireplace off the family room and a rear courtyard. Sight lines from the front entry to the screened porch heighten the sense of spaciousness. A strong emphasis was placed on simple massing, unassuming details and the economical use of materials.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Erickson Residence

Location: Beaufort, S.C.

Designer/Architect: Dominick Tringali Architects, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

Builder: The Noro Co., Port Royal, S.C.

Interior Designer: Carolina Moon Design, Beaufort, S.C.

Photography: Warren Lieb Productions, Mount Pleasant, S.C.



[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOME, 2,401 TO 3,000 SQUARE FEET]

Bluff-Top Estate

The Bluffs Along Santa Barbara Coast is a collection of 62 estate homes with views of the bluffs, a nearby golf course and the Coronado Butterfly Preserve. Residence One, also known as the Rustic Estate, exudes an earthy color palette with its clay roof tile blends, rusticated brick and stone, smooth plaster and stain grade wood detailing. Ideal for family gatherings and entertaining, the one-story home has an island kitchen adjacent to a large family room with French doors that open to both a loggia and dining room.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: The Bluffs Along Santa Barbara Coast

Location: Goleta, Calif.

Designer/Architect: William Hezmalhalch Architects, Santa Ana, Calif.

Builder: Comstock Homes, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Interior Designer: Designtec, Newport Beach, Calif.

Developer: Comstock Homes, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Land Planner: William Hezmalhalch Architects, Santa Ana, Calif.

Photography: Eric Figge Photography, Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.



[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOME, 4,001 SQUARE FEET AND OVER]

Authentic Bucks County

Despite its South Carolina location, this home is an authentic reproduction of a Bucks County, Pa., farmhouse. To make it look like an old home that had been added on to over the last 150 years, the main structure was built with four wings, each with a distinctive look appropriate to the time period. For instance, the first-floor study looks like an old spring porch that was enclosed. A sharp drop at the rear of the lot provided an opportunity to cascade the outdoor living area down several levels — the whirlpool into the main pool and the main pool into another small pool.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Brandywine Valley Home

Location: Fort Mill, S.C.

Designer/Architect: Carolina Design Group, Cornelius, N.C.

Builder: E.S. Johnson Builders, Cornelius, N.C.

Interior Designer: Durham Designs & Consulting, Huntersville, N.C.

Photography: Carolina Photo Group, Charlotte, N.C.

[BEST MULTIFAMILY UP TO FIVE STORIES]

Unifying a City Block

Palladium Plaza is a five-story condominium project that partially abuts and serves as a screen for the parking deck of an office building next door. Intended to reinforce and contribute to Raleigh's downtown revitalization, the project is a workmanlike, background building that knits together an entire city block. It comprises two-story townhouses at street level and at levels four and five, with a level of flats in between, and street-level retail. The brick façade and corbelled masonry reflects the architecture of the nearby historic warehouse district.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Palladium Plaza

Location: Raleigh, N.C.

Designer/Architect: JDavis Architects, Raleigh, N.C.

Builder: Langford Construction Co., Raleigh, N.C.

Developer: White Oak Properties, Raleigh, N.C.

Land Planner: JDavis Architects, Raleigh, N.C.

Photography: Marc Lamkin Photography/Design, Etowah, N.C.



[BEST SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED URBAN INFILL]

Stroll to the Park



Denver Brownstones at Stapleton have a distinctive façade featuring private covered entrances with tiered planters. Private terraces overlook the adjacent Central Park, and garages are alley-loaded so as not to detract from the metropolitan feel of the brick and stucco exteriors. The penthouse level of these four-story residences includes a rooftop terrace with unobstructed views and an optional fireplace or fire pit. State-of-the-art interiors include a private elevator and the buyer's choice of either three bedrooms or dual master bedrooms.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Denver Brownstones

Location: Stapleton, Colo.

Designer/Architect: Godden/Sudik Architects, Centennial, Colo.

Builder: Touchstone Homes, Lakewood, Colo.

Interior Designer: Amirob Architectural Interior Designers, Denver

Developer: Forest City Development, Denver

Land Planner: Calthorpe Associates, Berkeley, Calif.

Photography: Jim Blecha Photography, Aurora, Colo.



[BEST ONE-OF-A-KIND CUSTOM HOME UP TO 4,000 SQUARE FEET]

Nautical Flavor

Replicating the architecture of the main house, this guest house/poolhouse borrows details from Chesapeake Bay screw-pile lighthouses, such as Caribbean style porch railings, louvered island shutters and a nautical blue roof. The indoor/outdoor courtyard retreat looks toward bay and island views while maintaining streetside privacy. The 1,500-square-foot structure includes a one-car garage, kitchen, bedroom suite, laundry room, powder room and living room with fireplace. A glass wall opens to the lanai and pool.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Sea Strand/LeCates Poolhouse

Location: Ocean City, Md.

Designer/Architect: Becker Morgan Group, Salisbury, Md.

Builder: L.A. Sawyer Co., Ocean City, Md.

Interior Designer: Interiors By Carol, Ocean Pines, Md.

Developer: L.A. Sawyer Co., Ocean City, Md.

Photography: Studio C Design & Photography, Salisbury, Md.



[**BEST ONE-OF-A-KIND SPEC HOME, 6,501 SQUARE FEET AND OVER**]

Home Court Advantage

Tradewinds, a state-certified green home, is oriented on a lakefront lot to capture prevailing southern winds. Its Roman courtyard plan creates a funnel effect, allowing breezes to pass through the home via two 30-by-9-foot glass wall systems and out through a third-floor cooling tower. Regional elements such as structural cypress timbers, coral stone surfaces and a standing seam metal roof express a coastal theme. Two large window walls open the informal entertainment areas and master suite directly to the pool, a spectacular feature with fiberoptic lighting and a cascading waterfall flanked by fire bowls.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Tradewinds at Baldwin Park

Location: Orlando

Designer/Architect: Geoffrey Mouen Architects, Celebration, Fla.

Builder: Charles Clayton Construction, Winter Park, Fla.

Interior Designer: Brown and Deddens Design Studio, Orlando

Developer: Baldwin Park Development Co., Orlando

Land Planner: Mills Design Group, Oviedo, Fla.

Photography: James Wilson, Dallas; Greg Johnson; Joe Lapeyra, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Everett & Soule, Altamonte Springs, Fla.; Jeremy Flowers, Clermont, Fla.

[**BEST AFFORDABLE HOME — BOTH DETACHED AND ATTACHED**]

Affordable for Working Families

The Homesteads was built on a 15-acre parcel of land donated by a long-time area resident in exchange for a promise to develop housing for Cape Cod's working families. The project was subsidized by public funding, and 16 units, ranging from \$150,000 to \$225,000, were sold by lottery to low- and moderate-income buyers. Three primary house types in Cape Cod/Saltbox style are Energy Star-rated; they're two stories with three bedrooms, two full bathrooms, covered front porches and private rear decks.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: The Homesteads

Location: Sandwich, Mass.

Designer/Architect: Brown Lindquist Fenuccio + Raber, Yarmouth, Mass.

Builder: The Valle Group, Falmouth, Mass.

Interior Designer: The Valle Group, Falmouth, Mass.

Developer: Housing Assistance Corp., Hyannis, Mass.

Land Planner: Brown Lindquist Fenuccio + Raber, Yarmouth, Mass.

Photography: The Valle Group, Falmouth, Mass.

[HUD SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE]

Green Role Model

This LEED-certified, affordable, single-family home is the result of a partnership between the city of Schenectady, a division of HUD and two nonprofit housing organizations that wished to develop a new prototype for the city. Located in a low-income neighborhood, it has almost 150 unique features related to renewable energy, energy conservation, green products, universal design, affordability and aesthetic sensitivity. The 1,650-square-foot home reflects Schenectady's historic character and compact design, with its scale of the bay windows, lintels and front porch details and its use of paint and finishes.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Universal Design/Green Affordable Housing Prototype

Location: Schenectady, N.Y.

Designer/Architect: Dave Sadowsky, Architect, Petersburg, N.Y.

Builder: J. Luk Construction Co., Schenectady, N.Y.

Developer: Better Neighborhoods, Schenectady, N.Y.

Photography: Ann Petersen, City of Schenectady, N.Y.



[BEST RENTAL DEVELOPMENT UP TO FOUR STORIES]

Downtown on the Water

The Boardwalk is the only multifamily community on the waterway of the 1,000-acre downtown portion of a large master plan. Consisting of 245 luxury apartments, the project is designed in a Southern Coastal style with stucco, metal, soaring glass and cedar accents. Amenities include lush landscaping with two swimming pools, a conference room, a "teaching" kitchen, state-of-the-art fitness center and rooftop gardens with outdoor fireplaces. The waterway provides 1.25 miles of linear parkland and serves as a transportation corridor linking businesses and entertainment venues.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Boardwalk at Town Center

Location: The Woodlands, Texas

Designer/Architect: Humphreys & Partners Architects, Dallas

Builder: Greystar Development & Construction, Houston

Interior Designer: Karen Kramer & Associates, Houston

Developer: Cambridge Development Group, Houston

Land Planner: Humphreys & Partners Architects, Dallas

Photography: Richard L. Muniz Photography, Houston



[BEST RENTAL DEVELOPMENT 5 STORIES AND OVER]

Showcase for Public Art

Located adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania campus, Domus successfully mingles residential and commercial uses, public art and market-rate housing. The site was developed so that it pulls back from the corner, creating open space with an art sculpture in the shape of bells for pedestrians to enjoy, as well as 27,000 square feet of ground-level retail. There

are three distinct but interconnected green courtyards: a public plaza, a semi-private inner courtyard and a private, upper-level courtyard. The building's eight-story, thin-wall precast concrete facades were finished in three different colors, lowering its perceived height to six stories. In the common areas, floating soffits with incandescent lighting create a soothing environment.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Domus

Location: Philadelphia

Designer/Architect: Design Collective, Baltimore

Builder: The Hanover Co., Houston

Interior Designer: Design Collective, Baltimore

Developer: The Hanover Co. and MetLife, Houston

Land Planner: Design Collective, Baltimore

Photography: LaCasse Photography, Denver

[BEST COMMUNITY UP TO 150 HOMES]

Spanish Village Ambience

Located at the foot of Camelback Mountain, the Villas at Montelucia is a resort community designed in the timeless style of Andalusia, Spain, while recognizing the regional traditions of Arizona. A series of walking paths shaded by indigenous plants and trees leads residents to various resort amenities, including a spa and wellness center. Each villa has a central courtyard, covered loggias and detached guest casitas. The extensive architectural detailing features warm wood accents, wrought iron, canvas awnings and rough stone garden walls, all of which are designed to pick up the colors and textures of the desert. These are luxury homes with a truly unique flavor.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: The Villas at Montelucia

Location: Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Designer/Architect: Scheurer Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

Builder: Rowland Luxury Homes, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Interior Designer: Studio B, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Developer: Crown Realty & Development Corp., Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Land Planner: Scheurer Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

Photography: Dino Tonn Photography, Scottsdale, Ariz.



[BEST COMMUNITY, 151 HOMES AND OVER]

Unbeatable Amenities

Initially envisioned as a golf community, after extensive research Hampton Lake was redesigned as a lake-oriented community with a resort-style amenity complex. The lake and a 340-acre nature preserve with nine miles of trails ensure that more than half the community is devoted to conservation. Multiple living options are provided, including waterfront and wooded homesites; low-maintenance carriage and villa homes; and vacation townhomes. But the heart of Hampton Lake is Lakeside Village, with its plethora of family-friendly amenities: themed restaurant; general store; nature center; spa and fitness center; pools; boathouse; beach; overnight camping island; and dog park.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Hampton Lake

Location: Bluffton, S.C.

Designer/Architect: Cowart Coleman Group, Savannah, Ga.

Builders: Fraser Construction, Bluffton, S.C. (amenity buildings); Malphrus Construction Co., Hilton Head Island, S.C. (phase one infrastructure); PBG of South Carolina, Hardeeville, S.C. (phase two infrastructure)

Interior Designer: Image Design, Atlanta

Developer: Reed Development dba Hampton Lake, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Land Planner: Wood & Partners, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Photography: CNSG/Kevin Nightingale, Savannah, Ga.

[BEST SUBURBAN SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY]

Sensitively Sited

The Residence at SouthPark seamlessly unites four stories of luxury residential units with 80,000 square feet of ground-level retail while integrating site features. Developers worked with the city of Charlotte to carefully place the project on the site, renovating a historic civic space and fountain on a prominent corner. Mature trees were also preserved. The building reinforces a sense of community and softens the impact of vehicles by surrounding a U-shaped courtyard and is proportioned so as not to overpower activity on the street level.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: The Residence at SouthPark

Location: Charlotte, N.C.

Designer/Architect: Design Collective, Baltimore

Builder: The Hanover Co., Houston

Interior Designer: Design Collective, Baltimore

Developer: The Hanover Co., Simon Property Group and MetLife, Houston

Land Planner: LandDesign, Charlotte, N.C.

Photography: LaCasse Photography, Denver; Patrick Ross Photography, Timonium, Md.



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[BEST RURAL/EXURBAN SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY]

A Sense of Place

Washington Town Center is a mixed-use community that creates a distinctive identity for sprawling Robbinsville, N.J. The overall plan includes parks, walking trails and other open public spaces, and it welcomes the community at large into its shops, restaurants and residential neighborhoods. Single-family homes, duplexes and townhomes are designed with historically accurate details; many front yards have brick pier and iron fencing or hedgerows. The commercial core of the project consists of condominium units above ground-floor retail that continue to sell at a rate of two to three units per month, despite the real-estate downturn of the last three years.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Washington Town Center

Location: Robbinsville, N.J.

Designer/Architect: Feinberg + Associates, Old Tappan, N.J.

Builder: Sharbell Building Co., Robbinsville, N.J.

Interior Designers: Builder's Design & Leasing, Gaithersburg, Md. (townhomes); Childs/Dreyfus, Chicago (single-family homes); MS Designs, Chicago (lofts/condominiums)

Developer: Sharbell Building Co., Robbinsville, N.J.

Land Planner: A. Nelessen Associates, Belle Mead, N.J.

Photography: Fred Forbes Photogroupe, Lansdale, Pa.; John Martinelli Photography, Moorestown, N.J.



[BEST KITCHEN IN A HOME, 2,401 TO 4,000 SQUARE FEET]

Custom Crafted

This kitchen is the nucleus of an open floor plan. A two-sided stone fireplace anchors the great room on one side and the kitchen on the other. Built-in seating at the hearth provides an informal space for relaxing or conversation. Custom casework and skilled workmanship is evident in the cabinetry, which is made of quarter-sawn ash. Natural stone countertops, a stone tile backsplash and soft pendant lighting complement the wood cabinets, flooring and ceiling beams.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Chauncey Knoll Kitchen

Location: Biltmore Forest, N.C.

Designer/Architect: Carlton Architecture, Asheville, N.C.

Builder: Point South Construction, Asheville, N.C.

Interior Designer: Carlton Architecture, Asheville, N.C.

Photography: Frontier Group, Asheville, N.C.



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[BEST KITCHEN IN A HOME 4,001 SQUARE FEET AND OVER]



Sophisticated Showpiece

Intended to serve as a command center, family focus and guest magnet for parties, this kitchen displays a high caliber of design refinement. Specifications include a woven-glass mosaic backsplash, polished limestone countertops and custom frameless African mahogany cabinets. Horizontal, frosted-glass upper cabinets, hanging from a suspended beam that circles the room, provide countertop lighting. Windows open to service outdoor counter seating for guests gathering around the kitchen or sitting near the outdoor barbecue and bar.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Promontory Residence

Location: Las Vegas

Designer/Architect: Bridgewater Consulting Group, Los Angeles

Builder: Raftery Construction, Las Vegas

Interior Designer: Karen Butera Inc., Corona Del Mar, Calif.

Photography: Christopher Mayer Photography, Huntington Beach, Calif.

[BEST MASTER BATH]

Treat for the Senses

There's nothing fussy about this master bathroom, with its crisp combination of stone flooring, custom wood cabinetry and concrete countertops. Tall windows flood the high gabled ceilings with light and provide views of the wooded landscape outside without compromising privacy. The bath is prewired for Internet and television and has separate his-and-her vanities, along with a natural stone walk-in shower with dual heads and body sprays. The blend of natural materials prevents the room from feeling cold.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Chauncey Knoll Master Bath

Location: Biltmore Forest, N.C.

Designer/Architect: Carlton Architecture, Asheville, N.C.

Builder: Point South Construction, Asheville, N.C.

Interior Designer: Carlton Architecture, Asheville, N.C.

Photography: Frontier Group, Asheville, N.C.





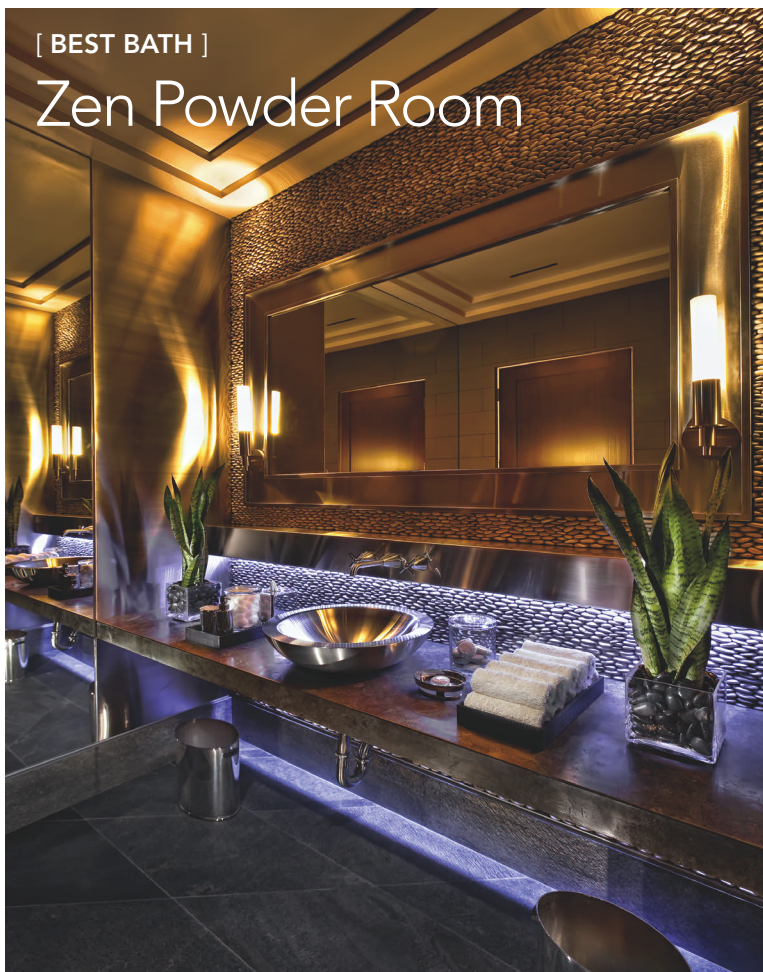
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[BEST BATH]

Zen Powder Room



Possibly the most unusual powder room we've ever seen, this bath consciously balances layered texture and subtle color to avoid being stark or chilly. Stainless steel and river pebbles softly back-light the vessel sink and shelf-mounted faucet. Leather tile walls provide a further textural contrast to the minimalist "Hat Box" toilet located in a separate compartment. Completing the picture are decorative glass sconces and a custom harlequin patterned Quartzite slate floor. A fine place to pause and reflect? We think so.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Promontory Residence

Location: Las Vegas

Designer/Architect: Bridgewater Consulting Group, Los Angeles

Builder: Raftery Construction, Las Vegas

Interior Designer: Karen Butera Inc., Corona Del Mar, Calif.

Photography: Christopher Mayer Photography, Huntington Beach, Calif.



[BEST DETAIL IN A PRODUCTION HOME]

Mosaic Magic

This mosaic inlay of Emperador marble and travertine tile creates interest in a breezeway connector that would otherwise have been a walkway. Mosaic floor bands and stone set on a diagonal surround the spectacular treatment. The ceiling detail in the dining room coffer further draws potential home buyers into the space.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Legends at Vista Del Verde

Location: Yorba Linda, Calif.

Builder: Toll Brothers, Yorba Linda, Calif.

Interior Designer: Possibilities for Design, Denver

Photography: E.L. Imagery, Highlands Ranch, Colo.



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[BEST DETAIL IN A SEMI-CUSTOM OR CUSTOM HOME]



That's Entertainment

A custom-designed fire element with a floating hearth along with a media center sporting a 60-inch plasma monitor makes this entertainment wall the focal point of the family room. The components and audio speakers are concealed behind touch-latch panels on the wall, which is made of polished Absolute granite and African mahogany with an espresso finish. A recessed surround for the monitor allows it to pivot and provides necessary air circulation. Accent lighting is concealed within the soffit of the dropped, floating walnut-plank ceiling.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Promontory Residence

Location: Las Vegas

Designer/Architect: Bridgewater Consulting Group, Los Angeles

Builder: Raftery Construction, Las Vegas

Interior Designer: Karen Butera Inc., Corona Del Mar, Calif.

Photography: Christopher Mayer Photography, Huntington Beach, Calif.



[BEST COMMUNITY FACILITY UP TO 150 UNITS]

Rugged, Yet Refined

The forms and materials for this clubhouse were inspired by an old sawmill that previously stood on the site, as well as the boathouses that populate the shores of the adjoining lake. The Beach Club at Barbee Mill is covered by a single roof plane of exposed timbers and fir decking that is continuous from inside to outside with broad, sheltering overhangs and flying brackets. The main gathering space is enclosed in glass and anchored by a stone fireplace, and the outdoor room offers plentiful seating, a kitchen and a large gas grill for gatherings with family and friends.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Barbee Mill Beach Club

Location: Renton, Wash.

Designer/Architect: Hackworth Group Architecture/Planning, Seattle

Builder: Conner Homes Co., Bellevue, Wash.

Interior Designer: Markie Nelson Interior Design, Seattle

Developer: Conner Homes Co., Bellevue, Wash.

Land Planner: Hackworth Group Architecture/Planning, Seattle

Photography: Doug Scott Photography, Seattle





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[BEST COMMUNITY FACILITY 151 UNITS AND OVER]



Boater's Paradise

Wilson's Landing, one of the newest amenities at Palmetto Bluff Resort, includes dry-stack boat storage buildings, a ship's store and the Canoe Club, a facility that encompasses a restaurant, docks, small watercraft storage, pools and a fitness center. The restaurant features a vaulted wood ceiling crafted in the style of a canoe's interior, supported by a series of structural arched ribs that resemble a boat spine. The use of oars completes the effect. All of the buildings evoke the region's traditional Lowcountry architecture. The facilities are designed to integrate boating activities on the May River and Water Trail with pedestrian and vehicular traffic at the resort.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Wilson's Landing at Palmetto Bluff

Location: Bluffton, S.C.

Designer/Architect: Hart Howerton Associates, San Francisco

Builder: Fraser Construction Co., Bluffton, S.C.

Interior Designer: Hart Howerton Associates, San Francisco

Developer: Crescent Resources, Bluffton, S.C.

Land Planner: Thomas & Hutton Engineering, Savannah, Ga.

Photography: Kaufman Photography, Hilton Head, S.C.



[JUDGES' SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD]

With Respect to History

Built by AT&T President Theodore Vail in 1917, Vail Mansion is being restored for commercial and public use and augmented by a new structure containing 36 luxury condominiums. A five-story mid-rise, situated behind the Italianate mansion, features two three-story wings that harmonize with the historic building's classical proportions and is finished in stucco, cast stone and natural sandstone. It's an example of the past merging perfectly with the present.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Residences at Vail Mansion

Location: Morristown, N.J.

Designer/Architect: BartonPartners Architects Planners, Norristown, Pa.

Builder: Belle Construction, Fairfield, N.J.

Interior Designer: Roseland Property Co., Short Hills, N.J. (interiors);
BG Studio, New York City (common areas)

Developer: Vail Mansion, Short Hills, N.J.

Land Planner: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, New York

Photography: Taylor Photography, Princeton, N.J.

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[JUDGES' SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD: MILITARY HOUSING]

Designed Around Nature

Intended for military families, Park Village consists of 22 new Craftsman-style homes built around two historic homes that were restored to their original state. The village's original "loop" street network was utilized to shorten blocks and preserve green space. Topographic constraints, imposed to save trees, were overcome by the use of either detached or tuck-under garages. These bungalows are anything but institutional-looking.

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Park Village at The Villages of Belvoir

Location: Fort Belvoir, Va.

Designer/Architect: RKtects, Alexandria, Va.

Builder: Clark Builders Group, Arlington, Va.

Developer: Clark Realty Capital, Arlington, Va.

Land Planner: Tori Gallas and Partners, Silver Spring, Md.

Photography: Michael Carpenter Photography, Springfield, Va.

[EMERALD AWARD]

Going for LEED Gold

Factory-built to reduce waste, this home maximizes square footage on a steep lot as well as outdoor space on both the first and second floors. The framing is made of nearly 70 percent recycled steel, and most of the major materials are recycled, reclaimed or sustainably grown or sourced. Other green features include low-VOC paints and stains; formaldehyde-free woodwork; and water-efficient fixtures.



PROJECT PROFILE

Project Name: Brentwood LivingHome

Location: Brentwood, Calif.

Designer/Architect: Ray Kappe FAIA Architect, Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Builder: Modtech, Perris, Calif.

Interior Designer: LivingHomes, Santa Monica, Calif.

Developer: LivingHomes, Santa Monica, Calif.

Land Planner: LivingHomes, Santa Monica, Calif.

Photography: LivingHomes, Santa Monica, Calif.

BALA JUDGES

Preston Bussard, AIA
Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Memphis, Tenn.

Lita Dirks
Lita Dirks & Co., Greenwood Village, Colo.

Darcy Garneau, AIA
EDI Architecture, Houston

Barry Glantz, AIA
Glantz and Associates Architects, St. Louis, Mo.

Grey Lundberg
Grey Lundberg Inc., Bellevue, Wash.

Jack McLaurin, AIA, CGP
Lessard Group, Vienna, Va.

Christy Scanlon
Masterpiece Interiors, Winter Park, Fla.

Chip Vaughan
Vaughan & Sautter Builders, Wayne, Pa.

Smart Growth Judges
Ron Derrick
Derrick Custom Homes, New Richmond, Wis.

Bob Simmons
Robert L. Simmons & Associates, Vienna, Va.

Ed Tombari
NAHB Land Development Services, Washington, D.C.

HUD Judges
Stephen Shelley
HUD Chicago Office of Housing
Andrea Vrankar
HUD Cleveland Office of Public Housing



BALA

HALL OF FAME

he 25 years since the creation of the Best in American Living Award has brought a lot of change to residential construction and design. Just consider these terms: green building, outdoor living, great room, grand foyer, professional kitchen, cascading roof, wrapping center, media room, front porch, traditional neighborhood design, transit-oriented development.

Those developments and trends didn't emerge on their own. People conceived and executed this evolution. To recognize those people, *Professional Builder* and the NAHB Design Committee — co-sponsors of BALA — created a Hall of Fame.

Our inaugural class features 10 honorees. Designers. Builders. Founders. The people on the following pages have significantly affected the residential design and construction field through their involvement in BALA and their success in their professions.

We would not be experiencing our lives in the way we do if these people had not envisioned and executed the kinds of change we've enjoyed over the last 25 years.

Please salute the initial honorees of the Best in American Living Award Hall of Fame.

On the Cutting Edge

Renowned for the aesthetic appeal and marketability of their housing designs, Aram Bassenian and Carl Lagoni continue to push the envelope.

By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

After a quarter of a century, the architectural profession has finally gotten serious about housing design. Builders and developers, too, are more savvy about its importance. For Aram Bassenian, chairman and CEO of Bassenian/Lagoni Architects in Newport Beach, Calif., that's a big leap forward. He and his partner, Carl Lagoni, have been honing their expertise in all things residential for more than 35 years. They've designed everything from conventional and high-density detached homes to townhomes, condominiums, apartments, senior housing and resort communities.

Bassenian has been honored with an Achievement Award from *Professional Builder* magazine as well as the Max C. Tipton Award for Marketing Excellence. Summing up the ongoing challenge, Bassenian observes, "As residential architects, it's our job to create homes that use the link to the past, look forward in technology and mix it with skilled hands to come up with an entity that has character yet appeals to the senses."

Lagoni, now president, started working for Bassenian in 1976, right out of college. Like his partner, he has a keen eye for detail and marketability and fine-tunes many of the company's designs.

"We like to pride ourselves on being on the leading edge in terms of design," Lagoni says. "We try to help predict trends, if you will." For example, while traditional elevations are likely to be around for awhile, he thinks that in the not too distant future we'll see more contemporized interpretations of authentic styles.

Adds Bassenian: "I find that I've been able to touch the lives of many people with design, and that's terribly rewarding."

Among many other industry awards, Bassenian/Lagoni Architects has won an estimated 79 Best in American Living Awards.



RESIDENCE ONE at The Tides at Crystal Cove in Newport Coast, Calif., features a dramatic, three-story interior courtyard. The natural light drawn in by this space "adds soul to the house," says Aram Bassenian (above). Carl Lagoni fine-tunes many of the company's designs.

Photo (left): A.G. Photography



Profile photos courtesy Bassenian/Lagoni Architects



Photo courtesy Christopher Homes

Group Elevation

Christopher Homes employees take pride in the recognition BALA wins have provided over the years. **By Felicia Oliver, Senior Editor**

Christopher Homes has a demonstrated commitment to residential design excellence. Building on its roots in custom building, this luxury production builder remains committed to beautiful, creative design that fits the lifestyle of prospective buyers.

Founder and CEO J. Christopher Stuhmer says the company's participation in and accolades from BALA throughout the years have meant a lot to its employees.

"It's very inspirational for all of our employees to be recognized on a national level by their peers for outstanding work," says Stuhmer. "To see the end product appear on the cover of a magazine, I would say that has been the biggest benefit of being involved and receiving awards from BALA."

Of all its wins since its first BALA award in 1994, the company is most proud of winning Home of the Year in 1999 for its Van Gogh at the Palisades project.

"It was a community that received tremendous acceptance and recognition," says Stuhmer. "Getting third-party endorsement from *Professional Builder*, not just for Van Gogh but for all four of the models out there, was a milestone for the company. It really positioned us in the community and in our industry as a design leader."



Photo courtesy Steve Moore

Timeless Design



For J. Carson Looney, residential architecture is all about livability, adaptability and long-lasting value.

**By Susan Bady,
Senior Editor, Design**

Due Recognition

BALA co-founder Steve Moore fought to award builders for great design when others frowned upon it. **By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director**

When Steve Moore worked for NAHB after college, it galled him that builders were not a strong part of design awards. “The justification,” he says, “is the other awards were pretty boy architect competitions and the builders were not part of it. We wanted something that showed off housing that works. Housing that sells.”

Without Moore, there would be no Best in American Living Award, and the focus of the competition would not have been as strong to recognizing designs that sell.

Today, Moore is president of BSB Design and is still focused on designs that work in the marketplace. He sees considerable advancement in residential design since the program began 25 years ago. “It isn’t just this competition,” he says, “but others pushing on the same goal of pushing residential design in terms of depth of talent and quality of design regardless of mar-

ket and price point.”

Moore began his design career by earning a degree from the University of Virginia School of Architecture. Even with that design background, the viability of design’s role in the marketplace has always been a high priority, which led to him accepting the marketing director position at BSB Design, which eventually led to the president’s role.

Photo: Sweeney South Commercial Photography



THE HIGHLAND LAKE COURTYARD

These cottages in Flat Rock, N.C., earned platinum in BALA 2004.



Photo (left): Sweeney South Commercial Photography; Profile photo courtesy Looney Ricks Kiss

If there’s anything Carson Looney hates, it’s an ill-conceived residential design that will look out of date in 10 years. “The most important thing to do,” Looney says, “is establish good design DNA. You can have a home that’s very modest or you can dress it up and make it into a very expensive home, but both should maintain a DNA that’s timeless.”

Looney is the principal in charge of residential architecture for Looney Ricks Kiss Architects in Memphis, Tenn., a firm he co-founded in 1983. At that time, he says, only a few architectural firms did work nationally or internationally.

“Today, architects can have an impact beyond their immediate locale, which is a big change,” Looney says. “Residential architecture is no longer just about providing a set of plans. I see it more as true problem-solving, dealing with lifestyle issues; materials; products and their life cycles; the cost/value equation; energy usage; health issues.”

Looney is passionate in his belief that one of the highest levels of sustainability in design is achieved through the creation of homes, streets and neighborhoods that have enduring value. Two outstanding illustrations of this philosophy are the firm’s Harbor Town in Memphis and Celebration in central Florida — New Urbanist communities that have garnered national recognition.

Looney was elected to The College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1996 and inducted into the Wm. S. Marvin Hall of Fame for Design Excellence in 2007. The firm has won 62 Best in American Living Awards (including three Home of the Year awards), in addition to numerous other regional and national awards.



Innovation and Comfort

Taylor Morrison delivers cutting-edge design while ensuring the homeowner's comfort. The result? More BALA awards than any other home builder.

By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director

Taylor Morrison has won more Best in American Living Awards — 36 — than any other home builder, and it's not by accident. The tradition of design, dating back to well before the merger of Taylor Woodrow and Morrison Homes, starts with the desire to work with leading-edge designers and moves to the area of strong execution.

CEO Sheryl Palmer says, "We've been fortunate. Taylor Morrison has always been recognized for cutting-edge design. It's an opportunity to invent how a house design can be innovative but considerate of the end use. We want to create whole home experiences."

Today the firm is forging ahead with innovation through its partnership with Disneyland on the Innoventions Dream Home. The idea behind the home is the same philosophy Palmer asserts for Taylor Morrison: to make modern home technology accessible, intuitive and seamlessly integrated into the environment.

"We felt the Dream Home was so critical to our future," Palmer says. "We need to be prepared for the next generation of homes ... If [the home] doesn't facilitate the end user's needs, you don't really have anything."

A Contest to Educate

Roy Diez worked with the NAHB Design Committee to create the Best in American Living Award and ensure it met the needs of the industry.

By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director

Photo courtesy Steve Moore





During Roy Diez's 34-year career at *Professional Builder*, he had many accomplishments, but perhaps none had as long-lasting an effect the Best in American Living Award. Working with the NAHB, Diez helped establish the premier national design contest that now celebrates its 25th Anniversary.

This design contest, unlike so many others, had a significant difference, however. "We worked real hard in the beginning," Diez says, to empha-

size the following: they didn't want to simply "hand out trophies," and sales rates had to be included in the judging process and a devotion to educating about design trends.

"The real key thing was in emphasizing in the magazine and at dinner what could be learned from the winners. What are the trends here? Every year, we pulled out seven or eight design trends, which become almost a leading indicator of what the industry was going to look like."



ONE OF DIEZ'S FAVORITE PROJECTS was Montage in Mission Viejo, Calif. Berkus Group designed it.

Photo (left): Glen Allison; profile photo courtesy Roy Diez.

A Foundation for Great Design

Through multiple efforts, Jack Bloodgood of BSB Design built new demand for better design, and then helped deliver it.

By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director

The accolades for Jack Bloodgood, FAIA, have been going strong for years now. Everyone in the home building industry recognizes his contributions: founding BSB Design, revolutionizing the architectural plan service and bringing great design to production builders.

Often, such recognition comes merely from strong involvement in the industry, but Bloodgood's excellence as a designer is paramount to his other achievements, including BSB Design's 36 Best in American Living Awards.

"Our design and our focus was the more traditionally minded home buyer," Bloodgood says, "rather than the contemporary one." He draws a contrast to the more



A CLUSTERED multifamily project at Springhouse Pond, Sudbury, Mass., won a BALA award in 2002.

Photo courtesy BSB Design

cutting-edge design that come from California. "When people moved to California," he says, "they were moving to a new region and new life — new ideas. When they moved from Buffalo to Cincinnati, they were not moving to a new life. They wanted to fit in; they didn't want to be different. When people moved around the Midwest, they wanted something better, but not much different."

Bloodgood's focus on plan services that provided designs for primarily Midwestern builders as well as a column for the Hearst Newspaper Syndicate (Bloodgood started as building editor for *Better Homes & Gardens* in 1957) spread the name of his company but also allowed him to, as he says, "influence design and deliver a better look and feel for homes."



Photo courtesy California Homebuilding Foundation

The Matriarch of Interior Merchandising

Carole Eichen's concept of model home design changed the industry and helped buyers see themselves as the best of American living.

By Felicia Oliver, Senior Editor

She was an innovator, a pioneer and expert marketer. Carole Eichen, who passed away in 2003 at the age of 70, was a legend in the home building industry. She invented the concept of interior merchandising and even coined the term "buyer profile." She understood how to use interior design to appeal to a specific buyer at a subliminal level.

"She helped establish the very measures used by judges to determine whether a project — as depicted in photos — hits the target buyer," says Heather McCune, the BALA judge who nominated Eichen for induction into the Hall of Fame. McCune is a former editor-in-chief of *Professional Builder*.

Eichen opened Carole Eichen Interiors in 1966 in Newport Beach, Calif. Her design style incorporated bold use of color and design details like drapes and throw pillows. Long-time friend Peter Mayer, principal of Peter Mayer Productions — producer of several industry awards programs — moved to California from the Midwest in the 1960s and understood how novel Eichen's approach was.

"I saw model complexes you didn't see in my part of the country," says Mayer. "Here were these glamorous houses with exotic, elaborate landscaping. People who pulled this off, to me, they were like super stars. That's the way I viewed Carole Eichen."



Photo courtesy Capital Pacific Holdings



Photo courtesy Berkus Design Studio

Customer Quality

A strict devotion to continuous improvement and meeting customer expectations puts Capital Pacific Holdings in the Hall of Fame.

By Paul Deffenbaugh, Editorial Director

How do you earn a Best in American Living Award Hall of Fame nod as a home builder? Simple. Execute great design and make sure the customer is happy. Of course, neither of those tasks is very easy, but the payoff for Capital Pacific Holding's ability to deliver on both is a series of Best in American Living Awards.

A devotion to continuous improvement has allowed Capital Pacific Holdings to achieve this success. CEO Hadi Makarechian says the home purchase is "an experience that you're delivering. We strive to have a smooth process whereby we're taking all the customer's needs into account from the beginning into the design, then we're executing the construction, then we deliver the product to them, and making sure they're comfortable and

don't have any problems.'

The key to execution, beyond a reliance on customer satisfaction, is a devotion to improving quality, exemplified by the San Diego division's achievement of National Housing Quality certification. Scott Coler, division president emphasizes the customer satisfaction. "It is a huge underlying catalyst in our company," he says.

He then exalts the importance of delivering consistent quality. "We have to ... make sure we get people into quality homes they come to expect through these practice. At the end of the day, we try to combine that with the design elements that the homeowners are looking for. The utility that they're looking for and the value that needs to go along with it."



Global Influence

Forty-five years of thinking outside the box have made Barry Berkus' name synonymous with innovation. By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

One of the most influential (and best-traveled) figures in residential design today is Barry A. Berkus, AIA, founder and president of B3 Architects and Berkus Design Studio, Santa Barbara, Calif. During a career that spans 45 years, Berkus has established a reputation as an innovator, redefining living patterns in housing both in the United States and abroad. Through his design work, educational efforts, books and articles, he has tirelessly promoted the architect's role as a planner and designer of neighborhoods and communities. Recently he wrote, "I believe the

future of architecture lies in respecting regional context through environmentally conscious design and embracing cultural and economic diversity in each community."

The Berkus portfolio includes more than 600,000 homes as well as resort and master-planned communities; urban infill; commercial and institutional projects; and custom homes. In Japan, his work has ranged from the planning and design of new towns to developing building codes for framed construction. Other international projects include planning communities in Malaysia, master-planning residential vil-

lages for EuroDisney in France and designing the redevelopment plan for the waterfront Expo site in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Berkus has been named in numerous industry awards, and his firm has won more than 300 design and planning awards, including 44 Best in American Living Awards.



THIS 1,472-SQUARE-FOOT detached home in Chandler, Ariz., won a BALA Grand Award in 1995 for its efficient design. Priced under \$100,000, the home has vaulted ceilings, a wraparound kitchen and an integrated, covered rear patio.

Photo: Professional Builder Archives



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Quality Cabinets received the highest numerical score among cabinet manufacturers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Builder and Remodeler Cabinet Satisfaction Study.SM Study based on 1,356 evaluations from over 1,100 new-home builders and remodelers who ordered and purchased cabinets January–December 2007. Respondents were asked to evaluate their primary and/or secondary cabinet brands that they used most often. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of builders/remodelers surveyed in March–May 2008. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com © 2009 Quality Cabinets

QualityCabinets[®]

Common name. Uncommon values.

WINDOW WATCH

A study recently published by the Freedonia Group, "Windows & Doors," details demand for windows in all categories: wood, vinyl or aluminum. Although the demands will be a bit subdued thanks to the current market, the study predicts steady gains in demand through 2012 despite shrinking floor plans and less remodeling work.

77



Photo: Weather Shield

INSIDE

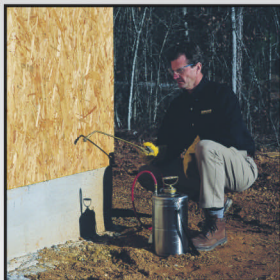
Cool cabinets [page 79]

Handy hardware [page 85]

Hurricane-strength window know-how
[page 87]

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1

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2

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3

Builders can earn points in green building programs by using Bora-Care, including LEED® for Homes, NAHB Green Home Building and many others.

4

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5

Bora-Care saves water. Soil termiticides require large amounts of water for dilution. Using Bora-Care can save 200-300 gallons of water per average-size home.

6

The element boron is found throughout nature and may be essential to the health of all living plants and animals.

7

Mammals, birds, fish and reptiles can all excrete excess ingested boron, so it has little effect on these non-target organisms; however insects cannot process boron in the same way. As a result, boron accumulates in their systems and interferes with their ability to convert food sugars into energy, leading to starvation. This unique quality makes borates the perfect green solution for targeting termites.

8

Bora-Care treated wood provides protection from subterranean, Formosan and drywood termites as well as wood boring beetles, carpenter ants and wood decay fungi. It also provides general pest protection by making the treated wood areas uninhabitable by pests such as cockroaches.

9

Bora-Care emits no VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds).

10

Green Builder® magazine selected Bora-Care for its inaugural Overall Grand Prize, Best of Show award at the 2006 National Green Building Conference.



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[CABINETS]

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Christiana Cabinetry's new urethane-based finish is formulated without the use of harmful chemicals, so once the solvents have evaporated, there are no noxious off-gasses from the coating. The new finish's gloss is clearer and less prone to yellowing and can stand up to UV rays and household finishes. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-251>**



Drawn In

These slides are the strong, silent type. Hettich's Quadro Slide drawers sport the company's unique ball-bearing technology and are able to withstand heavy weight. When installed properly, the slides will last a lifetime and will provide precision operation. Other useful features include high lateral stability and concealed mounting. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-252>**

Creamy Cabinets

HomeCrest Cabinetry's Ivory on Maple is a classic opaque finish, a creamy neutral shade to complement any color scheme. Ivory is available on several overlay door styles and can receive all five existing Glaze colors, plus an additional Fawn glaze. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-253>**



Properly Calibrated

The Calibra line provides outstanding value and slick styling for any kitchen. The Armstrong cabinets feature edges with slight radiuses on all four sides of the doors and drawers combined with full overlay styling for a touch of elegance. Its flat-panel design and plantation hardwood graining provides infinite décor options. Calibra comes in five contemporary finishes. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-254>**



[CABINETS]



Library Chic

With quality European hardware, chrome fixtures, clean lines and a variety of colors, ClosetMaid's MasterSuite is perfect for all the storage needs for a great library — all you need is a fireplace and snifter of brandy. The custom-designed and professionally installed storage system is a perfect set up for creating a space that will integrate functionality and style. Five finishes are available. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-255>**



buildit

Safe Harbors

Woodharbor Doors & Cabinetry is adding beaded inset cabinetry and 13 door styles to its Rockglen Cabinetry line of semi-custom cabinetry. The beaded inset is a detailed design element that can be used with a variety of door styles, wood species and finish combinations for a range of looks. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-256>**



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— **Bob Heidenreich**, Owner The Deck Store, Apple Valley, MN



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[CABINETS]



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Constructed of premium-grade stainless steel and made durable, rust-proof and virtually maintenance-free, Lasertron's Illuminated Stainless Steel Cabinets emit a soft glow to keep toiletries lit up at all hours, so your homeowners won't be stubbing any toes in the bathroom. The custom-size cabinet is inserted into the interior of the wall and features a brush finish on all exposed surfaces. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-257>**



Custom Closets

Richelieu has a huge variety of useful storage solutions in the new Milano leather and bronze collection. The high-end storage series and accessories can be configured to your requirements, and there's plenty of trendy finishes to choose from. The new Orlando series consists of baskets, sliding racks, innovative pull-out wardrobes and other options. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-258>**

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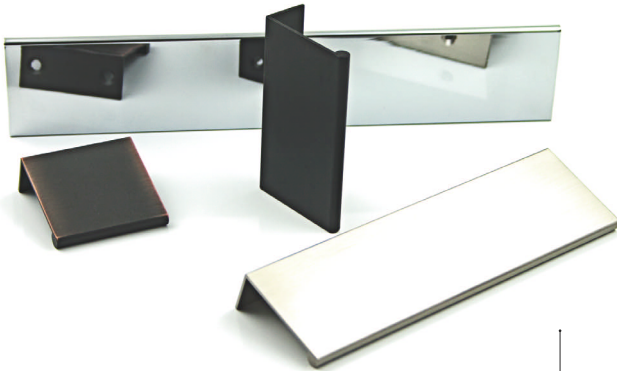
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[HARDWARE]

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Berenson's Bravo Collection of pulls is ideal for contemporary style kitchens and furniture. The collection comes in an array of sizes and modern finishes. The lengths are 1³/₄, 3, 6 and 9 inches. All of these pulls are Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant and are highlighted in four modern finishes. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-259>**



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Open the door to old-world luxury with Soko's Hearst Castle Collection. The line features pieces that are inspired by the legendary architect Julia Morgan and by artifacts collected around the world by William Randolph Hearst during his many storied travels. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-261>**



Under the Sea

Got a coastal-happy customer or seaside job? Complement the home with the Seaside collection from Edgar Berebi. The knobs measure 1⁵/₈ inches, and the seahorse pulls measure 3¹/₂ inches center to center. All are available in fine finishes of museum gold; burnished silver or brass; or antique nickel. Each of these precious items is embellished with Swarovski crystals in varying hues. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-262>**



Beautifully Bronzed

Bronze has been around since antiquity and hasn't lost its appeal yet. Baldwin's latest collection, called Baldwin Bronze, features elegantly detailed cast bronze lock, bathroom and general hardware products. Features include a full range of entry and passage lock options, and two distinct style families including the new Toscana and Stonebridge handleset designs. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23719-260>**

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[RULES & REGS]

Codes to Care About

By Nick Bajzek, Products Editor

Builders on the coasts have been well acquainted with the Miami-Dade County and other hurricane-related codes. However, homes nationwide are potentially subject to high winds and nasty weather, particularly in tornado-prone regions.

After all, says Chuck Anderson, Southeast regional director for the American Architectural Manufacturers' Association, "Hurricanes move many miles inland and the requirements for fenestration can still be very stringent in non-coastal areas."

Knowing the codes, the zones, the tests and the benefits of impact-resistant windows are an integral part in buying the right products. Deciphering what all the acronyms mean on the window packaging and understanding the significance of each, however, can be a different story.

MORE ONLINE

- * Storm-ready states
 - * Florida's codes
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terior windows, curtain walls, doors and impact protective systems. The tests blast the window with a 2 by 4 cannon in a test chamber and subject it to a lot of air pressure. The aim is to test the entire window assembly to see if the building envelope could potentially be breached.

American Architectural Manufacturer's Association (AAMA)

This group's test is a fenestration standard/specification that applies to operating, fixed, prime and replacement windows, doors and unit skylights. It establishes material-neutral, minimum and optional performance requirements. It's concerned with factors such as performance grade (PG), design pressure (DP) and related performance ratings. **PB**

TAS 201-94 and TAS 203-94

Dave Olmstead, senior public affairs and code compliance specialist for PGT Industries, is the company's "Code Guru." As such, he's well-acquainted with the specifications mandated in the Florida Building Code as well as other statutes. "Clear as mud, huh?" he asks when questioned about the various tests. Olmstead says manufacturers are required to test to for use in the HVHZ (High Velocity Hurricane Zone) in Florida's Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

TAS 201-94 (TAS 201) is designed to measure a product's resistance to windborne debris. To pass the test, the units must withstand a Large Missile Impact test. After the TAS 201 test is performed, a TAS 203-94 (TAS 203) test follows, which evaluates a product's resistance to cyclic pressure differentials that may occur when a hurricane passes.


American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)


When it comes to the ASTM tests, two methods work in tandem: E1996 and E1886. According to the ASTM, E1996 "Provides a basis for judgment of the ability of elements of the building envelope to remain unbreached during a hurricane; thereby minimizing the damaging effects of hurricanes on the building interior and reducing the magnitude of internal pressurization." Don Beltz, director of operations for Architectural Testing, notes the test is equally capable of testing for other storms that generate windborne debris.

E1996's sister test, E1886, measures performance of ex-



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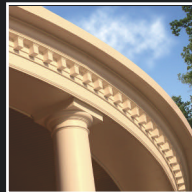
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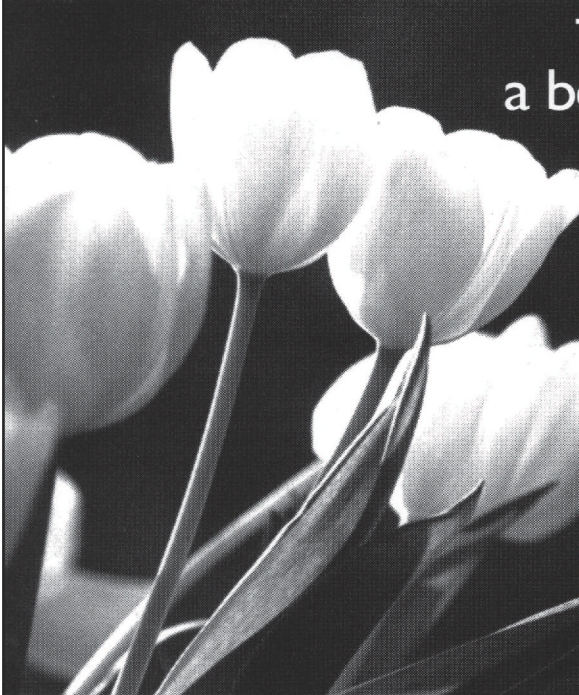
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Best in American Living Award Special Edition

25

The Best in American Living Award **celebrates its 25th year** this year. The program started in 1983 with two magazines, an idea and a guy named Steve Moore. Happy silver anniversary, BALA, and to many years more.

1,857

In 25 years of the **Best in American Living Award**, we've had approximately 1,857 winners. There were 12,500 entries during that time.

36

The Best in American Living Award now has **36 categories**, ranging from Best Custom Home to Best Detail. In 1983, it started with just 26 categories.



18

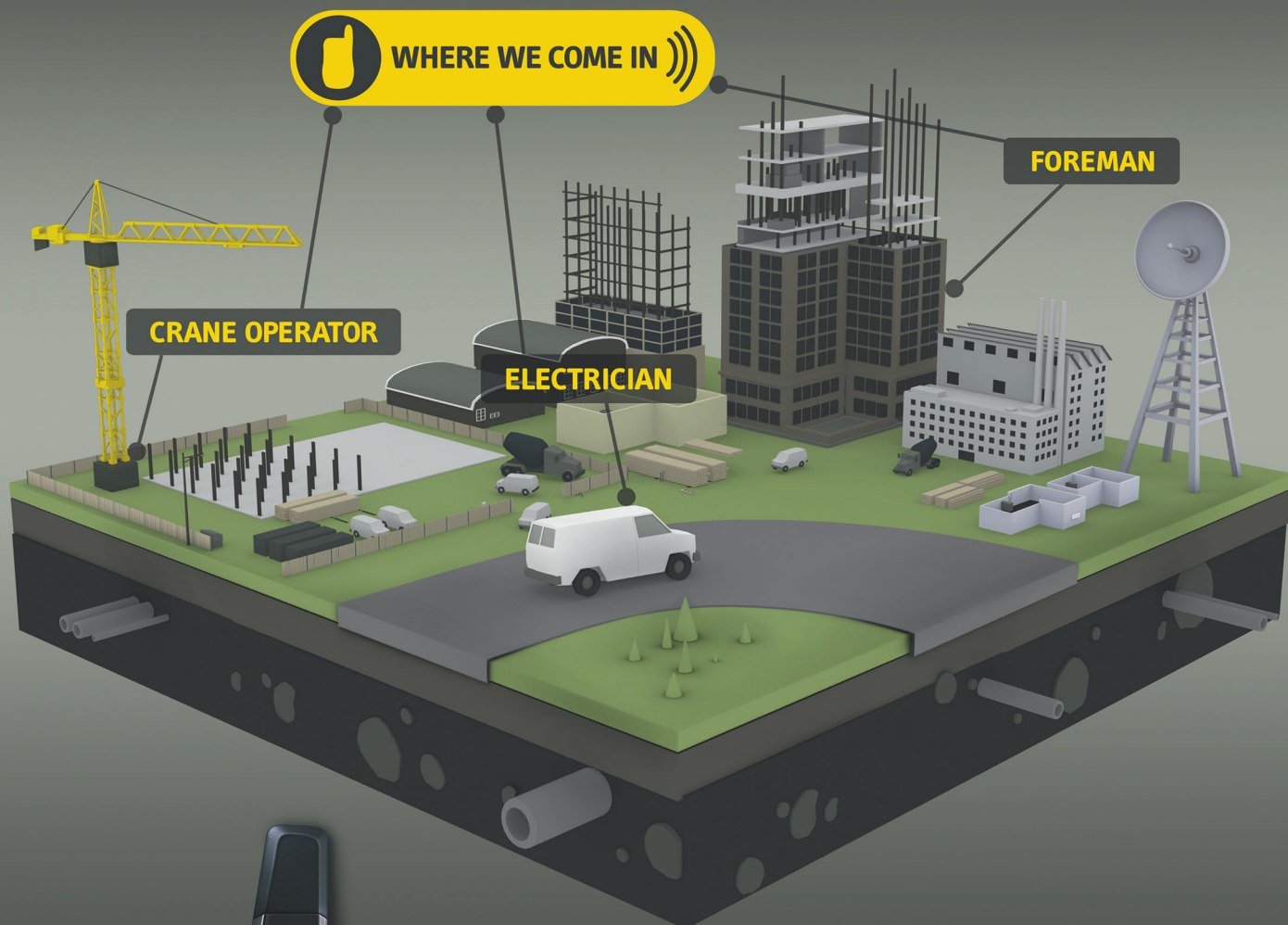
The coveted **Home of the Year award** started in 1990, with Vernon Swaback Associates grabbing the first one with his custom home project in Forest Lake, Ariz. (not picture). Since then, we've had **18 Home of the Year winners**.

3

The Home of the Year award has been around for 18 years, but **one company managed to take the title three times**: Looney Ricks Kiss. It snagged the title in 1991, 1994 and 2007.

225 judges

The Best in American Living Award wouldn't be complete without the judges. Since 1983, 225 builders, architects, interior designers, HUD experts and others volunteered their time to peruse the countless entries and make difficult decisions.



From the ground up is not a metaphor here. You start with a site and truckloads of supplies, then add a ton of complex and physically demanding labor. When you're finished, you've got offices, houses and schools. Basically, civilization.

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