

# Professional Remodeler

APRIL 2007

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## 2007 Kitchen & Bath Issue

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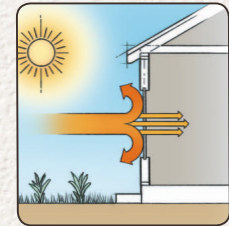
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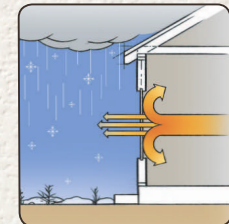
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### Online Poll

What types of green techniques or features are you including in your projects?

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### Best of the Best

Time once again to get your entries in for the 2007 Best of the Best Design Awards. Visit us online for more information and a registration form.

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## YOUR BUSINESS: TOOL OR BABY?

In our February issue, we explored the value of peer groups in Remodelers' Exchange.

Last week, I attended the Remodelers Advantage Roundtable conference in Jekyll Island, Ga., and learned for myself just how valuable belonging to a peer group can be for a professional remodeling firm owner.

Over the course of four days, my group, called the Charlie Group, discussed marketing and sales best practices; tax strategies; team building; profitable side businesses; exit strategies; production systems; contracts; growth strategies; performance metrics; vision statements; company culture; payment structures; management techniques; leadership attributes; customer satisfaction; personnel issues; organizational structures; reducing overhead, increasing net profits; balance sheets; profit and loss statements; budgets; backlogs; finance; and accounting.

By the time I boarded the plane back to Chicago, it was very clear to me that belonging to a peer group is as valuable a tool for professional remodeling firm owners as there is.

That is, unless you'd prefer to treat your business like a parent raising a baby, a comment made by Dale Contant of Atlanta Design & Build on the final day of meetings.

But if you're serious about making the most of your business, pushing profits to the maximum and retiring to a tropical location as soon as possible, do yourself a favor and join a peer group as soon as possible.

Charlie Group consisted of Contant and Guy LaMarca of Atlanta Design & Build; Kevin and Amy O'Brien of Agape Construction (Kirkwood, Mo.); Troy Fenley and Chris Neumann of Encompass Design Build (Vienna, Va.); George Davis of George Davis Builders (South Dennis, Mass.); Pete Valentino of Fisher Construction (Fairfield, Calif.);



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Ken and Kathy Spears of Ken Spears Construction (Shabbona, Ill.); Mike Spreckelmeier of Progressive Builders (Fort Myers, Fla.); Bob Weickgenannt of Starcom Design/Build (Columbia, Md.); Ben Thompson of Thompson Remodeling (Grand Rapids, Mich.); and Jeff Titus of Titus Built (Wilton, Conn.). Led brilliantly in discussion by Rosie Romero of Roth Production Company (former owner of Legacy Custom Builders), this group formed a pseudo board of directors for each other's companies as they each opened their books and left no stone unturned in an exhaustive search for improvement.

Once a year these groups hold a roundtable in a common location with hundreds of other companies in various other groups. Twice a year they visit one of the company's offices to see the business first-hand, interview employees and give even more feedback to the owner.

If you're shy about discussing the flaws in your company, peer groups aren't for you. But if you see your business as a tool and not a baby, they're worth the price of admission. **PR**



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## FRANCHISING

## JIM BODNER

**Owner:** Bodner Construction,  
est. 1981

**Owner:** DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen,  
est. 2004  
Bethel, Connecticut

***A veteran of general remodeling,***

Jim Bodner grew up in the construction business. His father was in construction, as was his grandfather before him. Jim followed the same career path, and in 1981 he got married, bought a house, and opened Bodner Construction, Inc. all in one year.

***What was business like before you bought a franchise?***

**Jim:** After opening Bodner Construction, what I didn't know about business I learned along the way, which equated to accepting any jobs that came along to increase sales. From kitchens to additions to entire new home construction, Bodner Construction grew despite our

**Now that I'm with DreamMaker, I realize that focusing on kitchens and baths is a niche that is more profitable.**

lack of direction, but the result of all this work was an identity crisis. We couldn't find our niche, and we were going after the big jobs because that's where we thought the money was. Now that I'm with DreamMaker, I realize that focusing on kitchens and baths is a niche that is more profitable.

***Why buy a franchise?***

**Jim:** The DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen franchise gave us a niche. By having a system to follow, I was able to spot places where we could make changes and run more efficiently. A franchise gave me the freedom to continue my small business, but now, I have the power of a national brand behind the business that gives me access to a complete marketing machine and strong vendor relation-



Photo: Sharon and Jim Bodner

***Were you worried that your business would be lost in a sea of franchisees?***

**Jim:** DreamMaker carefully aligns territories so that none of the franchisees compete for business. DreamMaker is very selective about who they choose to become a franchisee, so I have the support of an entire network of franchisees whose standards for quality are as high as mine. That helps keep the DreamMaker brand strong, in that sense we are all working toward a common goal.

***What do you see in the future for your franchise?***

**Jim:** My whole goal is to stay after the kitchen and bath market because it's more profitable than going after additions and exterior remodeling as I did with my other business. Rather than a bidding war for such jobs, I want to grow in a more professional and design-oriented environment. The margins we can demand in DreamMaker and the level of customer service we can provide are much better.

***About DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen:***

Located at 1020 N. University Parks Drive in Waco, Texas, DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen has approximately 105 independently owned and operated franchises nationwide.

ships. Now, that I've built the business into a brand, I could potentially sell the franchise and enjoy a comfortable retirement.

***Has DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen's business systems helped your business run smoother?***

**Jim:** Before buying the DreamMaker franchise, I was a field guy, an installer, the owner, and the best salesperson. I wore so many hats that I needed an efficient business solution to broaden the big picture. As a franchisee, I learned a business model that has proved successful all across the country. Now my business is more successful than ever, and it does not rely solely on my di-

rection to run efficiently. In fact, by my second year as a franchisee, I was able to take the toolbelt off and concentrate on growing my business. With the growth that came with that, I was able to reward my wife's hard work and double her salary and mine, and we were still able to have a strong net profit.

***What impact has the DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen brand had on your business?***

**Jim:** For 20-odd years everybody came looking for Jim Bodner. Now they look for DreamMaker, which includes a whole team of capable people. In total, I have seven full-time production staff and six people in the office. Plus, now we can reach a lot of people who may not have used us before.



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## Saving big while doing good

What if you could save your company thousands of dollars a year, give your clients a tax deduction and help the community at the same time? That's the situation now for Newman Company of Riley, Ind., through the company's relationship with Habitat for Humanity's ReStore program.

During demolition, workers set aside anything that could possibly be reused, such as light fixtures, faucets, doors and toilets. The local Habitat ReStore representative comes to the job site and picks up the products for sale through a retail store, with proceeds benefitting Habitat.



The homeowners then receive a receipt so they can claim the donation on their taxes.

The company got involved with the program several years ago through a friend of company President Todd Newman,

who was involved in Habitat for Humanity. "A lot of this stuff we were throwing away could be reused, so I always hated to see it going into the landfill," Newman says.

Besides the benefits to the environment and the community, it's also helped Newman's bottom line. The company's dumping fees have been reduced by about 20 percent. Plus, it's an excellent marketing tool.

"We tell our customers that they are helping the community, and a lot of people get very excited about that."

For more information on the ReStore program, visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org).

>> If you have a **Trade Secret** you would like to share, e-mail Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet at [jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com](mailto:jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com).

## Beyond design/build

When Denny Conner meets with clients, he tells them he's not interested in only remodeling their home. He wants to change their lives for the better.

A decade ago, Conner decided his firm, Conner Remodeling and Design in Seattle, had to be about more than just construction.

"I got tired of moving 2-by-4s around and wanted to look at the bigger picture," he says. "I realized that when we did a really good job, it changed the client's life in an incredibly positive way."

"We have to find the things that really make a difference," he says. "Sometimes it's the little features that mean the most to them. It can really be as simple as asking them if there's anything else they'd like to improve on their home."

The change was more than a shift in philosophy. It also required a different approach to the project and the customer. Most notably, Conner decided that to maintain control the company would only build projects it designed. He also emphasizes with his staff the importance of really listening to the client.

Clients often don't understand right away what Conner means when he says he wants to "transform" their lives, but once they do, they become very enthusiastic, he says.

## Reward for a job well done

Darius Baker knows that one employee can make a big difference — positive or negative — in how a client feels about a project.

That's why D & J Kitchens & Baths of Sacramento, Calif., now uses a \$100 bonus to reward employees who are mentioned by name in post-project customer surveys.

"It has really stepped up the level of concern for the client's mental state," Baker says. "It makes the employees think more about how they communicate with the client and what they can do to accommodate the client."

During staff meetings, Baker tells the employees to always look for little things they can do

that can make a big difference for the client.

For example, on a recent project, a client had a stamped concrete sidewalk installed. After it was completed, a D & J employee realized an element of the decorative finish was high enough to catch an existing wrought iron gate. Without the client's having to ask, the employee brought in a welder to remove and remount the gate.

"It only cost \$150, but it mattered to that client, who couldn't believe we had taken care of that for her," Baker says.

About 95 percent of surveys mention one or more employees. The bonuses are a small price to keep customers happy, Baker says.

### ONLINE POLL QUESTION

## What types of green techniques are you including in your projects?

To participate in this month's poll and view the results as they are tabulated, visit [www.ProRemodeler.com](http://www.ProRemodeler.com)



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# HOW TO AVOID BAD HIRES

Which person will fit your team?



Mark Richardson, Owner  
Case Design/Remodeling

Case Design/Remodeling in Bethesda, Md., has a local business that does about \$50 million a year. It also has a national business, Case Handyman and Remodeling, with three divisions: Kitchen and Bath, Design/Build and Handyman. The national business covers 180 territories across the country. The local business has approximately 300 employees, two-thirds of which are field employees. [www.casedesign.com](http://www.casedesign.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GEIGER



Mark Scott, Owner  
Mark IV Builders

Mark IV Builders is a 19-year old design/build company located in Bethesda, Md., whose projects cover parts of Washington, D.C.; Montgomery County, Md.; Arlington County, Va.; and Fairfax County, Va. The firm does about 20 projects a year and typically bills between \$4 million to \$5 million per year. Sixty percent of their 22 employees are in the field. [www.markivbuilders.com](http://www.markivbuilders.com)



## What do you look for when hiring a new employee? How do you find the ideal person? The Internet and personality profiling are two ways to find that team player.

**Jud:** Let's start off with a couple of questions. How do you avoid bad hires? Describe, to start, with your recruiting process.

**Mark R.:** The way we look at most things is that almost everything is a process. Years ago, we stopped looking at recruitment in the traditional method. We realized that we had developed a fairly effective sales process when it came to homeowners and clients. We essentially developed or translated the same processes from our consumer sales process in working with potential employees. It starts with getting the phone to ring, and we try to create some pretty compelling ways to get the phone to ring via a lot of the traditional methods. Once we get the phone to ring we do a qualifying conversation over the phone. We always have them come into the office for an interview, regardless of what the position is. We have a director of recruitment who takes them through a tour of the office to share the company story and talk about the position. Then, we move toward trying to see if it's a nice fit.

**Jud:** Mark Scott, what's your process?

**Mark S.:** Not nearly as defined. In good times, we'll run ads in the paper from time to time. In less frenetic times, we actually get a fair number of requests to come work for us. We have a similar screening in the beginning. The biggest qualifier for us is that early on we'll do a background check. That probably screens out about 40 percent of those who apply.

**Jud:** Mark Richardson, do you do background checks?

**Mark R.:** Yes, we do as well.

**Jud:** That was another question down the road. Mark Richardson, your comment was that you have a system in place to hire people. Is that a fair statement?

**Mark R.:** Absolutely. I think, in general,

the more things you can figure out in a process system, the more you can make it predictable. If you can make something predictable the outcome is going to be what you want it to be. It's not so much of a gambling exercise.

**Jud:** Mark Scott, you don't have as detailed a system as Mark Richardson.

**Mark S.:** As far as recruiting, no.

**Jud:** You probably have a "we've done it that way before" attitude on some things. Would that be a fair statement?

**Mark S.:** Yes. This past year we had an employee specifically set up a document of standard operating procedures for the whole company. We're just starting to implement all of that.

**Jud:** Mark Scott, do you have job descriptions for these positions?

**Mark S.:** Yes. We have fairly specific job descriptions for each one. Like Mark Richardson, once a person gets through a couple of levels of interviews, we do personality profiles. That tells me more who will not fit rather than who will necessarily be successful. They go through several layers of interviews with different people. All of our supervisors are collectively hired by several of the other supervisors.

**Jud:** You do a multi-interview system.

**Mark S.:** Correct.

**Jud:** Mark Richardson, job descriptions?

**Mark R.:** We do have job descriptions. We also have found that it's critical for any person to interview with at least two people. Some positions require more cross-interviews with as many as half a dozen different people. We also use the McQuaig system. It's more of a personality profile. As Mark said, that really helps to see if the person has the right disposition for the position. In sales, are they competitive enough? In the field, are they detailed enough? If they are more of a customer service "people" type person, how are they going to approach that? I think that utilizing some of these tools really helps you to not necessarily determine

who's the best, but it helps to determine who won't work in that role.

**Jud:** Let me give you kind of a scenario here. If you were looking for, say, a production manager and it could be anybody. If this person came to you with great credentials, but you don't think he fits your team. Do you try to hire on a "team" basis? In other words, if he doesn't really fit the team, "I don't care how good a production manager he is, I'm not going to hire him." Do you have any kind of relationship in this selection process like that, Mark S.:

It's become one of the main criteria for us. If you're not going to fit the team, it doesn't matter what your skills are. Another thing is that the Washington area, as big as it is, is still a fairly small building community. Most of us know each other. Most

of us pay a lot of attention and know what everybody's doing and know enough about each other's idiosyncrasies. We know what kind of personality is going to fit over time. I probably get one call a month from a competitor who's looking at so-and-so who I may or may not know about. Inevitably, I'll say, "Yes, I know this guy, these are his strengths and these are his

weaknesses. From what I know about you, he's probably not a fit for your business." Invariably, they hire him!

**Mark R.:** I think there are several elements of it. We always ask ourselves three questions. I was at a seminar many years ago, heard these questions, and it's become part of our mantra in our culture. The first question is, can they do the job? That's about competency. Second, will they do the job? That is about work ethic and attitude. And third is, do they fit? You've got to have a "Yes" answer to all of those. If they're not a fit, the first thing we look at is, "Is this real or Memorex?" Often times, if they can do the job and will do the job but don't fit, we'll then say is there another pair of eyes we need to get for a second opinion? Or a third or fourth pair of eyes.



Jud Motsenbocker  
Contributing Editor



Because of our scale, we're also looking for other "seats on the bus" potentially for them. For example, you might have a carpenter who is not really a team player, but he may be an extremely competent back craftsman, working by himself, very detail-oriented. We have a little bit of luxury in that we can oftentimes take a person that is not necessarily quite the ideal fit for one team, but maybe find another opportunity if we're really enthused about him.

**Jud:** That's a good point. Gentlemen, do you look at it differently if you're hiring salespeople compared to field people?

**Mark S.:** Absolutely. I need to become more systematic in the way I deal with sales people. We have a much stronger production culture than sales. Because we don't have as many sales people, I tried lots of different things a couple of years ago. I tried a car salesman just to see if that different personality would work well. It was pretty much an absolute failure! I knew I was taking a flyer when I did it.

**Jud:** Mark Richardson, is there a difference between sales and field people when you hire?

**Mark R.:** Absolutely. Again, I think that's where some of the personality profiles come in. It really sort of highlights itself. Usually, with a salesperson, they will not be successful in sales or at least be a "top gun" unless they're relatively competitive. Sometimes you can't tell how competitive someone is until you take a profile. The other thing about a salesperson is that they need a sense of urgency. They need that edge. In sales, the difference between yes and no is often times 1 or 2 percent. Successful salespeople have that sense of urgency. They're not too complacent or very relaxed. We want that kind of personality. Mark brought this up before. With the personality testing, you can determine not necessarily who's going to be successful but who's going to fail. It's a numbers game. If I have 10 prospects out there, I can reduce the odds to picking the right one out of five rather than the right one out of 10, I'm much more likely to be successful.

**Jud:** You've both talked about this personality profile. I'm taking it for granted,

**"With the personality testing, you can determine not necessarily who's going to be successful but who's going to fail."**

because you've both talked about it and both do it, that as far as you're concerned it's one of the key elements in hiring people. You can "fit them." Is that a good statement, Mark Scott?

**Mark S.:** I've spent a few years fighting the personality profiles. I didn't like the idea that you can ask me 40 questions and tell me about myself. I didn't want to be that predictable. The fact is, you are and so am I! It really does work. I've learned over the years that I have to depend on it. It's a pretty accurate predictor. The process I use is called DiSC. It measures both your adaptive and your natural style. I see what someone is naturally and what they try to be in their business. If I see a whole lot of shifts between those two, I'll tend not to hire them, because they're trying to be someone they're not. They are unlikely to flourish.

**Jud:** Mark Richardson, could you comment on that?

**Mark R.:** I think that there are certain roles in which personality profiles are especially effective. I think when it comes to management, leadership and sales roles, it is essential in my mind that you have something like that. When it comes to, let's say, a field member, I don't think it's quite as critical. That doesn't mean that they're not as critical, it's just that you're going to get more false positives when it comes to field members than, say, some of these other positions. For some positions it's essential.

**Jud:** Give me an idea of how much money you've spent on each one of those. Is it \$175 per person or more?

**Mark R.:** There are different systems, as Mark said. We use a system called McQuaig. We actually license the product on a national basis. Truthfully, I don't know how much we spend. We not only pick up the cost here, but at all of our offices around the country. It's not as much as

you'd think. It's thousands of dollars for us, but not hundreds of thousands.

**Jud:** Mark Scott, do you have any answers about cost?

**Mark S.:** It can vary. A real simple one may be \$75 to \$200.

**Jud:** The reason I wanted to put that in there was to indicate that this is not a real expensive deal for what you end up getting out of it. I thought we ought to bring that out at this point.

**Mark R.:** I would probably go by Mark Scott's numbers. Because of our size, it can be misleading.

**Jud:** Yes. Yours is totally different. Mark Scott's got a better handle on it because they do it on an individual basis. With the ones that I do, that's the kind of number we're in depending on what we ask for.

**Mark S.:** One of the biggest things we do as a qualifier is if we're at all serious about someone, we give them two people to talk to in the field. We pretty much expect them to go out and see them. If they don't go out to see those supers, they're not even in the running. They're not willing to do a little bit of "homework."

**Jud:** Even on the sales side?

**Mark S.:** Yes. Everybody.

**Jud:** Interesting. Where and how do you find good candidates?

**Mark S.:** Most of the good ones come to us through knowing one of our employees, or come to us by reputation.

**Jud:** Very little from the standpoint of ads in the paper and that type of thing?

**Mark S.:** There are some from the paper, but the stronger are the direct referrals.

**Mark R.:** Earlier Mark Scott made a comment that how you find someone can vary dramatically based on the environment. We happen to be in an environment with a little bit of softening that it's very easy to find "A-Level" players. We had, in





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## Remodelers' Exchange

the Washington area and in different parts of the country, say two or three years ago, been in remodeling environments where it was much more difficult to find even a "B-Level" player. My comment and advice is that you've got to be light of foot and you've got to approach how you find people differently depending upon what the environment is. Right now, all around the country there are a lot of very small remodeling companies that are saying, "I surrender, I give up." They can make wonderful team members to join your company, whereas in the past, that wasn't the case. There are a lot of traditional methods. The internet is certainly a much better source than it ever was for all levels of employees; also the newspaper and, as Mark brought up, the personal referrals and word of mouth. We give incentives to employees to bring on folks in certain environments. We try to use our own team to get out there and recruit because they're going to see some benefits for themselves.

**Jud:** Mark Richardson, are you always looking for new employees?

**Mark R.:** I would say yes. I got a call yesterday for a role that we don't need anyone in, and we're interviewing them tomorrow. We're always looking for and listening for talent. We're trying to have a little team set up so that they can pull in those folks when we're ready.

**Jud:** Mark Scott, are you always looking for employees?

**Mark S.:** Certainly the stock answer is yes. But right now, I'm less likely to hire someone for a job I don't have. But if they're a strong enough candidate, there are people out there that I would really seriously look at were they to become available. Yes, I am always looking; we all are.

**Jud:** I think that's a good point. In the seminars that I've been in there's the theme of "keep looking." You never know when that perfect employee is going to be available. Let me ask you: if you had to describe the "perfect applicant," the applicant you're really looking for, what might that be like? What are some of the char-

acteristics that might make you feel that this is a No.1? We all qualify leads and say "This is a No. 1 lead or a No. 2 lead." What are some of those criteria?

**Mark S.:** Over time, we've figured out that most of our really strong employees have a supporter component to their personality — that they're team players. That's probably the strongest issue. I need some strong dominant skills in the field, good "people to people." A comment that always stuck with me was Lee Iacocca saying, "The kiss of death at Ford was to hear someone say, "That person is not a people person."

**Jud:** Mark Richardson?

**Mark R.:** I think I'm understanding your question, Jud, slightly differently: How would one approach us, and we give them an "A" grade in terms of how they approach us. I would say that No. 1, they are prepared. Someone who comes in on time, prepared for the interview and meeting and have done research on the company, talked to some of the suppliers. They don't come in thinking "this is just a job." They are looking at it as an opportunity and career. For us to have to sit down and explain the fact that we design buildings, kitchens and baths, when all those things are at their fingertips is a little bit disheartening. The second thing would be, are they really committed? We need committed folks. We don't want to be the flavor of the month in terms of position. They're prepared not only in terms of knowing about the company, but also prepared in asking really intelligent questions — questions that aren't just about wage and benefits, questions about, "Once I do this, what's the next opportunity for me, potentially, in the future?" They're not like a deer in the headlights when we ask them some fundamental questions, and act like they've never thought about it or heard about it before. I'd say, committed, prepared, "laser focused." They're not distracted about having to get to their next interview that day. **PR**

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# OUTSIDE RESOURCES

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## AS BUSINESS OWNERS, WE ARE SO

busy with the day-to-day operations it's tough to find time to innovate. This is compounded because many times we lack the confidence about what and how to do so. To make things even worse, as business people, we all have a "blind spot."

What I mean by this is there are things we know about business, things we know we don't know, and things we don't know that we don't know, which is our blind spot.

To give you an example, I started studying sales at age 15. The first program I completed was "How to Master the Art of Selling" by Tom Hopkins, a national sales trainer. Later, between the ages of 18 and 24, I was in sales full time and grew into an assistant vice president role. I spent much of my time during the next six years training business owners on how to sell and have been involved in overseeing sales for the past 10 years as president of the company.

My point in sharing this is I've spent a lot of time in sales, studying sales and teaching others to sell, so I thought I knew almost everything there was to know about it. About five years ago, I came across a sales consultant who pitched our company, and I was very impressed with what he had to say. We investigated his company to make sure it was what he presented it to be, and my gut check came with a \$35,000 commitment to have his company work with my sales team and me. I knew if it worked it would pay for itself many times over, but if it didn't work, it would cost too much.

So I decided to believe in this guy, his company and systems and signed an agreement to move forward. Then to my pleasant surprise, the distinctions and improvements we made in our sales were tremendous. We improved our closing ratio

by 50 percent and significantly reduced our cycle time from a lead to a close.

Was it worth the investment? Absolutely. Was it as easy as it sounds in the few paragraphs described above? No. It took a lot of work, time and energy, including developing new habits by my team and me. If you have done anything like this before, you know it stretches you and can feel like a second job for a period of time.

From my experience, working with outside consultants, business coaches and other experts who have proven business models has provided quantum leaps for our business.

One consultant we hired 10 years ago was a gentleman named Marshall Thurber

and his company was a strategic partnership and you work together over a longer period of time. This creates accountability with someone who's an expert and thus will accelerate your becoming one yourself.

- Do your due diligence. Call two to three of the company's clients and take 30-45 minutes to dig in and ask the tough questions.
- Negotiate part of the fee based on some

type of predetermined results being achieved. Look at that amount being 10-30 percent.

It is easy in business to kid ourselves into believing there is a magic bullet that can make everything easy. The reality is that it takes many different things done well in concert with each other to make a great business. One



Doug Dwyer  
Contributing Editor

**"It is easy to kid ourselves into believing there is a magic bullet that can make everything easy."**

who studied under Edward Deming. Deming stated "profound knowledge comes from the outside, not within."

Here are a few tips when looking to hire a consulting company or business coach:

- Make sure you can work with them. If you don't connect with them, don't hire them.
- There is never a quick fix.
- Sustainable and real change takes time from your team and you.
- Some consultants can come in for a day or two and make a big impact if you do the follow-up work. We have found that, most of the time, it works better if the relationship is set up more as a strate-

of my favorite sayings is "What appears to be the slow way is the fast way." If you put a plan together and think in three- to five-year windows of time, you will experience greater levels of success with less frustration — and have a lot more fun in the process. **PR**

*Doug Dwyer is president and chief stewarding officer of DreamMaker Bath & Kitchen by Worldwide, one of the nation's largest remodeling franchises. He can be reached at [doug.dwyer@dwyergroup.com](mailto:doug.dwyer@dwyergroup.com).*

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# Growing







# Trend

HOMEOWNERS  
ARE LOOKING FOR  
LUXURY FEATURES,  
OPEN SPACES IN  
KITCHENS AND  
BATHROOMS

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

## OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE AVERAGE CONSUMER

has been bombarded with information about remodeling. From network and cable television to books and the Internet, there are multiple sources making your customers more knowledgeable than ever before — but mainly about products, not design. While some remodelers see this as a threat, the smart ones realize it is a chance to show their expertise. This is especially true in the kitchen and bathroom, rooms becoming more important to homeowners.

“The consumer today certainly has a lot more product knowledge than even a few years ago, but at the same time it can be very overwhelming for clients,” says John Audet, associate vice president and general manager of the kitchen and bath division for Case Design/Remodeling in Bethesda, Md.

The problem for most consumers is that there is so much information out there, they don’t know where to start. They may have plenty of ideas, but they need a professional’s help to make them work.

“They see those shows on HGTV or they bring in a picture from a magazine and tell us they want their project to ‘look like that.’ Our job is to take those ideas and apply them to their situation in a way that makes sense,” Audet says.

That makes it increasingly important to show clients design skill rather than just the latest and greatest products.

“The key is the design,” says Terri Schmidt, vice president of dreamkitchens/dreamrooms in Madison, Wis. “Clients want this to be the trophy in the home. They usually have ideas, but they don’t know how to get to that final point.”

Although every client is different, most are happy to have someone there to sort it all out for them, says Dale Contant, president of Atlanta Design & Build in Marietta, Ga.

“We still do a lot of shaping of the project,” he says. “Most people out there trust our common sense when it comes to designing their project.”

## INTEGRATING THE KITCHEN

So what are consumers looking for in kitchens? Simply put, more: more integration, more space and more high-end features.

**Large commercial-style appliances are a favorite in high-end kitchens, whether traditional or contemporary. Remodelers say many homeowners are now more concerned with performance than aesthetics.**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CASE DESIGN/REMODELING





**Hiding appliances behind cabinets or mounting them under countertops such as this microwave is one of the biggest trends in kitchen design. Remodelers are also having more clients asking for flat-screen televisions in the kitchen.**

"They want a kitchen they can be proud of," Audet says. "They want a sense of pride in a room that everyone will come over and see."

The biggest trend in kitchen design is certainly opening the room up to the rest of the home.

"Almost every project we do is associated with opening it up, making the room a part of a living room/family room addition," says Mark Hughes of GTM Architects in Bethesda, Md. "In most older homes, the kitchen is largely closed off from the rest of the home, and that's not what people want anymore."

The desire to integrate the kitchen with the rest of the house is in response to its changing role in the home from a utilitarian cooking space to the center of all activity in the home.

"It's not just a functional room anymore; it's part of the living space now," Audet says.

While integration is something clients are asking for, it's important to make sure the design works with the way people live, says Keven Schmidt, president of dreamkitchens/dreamrooms.

"If they're going to use it to cook while entertaining, we need to ask them about what they'll be doing," he says. "Let me put it this way: if you're going to be cutting the head off a chicken in

the kitchen, that's not something I want to be seeing while I'm having a cocktail. It's sometimes better to be behind closed doors with the kitchen."

That's why dreamkitchens/dreamrooms focuses on not just what customers say they want but the team also asks clients how they use each room on a daily basis, Keven Schmidt says.

Openness can also be created by adding windows or enlarging existing openings.

"Allowing more natural light in during the day can create that illusion of more space, without having to tear down walls or add on," Audet says.

Homeowners are also choosing to improve their kitchen by better integrating the dining room by removing the doors and walls that separate it from the kitchen. Others are eliminating it all together in favor of more space in the kitchen and an eat-in "country kitchen" area.

"We are seeing people move away from the formal dining room," Contant says. "It really depends on how families use them. We find that people don't use them because they're not convenient, so if we can better incorporate the room it is much more likely to be used."





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PHOTOS BY KEN WYNER, COURTESY OF GTM ARCHITECTS

Remodelers are using different colors and styles on cabinets (left) to accent the differences between islands and wall and base cabinets. Although white cabinets are not as popular as they once were, remodelers still install them in a number of homes.

If people keep their dining rooms, they typically opt for making the room friendlier and easier to use on a daily basis. Families very rarely keep two large dining areas, choosing instead for smaller areas like a breakfast nook or island seating to complement another space in which the family can gather for meals.

"If they're maintaining the dining room, it's because they're getting rid of the eat-in kitchen area," says Terri Schmidt.

### CREATIVE KITCHENS

When it comes to specific features of the kitchen, the answers to what homeowners want varies depending on the region, client's age and style of the home.

"We see everything," says Terri Schmidt. "We're still doing white cabinets. We're seeing a lot of the European country trends, and at the same time, we'll see more stylish looks, like Asian fusion."

One of the most common features people tend to change is the cabinets. With a lot of work being done in older homes, wood tones still dominate the more traditional kitchens.

"Nobody's using oak," Contant says of the older, upper-middle-class neighborhoods his company works in. "Cherry and maple are the two most popular, and we're seeing some interest in hickory."

Atlanta Design & Build is finishing most of its cabinets with natural glazes to give them a more antique look. The company is also using a lot of two-tone cabinet designs, choosing a different color or style on cabinets around islands to contrast with the

## AGING BABY BOOMERS CREATE OPPORTUNITY

There are now more than 36 million people over age 65 in the United States, representing about 12 percent of the population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And more than 80 percent of them own their own homes.

Not surprisingly, remodelers are seeing an increase in demand for universal design features in the bathroom.

"We're doing a lot of master bathrooms and putting in a lot of showers to replace tubs," says Dale Contant, president of Atlanta Design & Build in Marietta, Ga. Other common

changes include raised vanities and toilets, larger doorways and showers with built-in benches.

As baby boomers show a greater desire to stay in their homes than previous generations, universal design will only become more important.

"People want to stay in the homes they've had for years," says John Audet, associate vice president and general manager of the kitchen and bath division for Case Design/Remodeling in Bethesda, Md. "We are seeing more and more people reach those higher ages and ask

for these features."

GTM Architects of Bethesda, Md., is often asked to design spaces that make it easier to incorporate aging-in-place features later, says partner Mark Hughes.

"Where it's a two-story home, we're turning a downstairs bathroom into a full bath and adding a guest room with the idea that it could eventually become a master suite," he says. "In other cases, we're not mounting grab bars in bathrooms, but we are putting the blocks in place in the walls so they can be mounted later."



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The bathroom continues to be the “retreat” for homeowners, where they can relax and get away from daily stresses. Remodelers are incorporating luxury features, such as countertop sinks and jetted spas.

rest of the kitchen, Contant says.

Besides a trend toward darker colors, Hughes says homeowners with GTM opt for simpler, less-detailed cabinet doors. At the same time, they put more emphasis on hardware details such as pulls and hinges.

That emphasis on detailing carries over into countertops, with homeowners looking to separate their kitchens through unique treatments. Granite is still the dominant material by far, and accents and other features can help the countertop stand out.

“People are looking for more one-of-a-kind counters,” says Terri Schmidt. “We’re finding that a lot of people want to choose their own slabs so they can get the exact look they want. That’s not something we would have seen a few years ago.”

Other materials, like wood, glass and concrete are being used for some countertops, but just as often homeowners are using them as accent materials with predominantly granite tops, she says.

Contant is also seeing a lot of mixing of materials in countertops, with some clients expressing interest in marble and wood. Thicker granite tops from stacking two slabs on top of each other for a different look are also popular.

Homeowners are also approaching appliances differently.

“People are definitely focusing on the function of the appli-

ances now more than just the aesthetics,” Terri Schmidt says.

“They are really concerned about the outcome of the food they prepare. They want to make sure the appliance they choose will get the job done.”

Energy-efficiency also affects clients’ choices.

“People are really looking at the Energy Star-rated appliances,” Audet says. “Rising energy costs have really brought that issue to mind for a lot of people.”

That’s part of a larger trend toward incorporating green features into remodels, Audet says.

“We’re really embracing that and we’re seeing more people ask about that when we remodel,” he says. “We expect it to keep growing, so we’re always looking for ways we can reuse materials in a kitchen or bath remodel.”

Hughes says GTM’s clients frequently ask about green, but reports most don’t implement it.

“It’s something they’re aware of but not real familiar with yet,” he says. “I feel we’re just at the beginning of this trend.”

## BATHROOMS MIRROR KITCHENS’ TRENDS

Bathroom remodels are reflecting many of the same design trends as kitchens. Homeowners particularly want more space.

“Generally, we’re being asked to open things up, to create



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PHOTO BY KEN WYNER, COURTESY OF GTM ARCHITECTS



**Furniture-style lavatories (top) are one of the most popular trends in bathroom design, as are large glassed-in showers with multiple heads, reflecting the luxury trend.**

“Generally, we’re being asked to open things up, to create more space and to bring more light into the room,” Contant says.

That means designs using loads of glass and glass block to create the illusion of fewer divisions within the space, allowing smaller rooms to look bigger. In homes with small bathrooms, clients want larger spaces that allow two people to use the room at the same time.

“With most families having both people working, it’s important that they be able to use it simultaneously,” Hughes says.

And, they want luxury items too, especially in master baths.

“The master bath is the retreat,” Audet says. “People want to feel pampered.”

Many of Case’s Washington-area clients travel frequently and stay at high-end resorts and hotels across the country and overseas. They want to incorporate into their homes the features they see during their travels, such as heated floors, towel warmers and multiple shower heads, Audet says.

“They want to treat themselves to a luxurious, spa-like feeling that recreates what they experienced,” he says.

Another popular luxury feature is a television in the bathroom.

“We’re mounting little flat screens in there all the time now,” Contant says.

Like in the kitchen, darker colors are making a comeback in the bathroom. In cabinets, flooring materials and fixtures, homeowners are selecting a richer, more natural look. Brushed nickel and antique bronze are the most popular choices for fixtures and faucets.

“Brass is way out,” Contant says. “We are still seeing some chrome. People are moving away from it, but it will never go away.”

Green remodeling is playing a role in bathrooms as well, with an increased interest in renewable materials and water conservation through the use of dual-flush toilets and other technologies. Advances in ventilation systems are also improving indoor air quality.

Case is installing many environmentally friendly fans that run at a constant low level to circulate the air, then automatically cycle up or down when someone enters or leaves the room. Atlanta Design & Build reports interest in central exhaust fans. They are located away from the bathrooms in the attic and draw from two or three locations. They last longer and create much less noise, Contant says. **PR**



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## SAWHORSE BRINGS A 1950s KITCHEN INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

# Up to Date

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

**WITH A BEAUTIFUL LOT ON A LAKE**, this 1950s Atlanta home was immediately attractive to potential buyers. Unfortunately, the kitchen was dated and cramped, leaving much to be desired. Despite that, the new owners decided to take advantage of the prime location and turned to SawHorse in Atlanta to create the interior they wanted.

"They were a younger couple, and they wanted a kitchen that fit the way they lived," says designer Maribeth Gaines. "They wanted to reorganize the space and create a much bigger kitchen that was suitable for entertaining."

The space to be remodeled included a kitchen, a dining room and a den. SawHorse removed the walls separating each to create one large room, with an informal eating area where the den used to be and a seating area for entertaining replacing the formal dining room, which was moved to the other side of the foyer.

"They really wanted it to be one big area," Gaines says. "It was all about creating open spaces that allowed them to cook and entertain, all in one place. We really just had to use every square inch possible."

### MAKING THE SPACE WORK

In addition to wanting more space, the homeowners also presented an additional challenge to the designers. They wanted to convert the small powder room adjacent to the kitchen into a full bathroom because the first floor didn't have one.

To accommodate the request and not take too much space from the kitchen, SawHorse opted to push the bathroom out into what had been a hallway connecting the den to the foyer. The



change also helped flow visitors into the new entertaining area when they entered through the front door.

In the bathroom, SawHorse pushed the shower into the back corner to make it less visible.

"It's used more often as a powder room, so we wanted to keep that feel," Gaines says. "From outside the room you don't really see the shower, so it helps keep that illusion."

Another important decision SawHorse made: remove the door that had gone directly from the garage to the kitchen, which would lead people to come in through the laundry room/mud room and then enter the new seating area.

"We wanted to keep the kitchen area as uninterrupted as pos-





The new design incorporates warm cherry woodtones to help integrate the modern kitchen into the traditional home.

sible," Gaines says. "We wanted to preserve that open feeling of one connected space."

Although the room needed to feel connected, the design team also wanted to give each area its own personality.

"We wanted to tie it all together, but separate each area as well," Gaines says. "So we used different backsplashes and cabi-

## PRODUCTS LIST

**Appliances:** GE, Jenn-Air, Kenmore, Maytag, Whirlpool **Cabinets:** KraftMaid **Countertops:** Caesarstone, Cambria **Faucets:** Kohler, Newport Brass, Brizo **Flooring:** Mannington **Lighting:** Halo **Sinks:** Elkay



Before



AFTER PHOTOS BY SCOTT WANG PHOTOGRAPHY INC.



SawHorse used wood base cabinets to tie the bar area into the rest of the kitchen, while the glass cabinets and stainless steel backsplash helped to separate it from the rest of the room.

net styles to give each area a unique feel.”

In the cooking area, a cherry finish adds warmth to the base and wall cabinets. That theme carries into the wet bar area, but there SawHorse had only base cabinets, with a large custom-made stainless steel backsplash. The bar area transitions into the entertainment area, so glass cabinets were added above the counters and along the wall.

“The kitchen had to be practical, but with the bar we wanted to take a more fun approach with the strange, wavy stainless steel,” Gaines says.

The backsplash was designed by a local artist/metal worker to give it a three-dimensional look of wrapping around the wall and turning under it. The team left the area above the backsplash empty to allow the homeowners to mount a piece of art from their extensive collection.

“In the seating area, we stopped the steel and went to the glass because we wanted it to feel more formal,” Gaines says.

SawHorse also chose the glass cabinets and shallow countertops in the seating area to allow the homeowners to display art and other items, as opposed to using the storage space needed in the kitchen.

“It was a very large space, so it was important to mix as many

PROJECT TIMELINE

Date	Event	Payments
OCT. 4, 2005	Construction begins/demolition	\$10,284
14, 2005	Start of rough mechanicals	\$26,800
17, 2005	Start of framing	\$26,800
31, 2005	Start of drywall	\$26,800
NOV. 28, 2005	Start of cabinet installation	\$26,800
DEC. 9, 2005	Start of interior paint	\$26,800
JAN. 6, 2006	Start to finish electrical	\$26,800
FEB. 9, 2006	Project completion	\$20,567

Budget History

Estimate	\$96,000
Final price of job	\$96,000
Cost to produce	\$63,000
Gross profit	\$33,000
Budgeted gross profit	34%
Actual gross profit	34%

(Project was part of a larger \$191,000 remodel)





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materials as possible,” Gaines says. “Otherwise, with a kitchen that large, you run the risk of it becoming mundane.”

## BLENDING WITH TRADITION

Design and material choices were also important in integrating the kitchen with the rest of the home. The exterior of the home was untouched and much of the interior was not being remodeled, so SawHorse had to be sure the new kitchen was not jarringly different from the home’s traditional style.

“The clients wanted sleek and new — a very contemporary look — but I really wanted to help them blend it a little bit better with the house,” Gaines says. “We managed to talk them into warmer wood tones, which really helped make it part of the house.”

That’s a challenge in many of the kitchens the company remodels for clients looking for modern conveniences in traditional homes.

“When you give homeowners the reason behind the changes, they’re open to it,” Gaines says. “They don’t want to create something that is out of whack.”

This project is representative of the type of kitchen work SawHorse’s clients ask the firm to take on. With most people looking for bigger and better, many projects cost \$80,000 or more.

“They wanted something where people would come in and say, ‘Wow, this is a big kitchen,’” Gaines says. “That’s what we’re seeing clients ask for these days. They want as big a space as possible.”

## COMPANY SNAPSHOT

**SawHorse**

**Location:** Atlanta

**Owner:** Jerome Quinn

**Type of company:** Design/build

**2006 sales volume:** \$4.8 million

**Projected 2007 volume:** \$5.5 million

**Contact:** [www.sawhorse.net](http://www.sawhorse.net)

**Biggest challenge:** Updating the kitchen to meet modern needs while still blending with a traditional home

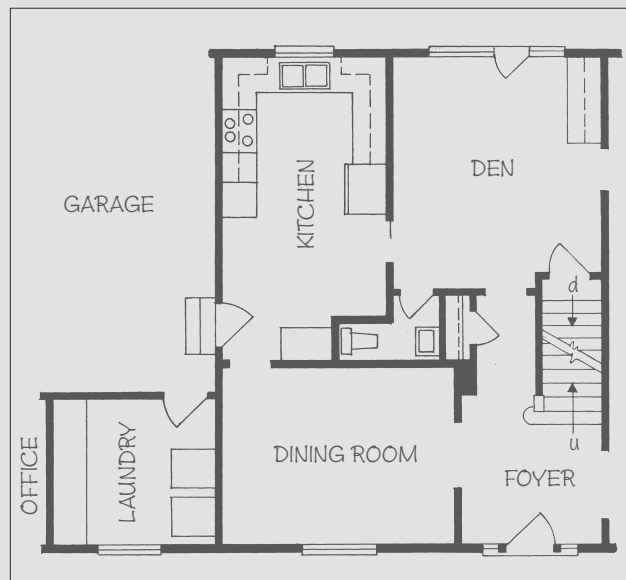
In this case, the size of the home allowed the client to preserve a formal dining room, but many homeowners instead choose to do away with it all together.

“Many people will opt to just absorb that space in favor of a larger kitchen with an informal eating area,” Gaines says. “We still find that people want someplace that the family can sit down together, but they just don’t want that formal room. They want spaces where they can hang out.” **PR**

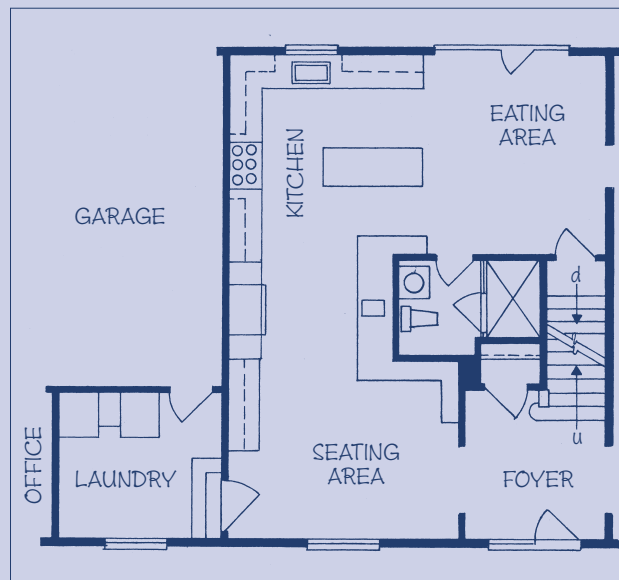
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Before



After





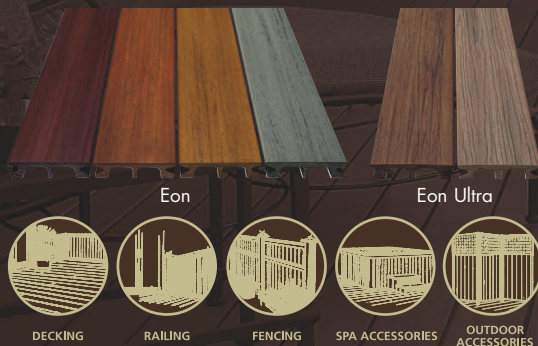
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# CROWN JEWEL CREATION

Creating the ultimate luxury bathroom was the cherry on top of a series of remodeling projects for these anxious homeowners

The multi-purpose linen tower became an essential addition for storage and added spatial definition for the his-and-her vessel sinks. Exposed plumbing under each sink gives the illusion of more space, which adds to the furniture-look design of the vanity.

AFTER PHOTOS BY ROBERT CHURCH PHOTOGRAPHY





## BATHROOM REMODEL

**REMODELER AND ARCHITECT:** College City Remodeling, Lakeville, Minn.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Lakeville, Minn.

**AGE OF HOME:** 6 years

**SCOPE OF WORK:** Pull and replace luxury bathroom

**THE HOMEOWNERS IN THIS** Lakeville, Minn., home had several remodeling projects under their belt to boost the curb-appeal of their home, but the master bedroom and bathroom was a space they never fully connected with. They commissioned College City Remodeling, also in

Lakeville, to redo the space and saw the project as the final chapter of their efforts to make the home truly their own. (College City Homes, the remodeler's sister division, had built the high-end townhome, so there was intimate familiarity with the space.)

"They already had a beautiful bathroom, but both of the homeowners live busy and active lifestyles that include physical

**The owners wanted to mimic a "big-city condo" for their 150-square-foot bathroom. To complete the look, College City Remodelers included floor-to-ceiling ceramic tile and slate throughout.**

## BEFORE



## PRODUCTS LIST

**Ceramic Tile:** American Olean, Laufen **Faucets, Fixtures & Sinks:** Kohler **Lighting Fixtures:** Oxygen **Insulation:** Owens Corning **Paints & Stains:** Hirshfield's **Water Heaters:** Rheem

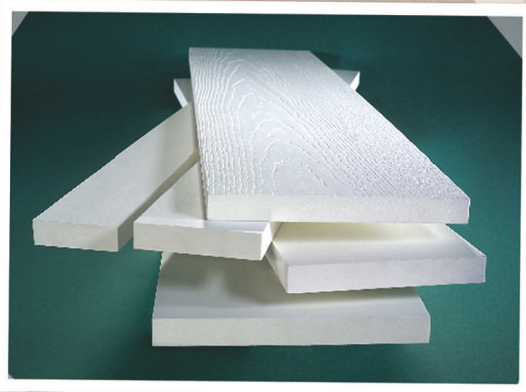


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**The thick textured glass panel above the tub almost appears to be a water feature upon first glance — the sheet bayou glass aesthetically connects the tub to the shower. “The way the tub is situated, because it’s stuck in a corner, the bayou glass makes it seem more open and adds a little visual interest,” designer Jennifer Murnan of College City Remodeling says, noting that the transom window just above the tub lets in sunlight, which adds to the effect.**

exercise, so they wanted the bathroom to function as a rejuvenating retreat. They wanted it to be a very private and personal space,” says College City Remodeling Lead Designer Jennifer Murnan.

To accomplish this in the existing footprint of an approximately 8- by 5-square-foot space, Murnan focused on features, finishes and fashion. The new bathroom has a stand-alone tub; a walk-in shower with five-spray body massaging system and recessed shower shelf; and a linen tower with dual vanities. Granite countertops, ceramic tile and high-end

in plumbing fixtures finish off the space. The vanity’s wood was custom stained to match the tub’s frame for seamless styling throughout.

Murnan let the contemporary, clean lines, floor-to-ceiling tile and warm brown and cream hues create a sleek, unfettered space that complemented the open floor plan and 9-foot ceilings of the existing townhome. The countered the homeowners’ perception of their previous bathroom, which they described as narrow and cold. Murnan adds that the materials are also virtually maintenance-free, appropriate for







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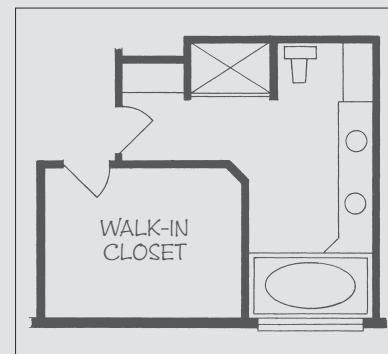
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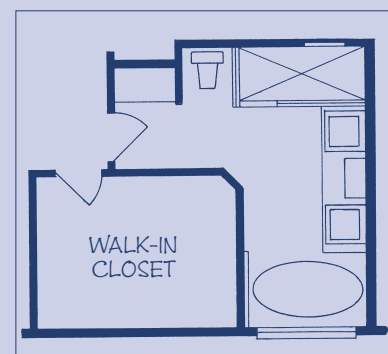


Remodelers say the main challenge of this \$129,600 bathroom became reconfiguring existing plumbing. A second water heater helps water flow for the sink, tub and multi-head shower.

Before



After



the clients' busy lifestyle.

A project like this — which didn't add any square footage to the space and simply focused on making what was there better — is indicative of a continuing trend of clients looking for personalized spa bathrooms with to-the-max accessories to fit within their budget. This approximately 150-square-foot bathroom cost \$129,600.

"The majority of the clients that we deal with, they all want the spa, and that means different things for different people," Murnan says.

"These homeowners were incredibly detail-oriented, so for them, it wasn't just function. It was curb appeal — that 'wow' factor." **PR**

— Meghan Haynes

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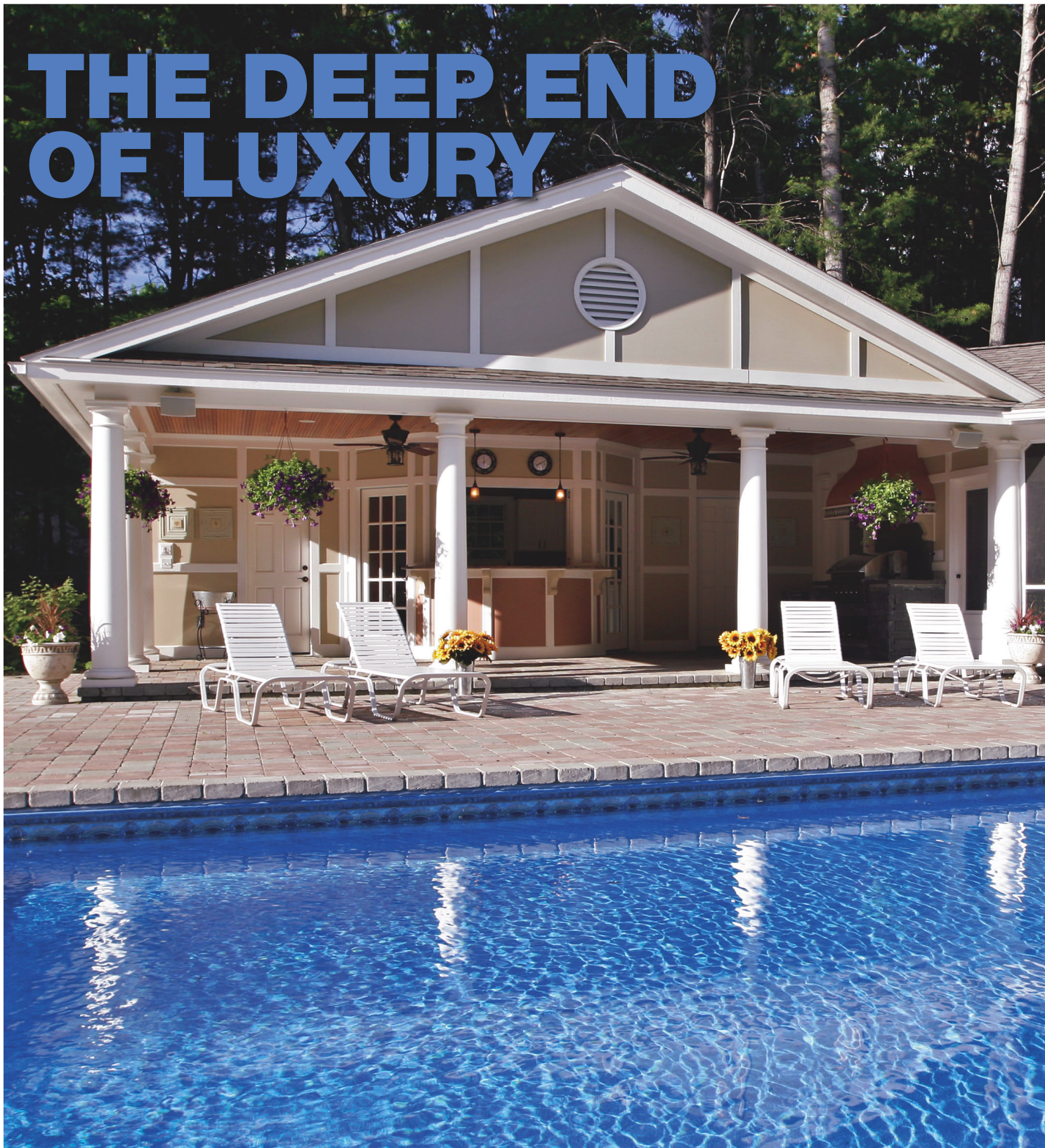
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# THE DEEP END OF LUXURY







## Plans for a simple shed-style cabana morph into a truly copacetic space

### OUTDOOR LIVING

**REMODELER AND ARCHITECT:** Teakwood Builders, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

**AGE OF HOME:** 4 years

**SCOPE OF WORK:** Creating an outdoor retreat to complement the home

**THIS CUSTOM COLONIAL SITS IN** a newer development that boasts larger lot sizes and deep backyards, and the clients were able to add a heated swimming pool after their purchase. However, the home is serviced by a septic system, and the system and leak fields occupied a large portion of the backyard, making for an almost 50-yard

The homeowners decided to add the screened porch after the project commenced so the porch had to be carefully executed to ensure it related well with the swimming pool. "We thought about putting up a separate gazebo, but we didn't want two independent structures competing with each other and detracting from the overall design," remodeler Jim Sasko says. "A linear projection from the side of the cabana would have extended it away and limited the view, so we skewed the structure 22.5 degrees to improve the sightline but still allow solace for anyone who wants to be distant from pool activity." The space features an integrated sound system (connected to home) and a plasma TV with cable hook-up. The stamped concrete floors resemble wood and inlay.

trek between the pool and home.

Walking to the home for each fresh towel or a soda became impractical, so the owners decided a cabana would add multi-purpose functionality. The homeowner had used a do-it-yourself CAD program to offer the overall vision of the project based on a picture he'd seen in a magazine, which



### PRODUCTS LIST

**Faucets:** Kohler **Sinks:** Kohler **Cabinets:** Kraftmaid **Ceramic Tile:** American Olean **Columns:** HB&G **Countertops:** Formica, Granite **Doors:** Simpson **House Wrap:** Tyvek (DuPont) **Insulation:** Owens Corning **Kitchen Appliances:** GE Appliances **Lighting Fixtures:** Juno, Kichler, Lightolier **Locksets:** Emtek **Paints & Stains:** Sherwin-Williams **Roofing:** CertainTeed **Water Heaters:** A.O. Smith **Windows:** Pella

AFTER PHOTOS BY SCOTT BERGMANN PHOTOGRAPHY





helped shape the aesthetics.

"While it was an unusual situation, I pulled good ideas for spatial requirements as they relate to the pool filter, pool heater and septic tank from those drawings, as well as a sense of what he wanted style-wise with the Roman columns," says Jim Sasko, founder and president of Saratoga Springs-based Teakwood Builders, the remodeler and architect for the project.

The site required specific configurations.

**The full-service kitchen opens to the outdoors and provides a convenient outdoor, countertop eating area.**

### Bringing the Heat

Working on an outdoor retreat in upstate New York during the winter months — the project commenced in November — comes with inherent challenges. To help reach the necessary temperature for the drywall, painting and pouring of the concrete floors, remodeler Jim Sasko of Teakwood Builders brought in an old gas furnace that was pulled from a prior project and built a tent to keep hot air in that space. "We sometimes had to clear a lot of snow before we could even work, and we had to make sure that the drywall didn't freeze overnight when we taped it," he says. When they started framing exterior walls and installing the roof trusses and shingles, they used a mason's plastic wrap around the perimeter to maintain the heat from the furnace. These weather-related issues added approximately 45 days to the total project time.

Teakwood crews also had to address how to service the volume of gas that was needed to run the appliances in the cabana and run the swimming pool. They had to install an industrial size gas line approximately 2 inches in diameter to the backyard. "It was a learning curve because we couldn't just run a one-inch line," Sasko adds, noting that, coupled with the inclement weather issues, some of the appliances have to be removed during the winter months.





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Initially the homeowners were adamant about having a fireplace under the covered exterior and preferred to roll in a freestanding gas grill. Remodeler Jim Sasko disagreed with the idea, but rather than nix it entirely, he designed a grill top structure with a dry-stacked fieldstone surround to mimic the look of a fireplace. "A fireplace would have been nice, but how often would you use that? And you can't just stick a grill underneath without ventilation. So we felt we found a nice compromise that gives the look of a stone fireplace but functions as a gas grill that draws away all the grease and smoke."

"Our first priority was to make sure the cabana was high enough to drain with the proper slope and elevation, so we had to break sewer line. And in addition to meeting the code requirements for the setback distance, we had to reset the pool pavers to make sure they pitched away from the cabana," he says.

The final design produced a 900-square-foot cabana complete with a full bathroom; working kitchen and bar area; screened porch; and connected storage area in the rear. Low-voltage halogen lights surround the structure. Beveled cedar siding and high-quality finishes mirror the look and tone of the existing home.

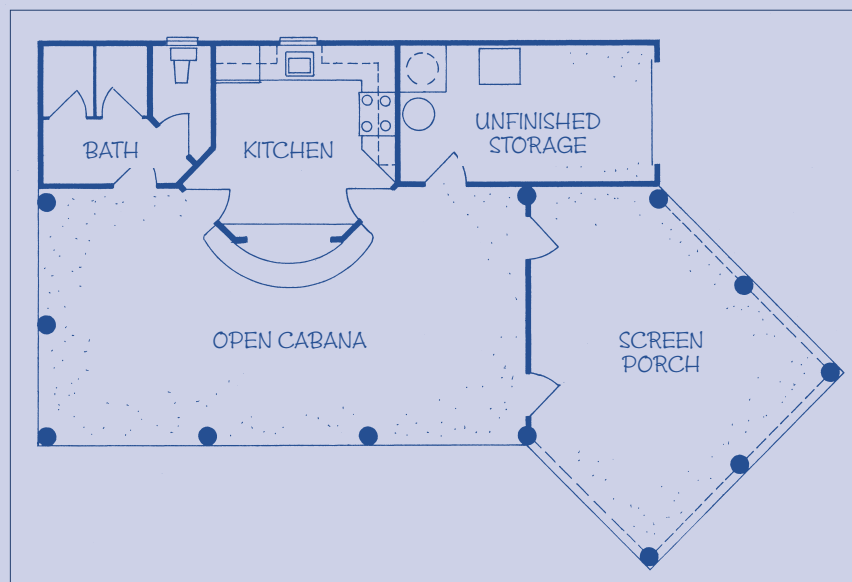
The five-month project cost \$192,600.

"We ended up building a pool cabana that cost about the same as a home, so they really had to love it and be thoroughly invested in how they would use the space for their family," Sasko says.

"To me the best indicator of how well the space worked out was that the wife threw the husband a surprise 40th birthday party that was solely around the pool. There were about 100 people there, and the caterers and bartenders had everything they needed and were able to work in the cabana. It was nice to say after it was all said and done that it really worked. It did everything it was supposed to do." **PR**

— Meghan Haynes

After



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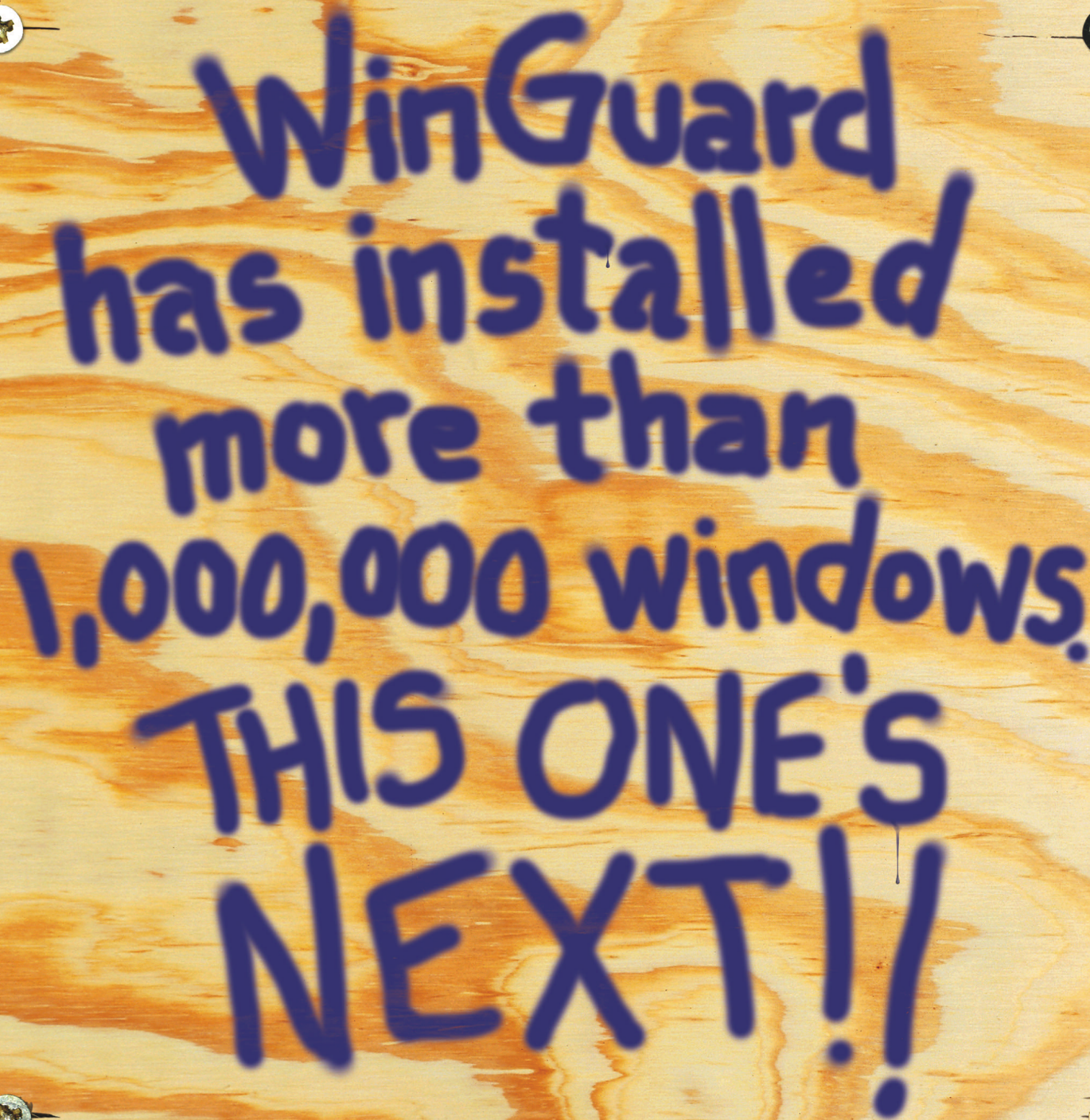
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# CAPS LOCK

Upgrade your business with aging-in-place certification, design

By Asa Foss  
PATH Partners



## CHANCES ARE YOU'VE BEEN MAKING

most of your money from baby boomers the past decade or two. If you want to continue to tap America's largest population segment, you may need to find new ways to meet the needs of this aging clientele.

As baby boomers retire, they're choosing to retire in their own homes, unlike their parents did.

"We've noticed first-hand that over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of people who want to live independently rather than in an assisted-living facility," says Katie Lammers of Lammers Construction Services in Iowa City, Iowa.

Which is why aging-in-place design has attracted so much attention. Help clients stay in their homes longer by making the home more accessible using aging-in-place techniques.

The good news is that you've probably been using some of these techniques all along. With a little extra education and planning, you can market yourself as an expert and secure a larger slice of the baby boomer pie.

## Get Certified

Get started at NAHB, which offers a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation. Randy Stow, CAPS, CGR, a remodeler for 13 years and owner of Stow's Home Repair and Remodeling in Houston, now concentrates exclusively on renovations to improve accessibility.

"I got the certification back in 2002

**Pantry cabinet with knee space and easy-to-reach, full-extension shelves.**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATH PARTNERS



because you need something to differentiate yourself from everyone else. This is it for me," says Stow.

CAPS — a collaboration between the

AARP, the NAHB Research Center, and NAHB's 50+ Housing Council and remodelers councils — trains and certifies remodelers in aging-in-place design. And business

is booming. When it was launched in 2002, CAPS certified 52 professionals; in 2005, it certified 284. By July 2006, the total number of CAPS certifications hit 1,000.

Remodelers who don't plan to make aging in place their main focus, certification can still help.

"The greatest benefit for me to getting CAPS certified is that I have greatly increased my versatility as a remodeler," says Steve Shattuck, CAPS, CGR, CR, of Shattuck & Associates in Puyallup, Wash. "For example, I ask all my clients how long they are planning on living in the home. If they say for the rest of their lives, I encourage them to select some accessibility features, such as wider doors and hallways. And so they say, 'Of course, it makes sense.' Nobody else told them that stuff before."

"It's all about planning and thinking about what they want to do in the future."

Certification entails a three-day course. The first day covers the social aspects of working with seniors and people with dis-



Universal bathroom cabinets can have "entertainment center" door hardware that opens to provide knee space (top). The adjustable-height lavatory (bottom) has knee space and easy-to-reach, lever-handled faucets.



The curbless shower has a built-in seat; adjustable-height, hand-held shower; and lever-handled faucets.





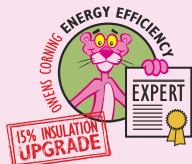
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The prefabricated curbless shower has an adjustable-height bar for the hand-held shower and a lever-handled faucet.

abilities. The second day addresses the technical aspects of accessible design, such as where and how to locate grab bars, light switches, doors, kitchen cabinets and counters. The third day covers business management training.

At a cost of \$320 for NAHB members, you can gain a marketing edge that your competitors may have never considered.

### Expand Your Referral Base

Aging in place has helped Stow build a strong referral base, which has been his most effective form of marketing. He spends a lot of time educating professionals who work with the elderly and disabled about universal design and accessibility products.

Stow meets with occupational and physical therapists at home health care companies to tell them about products they can suggest to their clients. Stow also visits assisted living facilities and gives mini-sem-

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**The wide pocket door provides easy wheelchair access.**

inarians to groups such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and, Lou Gehrig's society, and similar support groups. Easy Living Home Texas, a program sponsored by the Institute for Rehabilitation Research, has been another major source of referrals.

"I've spent the money doing magazine and newspaper ads, flyers, things like that, but to no response," Stow says. "I've come

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- Do you have any relatives who visit often? Is mobility an issue?
- When you sell this house, would you like to appeal to as wide a market as possible?

to the conclusion that going door to door with any kind of aging-in-place advertising is ineffective. The general public is not ready to accept that they need our services. But if their doctor or occupational therapist

says that they need to have a retrofit done, I'll have them in an instant."

Many CAPS remodelers also get referrals from their local builder and remodeler associations.

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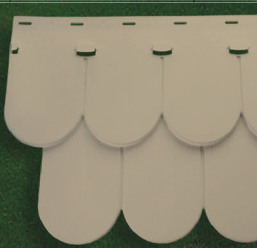
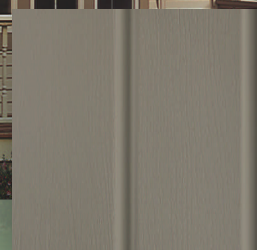
Whatever your client's vision, Variform Vinyl Siding is the perfect siding choice to bring their best ideas to life.

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- a wide variety of fashionable styles and colors to thrill your customers;
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- advanced installation features that make your life easier!

And Variform's stringent quality controls—backed by a solid warranty—means fewer callbacks and happier homeowners, so when the job is finished, the job is finished!

**Relax. Choose Variform Vinyl Siding.**



\* Variform commissioned an independent research study of homeowners in 2005 that was conducted by the Vernon Research Group. Respondents did not include homeowners with primary brick or stucco exteriors.

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For details about Variform products, or to find a distributor in your area,  
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**A no-step entrance with a side light and lever door handle adds accessibility. Lever handle door hardware can be used by people who cannot grasp and twist or by those without hands and by anyone whose hands are full of packages.**

## Resources

- NAHB Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist: [www.nahb.org/education](http://www.nahb.org/education). Click on "Designations."
- Universal Design Bathtubs, Showers and Kitchen Cabinets: [www.toolbase.org/techinventory](http://www.toolbase.org/techinventory).
- Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University: [www.design.ncsu.edu/cud](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud).



**A different type of universal entrance with front steps and a no-step side approach.**

"When people call the local builder's association looking for an aging-in-place remodeler, the association will give them the three or four names with the CAPS designation in the area," says Shattuck.

He also relies on doctors and other professionals for referrals, he says, estimating that about ten percent of his projects predominantly feature aging-in-place concepts. He gets so much business he turns work away every day.

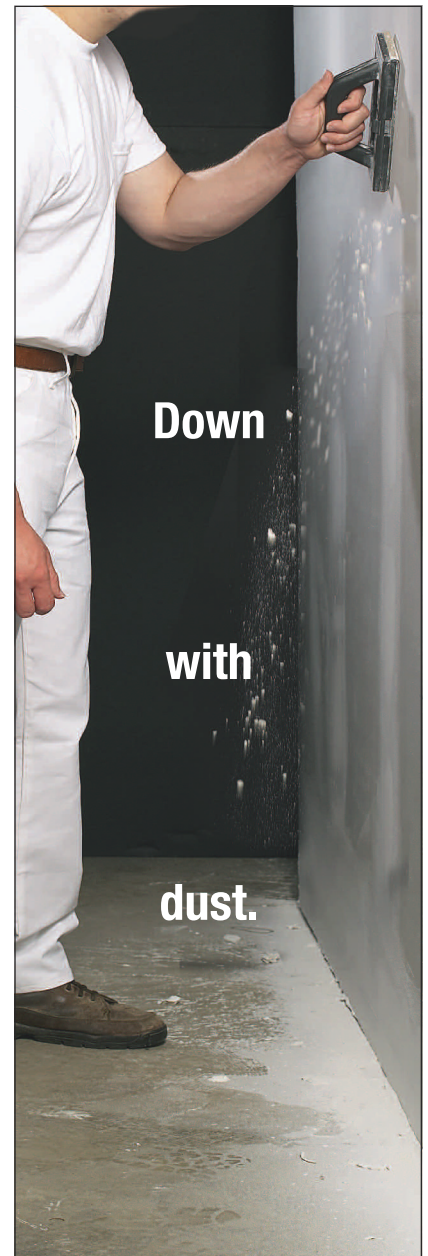
Proposing an aging-in-place design to elderly or disabled clients is obvious, but don't miss the chance to propose it to younger and more mobile clients as well. Planning for the future can save them significant money and hassle of another renovation down the road.

So go out there and use your knowledge of aging-in-place to grow your business. There's no time to waste.

"There are a lot of us in the baby boomer era who are going to need aging-in-place services," says Shattuck. "It's going to become even more significant, so it's a smart move for people to be prepared for this." **PR**

*Asa Foss writes about better building practices on behalf of the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH). PATH is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Learn more at [www.pathnet.org](http://www.pathnet.org).*

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## CRANE PERFORMANCE SIDING

Mimicking the look of natural stone, Crane Performance Siding's BellaStone line, according to the company, reduces traditional labor and installs at least 50 percent faster than traditional stone. The panels can be mounted directly to the wall, and a full line of accessories are available. The product is made in earth-tone Tuscan or gray-tone Torino (shown).

For FREE info, go to  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-125>



## NUTONE

In-ceiling and in-wall speakers from NuTone feature, according to the company, improved bass and sound and can easily be painted to blend with existing décor. Offerings include the ES628DS two-way, weather-resistant, in-wall speaker that allows a single speaker to be used in confined rooms without losing stereo audio. It handles 100 watts of RMS power and has a five-year warranty.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-127>



## NAPOLEON FIREPLACES

The Tureen direct vent gas fireplace by Napoleon Fireplaces sports modern European styles in a double-fired ceramic bowl complemented with river rock. The unit kicks out 26,000 BTUs and has the flexibility of flame and heat adjustment for comfort. It also features an electronic ignition and digital hand-held remote along with the company's Night Light, which creates a soft glow when the fireplace is off.

For FREE info, go to  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-126>



## VITRA

Using fewer gallons per flush than the mandated 1.6 gallons per minute, Vitra's line of Evergreen HET, or high-efficiency toilets, includes the 1.2 gallons per minute Gravity Flush, Dual Flush 0.8/1.6 gallon per minute (in a round front or elongated front) and the one gallon per minute Pressure Assist HET.

For FREE info, go to  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-128>



## BEAM/ELECTROLUX

The Serenity QS Power Unit and its companion Q electric power brush, hose and cleaning tools from Beam Industries, a subsidiary of Electrolux, features a 640 air watt motor, which, according to the company, produces 10 to 25 percent more power than other units.

The Serenity uses the Quiet Pak insulation package and Sound Off muffler to reduce noise and vibration.

**For FREE info, go to**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-129>



## HUNTER

The Villa Fan from Hunter has a detailed motor housing, curled blade arm and frosted amber glass globe. The blades have a 52-inch span and 12 degree blade pitch, and are made of furniture-grade veneer. The Hunter, part of the company's Prestige series, features an efficient AirMax motor and a patented WobbleFree canopy.

**For FREE info, go to**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-130>



## RIDGID PROFESSIONAL TOOLS

The SeeSnake Micro from Ridgid Professional Tools is a hand-held, fully flexible tool that allows inspectors to see inside ductwork, appliances and walls. Attached to the three-foot vinyl cable, the high-resolution camera transmits images back to a 2½-inch LCD screen. Two LED lights provide illumination and run on four AA batteries, providing up to three hours of continuous run time.

**For FREE info, go to**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-131>

## AMERICAN FLUORESCENT

Responding to the call of "Green" lighting, the Diode28 LED under-cabinet fixture by American Fluorescent will, according to the company, last for 10 years if lit continuously. Each fixture draws 7 watts and up to 20 individual components can be strung together. Options include a high/low feature with illuminated switch.

**For FREE info, go to** <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-132>





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### SFA SANIFLO

The Sanishower Above Floor Gray Water Plumbing System by SFA Saniflo is a fully automatic gray water compact pump system designed to discharge wastewater from a shower, bathtub, bar or bathroom sink, making it ideal for tight areas where installation space is severely limited. It measures only 13 inches wide and 6½ inches deep.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-133>



### USG CORP.

The Sheetrock Lightweight All-Purpose Joint Compound from USG Corp. reduces airborne sanding dust for less mess and faster cleanup and weighs up to 35 percent less than conventional compounds. It comes ready-mixed and requires only two coats over metal and bonds like a taping compound.

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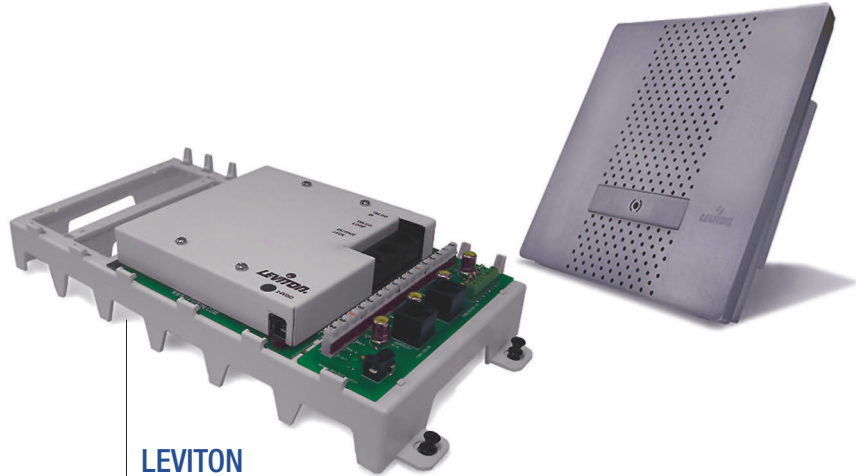




## ANDERSEN WINDOWS & DOORS

Expanding on the company's 200 series, the Hinged Inswing Patio Door from Andersen Windows & Doors has traditional French styling and glass fiber construction with an aluminum exterior frame. It is available in single- and double-panel configurations in multiple widths and 6'8" and 6'11" heights.

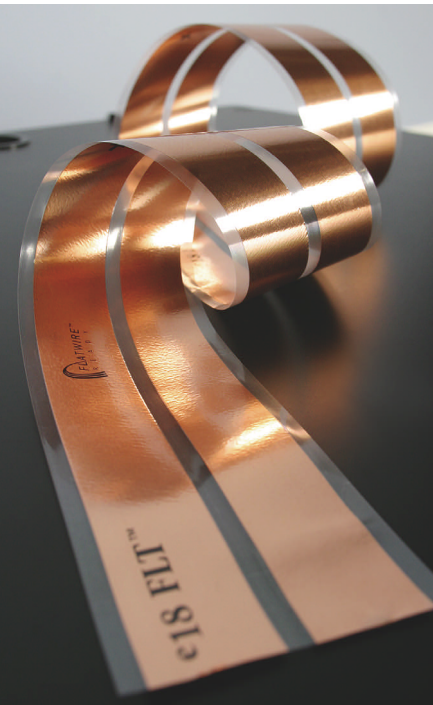
**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-135>**



## LEVITON

Able to coordinate with contemporary décor, the Residential Intercom System from Leviton is designed to work with the company's other residential Cat5e structured wiring installations. The modular system provides basic intercom and paging functions and comprises a main controller board, outdoor and indoor stations and a door chime. Standard telephones are used for the indoor user interface.

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-136>**



## SOUTHWIRE

The FlatWire is an ultra-thin wire that allows low-voltage lighting fixtures to be mounted anywhere on walls or ceilings and connected to an electrical outlet without drilling holes, pulling electrical wires or using extension cords. Produced by Southwire, installation can be finished using standard concealing and painting. The system is UL listed and has 30 lighting sconces in a variety of finishes.

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-137>**



## MOEN

The Trianna pull-down kitchen faucets by Moen offer functionality with three spray options: aerated stream, spray and pause. The pause button allows users to interrupt the water flow while moving the spout outside of the sink. The faucet can be installed as a two- or three-hole mount and is available in chrome and the company's proprietary LifeShine Stainless finishes.

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5319-138>**



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### ATLAS HOMEWARES

Fusing the look of centuries-old craftsmanship with current design trends, the new Old World Collection from Atlas Homewares features a 4-inch and a 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch pull and a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch knob. Finishes include brushed bronze, craftsman copper,

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-139>**



### BLANCO AMERICA

Sticking to the European influence, Blanco America's BlancoPerforma sinks are made from 18-gauge steel with 18/10 chrome-nickel content for shine and durability. The bowls are 10 inches deep and have flat bottoms and an off-center drain placement. The company's insulation muffles water and garbage disposal noise.

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-140>**



### WHIRLPOOL

Featuring the company's PowerScour technology that uses targeting jets to scrub away debris without scrubbing or soaking, GE's Gold Dishwashers also have a new slate interior that reduces visible tub stains after a wash. The unit's Adaptive Wash cycle uses sensors to measure load size and soil level for best results.

**For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-141>**

### DELTA

Fitting the company's "shabby chic" and "sophisticated country" trend, the Talbott single-handle kitchen faucet from Delta features a recessed aerator in a one-hole, two-hole with side spray, three hole without side spray and four-hole with side spray configurations. Finishes include chrome and Brilliance stainless.

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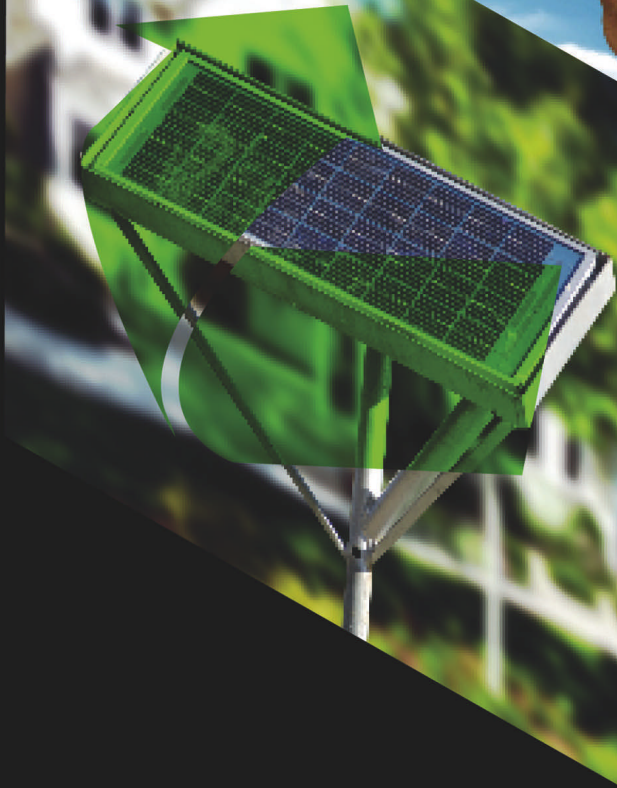
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## GE

Custom Hood Inserts from GE attach directly to house ducts from within the unit, eliminating the need to adjust, remove or replace the canopy. The on-board control panel can be removed from the hood insert during installation and can be mounted to the wall or countertop. Tile, wood panels and other decorative finishes are available.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-143>

## THERMADOR

Building on the company's previous Masterpiece Series, the Professional Series 30-inch Single/Double Convection ovens from Thermador have restaurant-style controls and stainless-steel knobs. The ovens use a triple configuration with a convection microwave, convection oven and warming drawer. A 30-inch Double Convection Thermal Oven model is also available.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-144>



## BRIZO

Expanding on the Trevi line, the Trevi Cross Handle faucet by Brizo has configurations for the entire home, including kitchen, bar/prep, bathroom, Roman tub and shower faucets.

Inspired by contemporary European designs, the Trevi Cross Handle is also available as an upgrade on the company's Total Escape Custom Shower system.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-145>



## ACP

Jumping in on the decorative backsplash trend, ACP's thermoplastic backsplash panels for kitchens and bathrooms are water- and corrosion-resistant. The panels measure 18 by 24 inches and are color-infused in 14 finishes and six embossed designs, including a paintable white, brushed aluminum, Bermuda bronze and cracked copper.

For FREE info, go to <http://pr.ims.ca/5344-146>



### Perfecting Installation

Although it's important to have a good product, the success or failure of a window replacement project ultimately comes down to proper installation.

"We do most jobs with no money down, and the client doesn't have to pay if they're not satisfied, so installation problems are a big concern for us," says Asaf Shaposhnick, chief operating officer of Power Windows & Siding in Brookhaven, Pa.

The company has seen marked improvement in callbacks since it began training its installers with the InstallationMasters program designed by the American Architectural Manufacturers Association, Shaposhnick says.

Being able to tell customers the company has certified installers also helps in marketing because it shows the company is dedicated to quality, Shaposhnick says.

Installers can receive training through the program in a couple of ways. Companies can either hire an accredited trainer directly (from a list on the Web at [www.installation-mastersusa.com](http://www.installation-mastersusa.com)) or participate through a sponsored session offered by a manufacturer or supplier. Several of the major window manufacturers have certified instructors on staff, including Jeld-Wen, Pella and Weather Shield Windows & Doors. Certification has to be renewed every four years. Several other manufacturers have their own training programs for installers as well.



#### MILGARD WINDOWS

Featuring the company's fiberglass frame and sash design with standard SunCoat Low-E glass, Milgard Windows' new double-hung tilt sash windows are made in six standard exterior colors and interior treatments in pre-finished white or wood clad clear vertical grain Douglas fir. Custom colors can be ordered as well.

**For FREE info, go to**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-147>



#### WEATHER SHIELD WINDOWS & DOORS

Replicating classic architectural elements from the 1700s to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Neoclassical Collection from Weather Shield Windows & Doors includes a push-out casement, double-hung tilt, transom, picture and single-hung options. Hinged and concealed retractable wood screens are available for casements.

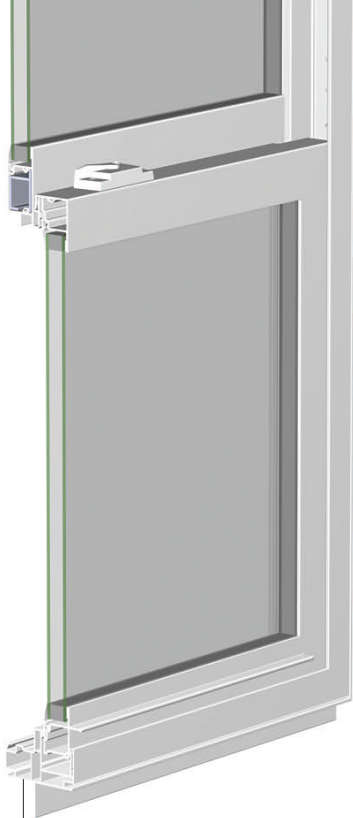
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#### HY-LITE

The StormBlocker windows by Hy-Lite pass Miami-Dade County, Fla. testing requirements to help resist 230 mph storm-force winds, internal/external air pressure changes and impact. The windows are made of acrylic in six sizes and feature a polycarbonate reinforced core and high-strength aluminum frame. Block types include clear wave, frosted wave, solar block and cross rib.

**For FREE info, go to**  
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## WINDSOR WINDOWS & DOORS

The latest vinyl windows from Windsor include the Next Dimension Pro. Touting it as more attractive than aluminum, easier to install and operate, lower maintenance and more energy-efficient, the company reports it offers 30 new feature-clad covers. The windows have vinyl extrusions, a 2-inch frame with extruded nail fins and a fusion-welded frame for leak resistance.

**For FREE info, go to**  
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## ATRIUM WINDOWS & DOORS

Using the company's Truth Maxim low-profile, multi-point locking system and multi-chambered assembly for sound absorbency, Atrium Windows & Doors' Series 700 casement windows are available in all standard sizes. The 700 windows have an integrated nail fin design for quick installation. Options include Low-E glass and decorative grids.

**For FREE info, go to**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5344-151>



## GORELL WINDOWS & DOORS

Armor Max Plus vinyl hurricane windows from Gorell Windows & Doors include a double hung with tilt-in sash, two- and three-light lift-out sliders and a picture window configurations. The windows pass ASTM Large Missile Impact Level D testing and have heavy-duty double cam sweep locks to hold sashes in place and insulating foam wrap around the frame.

**For FREE info, go to**  
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## MARVIN WINDOWS AND DOORS

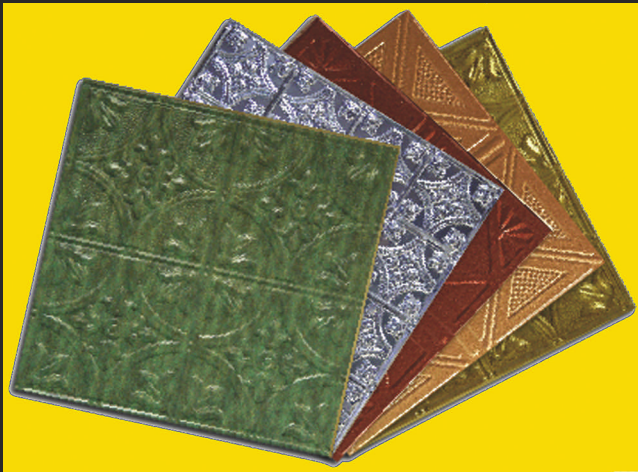
Answering demand for large radial shapes, the Ultimate Double-Hung Magnum Round Top by Marvin Windows and Doors will be available in spring 2007. A variety of shapes and sizes will be made, including elliptical, eyebrow and sizes for double- and single-hung variations. Nineteen colors, several wood species and divided lites are also available.

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# Product and Literature Digest

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## Product and Literature Digest



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# Product and Literature Digest

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## UNIVERSAL DESIGN APPEAL

Universal design, handicap access, adaptive design, visibility — they're all terms I'm sure you've seen or heard at some point as a remodeler or as an industry ally. Look at those words again and think about what kind of picture they paint for you in your mind.

Do you see cold commercial-style restrooms or that unsightly ramp tacked onto your local post office? Maybe you see wheelchairs, walkers and stainless steel shower seats. Whatever comes to mind, it's hard not to admit there is a certain stigma attached to those clinical terms.

As we continue to respond to our aging population and the housing needs associated with that market, those words and the design principles unique to each term will be hard to ignore if you like to maintain yourself in the mainstream remodeling industry. With one in four of us in the U.S. currently over the age of 50, it's a sure thing you'll be called to action sooner or later to integrate some unique

design solutions into one of your projects.

That really is how most of us are introduced to aging-in-place housing solutions; we get a call from a prospect who has an express need for something in their house as a result of an accident or injury or has a long-term progressive or degenerative disease.

As a result of that call, we need to immediately school ourselves on what to do for that specific need or ailment — not exactly the way any of us want to learn. But, all too often we're forced into becoming an expert, or today's client will find someone who can offer them the professional advice they seek.

One solution is to begin to educate yourself about what aging in place design encompasses. You'll find in most respects it has a lot to do with the fairly straightforward principles of universal design.

The definition of universal design is simply to create environments that are supportive of all people, ages and abilities. Although few designs can integrate all design principles unique to

universal design, you would be surprised how many could be included with a little planning and some attention paid to product selection and placement.

The real appeal to introducing universal design into your work successfully is that it can be challenging, to even the best designers, to pull off integration of universal design and score the ultimate victory, creating an approach in which the use of universal design isn't felt or necessarily seen without thinking about the space in those terms. In other words, universal design is a design tool that doesn't have to have a sterile or institutional feel to it.

It's up to the designer and the builder to successfully create a project that is universal design sensitive but remains true to the client's original intent on how he or she wanted the space to look and to feel. If you are truly successful, only you and the trained observer will be able to list all the principles employed. After all, isn't that why people are paying to use a professional in the first place? **PR**



### Bill Owens

*Advisory Board Columnist*

**Birth Date:** Jan. 23, 1958

**Company:** Owens Construction

**Location:** Columbus, Ohio

**Industry Involvement:** NAHB

**Remodelers Council Chair, 2002**

**Best Advice I've Received:** The customer isn't always right but they're still the customer (from my dad)

**If I Weren't a Remodeler...**

I'd be running a snowcat at a western ski resort

**Most Important Issue Facing**

**the Industry:** Most contractors

I know don't charge enough to derive a fair profit

**Greatest Business Achievement:**

Better Business Bureau Business Integrity Award, 2000

**Favorite Family Activity:** Staying

at our lake house on Lake Erie, truly our second home

**Best Memory from Childhood:**

Santa's delivery to me at age 10 — scrap wood and a saber saw

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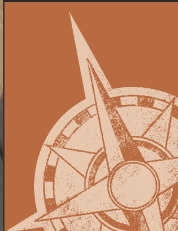


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