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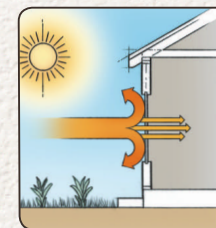
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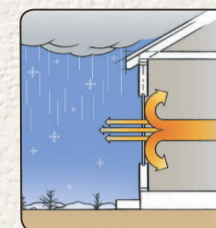
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#### Debut of Blogs

For the latest trends, news and topics of interest to remodeling firm executives, log onto our blogs by Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet and Editor in Chief Mike Morris.

[www.ProRemodeler.com/blogs](http://www.ProRemodeler.com/blogs)

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#### Best of the Best

The deadline's rapidly approaching for the Best of the Best Awards. Entry forms are due by May 15, 2007 and Entry Notebooks are due by June 15, 2007. Don't delay!

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## staff

### EDITOR IN CHIEF

**Michael R. Morris**  
630/288-8057; michael.morris@reedbusiness.com

### SENIOR EDITOR

**Jonathan Sweet**  
630/288-8170; jonathan.sweet@reedbusiness.com

### MANAGING EDITOR

**Judi Damm**  
630/288-8193; judi.damm@reedbusiness.com

### COPY EDITOR

**Sara Zailskas**  
630/288-8197; sara.zailskas@reedbusiness.com

### PRODUCTS EDITOR

**Nick Bajzek**  
630/288-8187; nicholas.bajzek@reedbusiness.com

### SENIOR EDITOR, E-MEDIA

**Mark Jarasek**  
630/288-8171; mark.jarasek@reedbusiness.com

### SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**Wendy A. Jordan**

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

**Doug Dwyer, Bob DuBree, Jud Motsenbocker, Tom Swartz**

### EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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### SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

**Customer Service, Reed Business Information**

8778 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126

Phone: 800/446-6551, Fax: 303/470-4280

subsmail@reedbusiness.com

### CEO, REED BUSINESS INFORMATION

**Tad Smith**

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## TALKIN' 'BOUT MY GENERATION...

This month's cover story makes me feel old. It's one thing to look in the mirror and see the wrinkles creeping across your face like cracks in an old plaster ceiling. It's another matter to discover that American business thought leaders are beginning to pay less and less attention to my generation — baby boomers — in favor of a younger, wealthier one — Generation X.

Baby boomers have been the center of attention in advertising and marketing for so long — and for good reason — that it may come as a shock to you that they are not only past their spending prime as a generation, they are very soon going to be passed in spending by a nation of upwardly mobile, iPod wearing, text messaging consumers.

Many forward-thinking companies have already begun to pay less attention to the baby boomers in order to get in on the ground floor with the Gen-Xers. This includes some leading-edge remodeling firms, perhaps some of whom are in your local market.

The sense of urgency, as I see it, to making a shift toward targeting Generation X sooner than later, is that they have been identified as very brand loyal consumers, more so than previous generations. This means that if they do business with one of your competitors first, and are happy with the service they receive, they and all those they might refer you to will be lost to you forever as prospects.

If 100 percent of your customer base is baby boomers, let this serve as a wake-up call. The time to plant some seeds in this fertile new soil is now.

It won't even take a major shift in your business to get moving in the right direction. You can continue to target past clients (baby boomers) via your company newsletters and direct mail pieces while focusing newspaper



**Michael R. Morris**

Editor in Chief

630/288-8057

michael.morris@reedbusiness.com

and magazine ads, radio spots, and especially your Web site, toward a younger generation of new prospects.

This will allow you to continue to milk the boomer market through their final years of strong spending while ensuring you're not left behind when Generation X takes complete control of home improvement spending.

On a somewhat related note, we've added another feature to our ever-expanding Web site, *www.ProRemodeler.com*, to enhance our ability to deliver more timely information of use to you and your business. Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet and I debut our blogs (or Web logs) on a new Blog Zone.

If you're not aware of what blogs are, you're in for a real treat. On our Blog Zone, you'll find regular columns, or posts, from Jay and I on topics of interest to the professional remodeling community. More importantly, you'll be able to add to the conversation by responding to our posts with comments and insight of your own.

It's enough to make a Generation Xer proud. Or even an aging baby boomer like me. **PR**

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## Stand tall in a crowd

With more than 300 remodelers in the San Antonio phone book, Casa Linda Remodeling staff knew they needed a way to stick out from the competition.

"Our competition is pretty segmented," says Vice President Mike High. "There are a lot of pick-up truck guys here."

When the company hired a marketing firm four years ago, it quickly realized that emphasizing professionalism and experience would be the key to a successful marketing program.

That led to "The Homeowner's Guide to Success-



ful Remodeling," a 12-page booklet that describes the remodeling process and what clients should look for in a professional remodeler.

"It's part of a two-step

approach to our marketing," says High. "All of our marketing and advertising is about getting the guide in their hands. Once we do that, it puts us above the competition in their eyes."

The guide is free to anyone who requests it. Even those clients who don't end up hiring Casa Linda say it helps them, High says.

"We don't mind competing against other good companies that have been around for a long time," he says. "We just want to make sure the public is educated about what to look for in a remodeler."

>> 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).

## Do a test run before you hire

Creative Contracting in North Wales, Pa., doesn't take any unnecessary chances when it comes to hiring a new employee.

Not only does Creative Contracting have all potential job candidates undergo a second interview with an outside consultant, but if the candidate makes it past the second interview, he or she will spend a day working at the position before being offered the job.

"Designers get a project to design and present, carpenters work with a lead carpenter, and all are paid," says president Bob DuBree. "This may stretch the process, but a good hire is a lot less expensive than a bad hire. We provide all candidates with our policy manual and give all candidates an opportunity to talk with existing employees."

Following the test work day, DuBree reviews the position one last time with the candidate to make sure he or she is comfortable and offers them a chance to voice any concerns — or to back out.

"It's much better to start from scratch at this point than after months of training," says DuBree.

For more of DuBree's insight on how to hire quality employees, see his column in The Board Room on page 68.

## Forget-me-not

Since J. Francis Company relies on repeats and referrals for almost all of its business, when past customers would say, "We didn't know you were around anymore," the company knew it had a problem.

"It happened so many times," says Jean Krak, business development manager for the Pittsburgh-based, full-service remodeling company. "We knew we needed a vehicle for staying in front of people."

So two years ago the company launched a monthly e-newsletter that goes to more than 600 e-mail addresses. The newsletter is designed to be both promotional and informational, with remodeling tips; items on past and current projects; and updates on company

awards and news. It also includes a monthly trivia contest, which encourages people to read the newsletter by offering a \$20 gift card to the first person who e-mails the correct answer.

Instead of managing it themselves, the company uses Constant Contact, an e-mail marketing firm, to host and distribute the newsletter, although Krak provides the content.

"The initial set-up is where the expense and challenge is," she says. "Once it's up and running you just have to revise it each month."

Since launching the e-newsletter, J. Francis Company has seen an 80 percent increase in volume. Although the newsletter is not the sole reason, it has played a significant role in growing business, Krak says.

### ONLINE POLL QUESTION

## Are you incorporating universal design into 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).

# MARKETING FOR REFERRALS

Do you market differently to target referrals?



PHOTO BY JEFF KLEIN

Jeff Titus, Owner  
Titus Built

Titus Built is a design/build company located in the affluent suburb of Wilton, Conn., about one hour from New York City. Jeff is the owner, general manager and the visionary leader for the company. He is currently the sales and marketing director, although it is a separate position on the organization chart. The company does about \$3 million and hopes to grow steadily. The firm has about 12 employees. [www.titusbuilt.com](http://www.titusbuilt.com)



PHOTO BY MARC BERLOW

Amy O'Brien, Marketing Director  
Agape Construction Co.

Agape Construction Company is a full-service, design and build firm located in Kirkwood, Mo., serving the metro St. Louis area. The company does about \$6 million a year in volume, half in remodeling and the other half in custom new homes. They have 30 employees with 14 in the office and 16 in the field. The business was started in 1985 by Amy's husband Kevin, who is the owner and president. [www.agapeconstruction.com](http://www.agapeconstruction.com)

## Once you've been in the business for a while, a lot of your clients can be referrals. Does your marketing plan change to attract those referrals?

**Tom:** Today's subject is "Marketing for Referrals." Jeff, in your terms, how would you define marketing in and of itself?

**Jeff:** I would consider marketing as what our image is in our community. Being remodelers and the fact that much of our business is based on referrals and our reputation, our image in the community is extremely important. It is also what drives clients to us. We look, obviously, for cultivating the current clients we have to come back to us. That's our main thrust. We also need to go out and look for new blood and have new people calling us and searching out our services.

**Tom:** Amy, how would you define marketing?

**Amy:** Marketing is putting your company's best foot forward by maintaining contact with past clients in order to generate referrals. Another thing is to present a good image in the community. We can see that through consistent advertising, outreaches, etc.

**Tom:** If you take a look at marketing, some have said that it is used for one of two reasons or both — mainly, for top-of-mind awareness, similar to what you're saying. The image in the community is important, so top-of-mind awareness of your company is good. The second one is for lead generation. Would you agree with that, and what are you expecting most out of your marketing?

**Jeff:** I agree with that 100 percent. It's almost to the word of how I described it as far as attracting lead generation, attracting new blood, and cultivating community awareness and top of mind, as you say. Our vision is to become the best known, most respected and truly integrated design/build company in our county, which is Fairfield County. That's the image that we want to put out there.

**Tom:** Define "truly integrated."

**Jeff:** Being a design/build company, there are different roles to that. What I feel is our model and how I want to put ourselves out there is really promoting the convenience of working with one company: calling one company and having that company accountable for delivering a fantastic product. When someone calls us with a problem or an issue or something they need to resolve, in other words, they need more space or need to reorganize their space. They can call one company and we want our name in our community to be the first and only name, hopefully, that they think about. They call one company. "Truly integrated" means we can design; we can do all the product selection, custom cabinetry design and fabrication; we can do all the construction. It's really a soup-to-nuts kind of approach. Again, I use the word convenience because that's what it is for a high-pace community where they don't have a lot of time.

**Tom:** Amy, would you agree with that and what would you be expecting most out of your marketing?

**Amy:** Our top goal is to generate 30 leads per month. We both do 50 percent sales calls so we can maintain that. Fifteen good qualified calls a month. A good number of those turn into jobs, and we stay on target for making our budget every year.

**Tom:** Your primary goal is a quantified and measurable amount of 30 new leads per month, one a day, and of those 30, 15 would result in sales calls. Correct?

**Amy:** Correct.

**Tom:** Jeff, how is your marketing budget as a percent of your total volume, how do you budget within your marketing plan, and for what target? You're going to say, "I'm going to set a budget for this year's marketing." How do you do that within a percentage of your sales, and who do you target with that?

**Jeff:** We start with a percentage of about 2 percent of our projected revenue. That's

the target; for our business, that seems to work. Certainly, other companies have different structures or services and they need to put in a different percentage. Our target is at 2 percent and I can see that growing in the next couple of years to maybe 3 percent. How we budget it and target is obviously you want to get the biggest bang for your buck; you want the highest return on the money you spend. I feel the highest return is really cultivating the clients that we have in hand and making it the most positive remodeling experience that we can give them. That may include "nights out" for the family while their kitchen is under construction. It may involve housewarming gifts after the job and things like that. But it's also in our image; our clothing, our vehicles and trucks. That's not

making the phone ring, but it's insuring that we're going to get the best possibility of getting a positive referral from this client: that we're professional, that we did little extra things for them. Hopefully, they'll remember. Some of the things we do to make it fun for the family may not seem like marketing. We do a time capsule for the kids, have them put

in pictures of the family, newspaper clippings and things in these capsules, and we'll bury them somewhere behind a wall. So, somewhere down the road maybe someone will remodel and find that. It's a fun thing and not expensive but it's an idea of what we do to, as our slogan says, "build a client for life," and get the whole family involved and make it a memorable experience.

**Amy:** Our marketing budget: I know that Remodelers Advantage Roundtable is a highly respected group of top remodelers, and they suggest a marketing budget of 2 percent a year.

**Tom:** Two percent of sales?

**Amy:** Two percent of sales per year. At our company, we budget about 1 percent. My salary, I'm part-time and work about



Tom Swartz  
Contributing Editor



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35 hours a week, and that of my associate who works with me and she probably works 30 hours a week, is not in that marketing budget.

**Tom:** That's in another line item of salaries or wages, and it's an expense. You and the person who helps you are over in that area. So you have 1 percent which is set up. What do you see in that 1 percent? I guess I'm going with \$2 million is sales and 1 percent is budget. You're going to spend about x-amount of dollars, 1 percent or maybe up to 2 percent of your sales. Half of your business is high-end remodeling and what's the other half?

**Amy:** Custom new homes.

**Tom:** Yes. I've always said a custom new-home builder is actually a remodeler, you just have to put a foundation in. He still has to deal with high-end material and matching what the customer wants. It's different than matching what's existing, but there is a lot of similarity in that. Do you know approximately what percentage of your business is repeat and "repeat and referral," I would call it.

**Amy:** I would say it's not as high as we'd like; it's about 30 percent of our business.

**Tom:** Thirty percent is past customers. But the referral business, it sounds to me like you work on referrals in generating those 30 leads a month. You rely on referrals. What percentage do you think that would be or would that be part of the 30 percent?

**Amy:** I would say that if I put the two together, that between the two — and it varies month to month — probably about 38 percent.

**Tom:** Jeff, what percentage of your business approximately, is repeat and past customers?

**Jeff:** I don't have an exact number but would say between those two it's probably 80 percent. Most of it is referral and past clients behind that.

**Tom:** Do you track leads to see what marketing techniques are working?

**Jeff:** Absolutely. We track every single

phone call, even if it's a "nothing" call. We track it, and the first question we ask is, "Where did you hear about us?" We want to know where people are getting our name from or where they saw us. Even if it's a bad lead, we still get some information as far as where they got our name, and can track it by category.

**Tom:** The categories. The phone rings and you ask, "Would you please tell me how you came to call us?" and they might repeat about eight or nine things. Tell me about some of the areas that you track.

**"We track every single phone call, even if it's a 'nothing' call. We track it, and the first question we ask is 'Where did you hear about us?'"**

**Jeff:** Repeat and referral are obviously the big ones. We have job signs and vehicle signs. We don't do the Yellow Pages or things like that. We find that, for our business, we get unqualified leads and end up wasting too much time.

**Tom:** A side note about the Yellow Pages. Are you in the Yellow Pages?

**Jeff:** We are just as a regular listing, just the phone number.

**Tom:** Amy, do you track your leads?

**Amy:** We do track our leads in Act. We probably don't do as good a job as some other companies.

**Tom:** You probably do a lot better than most companies, Amy. If you track them in Act, you're probably ahead of about 75 percent of the remodeling companies in the U.S. anyway.

**Amy:** We track where they're coming from. I think we've been good trying to define, like on the referrals if it's a real estate agent, customer, architect, co-worker, decorator, whatever. We have Internet and Yellowpages.com, Realtor.com. We try to go beyond, "Did you find out about us on the Internet? Were you looking at a realtor Web site?" We try to dig deeper. Where we probably haven't done well though is to be tracking per community. How many

leads are coming in from Webster, Kirkwood, Glendale? We have an Act guy coming in on Thursday to set up tracking per community. We can target those areas more specifically.

**Tom:** Do you also ask the customer why they came to you or came to call you? Do you give them a list of certain things? You mentioned they come to you by Internet, which could be four or five sources. Do you ask them why they called you?

**Amy:** Yes. In our company, we do the marketing — all the leads are turned over

to our design consultants. They are the ones who actually call the customer back or the potential client back and go through a series of questions. That would generate more specifically how those people got to us. There is a form that they fill out.

**Tom:** Would the owner of the company be one of those design consultants?

**Amy:** He was in the earlier days. Not any more.

**Tom:** How many design consultants? The design consultant is also a very defining name for what some might call a sales person. Is that correct?

**Amy:** Yes. Our design consultants are salesmen, but they have that capability. One of them has been at it for 11 years and is very good at it — what might work on a project, or an addition — "guesstimate" what it will cost. The other is very proficient. She's an architect.

**Tom:** Do you advertise in the Yellow Pages?

**Amy:** We did until this year. Now we advertise on Yellowpages.com. It's through Yellow Pages but it's online, not in the actual phone book.

**Tom:** If I pick up a St. Louis area phone book, I won't be able to find your name in it in the Yellow Pages? In our case, we

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used to advertise very heavily in the Yellow Pages, with big color ads. What we found was without research — and that's basically asking the people how they called us — a real small percentage ever said Yellow Pages! We found that the people who did say Yellow Pages actually were going to call us anyway and went to the Yellow Pages to find our phone number. We don't get many calls; we're a little high-end too. But we found that they didn't go to the Yellow Pages to go in search of the "best one to call." We found out that usually those people are saying which is the best one to call. I sense with you and the same with us, we don't have very many cheap prices.

**Amy:** Yes, I would agree with you on that.

**Tom:** What about home shows? Jeff?

**Jeff:** We do not do home shows. Again, we find that we get more "tire kicker" type things where it's not a real qualified strong referral where someone knows who we are and what we do. Certainly, you could get some leads from there, but it's much more work, and I think your cost per lead is higher on things like that for us.

**Tom:** Amy, what about home shows?

**Amy:** We did in 2005. In 2006, we made a decision not to do any more home shows. We found that none of the leads we got from that turned into jobs. It was a fun activity, and we gave out a lot of Agape pencils and pens, but we just didn't find it was cost effective. For today, we've got enough leads.

**Tom:** What about magazine ads, newspapers and other forms of advertising?

**Amy:** You're only interested in remodeling, right?

**Tom:** I don't know. I'm not so sure that I'm totally interested because I think you're not unique, and I think that it's not unusual to have an integration of high-end remodeling and custom new homes. I guess I'm interested in both.

**Amy:** Yes, we run a magazine campaign. For custom new homes, it was a lot bigger

last year when we had a couple, we were doing a big showcase home for a project. We were trying to market some custom new homes on the piece of property that we owned — 10 building lots. We were a lot busier in the magazine side. We did it through a couple of local venues, one called New Homes Guide. Another was Buying New Homes Magazine. We use both of those on a regular monthly basis. On the remodeling side, we consistently advertise in the local newspaper that a lot of people read, the Webster-Kirkwood

**"In 2006, we made a decision not to do any more home shows. We found that none of the leads we got from that turned into jobs."**

Times. This year, we're doing a \$3,100 newspaper ad campaign and we're changing it quarterly. It will run once a month and for three months it will be geared toward custom new homes, three months geared toward remodeling second story additions, and then three months geared toward teardowns and new homes. The last three months will be back toward remodeling.

**Tom:** That works out good. And you get that off of the \$3,100 because it's not in the big St. Louis paper, it's in the local Kirkwood.

**Amy:** Yes, we've found the Webster-Kirkwood Times to be much more effective.

**Tom:** That's really your target area, isn't it?

**Amy:** Right. Everyone reads that paper. We get calls from people saying they've seen it in the Webster-Kirkwood.

**Tom:** Jeff, do you do any magazine ads, newspaper ads and other forms of advertising?

**Jeff:** We do high-end glossy photo magazines. Local magazines. There's not so much of an instant phone call, but it's just general awareness. Some people can't tell us how they know of us, which is frustrating, but I'm glad they do know about us. Something's working, whether

they see a truck or a job sign or see us in a magazine. Another category would be press releases. We do our own promotion to try to get our name out there in any way we can.

**Tom:** If you did 2 percent of \$3 million, or approximately \$50,000-60,000 of advertising/marketing, I find it interesting that you are thinking very uniquely, frankly. As your sales increase, some would say your percentage of advertising/marketing would decrease. Titus Builders says we're looking for that to increase; increase your rev-

enue and increase your percentage, which I applaud. I think it's a great move, and a move which is sometimes not looked at. Is there a difference between marketing and advertising?

**Jeff:** Advertising, to me, is a component of marketing.

**Tom:** Advertising, to us, is the "warm fuzzy feeling." And by that, I think marketing is harder. Advertising is easy: you just put a big ad in the paper on Sunday, and Sunday morning when you see the ad and say, "Look, I'm doing everything I can marketing-wise because here's the ad." When, in fact, maybe that's not really true.

**Jeff:** If you advertise without having a marketing plan, you don't know what message you're trying to send and have a cohesive tie to your other marketing and your image. With one stand-alone piece you might get some call from it, but over time you're not sending a consistent message or sending the message that you really want to send and may not be getting the people back that you really want to get back. **PR**

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# THE NUMBERS GAME

## Knowing your numbers equals profits

**THERE IS AN OLD SAYING**, “numbers don’t lie.” This is true, but they can also be very confusing when it comes to your remodeling business’ profit and loss statement. Why is that?

Most financial programs are set up to accommodate IRS standards. What you and I need is a program that helps us run a more effective and efficient business — a business that pays us well and produces a double-digit net profit.

A few key items to understand:

- How should you structure your P&L?
- Why analyze post-job profitability?
- What is the quickest way to become the financial expert you need to be?
- How will your annual sales volume and gross profit margin affect your remodeling business growth?

When you estimate a job, you have the sale price and your direct costs of that job (e.g. material, labor and subcontractor costs). The difference between the two is your gross profit. With that number, you can calculate your gross profit margin.

My suggestion is to keep your P&L fairly simple. Think of the top section of your P&L like a conglomeration of jobs completed in a period of time (i.e. a month, quarter or year). The middle section should list the supporting costs (overhead) to run your company. The last section details what’s leftover (pre-tax net profit) after subtracting your overhead cost from your gross profit dollars.

By structuring and thinking about your P&L in these terms, you have a much more useful tool. For example, if you look at your gross profit margin percentage and it is 8 percent lower than what you’ve been selling your jobs, you know you have a problem.

To diagnose problems in your business, we recommend post-job profitability analyses for each and every job. I have worked with many companies that never realized how or why they had so much

slippage in their gross profit margin. When digging in, they found myriad reasons, including:

- No set pricing system
- Missed items in the estimate
- Labor hours underestimated
- Not signing a subcontractor agreement on each job, resulting in budget overages
- Incorrect orders
- Poor coordination of production team and materials
- Poor drawings, lacking detail, causing rework
- Manufacturer mistakes
- Not using change orders and failure to collect money as changes were made.

Just a couple of these issues can hurt, and if you have all of them, they could put you out of business and/

who did design/build work as a general contractor. His annual sales were \$1.6 million. He was making good personal income but was wearing the general manager, production manager and salesperson hats. His quality of life was fair — not great — and his business stability was totally dependent on him. At his volume, it should be a choice to wear that many hats, not mandatory for the business to survive. In this case, his gross

profit margin was not high enough to afford to replace himself in one or more of his roles. So volume is not the cure for him, but rather selling jobs at a higher gross profit margin is.

But, the opposite can be true. I know of a remodeler with a 45-50 percent gross profit margin and sales of



Doug Dwyer  
Contributing Editor

**“The quickest way to become an expert in your field is to hire a top-notch accounting or business coach.”**

or consume your personal savings.

The main reason for most of these issues is the lack of systems, knowledge and people trained to use the systems. Like having a major bodily injury, it is advisable to seek immediate professional help for your business. Whether your company is healthy or sick, the quickest way to become an expert in your field is to hire a top-notch accounting or business coach.

Annual sales volume and/or gross profit margin are not a cure-all in a remodeling business. Rather, a blend of the two makes it possible to have strong income and quality of life.

For example, I worked with a remodeler

approximately \$500,000 a year, serving in the same role as the \$1.6 million company. The challenge: this owner does not produce enough volume to hire a full-time person to replace himself in one or more of his roles. Know your numbers and how they affect your future as a business owner. **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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# No Longer Next

NOW IS THE TIME TO  
THINK ABOUT GENERATION X

By Jonathan Sweet, Senior Editor

**FOR DECADES, BABY BOOMERS** have been setting the pace in the remodeling industry, but in the next few years the last of the boomers will be leaving their remodeling prime. The good news is that Generation X is already spending at a higher rate than boomers and is just now entering key spending years.

The top ages for remodeling are when homeowners are between 35 and 45, according to research by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. Although boomers still lead in total spending, Generation Xers are spending more per household, reflecting their general tendency to spend more than their parents.

“The trend across all generations is that they spend more than their predecessors, but for Generation X, we’re seeing that they tend to out-spend at an even greater rate,” says Amal Bendimerad, a research analyst at the Joint Center.

There are several positive indicators Generation X will spend on remodeling. First of all, they are much more likely to look at their home as an investment than previous generations. This view is driven largely by living through the recession and resulting stock market losses earlier this decade, Bendimerad says.

“That shaped their view of what is a safe investment,” she says.

They are also defining households differently. Unlike previous generations, they aren’t waiting until they are married to buy a house. Single Xers, especially women, are much more likely to buy homes than single baby boomers. That all leads to higher homeownership rates for all Generation Xers, Bendimerad says.

Finally, as the housing stock continues to age, it just makes remodeling more likely. According to Joint Center research, 31 percent of Generation Xers live in homes that are at least 45 years old, compared with 22 percent of baby boomers when they were in their 30s.

Smart remodelers are realizing they need to court this age group if they want to build their business.

Len McAdams, president of McAdams Builders in Kirkland, Wash., is a baby boomer himself but realizes the importance of reaching Generation X. It now represents about 15 percent of his business, up from basically nothing a couple of years ago.

"It has to keep growing," he says. "We're running out of times we can keep going back to the same people."

McAdams expects the importance of Generation X to grow rapidly in the next few years.

"I am convinced that our industry must find a way to sell to this group and pretty quickly," he says. "Baby boomers are feeding us so well that there's going to be a big vacant spot in the market when they stop."

Riggs Construction in Kirkwood, Mo., is already getting about 80 percent of its business from Generation X. Kirkwood, a St. Louis suburb, has become a popular choice for young families that want a sense of community in their hometown.

"They're buying the bigger, older homes in town and having us come in and do the work to bring it up to what people want today," says company Vice President Aimee Riggs.

## SALES RESISTANCE

As a Generation Xer herself, Riggs has focused a lot of attention on targeting her generation for growth. But marketing to Generation X is different than the baby boomers. Both Riggs and McAdams have had the most success with face-to-face networking through activities like community service and coaching local youth sports.

"They see us out there and know we are part of the community," Riggs says.

The way we think of advertising and marketing today has been

## Average household spending by generation (in 2005 \$)

Generation X

1995 1,252

2005 3,305

Younger Baby Boomers

1995 1,942

2005 3,224

Older Baby Boomers

1995 2,264

2005 2,851

Matures

1995 1,903

2005 1,985

Echo Boomers

1995 461

2005 1,647

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

mostly shaped by what works with baby boomers because of their dominant role in consumer spending for the last 30 years, says Lauren Kolbe, president of KolbeCo Marketing Resources, a Dardenne Prairie, Mo., company with several remodeler and home builder clients, including Riggs Construction.

"For Generation Xers, there is a resistance to being sold," she says. "They've grown up in the age of cable television, and they've seen all the traditional advertising."

Xers are much less likely to be motivated by a "buy now" or limited-time offer. The biggest thing Xers are looking for in a

## WHAT COMES AFTER X?

Generation X is the near future of remodeling, but the generation that's following them has the potential to radically reshape the housing industry.

Echo boomers, those now in their 20s and teens, are already having a huge impact in the way many products are marketed. Echo boomers will be driving consumer spending for the next 30 years.

"Everything is pointing to that they'll

be everything Generation X is going to be, but times two," says Amal Bendimerad, a research analyst at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

A very small percentage of echo boomers own homes, so data is limited, but so far they are investing in their homes, Bendimerad says. It remains to be seen if they choose to invest at as high a level as much as Generation X has. Much of that will be shaped by the strength of the general

economy and the health of the housing market in particular in the next few years, she says. Just like the recession and stock market losses earlier this decade caused Generation X to invest in their homes, an extended housing downturn could cause the echo boomers to see real-estate as a poor investment.

"We don't know what the events are that are going to shape their attitudes and how they'll decide to spend and invest," she says.



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purchase is value and quality.

"They're willing to spend, but they want to know where the money is going," Riggs says. "They want to know how their lives are going to benefit from it."

That's a sharp contrast from baby boomers, who usually "just want what they want," regardless of price, Riggs says.

This emphasis on quality leads many Generation Xers to become very brand loyal. Studies have shown that they are much more likely to find a brand and stick with it when it comes to everything from soap to cars. There's no reason to think that would change when it comes to a big investment like remodeling, Kolbe says.

"You have to reach them at a younger age to get their business," she says.

That means companies that are actively marketing to them now are going to have a leg-up on the competition when Xers are in their prime remodeling years. Xers also place more emphasis on the opinions of their peers than earlier generations, meaning getting early inroads into the market will be crucial for future referrals.

"They tend to trust each other, and that can be useful in shaping the marketing message," Kolbe says. "For Riggs, we can put Aimee out there and make her the face of the franchise, and they can relate to her."

Riggs says that message can carry through to the entire relationship with the client.

"For a lot of people, they like knowing that someone young is calling them back," she says. "I think for some people it makes them more comfortable than 'talking to a dad.'"

Interestingly, that doesn't necessarily hold true for every client. At Riggs, there are four people who handle the sales. Aimee and her brother Bill are in their 30s, and the company also has two salespeople, Becky and Tim, in their 50s. Aimee handles all of the incoming calls and assigns the salesperson based on her initial conversation with the client.

Younger clients are often more comfortable with a younger

### Total remodeling spending by generation (in millions of 2005 \$)

Younger Baby Boomers

1995 26,643

2005 56,939

Older Baby Boomers

1995 33,122

2005 45,000

Generation X

1995 5,555

2005 42,208

Matures

1995 20,257

2005 21,482

Echo Boomers

1995 36

2005 8,895

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

salesperson, but McAdams has found that in many cases, younger clients would rather talk to him than one of his Generation X salespeople.

"I think sometimes they want to talk to me because they want that sense of authority I have from my experience," he says.

### INFORMATION OVERLOAD

The message that marketing efforts deliver is important. For Generation Xers, that message needs to be more information-based than it has been for previous generations.

"Generation Xers want to have a remodeler help them buy rather than sell them," says David Alpert, president of Continuum Marketing Group, a Great Falls, Va., firm that works with remodelers around the country. "They want to make a selection

## MINORITIES DRIVING GROWTH

One of the surprising factors in the strength of the Generation X market has been minority homeowners.

"Every generation has a higher percentage of minorities than previous generations," says Amal Bendimerad, a research analyst at the Joint Center

for Housing Studies of Harvard University. "Typically, they have statistically had lower incomes and been less likely to own homes."

That gap, though, is closing with Generation X and the echo boomers. While the gap still exists, minority Generation Xers, especially Hispanics, are outspending early generations at a

higher rate than whites.

"Gen X Hispanics have higher median incomes, higher homeownership rates and higher spending rates than previous generations," Bendimerad says. "That means the impact of Hispanics on the market will be more and more positive."



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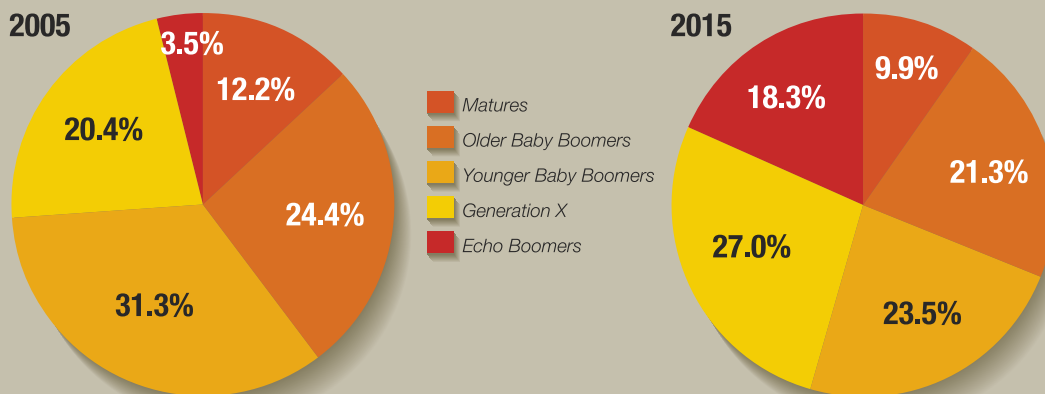
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## Share of total homeowner spending



Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University

from a series of choices, but they want the remodeler to help them make the choice more intelligently.”

A good example of this is auto insurance companies’ providing consumers quotes from multiple insurers. That’s a response to the buying habits of Xers, Alpert says.

“We find that they do require a lot more technical detail when making the choices,” McAdams says. “They don’t say things like, ‘You give us the best option,’ and the older clientele often does.”

The Web is also playing a big role in the way Generation Xers make decisions. Before they make any contact with a remodeler, they’re likely to research the company and products online. That makes having an effective site very important. Everything on the site sends a message, so that language needs to be carefully crafted.

Web sites need to be less about the company and more about the services the company provides, Kolbe says. Many sites end up being about what’s important to the company rather than what’s important to the consumer.

“It really needs to be focused on the language of what people can get from the company,” Kolbe says.

Riggs recently launched podcasts on its site. Podcasts are short recorded messages that can be played on an iPod or other portable MP3 player. Aimee Riggs is recording a series of four, each focusing on a different type of project.

“We all have our iPods, so this is a good way to market to my age bracket,” she says.

Even if a company has a great site, getting consumers there can be a challenge. KolbeCo works with many of its clients using aspects of search engine optimization, specifically a process by which sites use keywords to increase their likelihood of being near the top of search results on Google or other search engines.

Search engine optimization can require a lot of time and effort to keep a site updated, especially in highly competitive markets. For that reason, Alpert says using pay-for-click advertising may be a more cost-effective approach for many smaller clients.

“You’re going to get more bang for your buck, and it’s a more straight-forward approach to getting visits,” he says.

Traditional marketing is still a good way to get Generation X traffic to a Web site. Because brand is so important to Generation Xers, marketing efforts that promote the Web site and the company’s brand are still the best method to stay top-of-mind for clients. So while the message has changed, the medium is not that different.

With Generation X, personal referrals remain the top way to generate business. Beyond that, direct mail is very effective with Generation X, as long as the message is properly crafted by focusing on services and quality, not a discount. Research shows that 86 percent of Generation Xers read their mail the day it arrives, and they rate 75 percent of their mail as valuable, Alpert says.

Print advertising can still work if it’s properly targeted. Advertising in daily newspapers or the Yellow Pages are not very effective unless a remodeler serves a wide area. However, niche advertising can pay off, such as in local home improvement magazines. Riggs has had great success advertising in the local Kirkwood weekly paper, because it appeals to the community-focused residents of the city, she says. **PR**

Visit [www.ProRemodeler.com](http://www.ProRemodeler.com) for more on Generation X and remodeling, including Senior Editor Jonathan Sweet’s blog about his experience remodeling his home.

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# Hidden Treasure

A 1920s HOME IS RESTORED TO ITS FORMER GLORY

By Jonathan Sweet

**WHEN ORFIELD DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION** took on this whole-house remodel for a newly blended family, they discovered a classic home that was the victim of previous remodels gone horribly wrong.

"In the 1970s, somebody came along and made some terrible choices," says company Vice President Laura Orfield.

The kitchen featured yellow linoleum flooring and countertops, with a mix of white and oak cabinets. The oddest part was a free-standing stove in the middle of the kitchen — apparently

someone's misguided idea of a kitchen island, says company President Ronald Orfield.

In the bathrooms, pink tile was paired with dated oak vanities. The upstairs bathroom had been poorly done and frequently leaked if someone tried to take a bath. Plus, the home was too small for this newly extended family.

Orfield had previously remodeled a kitchen for one of the homeowners. When the couple decided to move into the Minneapolis home because it was closer to their jobs than the subur-



AFTER PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE PAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

**The homeowners wanted more space for the family to gather, so one of Orfield's solutions was to enlarge the kitchen and create an informal sitting area.**

ban house, she thought of Orfield again.

The 1920s Arts and Crafts home still had many beautiful features, and Orfield's mission was to restore it to its previous glory, as well as add space for the larger family.

## MAKING SPACE

It was important to the clients that everybody have their own space to make the blending of the two families easier. They wanted the children's bedrooms to be on the second floor, while

the small bedroom on the first floor would be expanded into a large master suite. The master suite included a new gas fireplace and a walk-in closet. The new bathroom was built on the site of the previous small bedroom and featured a large two-sink countertop and custom, multiple-head, glass block shower.

In the kitchen, the clients were looking not only to update, but also to add space.

"They had a formal dining room, but they wanted a larger breakfast/eating area for the family to gather in," Ronald Orfield says.

The kitchen was taken down to the studs and expanded. Every remnant of the old style was removed, and the new kitchen has the luxurious feel the clients wanted, with handmade maple cabinets, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances.

The team improved the first floor by removing some walls and opening the spaces up to provide better flow.

"The house was very segmented to start with," Ronald Orfield says. "They told us they'd rather have a lot of space than a lot of small rooms."

In the living room, Orfield built a large, custom bookcase and fireplace surround. Above the fireplace, they installed three stained glass windows that had been designed from a sketch by Ronald Orfield. Two of them replaced existing windows. The third covered the chimney and is lit by a light installed behind the glass. The effect is Orfield's favorite feature in the home, he says.

The family also gained space with a finished basement as a place for their teenagers to hang out.

"The basement was semi-finished with horrible paneling and ugly indoor/outdoor carpet," says Laura Orfield.

The Orfield team ran heating to the basement, installed a gas fireplace, added drywall, painted and replaced the carpet, drastically improving the room.

Upstairs, adding a dormer allowed a cramped bathroom to expand. Before the remodel, the bathroom — the only one on a second floor with three bedrooms — had been squeezed under the roof with a ceiling that angled to the floor.

"It needed to be totally gutted and redone," says Ronald Orfield. "It was a bathroom, but you barely had room to stand up."

Orfield expanded the room to full ceiling height, added a tub and large walk-in shower and updated the finishes and fixtures.

"Now there's ample room for what you really need with three bedrooms upstairs," he says.

## PRODUCTS LIST

**Appliances:** KitchenAid **Doors:** Marvin, Masonite **Faucets:** American Standard, Porcher & Franke  
**Fireplace:** Heat & Glo **Roofing:** GAF **Sinks:** American Standard, Blanco **Windows:** Marvin



The kitchen is a good example of how Orfield successfully blended the art deco and Arts and Crafts styles with its curved cabinets and modern appliances that complement the traditional tile backsplash.

## BLENDING STYLES

Another wrinkle in the remodel was the couple's art deco antiques and furnishings that contrasted with the Arts and Crafts home. Orfield's challenge became to blend the two styles without creating another mismatched remodel.

"That was our biggest challenge: to merge these two tastes into something that still looked good," says Laura Orfield.



## THE FINANCIALS

Normally, Orfield Design & Construction tries to limit change orders on projects. On this home, though, the clients requested more than 20 change orders along the way, ranging from \$239 for plumbing fixtures to \$8,015 for upgraded tile.

Cost wasn't an issue for these clients, which certainly made them unusual.

"The clients' lack of a budget

### Budget History

Estimate	\$347,803
Change orders	\$73,325
Credits	\$5,481
Cost to produce	\$292,956
Final price	\$415,647
Gross profit	\$121,836
Budgeted gross profit	40%
Actual gross profit	30%

certainly surprised us," says company vice president Laura Orfield. "There were huge, thousands-of-dollars

change orders. Those things add up, but they wanted to have all the features they wanted."

Although the clients were billed for all the changes it did eat into the company's profit margin, resulting in a 30 percent gross profit, down from the budgeted 40 percent.

While still profitable, the company learned its lesson about trying to be too accommodating to clients, Orfield says.



Orfield redesigned the staircase to not only reflect the Arts and Crafts style of the home, but also to open up the space between the kitchen and the dining room.



The wooden fireplace surround and bookcases along with the custom-designed stained glass windows are Ron Orfield's favorite features in the remodel.

## COMPANY SNAPSHOT

### Orfield Design & Construction

**Owners:** Ronald and Laura Orfield

**Location:** Saint Louis Park, Minn.

**2006 volume:** \$1.9 million

**Projected 2007 volume:** \$1.8 million

**Web site:** [www.orfielddesign.com](http://www.orfielddesign.com)

**Biggest challenge:** Blending the Arts and Crafts style of the home with the clients' art deco antiques

## PROJECT TIMELINE

Payment	Date	Stage of Project
\$20,000	April 12, 2004	
	May 2004	Project start
	June 2004	Completion of demolition, excavation, rough framing and roof
\$65,000	July 16, 2004	
\$15,000	July 22, 2004	
	Aug 2004	Completion of rough electrical, HVAC and plumbing
\$100,500	Aug 25, 2004	
	Sept 2004	Completion of insulation, drywall and floors
\$14,000	Oct 28, 2004	
	Nov 2004	Installation of cabinets, countertops and finish trim
\$74,000	Nov 17, 2004	
	Dec 2004	Completion of finished basement
\$40,000	Jan 11, 2005	
\$20,000	Feb 23, 2005	
\$20,000	April 11, 2005	
	July 2005	Construction of rear patio
\$16,000	July 11, 2005	
	August 2005	Installation of custom fireplace surround for master bedroom
\$20,000	Aug 3, 2005	
	August 2005	Project completion
\$6,000	Oct 10, 2005	
\$4,970	Jan 17, 2006	

The solution the Orfield team came up with was to keep all the structural items in the Arts and Crafts style and use the art deco as an accent. For example, the living room fireplace surround was created in the Arts and Crafts spirit, as was the custom-designed staircase. In the master bathroom and kitchen, the cabinets were designed with a lot of curves to showcase the art deco style.

"We wanted to make sure the structural details matched the home," Laura Orfield says. "We used original, large trim on all of the windows and doors to match the original home."

The owners' love for antiques and finding new treasures also created another interesting challenge for the firm. Throughout the project, the clients would find historic antiques they wanted incorporated into the remodel.

"The owners would just walk in with a new item and say 'Let's use this somewhere,'" Laura Orfield says.

The stained glass window in the master bedroom was one of those items. As they were getting ready to drywall that room, the clients brought the window in, and Ron Orfield had to redesign the room to incorporate it. The fireplace surround in the master bedroom required some planning as well. The homeowners had purchased it from another home, and it came to the house piece-

meal. When they were cleaning it for installation, Orfield's crew discovered a missing piece, so they replicated the marble leg to finish the installation.

"Incorporating their things into the project was a challenge," Ronald Orfield says. "Any designer wants to have all the components on hand before the project starts, so it was obviously frustrating at times."

That's the only thing the Orfields say they should have done differently with the project: insist on getting all the extras up front. Because of their history with the client and the size of the project, they instead tried to be very accommodating, which

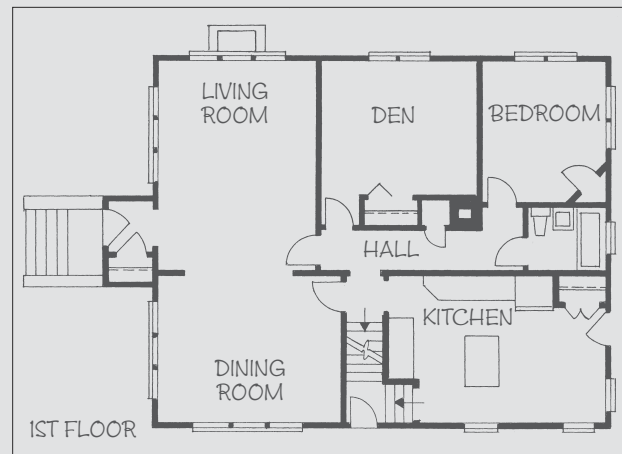
probably was a mistake, Laura Orfield says.

Despite those problems, the project ended up being a success. "I'm proud that we remained true to the home's architectural style," Laura Orfield says. "We achieved their goal of blending their tastes in these different rooms."

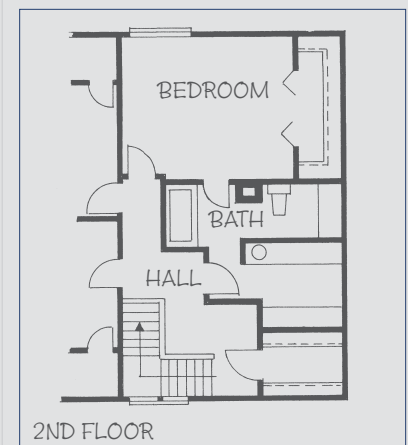
The clients were also pleased and have referred several projects to the company. **PR**

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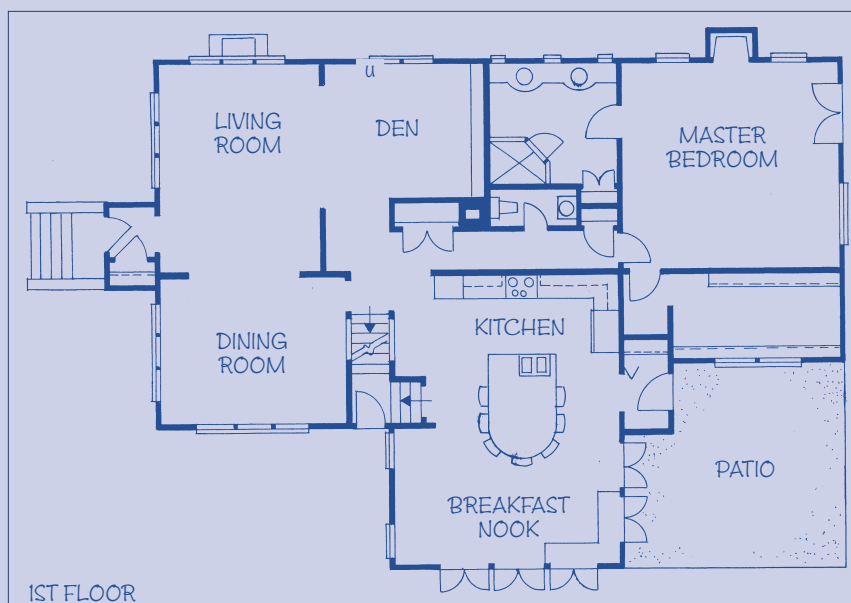
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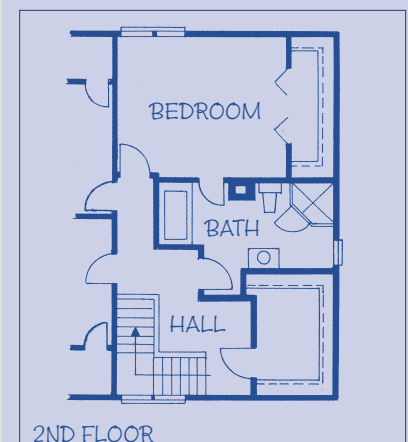
Before




After



After



**DECKING+OUTDOOR**

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# LIVING

A SUPPLEMENT TO REED BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS

# 5

**Top Trends  
for 2007**

Designs for  
Every Style  
of Home

Building  
Green  
Outdoors

**Best New  
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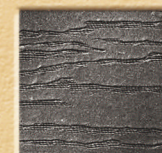
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By Jennifer Block Martin, Contributing Editor

# WHAT'S IN ON THE OUTSIDE

Want in on the outdoor market?  
These trends can guide you.

Across the country, clients are requesting maintenance-free, environmentally conscious decking products, and they're asking for ways to improve the outdoors and the time they spend there. Manufacturers, builders and remodelers alike are stepping up to the plate by expanding their offerings. Here are five of the biggest trends in outdoor living today.

## 1 COMPOSITE VS. WOOD DECKS

The almost mythical lure of the maintenance-free deck makes it a hot topic. "Although customers request maintenance-free most often, it's not necessarily the right product for them," says Patrick Henry Nicholson, C.R., chief executive officer of Deckmasters, a deck-building franchise based in Pittsburgh.

"If the homeowners are going to live in the house five years or less, I recommend wood," says Nicholson. "If they'll be there 10 to 15 years, I'd say invest more and go with composite."

On the other hand, Dave Lombardo, president of American Deck, says

choosing decking materials depends on the location: "Our Mid-Atlantic region looks to alternatives like vinyl, aluminum and composites, while the West Coast still likes wood. The Pacific Northwest is a popular, well-developed alternative market, but they still hold on to that rugged, natural look. For the Southeast, it's wood and economical pressure-treated products. In the middle of country, budgets aren't as high, so

This wood deck is integrated with the landscape, taking advantage of shady trees and a view of a well-manicured lawn.  
*Photo courtesy of Southern Pine Council*

**"ALTHOUGH CUSTOMERS REQUEST MAINTENANCE-FREE MOST OFTEN, IT'S NOT NECESSARILY THE RIGHT PRODUCT FOR THEM."**

— PATRICK HENRY NICHOLSON

But Nicholson cautions fellow builders and remodelers to do their homework. "Very few composites are actually good. Check up on all of them; don't just buy the cheapest," he warns. "Some do not perform — they deteriorate, swell up, easily mark, change color or stain — and it makes for an unhappy customer."

Nicholson says plastics are good, although builders and remodelers must plan for their expansion and contraction in construction. He's been happy with vinyl.

'value' is the key word. And the country as a whole is 80 percent pressure-treated wood and wood in general."

In southeastern Virginia, for example, Casa Decks has built more composite decks over wood — in fact, they've been 100 percent composite for the last five years, says President George Drummond — and they are moving toward a higher-end, more expensive composite. "We have a mold and mildew issue here," Drummond says. "The more expensive types have a better encapsulation process and



This multilevel composite deck creates distinct outdoor rooms – each with different decking patterns – as well as a full-service kitchen and fire pit. *Photo courtesy of Fiberon*



are easier to keep clean.”

Over the last 18 months to two years, Drummond says he’s been using a vinyl product by Procell Decking Systems, which he claims reflects heat instead of absorbing it, an important feature for his region. Procell’s limited shades, however, have become a concern. “All of the colors are light pastels,” he says. “Homeowners are looking for more color options. They want to match the deck color to their brick — they don’t even care about the product.”

“Composites, vinyls, etc. continue to grow in popularity ... mostly for the promise of no maintenance,” says Steve Cory, author of Sunset’s “Complete Deck Book.” “I have a feeling that in 10 years or so, there will be a backlash, and people will want to return to natural wood.”

The wood market is ready and flush with new preservatives — especially organics, which are sure to appeal to green-conscious customers. All this makes for the most important trend, says Richard Kleiner, director of treated markets for the Southern Forest Products Association, “and more choices for the consumer when selecting decking products,” he says.

“Consumers and builders can expect to see a new generation of organic preservatives used in above-ground Southern Pine decking. These products contain no metals,” Kleiner says. “For consumers and designers who are concerned about toxins and heavy metals, these products take

those issues off the table.”

One example, says Kleiner, is Arch Treatment Technologies’ Wolmanized L3Outdoor Wood. This product is completely organic, with no arsenate or metals. According to the company, the waterborne preservative consists of fungicides tebuconazole and propiconazole, as well as imidacloprid, which is an insecticide.

Viance, too, is looking to regain market share from composite manufacturers with its new product Ecolife, a wood stabilizer with an organic preservative. Dave Fowlie, vice president of business development, says Ecolife “makes wood perform better, improves weathering performance, as well as has environmental attributes.”

And Osmose has come out with an alternative to alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ) called MicroPro, which is micronized copper quaternary, or MCQ. “There’s always concern about corrosion from ACQ,” says Kleiner. “MCQ is less corrosive and similar to CCA (chromated copper arsenate) treated wood and untreated wood.”

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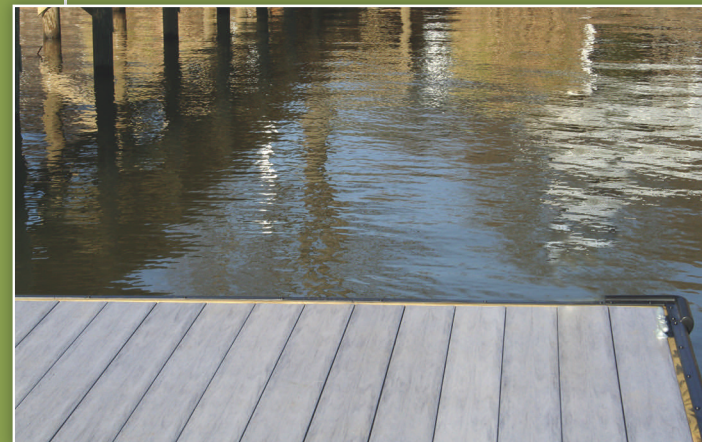
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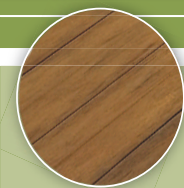
## ALL OTHER DECKS

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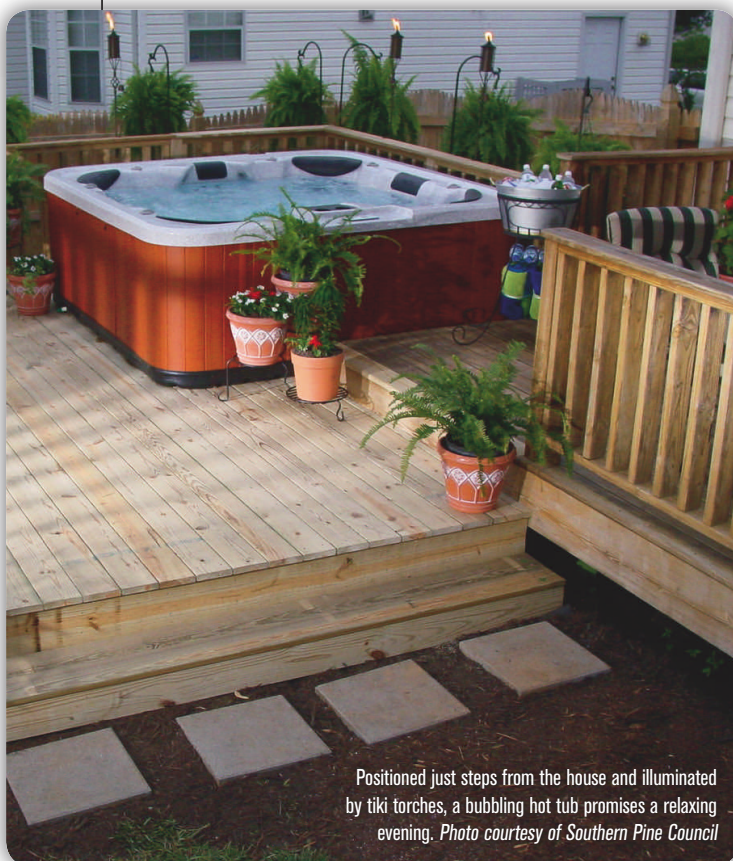
## 2 MULTILEVEL DECKS

Multilevel concepts are very popular. They create two or more separate spaces, sometimes reinforced by distinctly different decking surface patterns. This concept helps promote a two-decks-in-one feeling: one for entertaining and the other for a more private setting for a secluded spa at ground level. Or locate one deck in the shade, such as beneath a large tree, and the other in a spot that will be bathed in sunshine.

One way to get the split-level look, Nicholson says, is to break up a staircase with landings instead of making it one long run.

Drummond says he is creating smaller decks that step down into stamped concrete or a patio or serve as an extension to a pool deck. Part of the reason for this configuration, he says, is that many larger homes are situated on standard 10,000-square-foot lots. Also, some clients don't want a deck that's high off the ground for privacy reasons.

On the contrary, Lombardo cautions about this trend. "We are first-floor dwellers," he says. "People want to walk out the sliding door and be on the deck, not walk down the staircase, then over to the hot tub. People are more likely to use a deck project if it's on the main floor. Otherwise it's out of sight, out of mind. Proximity is very important."



Positioned just steps from the house and illuminated by tiki torches, a bubbling hot tub promises a relaxing evening. Photo courtesy of Southern Pine Council



Built-in planter boxes and ponds integrate nature into this deck. Photo courtesy of Southern Pine Council

## 3 INTEGRATING LANDSCAPING

Deck builders are finally being more friendly to the landscape. "We're adding a lot more landscaping around decks," Nicholson says. "We are also taking the natural surroundings into consideration. For example, we might plant trees for privacy instead of constructing walls, so you're not looking at a wall of wood or plastic."

He's also seeing more terraced decks, which can take the best advantage of the lay of the land. They can safely traverse uneven or rocky terrain and step down from house to ground level in an interesting and easy descent. "A terraced deck conforms with the yard and also opens the deck onto the yard," says Nicholson.

Drummond is integrating decks with the hardscape, as well as with water features such as by cantilevering a deck over a pond or waterfall. On the West Coast especially, Lombardo says, "they're integrating the deck with the pool, hot tub or fire pit."



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# 4

## OUTDOOR KITCHENS

If you can't stand the heat, take the whole kitchen outside. The name of the game is full-service. In addition to the requisite grill, you'll now find outdoor refrigerators, sinks, tile counters and even pizza ovens when "money is no object," says Lombardo. He's also creating elaborate stone and stucco facades on some of his outdoor kitchens.

Again, location is key. Traffic flow to and from the indoor kitchen and dining room will make an outdoor kitchen an oft-used amenity. Add a trellis to provide privacy and shade and make the dining area comfortable year-round.

That's weather permitting, of course. "The thing that surprises me about outdoor kitchens and rooms is the popularity of books on those subjects here in the Midwest, where such rooms can be used only half the year or so," says Chicago-based Cory, noting that snow in April is not uncommon in his area. "From what I can tell, lots of people here are buying the books just to dream, or maybe to pick up a small idea, rather than to build all-out kitchens or living rooms. I've talked with homeowners [in the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California] who have outdoor kitchens, and they all rave and claim that they cook out there all the time."

Full-service outdoor kitchens like this one incorporate obvious features like gas grills but also include refrigerators, sinks and custom cabinetry. *Courtesy of Marrokal Construction, photo by Gail Owens Photography*



Comfortable furniture gives these homeowners a place to lounge in style. And when the sun goes down, the stone-clad hearth makes cool evenings cozy. *Photography by Dino Tonn Photography*

# 5

## THE OUTDOOR FAMILY ROOM

"Decks are viewed as an extension of the living space," says Diana Hanson, administrative director of the North American Deck and Railing Association. "They are literally an outdoor room, complete with speakers and media."

Drummond takes this idea even further. His outdoor living rooms and screen rooms — they are no longer called screen porches, he notes — are furnished sitting rooms instead of just a table and chairs. He says these spaces are successful because they mirror rooms on the interior and pair up to traffic patterns, creating an easy flow for entertaining or for large families with various interests.

Wiring for sound and light completes the effect. Nicholson notes Yamaha's all-weather outdoor speaker systems. For lighting, low-voltage lights recessed in the deck, under railings and porch roofs are the way to go. Or opt for a photo-cell sensor that automatically turns on the lights at night.

# THE FUTURE OF DECK BUILDING IS RESTING FIRMLY ON THE CONNECTOR OF THE FUTURE



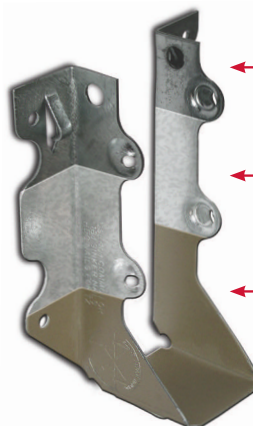
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By Kathy Price-Robinson, Contributing Editor

# THE GREEN OUTDOORS

Environmentally friendly building and remodeling isn't restricted to four walls

**W**ith the topic of global warming now fixed in the national discourse, green building and remodeling has surged.

Contractors, architects and clients are more likely than ever to ask: how can this project be energy efficient, resource-conservative, and healthy and comfortable, too?

Those questions apply to outdoor living areas, too: how can we use green building principles to construct this deck? Or this arbor? Or this patio?

Here are some ideas:

## Decks

Wood or composite? There is no definitive "green" answer when it comes to this choice. Each material has its benefits and limitations, and much depends on client preference.

**WOOD DECKING:** When wood is the preferred decking material, the green choice would be to use lumber that is not treated with arsenic, is harvested locally (which typically means within 500 miles) and/or is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.





The original plans for this stairway and a retaining wall called for concrete block and plaster walls. However, when Allen Associates' team unearthed giant sandstone boulders while excavating a motor court, the contractor quickly substituted them in. This not only saved the homeowners about \$30,000 but helped move the project in the green direction the contractor sought.

*Photo by Kathy Price-Robinson*



This entry courtyard displays three green principles: the natural limestone underfoot was quarried locally; the gravel allows rainwater to percolate into the ground; and the benches are made of ipe wood from Brazil, which is said to resist decay for up to 50 years without any emissions-producing protective sealants.

*Photo courtesy of Raymond Yin and Mark Word*

The non-green alternative is to use lumber that is not sustainably grown and comes from tropical forests. You and your clients have a choice of any lumber you want, but if you or your clients desire planet-friendly choices, buying wood culled from a diminishing rain forest wouldn't make sense.

Outdoor designer Pamela Berstler, co-owner of Flower to the People landscape design firm in Los Angeles, says determining the origin of the wood you use is not difficult: "Ask your lumberyard: Where does your wood come from?" Berstler suggests.

ago and found it wanting, the product might be worth another look, says Karen Feeney, green building specialist with Allen Associates, a builder and remodeler in Santa Barbara, Calif. "They've gotten so much better" over the years, she says.

### Lighting

Lighting embedded in decking stair stringers or risers can be energy efficient, too. LED lights can use a fraction of the energy of conventional lighting and last for years — some brands claim to last 15 or more years. If your clients or con-

**WHEREAS CLIENTS ONCE BRAGGED ABOUT GRANITE THAT WAS QUARRIED FROM DISTANT LANDS, THE FUTURE BRAGGING RIGHTS COULD SHIFT TO STONE QUARRIED LOCALLY.**

**COMPOSITE DECKING:** Clients concerned about the environment but not opting for real wood can choose composite decking. Representatives from Trex, for example, claim the company receives 50 percent of the recycled grocery bags in the country and that every year it diverts from landfills 300 million pounds of used plastic and 300 million pounds of hardwood sawdust.

Brand, color and surface profile choices in composite decking are ever-expanding. If you tried composite decking years

ago and found it wanting, the product might be worth another look, says Karen Feeney, green building specialist with Allen Associates, a builder and remodeler in Santa Barbara, Calif. "They've gotten so much better" over the years, she says.

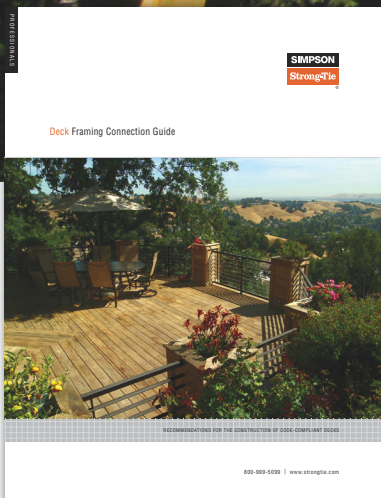
### Patios, Walkways and Retaining Walls

Green choices for patios, walkways and retaining walls include recycled or recyclable materials and rainwater management.

**STONE:** If carbon emissions are contributing to global



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The arbor outside this home in Santa Ynez, Calif., is oriented to soften the harsh sun in a hot climate to cut down on air conditioning. The permeable patio and grounds allow rainwater to percolate into the ground rather than run off onto roads and sewage systems. Photo courtesy of Allen Associates

warming, as many scientists claim, the “carbon cost” of moving materials around must be factored into any green goals. Whereas clients once bragged about granite, marble or other stone that was quarried from distant lands, the future bragging rights could shift to stone quarried locally.

Sometimes, the stone can be so locally sourced that it comes from the site itself. This was the lucky circumstance encountered by the excavation crew at the Santa Barbara residence of Bill and Denise Bielby. While their remodeling company, Allen Associates, planned to build a retaining wall between

managing rainwater is to encourage it to percolate into the ground on site rather than force it to run off hard surfaces into streets and gutters, and from there to waterways. Water that percolates on site does not pick up pollutants from the roadway and helps replenish aquifers.

Permeable surfaces and/or catch basins are critical for on-site percolation. Some cities in dry areas require this for new construction. To encourage percolation on pathways and patios, gravel can offer a good solution. Even when stones are used for a patio, gravel can be used in the gaps.

## TO ENCOURAGE PERCOLATION ON PATHWAYS AND PATIOS, GRAVEL CAN OFFER A GOOD SOLUTION.

the driveway and the home, the enormous sandstone boulders unearthed during construction served that purpose well.

**CONCRETE:** In terms of production, concrete might not be the greenest material around. But in terms of recyclability, it's at the top of the list. At the end of its use in a patio, for example, concrete can be broken up and used for pathways or ground up for use in new concrete products. Plus, new concrete can be made more green by adding fly ash, a byproduct of coal-fired energy plants.

**RAINWATER MANAGEMENT:** The key to

### Arbors and Trellises

An arbor is an arbor is an arbor, right? While it's tempting to reach for the timber you've always used to create arbors and trellises, the goal of sustainability brings more choices to the fore. Some considerations:

**OLD WOOD:** Recycled timbers from demolished buildings are one option, as are timbers from logs salvaged from lake bottoms or old piers. Although some homeowners will insist on new wood, some might prefer “experienced” lumber in their projects.



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A passive solar hot water system for a pool cuts down on the homeowner's energy bills significantly.

**NONTOXIC WOOD:** The advantages of using wood treated without arsenic and other toxins are not only good for the health of clients and their children, but for a company's workers as well. Companies who push the green angle can use the fact of a healthier work environment to attract the highest quality employees.

**SUSTAINABLY GROWN LUMBER:** As with decking wood, lumber used for trellises and arbors should be harvested from a sustainable operation and sourced locally

**SOLAR-HEATED HOT WATER:** Pools and spas make ideal uses for passive solar hot water systems. In these systems, solar collectors heat the water rather than a machine creating energy to heat water. An outdoor shower could make use of such a system. Fafco, has created a "hot water in a box" system for homeowners to install on their own. Even if clients are not ready to invest in outdoor showers and solar pool heating, they can keep these options in mind for the future.

## POOLS AND SPAS MAKE IDEAL USES FOR PASSIVE SOLAR HOT WATER SYSTEMS.

or within a few hundred miles. While several programs exist to certify the level of sustainability for wood, the FSC label is the best known and one of the most stringent.

**SOLAR PANELS:** Arbors and trellises may not immediately bring to mind solar panels. And of course, black, opaque panels would be a disaster topping a structure meant to filter light below. However, translucent solar panels would be ideal on top of a trellis. Schott North America offers a selection.

### Pool and Spa

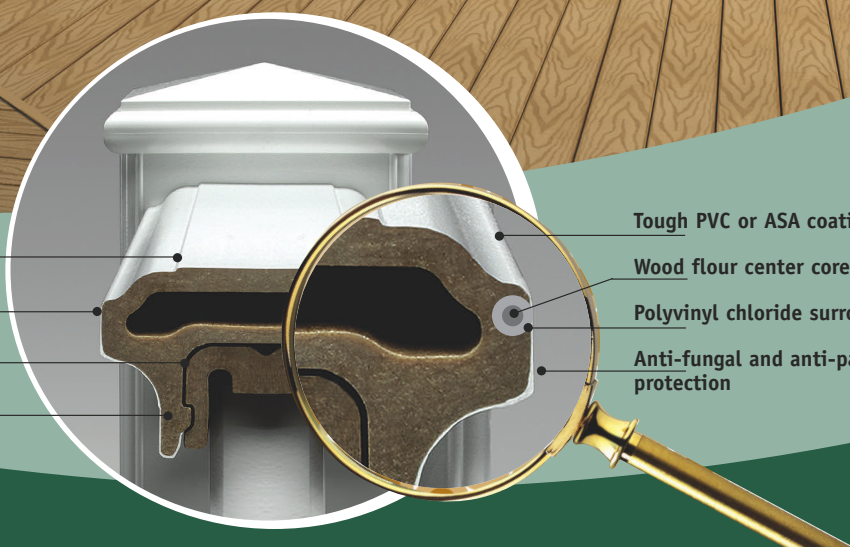
These bells and whistles of outdoor living bring great potential for incorporating green building principles.

**ON-DEMAND WATER HEATER:** There's really no reason to run a hot water line from a tank water heater at the house all the way to a pool house, especially for use in a sink. That need could be met with a mini on-demand electric water heater by German manufacturer Stiebel Eltron. The unit is about 7 inches square and 3 inches deep.

**BARBECUE:** And finally, a barbecue for outdoor cooking is by nature a green product when you consider this: an air-conditioned home in a hot climate will not be heated up when a barbecue is in use. Even clients who are minimally inclined toward a sustainable lifestyle may still enjoy another excuse for a barbecue.

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By Kathy Price-Robinson, Contributing Editor

# BEYOND THE DECK

When your clients say, “Build us an outdoor living area,” let the house guide you

**D**esigning and building outdoor living areas for your clients triggers a quandary: What style should it be?

The easy answer is to slap a wood or composite deck onto the back of the house. But your clients are likely to be more delighted with an outdoor living area that takes its design cues from the house itself.

For instance, if the home has a Colonial flair with shiny black doors, white columns and brick floors, why not carry out that theme on the patio or outdoor kitchen?

“There’s a formality to Colonial architecture,” says designer Kitty Bartholomew.

Victorian, on the other hand, is more whimsical, with ornate corbels and turned spindles. The deck or gazebo should reflect that.

And for a contemporary home, it’s another story altogether.

To get clarity on which outdoor elements complement which architectural styles, we asked Bartholomew, who spent 15 years traveling the country for shows on ABC-TV and HGTV, for advice.

The following pages offer tips on designing and building outdoor spaces for the most popular architectural styles.





This stately gazebo would complement a Colonial-style home with its columns, moldings and crisp white paint.

## Colonial/Traditional

**T**he defining characteristics of New England Colonial homes are symmetry, clapboard siding, shutters and columns flanking the front door. Thomas Jefferson's Monticello is one of the more spectacular Colonial buildings in the United States.

"Brick would be the mainstay of a Colonial home," says Bartholomew.

Modern production homes sometimes have hints of Colonial style — perhaps two-story, composite lap siding and shutters — but not the full package of columns and extensive brick work. However, a new outdoor kitchen that included a portico held up with columns and brick decking would feel right and help increase the home's Colonial credentials.

### COLONIAL/ TRADITIONAL STYLE AT A GLANCE:

- Symmetrical shapes
- Brickwork
- Wooden columns painted white
- Clapboard siding
- Cornices
- Shutters
- Simple, rectangular shapes
- Stone planter with topiary flanking door
- Wood planter with topiary, painted glossy black, white or dark green
- Pediment over door
- Brass door knobs
- Divided light windows
- Extensive white moldings

# Victorian

**V**ictorian architectural style is characterized by steep roof lines and lots of ornamentation with corbels, scalloped shingles and spindle work. This work blossomed at the beginning of the machine age, when fancy woodwork no longer had to be done by hand. Victorian gardens usually have a lot of ironwork. "Think New Orleans," Bartholomew suggests. Inside, Victorians are likely to have marble somewhere. A steep-roofed pergola with an outdoor kitchen and marble counters would be keeping with the style.

## VICTORIAN STYLE AT A GLANCE:

- Steep rooflines
- Curlicue details
- Scalloped shingles
- Lots of ornamentation
- Decorative corbels
- Ornate detail
- Marble
- Filigree ironwork
- Multi-colored elements



A gazebo made of lacy ironwork is ideal for a Victorian garden.



A painted railing like this would complement a Victorian deck better than, for example, a standard wooden railing.



In a cold climate, a Victorian conservatory can provide a connection with nature through the year. The filigree ironwork gives it a Victorian flair.

# Craftsman/Bungalow

**C**raftsman houses are well-named, as they show off the craftsmanship of the carpenters and ironworkers who build them. Bartholomew says the patina of wood is most valued in Craftsman homes, as well as the homes' iron hardware and glazed tiles. Of all the home styles explored here, the Craftsman bungalow lends itself most comfortably with a standard wood or deck that looks wooden.

## CRAFTSMAN/ BUNGALOW STYLE AT A GLANCE:

- Exposed timbers
- Stonework
- Iron hardware
- Hand-forged iron
- Burgundy and hunter green colors
- Tapered wood columns
- Glazed tile
- 4-over-1 or 6-over-1 double-hung windows
- Front porch beneath extension of main roof
- Eaves with deep overhangs
- Exposed rafters
- Brackets under eaves

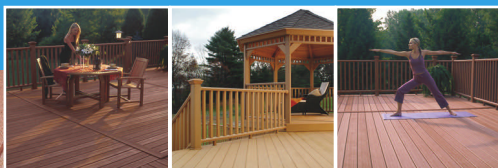


In this modern home, the Craftsman theme is suggested with shingled siding, brackets under eaves, tapered wood columns on brick bases and divided-light windows.



A slatted covering over a wooden deck would work well for a Craftsman house.

## Other deck brands pale in comparison.



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# European/ Old World/Spanish

**T**he European style referenced here is characterized by stone decking, tile roofs, masonry, stucco, pillars and antique woods. On the West Coast, many new production homes have an Old World feeling to them. Stone patios and fountains will suit these homes well.

## EUROPEAN/ OLD WORLD/ SPANISH STYLE AT A GLANCE:

- Stone
- Stone benches
- Arches
- Masonry columns
- Tile roofs
- Terra cotta stone
- Pillars
- Stone decking
- Stone walls
- Columns
- Metal grille
- Antiqued wood
- Decorative straps
- Hand-hewn finish
- Stucco
- Metal lamps



You'd never expect to see a tiled fountain outside a Cape Cod or Colonial style home, but it would be perfect outside a European or Spanish style home.



This modern outdoor fireplace has Old World influences.



This whole package - a stone patio, black iron sconces, a wood trellis and massive wood pillars - would dress up just about any Spanish- or European-style home.

# Cape Cod

**C**ape Cod-style homes evoke the Atlantic Ocean, sun-drenched decks, sea birds, wild grasses and the sound of fog horns. Wood or composite decks are the perfect look for Cape Cod homes, either painted or left unpainted to weather in the sun. The latter option will cut down on maintenance issues for the homeowners.

## CAPE COD STYLE AT A GLANCE:

- Gable roofs
- Dormers
- Shutters
- Divided-light windows
- Wooden clapboard
- Sun-bleached wood
- Weathered shingles
- Cedar
- Sun-dried grays
- Blues, reds, patriotic colors
- Native grasses
- Square posts



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# Contemporary/ Modern/Mid-Century

**T**he term contemporary architecture does not necessarily mean the building is new or nearly new. Rather, the term refers to a certain style of architecture that is very sleek and without ornamentation — think the opposite of Victorian. Many houses built in the 1940s and 1950s could be labeled contemporary and are now sought-after and known as “mid-century modern” homes. Outdoor spaces for these homes should follow the same aesthetic and use the same exterior materials and colors.

## CONTEMPORARY/ MODERN/ MID-CENTURY AT A GLANCE:

- Angular
- Stainless steel
- Metal
- Geometric shapes
- Stucco
- Concrete
- No ornamentation
- Cable-deck railing
- Sleek



Concrete blocks and geometric shapes like this bench fit well with a contemporary or modern house. Photo courtesy of Flower to the People



A screen made of translucent polycarbonate plastic provides a small amount of diffused privacy and wind protection while allowing for maximum natural light on the deck. Photo courtesy of Robert Nebolon



This aluminum trellis over a deck in Huntington Beach, Calif., coordinates with the home's modern vocabulary. The deck is visible from the house through large corner windows, and the fireplace inside is visible from the deck. Photo courtesy of Robert Nebolon

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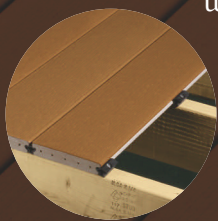


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### Dow

The Symmatrix Classic Elegance Series Railings from Dow's Building Solutions division is fabricated from extruded profiles made of wood flour and PVC resin. The decking line requires no sealing, painting or staining and comes in redwood, cedar, driftwood, mocha or pearlescent white. Dow provides a 15-year limited warranty.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-20>



### Simpson Strong-Tie

The Composi-Lok Deck Screw by Simpson Strong-Tie feature "wings," on the shaft of the screw that counter-bore a hole in the deck boards to create a channel for excess composite material, which helps prevent spin out in hard, cold or wet boards. The screw cap captures any mushrooming material and the Quik Guard coating also allows the screw to be used with certain treated woods.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-21>



### KitchenAid

Outdoor gas grills by KitchenAid include a variety of models under the Outdoor Entertainment line. All grills are constructed with stainless steel, mimicking the look of commercial-style appliances. Each model has a built-in thermometer and KitchenAid's SureSear system, which puts out 22,500 BTUs in each main burner. The 27- and 36-inch models (36-inch shown) can use liquid propane or natural gas.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-22>





### Universal Forest Products

The ChoiceDek composite decking lumber from Universal Forest Products comes in cabernet, spice and driftwood colors. Part of the company's Eden Series, the planks are made to imitate the look of exotic hardwoods. Twelve-, 16- and 20-foot lengths are available. The material, according to the company, doesn't require staining, sealing or treating.

**For FREE information, visit**  
**<http://pr.ims.ca/5345-23>**

### SPAX/Trufast

Heavy Duty screws made by German manufacturer Spax and distributed by Trufast feature a patented thread pattern with serrations on the screw shaft that eliminate the need to pre-drill wood. The latest screws also employ the company's ThreadLoc dual-lock thread design made especially for decks.

**For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-24>**



### Louisiana-Pacific/Andersen

Using Andersen's patented Fibrex material, Louisiana-Pacific's Crystal White Railing features a post sleeve of five-by-five inches for more cap choices. The railings have a bright white finish and a texture similar to wood. Six- and 8-foot kits are available with two top rail choices: flat top or colonial top.

**For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-25>**



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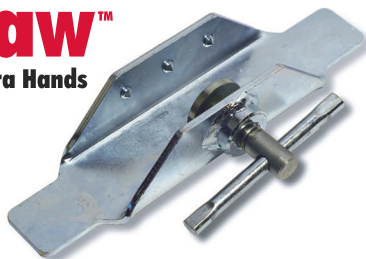
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PRODUCTS



### CorrectDeck

The CX Quatro composite decking boards come in 4-inch channeled planks. Similar in look to some tropical hardwoods, the Quatro features the Microban antimicrobial product to prevent mold and mildew. Cedar, mahogany, merlot, coastal grey and cottage green colors are available. The boards are designed to work with the company's Fastenator hidden fastening system.

For FREE information, visit

<http://pr.ims.ca/5345-26>



### Viking

Similar to the company's double sideburner, Viking's 24-inch-wide, built-in gas rangetop can also be purchased as a separate unit. The rangetops are made from heavy-duty stainless steel and offer four 15,000 BTU burners. Ignition is powered by a 9-volt battery, and the units sell with porcelain-coated V grates.

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### East Teak Hardwoods

Responding to demands for lighter woods, the Garapa Gold (also known as Brazilian Ash) by East Teak Hardwoods is a South American hardwood that runs the gamut from a light yellow to a golden brown color. According to the company, the wood resists rot, decay, splinters, scratches and fire without any chemical treatments. The line is also available tongue-and-grooved for porch planks or pre-grooved for hidden fastener systems.

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### Dekstone

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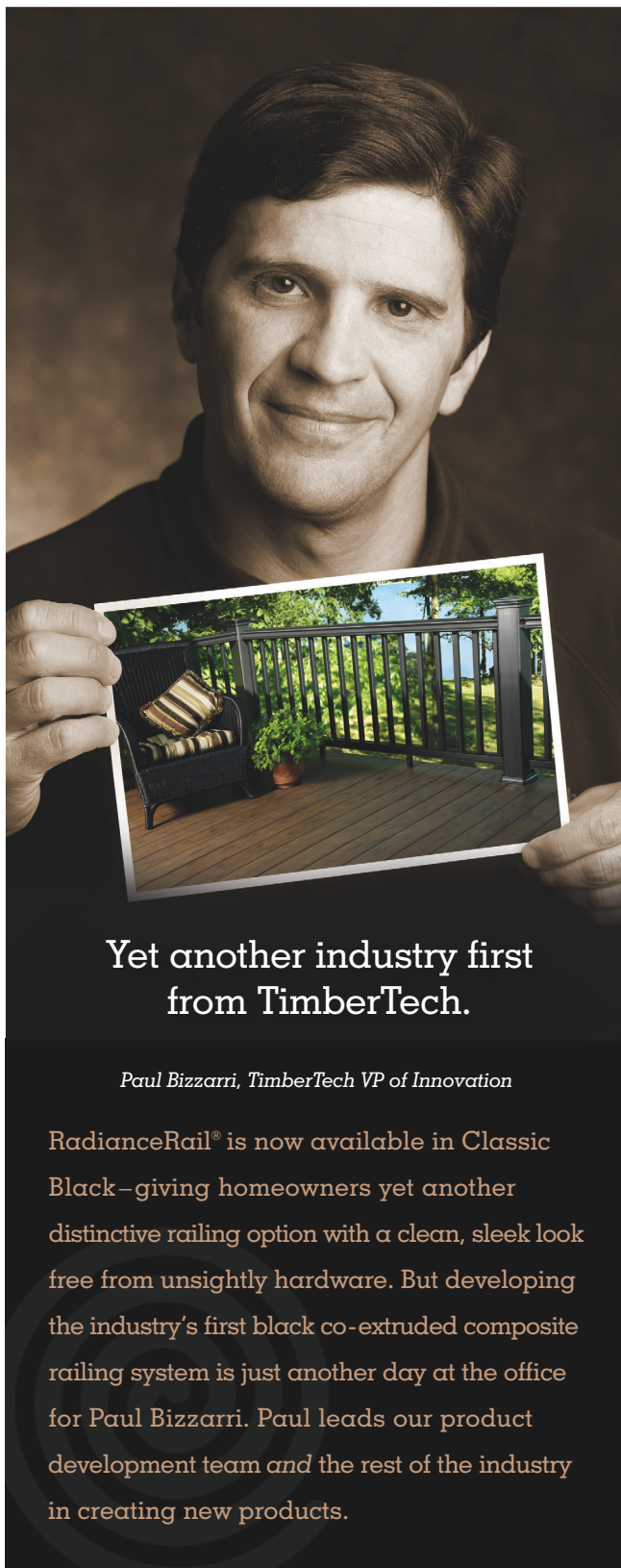
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## PRODUCTS



### Weather Shield

Available in standard widths up to eight panels wide for an opening of 23 feet, Weather Shield's Legacy Series Bi-Fold Patio Door are made with laminated veneer lumber cores. The accordion-style doors stack each panel on top of the next as it slides on an overhead track. Custom sizes and extruded aluminum-clad exteriors are available.

**For FREE information, visit**  
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### Peachtree Doors and Windows

The 700 Series Aluminum Clad Patio Doors from Peachtree Doors and Windows are now available in 6'8", 6'10" and 8-foot heights. The 700 series also has customized sizes and a 1¼-inch quarter panel and is made in standard pine or five hardwood interiors that can be factory-stained with standard and custom colors.

**For FREE information, visit**  
<http://pr.ims.ca/5345-31>

### Royal Crown

The Harmony Select Decking and Railing System from Royal Crown uses the company's Celucor blend of wood fibers, vinyl and cellular PVC capped in a thermoplastic resin. The boards have a variegated wood grain appearance and are offered in deep red mahogany and weathered gray. According to the company, the boards are colorfast and covered by a warranty.

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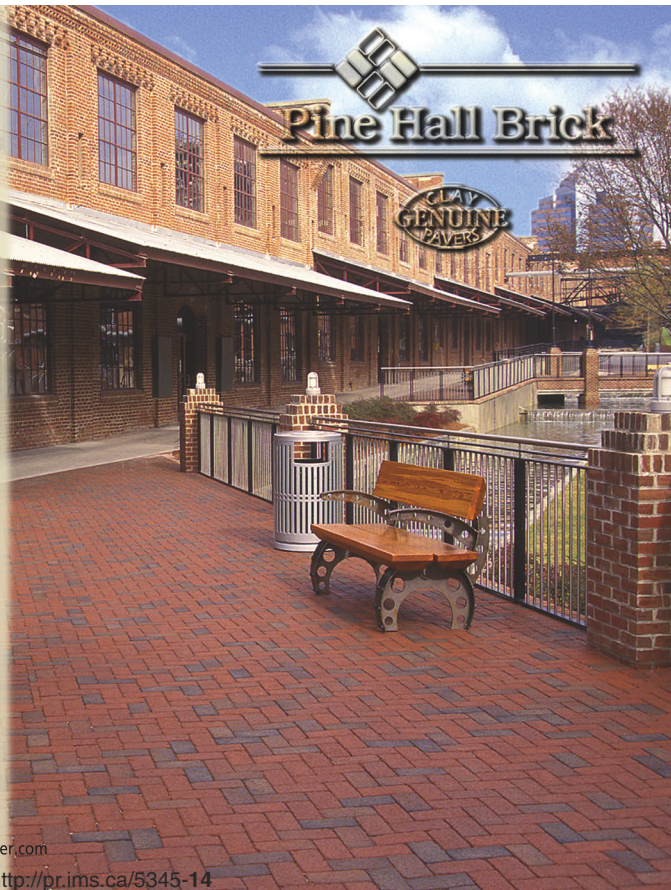
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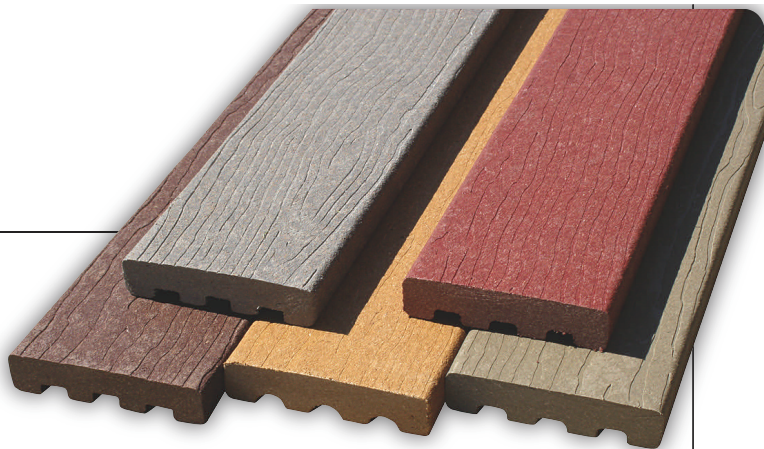


## PRODUCTS

### A.E.R.T.

Cherry and earth-tone colors have been added to A.E.R.T.'s MoistureShield composite decking line. The material has a deep wood grain texture and is made of recovered wood fiber and recycled polyethylene plastic. Colors also include Cape Code gray, seasoned mahogany, rustic cedar and classic natural. The company provides a 50-year limited warranty.

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### CertainTeed

Re-launched with a new hidden fastener system, CertainTeed's Boardwalk Signature series is made of the company's PVC, polymer and recycled natural fiber blend. The deck planks are coated with a PVC and acrylic-styrene-acrylonitrile (ASA) resin cap to resist scratches, stains and fading. Chestnut, cedar and redwood colors are available.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-34>

### Trex

Builders can choose from either a wood grain pattern or a smooth contemporary look with Trex's Accents reversible deck boards. The product line is made in reddish-brown, Winchester gray, saddle (tan) and woodland brown. The boards are made out of reclaimed wood and recycled plastic, and the colors reach their final shades after eight to 12 weeks of outdoor exposure.

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### Deckorators

Made in 6-by-6-foot sections, the latest post covers from Deckorators include the Stacked Stone Collection made in the company's canyon, gray and Sedona colors. Each post cover is 24 inches tall and is made of a high-density polyurethane epoxy with a proprietary molding process that mimics the look of stone. Connectors accommodate a variety of rail angles and the product features a 25-year warranty against cracking, splitting or warping.

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Photo of actual deck in Saddlebrooke, Missouri.

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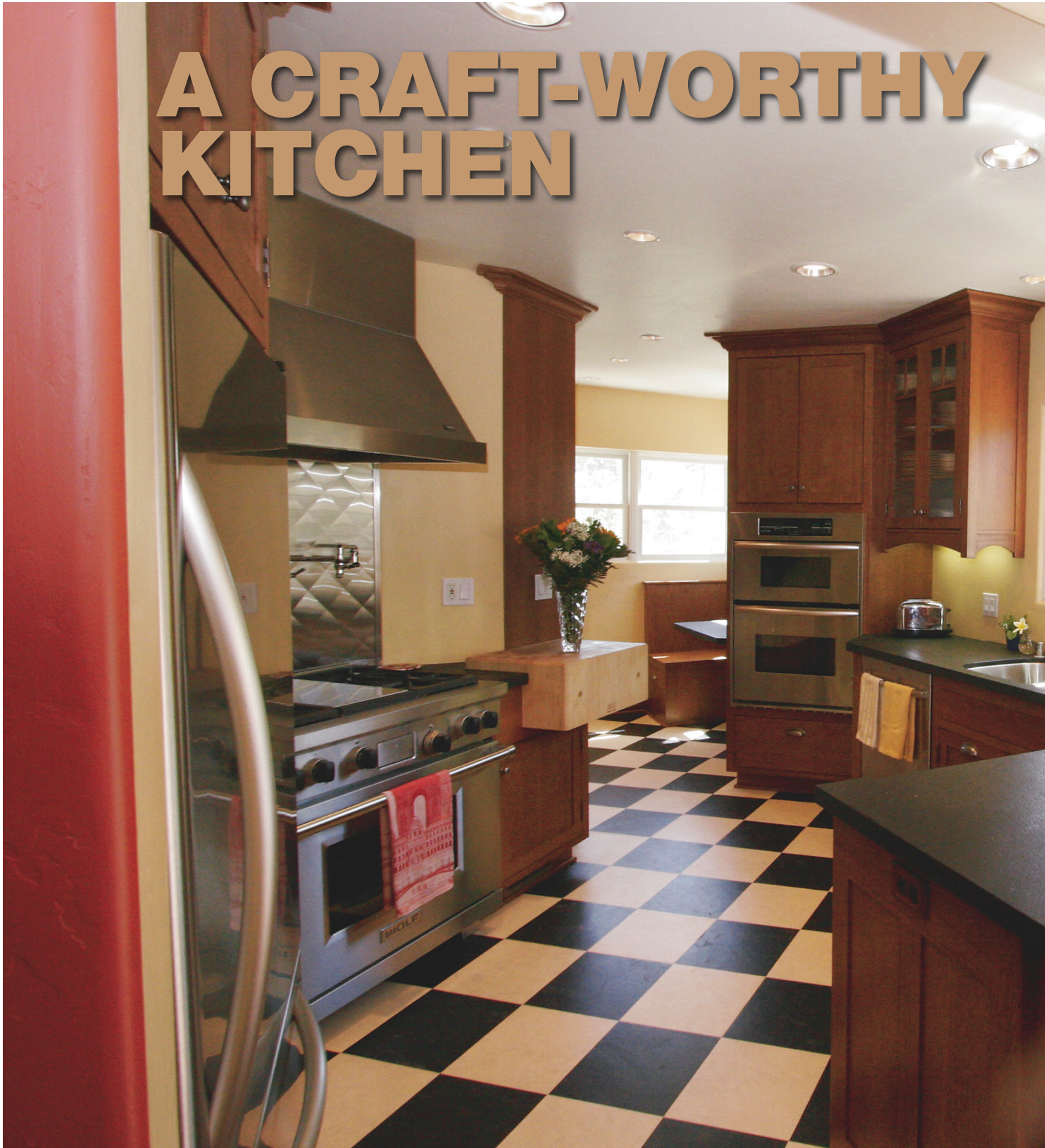
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**NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 24, 2007**

# A CRAFT-WORTHY KITCHEN





Gutting an outmoded kitchen reflected the home's architecture while accommodating the owners' love and skill for cooking

## KITCHEN REMODEL

**REMODELER AND ARCHITECT:** VanBerg Construction, San Diego

**PROJECT LOCATION:** San Diego

**AGE OF HOME:** 84 years

**SCOPE OF WORK:** Revamping outdated appliances and ill-conceived material choices and applications to create a modern and attractive space.

**JEFF JERTBERG, CO-OWNER OF VAN-BERG CONSTRUCTION** and his wife were unhappy with many things in their kitchen: the crumbling grout in the tile-on-Formica countertops made cleaning impossible, and the wood-on-wood glides sawed each other and left sawdust in the cabinets and drawers. Having only one light near the sink added to the cleaning woes.

There was nothing in the space worth salvaging from the homeowners' vantage point. Jertberg was anxious to get remod-

**Incorporating wish-list accessories and functionality was important to both Jertberg and his wife — Jertberg's big items were a sizeable stainless steel range, John Boos & Co. end-grain butcher block cutting board and a stainless steel backsplash. "I wanted the best, and this is where I chose to spend money."**

## PRODUCTS LIST

**Appliances:** Bosch, Best by Broan, KitchenAid, Wolf  
**Faucets:** Grohe **Flooring:** Marmoleum **Lighting Fixtures:** Halo  
**Insulation:** Owens Corning **Paints & Stains:** Dunn-Edwards  
**Sinks:** Franke **Windows:** Marvin

AFTER PHOTOS BY GAIL OWENS PHOTOGRAPHY



One entryway to the kitchen lends the space a quirky, inventive quality because the path to the back is not completely linear. This new, wider traffic pattern makes a strong design statement and opens up the kitchen to the rest of the house. It also allows people to sit at the bar or in the living room that's just beyond and still engage with the cooks without being in their way.



eling ideas for the kitchen layout from his designer, who did not live in the space everyday and could see it with fresh eyes. The team decided to gut the space and start from scratch.

More cabinets and drawers combined with a credenza anchored by two pantries add storage. The new kitchen also boasts top-end appliances, textured black granite countertops and zoned lighting

**The chase that accommodates the microwave and oven tray divides created a perfect space for bench seating. "I love sitting on the back seat. It makes a cozy little nook, and it happened because something needed to be worked around. It was very serendipitous," he says. New windows in the space provide views of trees and a canyon that walls had blocked.**



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**INTERIOR:** INSULATION • WALLS • CEILINGS



### Up on the roof

**T**he hood fan was a must-have addition to the space, but Jertberg was concerned that the blower's size would take up too much space, and he didn't want noise to interfere with kitchen conversation. The solution: separate the motor from the hood and place it on the roof directly above. "I am fairly certain if the original builder of my home could have installed a 1500 CFM Hood with a remote blower and halogen lights above his range, he would," Jertberg says. "We can cook fish or anything and not worry about the home smelling like the main meal for several days."



**The new kitchen design features quarter-sawn white oak cabinets true to the home's Craftsman roots. Black granite countertops and stainless steel appliances provide contrast.**

programmed for both tasks and moods. Jertberg is most pleased with the balance between technically superior appliances and earth-friendly choices that complement the home's style.

"My cabinets are quarter-sawn white oak that are true to the craftsman roots, but the drawer glides are high-tech and soft close. The flooring is linoleum, made from linseed oil that is true to the era of the home, feels better on the feet and is a green choice, but the dishwasher is whisper-quiet," he notes. Jertberg completed his approximately 215-square-foot kitchen in six months.

"My home is in an older neighborhood that is filled with craftsman homes, and

that is one of the things I love about my neighborhood. I always consider how well what I am doing fits the spirit of the era of the home," Jertberg says. "I am not, however, a slave to historical accuracy, and it was important that with something like the countertops, for example, that I had elements that were interesting and different.

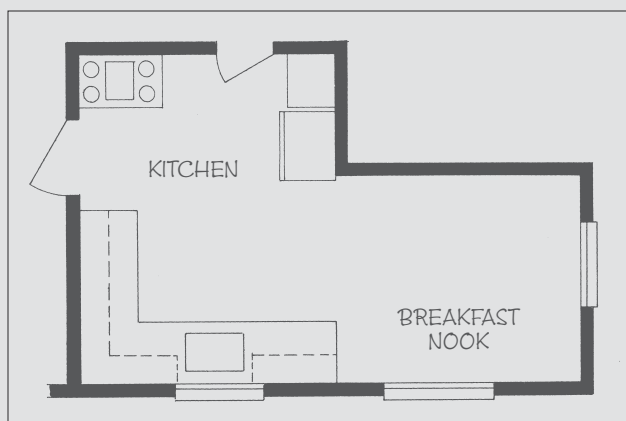
"My intention with the aesthetic was to use woods and stay true to the craftsman-ship and to echo the area without being slave to historic preservation." **PR**

– Meghan Haynes

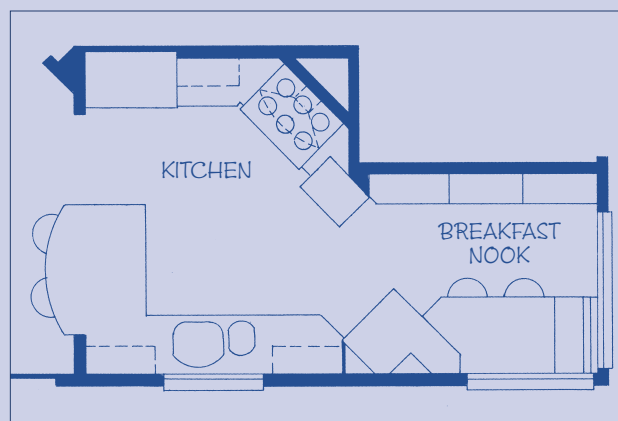
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### Before



### After





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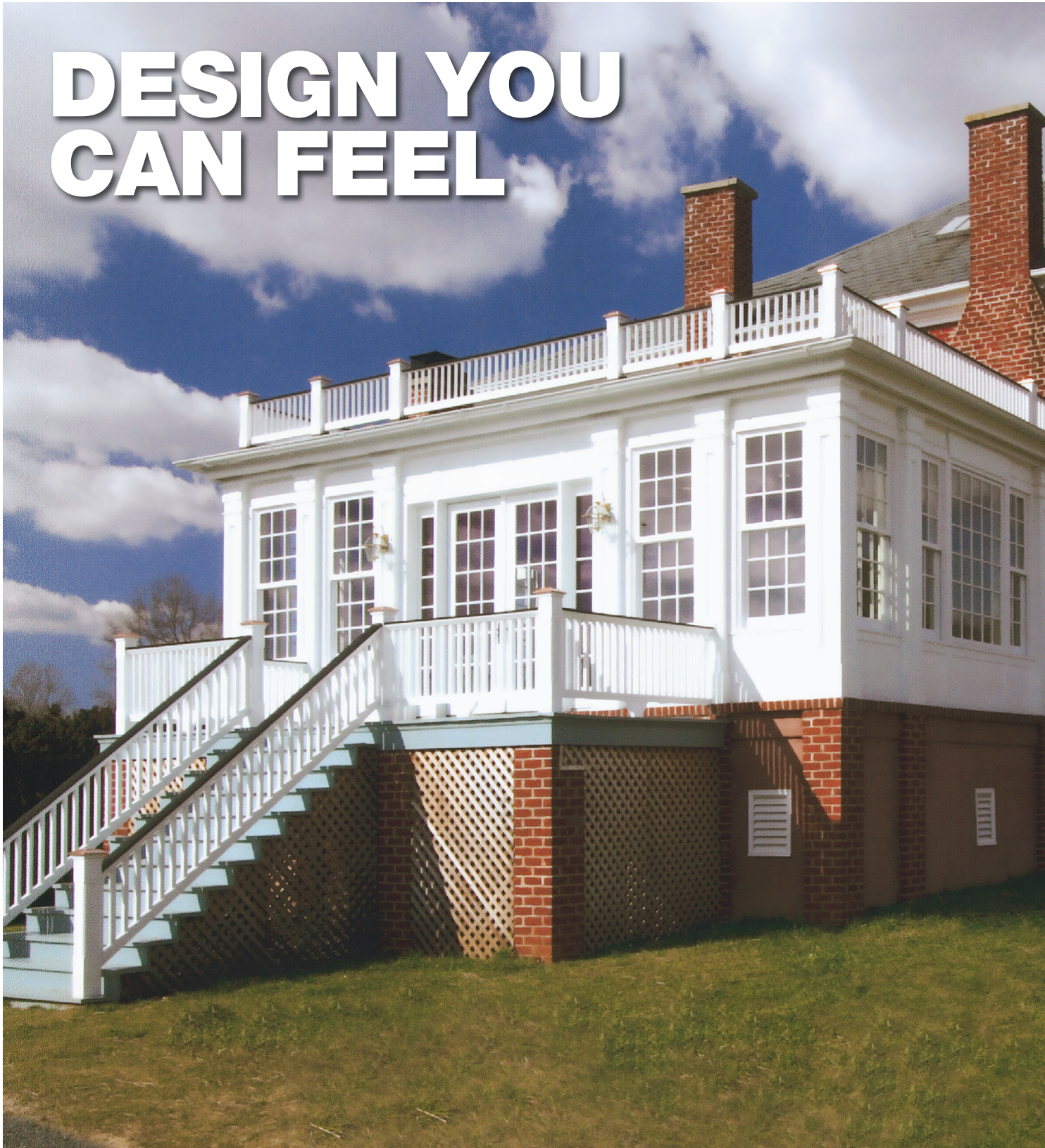
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# DESIGN YOU CAN FEEL





## A remodeler focuses on creating an addition that 'feels' right rather than mirrors its existing home

### SUNROOM ADDITION

#### REMODELER AND ARCHITECT:

HomeMasons, Manakin-Sabot, Va.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Montpelier, Va.

**AGE OF HOME:** 175 years old

**SCOPE OF WORK:** Add sunroom as part of a larger whole-house project

**THE COMMON PRESUMPTION** when adding to an almost two-century-old historic Georgian home is that preserving design authenticity is key. But although maintaining authenticity was key in this Virginia sunroom addition, the exacting homeowners wanted casual living space that was modern and of its own time.

They came to HomeMasons of Manakin-Sabot, Va., via referral, two years after engaging another architect who, in the estimation of HomeMasons president C. Mason Hearn Jr., had created a thoughtful but uninspired replica of the existing home. The homeowners couldn't articulate what they didn't like about the approach, but they simply weren't connecting with it. Hearn, however, saw the problem: the project draft was mimicking what was already there. More than being a Georgian, the home also had influences from Federal

architecture and hints of other classical styles that together, made the house unique beyond its age.

Hearn saw parallels between the house and the Thomas Jefferson-designed Academical Village on the University of Virginia's campus that was so attractive and fascinating to him: different architectural

### BEFORE



### PRODUCTS LIST

**HVAC:** Trane **Doors:** Pella **Fireplace:** Majestic **Flooring:** Mountain Lumber **Lighting Fixtures:** Halo, Progress, Sea Gull **Housewrap:** Tyvek **Insulation:** Owens Corning **Locksets:** Schlage **Paints & Stains:** ICI **Millwork & Molding:** Crown Molding & Door Co. **Siding:** James Hardie, Azek **Windows:** Weather Shield

**Bricks on the base blend the new with the old. Detailed millwork, siding and a balustraded low-slope copper roof complement the existing structure without detracting from the vintage style of the original home.**

AFTER PHOTOS BY TAYLOR DABNEY, PHOTOGRAPHER



One of the aspects remodeler and architect C. Mason Hearn Jr. is most proud of throughout this project is the incorporation of contemporary technology and conveniences. For example, though it's a pre-fabricated engineered gas insert, the fireplace still looks traditional, and the cabinet above houses a flat-panel television. "We had to tuck the flue out of the way to accomplish this, but I like that it's cloaked in a traditional style," Hearn says.

styles and interpretations blend together in design with the attention to details, proportions and craftsmanship.

"Good preservation ethic for a nice historic home like this means the addition shouldn't look like it's always been there," he says. "An addition should be of its own time architecturally, and it should be

respectful. To simply replicate what's there is an injustice to the rest of the home, and it's architecturally deceptive."

From this vantage point, Hearn and his team set about designing a clean, simple sunroom addition that complemented the existing home. He only used brick on the crawlspace base, opting for siding for the

majority of the structure. And rather than a slate slope roof, the team used a low-slope copper roof with ornamental balustrades around the perimeter to give it a "high-hat" that echoed the railing system. "The top/cap creates a good architectural balance between the base, body and head; without a pitched roof, the addition would be with-



### Made its own mold(ing)

Remodeler and architect C. Mason Hearn Jr. of HomeMasons noticed each room in the existing home had its own millwork profile. Rather than choosing one of these 10 to use in the addition, HomeMasons decided to stay true to the history and designed another profile altogether. This encompassed almost one month of continuous design time, weeks of elaborate field measurements and photo documentation of each room for study and comparison. All of the carpentry was performed

in-house with a team of up to four carpenters.

"The client really let us run with the design of individualized trim work for the addition, and they encouraged us to develop it fully," Hearn says. "There's a certain type of demanding that we look for in a client, and if they set the bar too low, it's probably not a project we want to do because anyone can do it. This was about executing a project at a higher level for someone who wanted something at a higher level."

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The curved rail resembles the arch in the doorway, and the rail posts mimic the larger, exterior pilasters. The walkway connects the sunroom to the front porch.

out a head," Hearn says.

The sunroom's interior holds the projects' most prominent details, which lie in its white millwork: paneled columns, pilasters, baseboards, crown molding and a window apron. Reclaimed antique heart pine flooring connect with the age and authenticity of the home while trimless, hole-in-the-wall lighting gives a modern look and functionality that doesn't compete with the distinguished feel.

The 780-square-foot addition (approximately 1,560-square-feet with the crawl-space) was part of a larger whole house remodel that was completed in one year; this phase represents approximately five-and-a-half months of work.

Says Hearn: "This project is about design you feel — the heart of the project is a very general concept, and everything else we did was just detail, exquisite craftsmanship and follow-through." **PR**

— Meghan Haynes

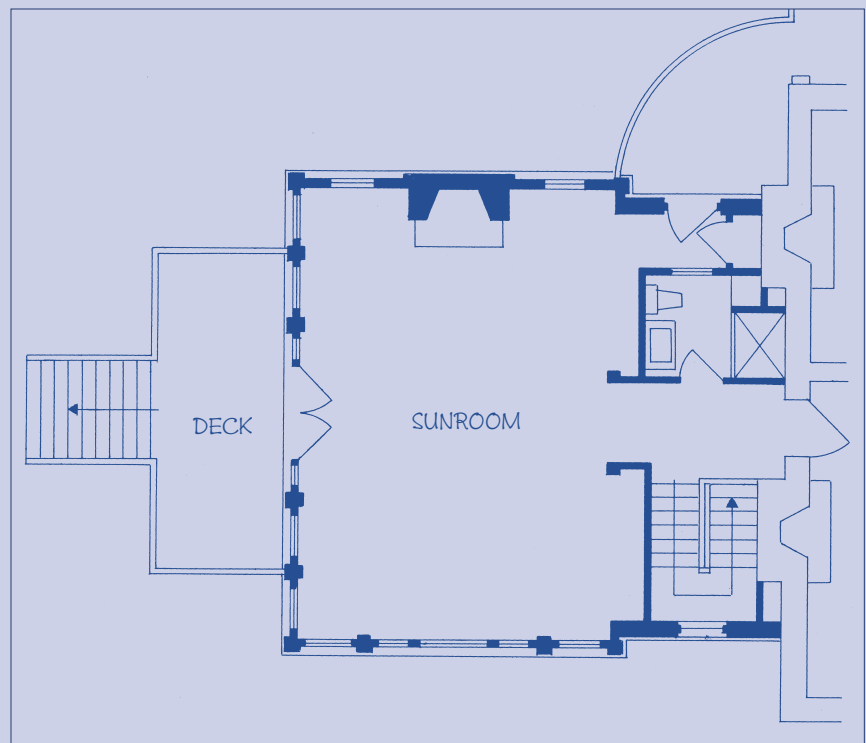
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The sunroom features true divided light windows with real wood jambs that look like those found in an older home, but the insulated, high-performance glass is clad in aluminum, which creates an almost maintenance-free finish. "The addition needed to be sunny and provide a lot of views, and there was no room in the existing house that did either of those things," remodeler and architect C. Mason Hearn Jr. says. "But we still measured the window panes in the existing house and kept the ones in the addition similar to or equal in size."

After





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# HOME SCHOOLED ON HOME PERFORMANCE

Energy-efficient, educated and bragging about it

By Glen Salas  
PATH Partners

**WHEN JOHN CORDONE PURCHASED** his 1,100-square-foot, 1930s-era home in Rochester, N.Y., he had to wear a hat indoors to stay warm in the winter.

Now Cordone's hat hangs on the rack when he's home, and his monthly energy bills have dropped so much he's doing radio spots for GreenHomes America, the contractor that made it possible.

GreenHomes conducts a full-scale energy audit valued at \$400-\$500 and then completes energy upgrades. With that, the company guarantees 25 percent energy savings on every project. Business is so hot, GreenHomes completed more than 1,600 projects in 2006 — only the second year of its existence.

GreenHomes is a home performance contractor whose focus is improving efficiency, which isn't the typical remodeler's goal. But why be the typical remodeler? Take a page from GreenHomes' book, and you may have a whole new angle to add to your business.

## The Audit

The audit of Cordone's ranch home began in the basement.

"We examined the tiered foundation,

**One key component of a high-performance home: sealing leaks into the attic, also known as an attic bypass.**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATH PARTNERS



**Dense-packing insulation in the side walls can boost a home's energy-efficiency.**

the mortar joints, the wall joints, the wall connections and the windows,” says Tony Karpovich, project manager for Cordone’s upgrade. “We tested the combustion efficiency and safety of the furnace and water heater with a combustion analyzer. Finally, we safety-tested both units to make sure the exhausts didn’t backflow into the house and checked the carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide levels to make sure they were safe. The crew then moved to the top floor.

“In the attic, there were only six inches of insulation, and the old bathroom fan vented directly into the space — a potential source of moisture problems.

“The outside walls of the living area had zero insulation. We tested the efficiencies of the refrigerator and dishwasher with a wattmeter.”

A blower door test using an infrared camera showed how much the house leaks and where.

The audit took Karpovich two hours. He says the size and type of house determines how long it takes and how many people, typically one or two staff more than 3 hours.

Once the audit was complete, Karpovich drew on his knowledge of building science to recommend a package of upgrades to

Cordone. GreenHomes stays abreast of building science issues through training from New York’s Home Performance with Energy Star program an in-house training program, and certification from the Building Performance Institute.

### The Upgrade

“We don’t just guess at what we recommend for upgrades. Safety is paramount. After we decide on safety measures, we rank the energy-efficiency measures by the savings-to-investment ratio,” Karpovich says.

“An air sealing package — caulking joints, sealing penetrations, adding weather stripping — is almost always cost effective, and it was very much so in this case.”

Adding insulation was also easily justified. Karpovich blew in cellulose to fill the outside walls and the attic. Energy Star recommends a minimum attic insulation value of R-38 in Rochester, but GreenHomes usually finds R-80 to be cost effective.

“We already have a delivery scheduled, and the crew is here with the blower set up. An extra 25 bags of insulation just doesn’t add that much to the cost,” Karpovich says.

Other measures included replacing existing lights with CFLs, replacing the 1984-

vintage furnace with a 94 percent efficient Energy Star-qualified model equipped with sealed combustion venting, and replacing the bathroom fan with an Energy Star bathroom fan/light assembly vented to the outside.

Cordone also got new windows all around: 11 Low-E, Energy Star-qualified windows on the main floor and six glass block basement windows. But this decision was based on safety and comfort considerations rather than energy savings.

“The existing window frames were covered with lead-based paint with friction surfaces that could release lead dust into the air,” says Karpovich. “In this case, keeping kids healthy was more important than energy savings. Of course the new windows improve the home’s comfort and appearance, but energy savings on new windows won’t pay for the interest on the loan.”

The whole upgrade cost about \$16,000, including \$5,400 for the windows and \$400 for the bathroom fan assembly. Karpovich estimates GreenHomes increased the efficiency of Cordone’s home by almost 40 percent. That translates to savings of almost \$1,000 per year — savings that will only increase as utility rates continue to climb.

### Client Education

One key to GreenHomes’ success is pretty simple: a focus on client education. Having clients thoroughly understand the recommendations and then helping to choose the solutions is a powerful tool.

“We make sure the homeowner wants to be involved in the home performance improvement process,” says Karpovich. “It’s just good for business. We’re not going to look at a home if the client’s not there. We give our customers a one-and-a-half-hour course on building science and the principles of home performance contracting. It builds trust, and it makes the sale.

“The GreenHomes approach includes detailed explanations. We explain to the client that we treat the home as a completely integrated system, not just four walls and a roof,” says Karpovich. “We use some of



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**When blowing cellulose insulation into the attic, make it snug. "A few extra few bags of insulation just doesn't add that much to the cost," says Tony Karpovich of GreenHomes America.**

## Additional Resources

**S**everal good resources are available to teach you about home performance contracting — and help you discuss energy upgrades with your customers.

- Home Performance with Energy Star is a program offered in 16 states that trains contractors to use a whole-house rather than piecemeal approach to improving comfort, air quality and energy use. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).
- The Building Performance Institute certifies remodelers and offers accreditation of organizations in building performance testing. Visit [www.bpi.org](http://www.bpi.org).
- The Energy Efficient Rehab Advisor, a product of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides guidelines for energy-efficient housing rehabilitation ranging from gut rehabs to bathroom remodeling. Quick and easy to use, it's a good resource to help remodelers and clients understand the costs and benefits and is also a useful tool to help remodelers market upgrades to their clients. Visit [www.rehabadvisor.com](http://www.rehabadvisor.com).
- Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory's Home Energy Saver provides the remodeler with a more rigorous analysis of potential energy-efficient opportunities. Users can estimate how much energy and money can be saved and how much emission can be reduced by implementing energy-efficiency improvements. Visit <http://hes.lbl.gov/>.
- ToolBase Service's Technology Inventory, a product of NAHB Research Center, provides a detailed explanation of more than 180 proven technologies that can improve the performance of U.S. homes. Visit [www.toolbase.org/TechInventory](http://www.toolbase.org/TechInventory).
- And when you're marketing your green upgrades, don't forget to mention tax credits. PATH's consumer site, <http://www.pathnet.org/homeowners>, provides links to a wide range of tax incentives, including credits and deductions in the 2005 Federal Energy Bill.

the materials straight off the Energy Star Web site to introduce the concepts. Then we escort the client through a complete whole-house assessment and recommend and explain solutions that will improve both efficiency and safety. After that, we implement those the client chooses. We want this process to be interactive so the clients can take control of their home's health and efficiency."

This approach allows GreenHomes to guarantee complete satisfaction — and 25 percent energy savings. "We can do that because we know that day in, day out, we often deliver 40 percent energy savings here in the Buffalo region," says Karpovich.

## Marketing Customer Satisfaction

To prove to customers that they're getting what they paid for, GreenHomes tests the entire system after installation. The team does a visual inspection; tests equipment efficiencies; checks combustion gas venting and carbon monoxide levels; and repeats the blower door test with the infrared camera.

"The process only takes about 45 minutes, but in that time we prove to ourselves and the client that the house will perform as promised."

"The best marketing comes from customers," Karpovich says. "An educated customer who has taken part in the process is a happy customer. John Cordone loved the sales and follow-up and called me and talked for over 10 minutes about how pleased he was. He loved the job, fed the staff everyday and enjoyed their tutelage and professionalism. John has agreed to do a radio spot for us in Rochester. We run some customer referrals in some of the commercials we do. What better advertising do you need?" **PR**

*Glen Salas 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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Made in classic shaker style, the Lancaster Hickory cabinets from Wellborn feature a solid wood center panel and a five-piece drawer front. The line will have six standard finishes and one specialty finish. The company recommends a natural finish to highlight the grain and texture of the wood.

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## Product Preview

NEW PRODUCTS



### MOEN

Made for vessel sinks in a wall-mounted configuration, Moen's Kingsley faucet feature the company's M-PACT common valve system for easy installation. The Kingsley has coordinating accessories and is made in chrome, LifeShine brushed nickel and oil-rubbed bronze. The faucets are backed by Moen's lifetime guarantee.

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### INSINKERATOR

The TransCape instant hot water dispensers from InSinkErator features new faucets that now include the View and Wave (shown) designs. The View is made for more traditional-looking kitchen décor, where the Wave complements softer contemporary kitchens. Both are made in chrome or satin nickel finishes.

For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-132>

## The Future of Green Flooring

As green remodeling continues to grow in popularity, homeowners are looking for more environmentally friendly flooring materials.

Bamboo, which qualifies for certification under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program, is one of the materials gaining ground because of its natural wood look. Because it grows rapidly, it can be harvested every five or six years, making it a more renewable resource than traditional hardwoods.

The problem with bamboo flooring is that with its increasing popularity, countless companies, many based overseas, have jumped into the market. That's resulted in significant variations in the quality and environmental friendliness of products.

"There are no standards for bamboo flooring, so consumers and remodelers need to be educated," says Ann Knight, vice president and co-founder of Teragren, a producer of bamboo flooring, panels and veneer.

Knight recommends several factors for remodelers to consider when purchasing bamboo flooring.

- When was it harvested? Some companies harvest bamboo at three years or less, resulting in softer flooring:
- Do they have hardness testing results? The Janka ball test is used to measure the hardness of wood floors based on how much pressure it takes to push a steel ball into wood.
- Who are you buying it from? By working with a reputable distributor or manufacturer, there's a better chance of getting a quality product and a warranty that will be honored.
- Can the supplier vouch for the environmental friendliness of the product? Many Chinese manufacturers use formaldehyde-based solvents and adhesives. Look for components such as water-based, solvent-free, non-off gassing finishes and proof that factories are ISO-certified.



### VILLEROY & BOCH

The latest in glazed stoneware from Villeroy & Boch includes the Fire & Ice collection. The company touts the shimmering effect of the tile's surface and claims the line is a possible choice in commercial projects because it meets Class R9 slip-resistance requirements. Sizes include 12-by-24-inch, 18-by-18-inch and 24-by-24-inch tiles.

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### ARMSTRONG

Seven new products to Armstrong's Valenza family include four engineered species: Brazilian Ruby Ironwood, Tigerwood (shown), Tauari and Pangali Ironwood. The flooring features a filled-face, sawn surface and micro-beveled edges and ends. The engineered wood products can be glued to a slab foundation in a home's lower levels.

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### QUICK-STEP

Afzelia Doussie, part of Quick-Step's environmentally-sustainable exotic hardwood laminate flooring, features a look similar to teak. Comes in Oiled, a caramel-color and Bleached, a light golden brown. Afromosia and Brazilian Cherry are also offered. The line is available in the company's Perspective V-groove or Eligna square-edged collections.

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### USG CORP.

Made to minimize downtime during flooring installations, USG Corp.'s Quick-Top Floor Underlayment, part of the company's Levelrock brand, is a self-leveling poured gypsum-concrete product that withstands up to 6,000 psi of pressure and dries within 15 hours.

It can be applied to subfloors 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick.

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### WILSONART

The Cherry Blossom 5-inch narrow plank full board from Wilsonart's Red Label is, according to the company, inspired by a two-year study of Japanese culture. It can be applied over existing floors and requires little maintenance. The flooring features a lifetime residential warranty against wear, fade, stain and topical moisture.

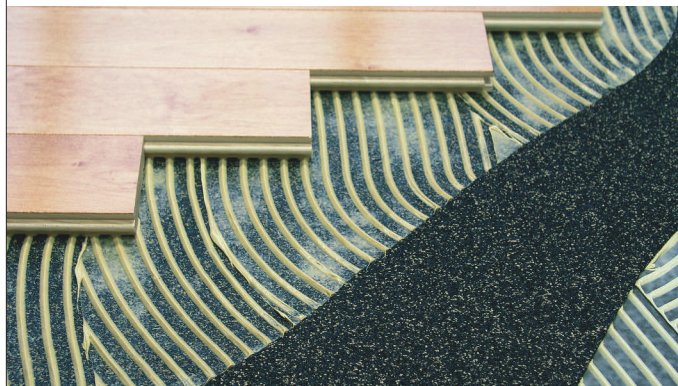
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### SIGNATURE INNOVATIONS

Suitable for use underneath ceramic tile; stone; solid and engineered hardwood; and all radiant flooring systems, the FlexiKork padded floor underlayment from Signature Innovations also uses environmentally-friendly adhesives, sealers and finishers from Germany's Uzin Group. According to the company, the product also received high marks in impact insulation and sound transmission resistance.

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### OSHKOSH

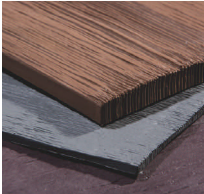
The latest inlay designs from Oshkosh's Essence collection includes the Compassion floor medallion. The decorative forms are made from American cherry, Birdseye maple, Jarrah, Leopardwood, Tigerwood and other exotic species. The company's metal-free Artisan finish completes the offering.

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## SENCO

Cordless finishing nailers from Senco include models 25 (18-gauge brad nailer), 32 (16-gauge finish nailer, shown) and 41 (15-gauge angled finish nailer). All feature the company's changeable drive system for precision nail placement in sequential operation or rapid nail placement in contact actuation operation. A two-year warranty is offered.

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## EMPIRE

With accuracy guaranteed to 5/10,000 of an inch, Empire's True Blue em71 Magnetic Box Level is stabilized by neodymium magnets with more than 50 pounds of holding power. The unit's E-Shock shock absorbing system uses co-polymer end caps made of a dual-density elastomer on an aluminum frame for added durability. The em71 is made in 24-, 48- and 72-inch versions.

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## STANLEY

With a rigid waterproof plastic bottom and ergonomic grip handle, Stanley's 18-inch Fat Max tool bag may be bulky, but according to the company, the bag is packed with nooks and crannies. That includes easy-pull zippers, extra tool loops in interior areas, a wider shoulder strap and industrial leather reinforcements at critical seams.

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## RYOBI

Using a swirl-free sanding action, Ryobi's P410 compact random orbit sander uses the company's universal 18-volt battery and features a dust-sealed on/off switch and an ergonomically-designed hand grip. The sander sports a two-year warranty and ships with an assortment of sand paper.

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## TOOLS

### BOSCH

Featuring the latest bells and whistles from the company, Bosch's 4100-10 portable job-site table saws have a high-visibility LCD gauge and display. The unit has a modular Smart Guard System that uses a blade guard, riving knife and anti-kickback pawls. The blade guard, according to the company, offers optimal line of sight for cut accuracy. **For FREE information, visit <http://pr.ims.ca/5345-144>**



### SKIL

Adding to their Lithium-Ion product line, Skil's 2410 drill/driver weighs in at 1.7 pounds and holds a charge even after 18 months of non-use. A built-in electronic clutch is operated by a torque dial for accurate adjustment. The clutch also turns off the motor when the desired torque is reached for less wear and tear. It also has a built-in work light.

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### RIDGID

Able to accept the company's 18- and 24-volt lithium ion batteries, Ridgid's R8823 Dual Voltage Impact Driver features a die-cast gear box and a high-end motor that delivers almost 1,500-pounds of torque. The R8823 has a 1/4-inch coupler for easy bit changes and a built-in LED light.

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### MILWAUKEE

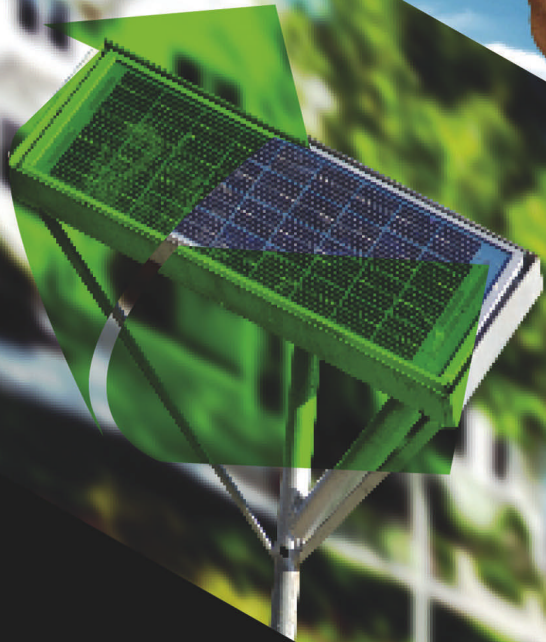
The 4 (formerly called V4) Screwdriver Kit from Milwaukee includes the 0490-22 screwdriver that accommodates tight spaces and awkward angles. The unit has a two-position handle in pistol and in-line settings along with a heavy-duty two-speed gearbox that delivers up to 600 RPMs. The unit weighs just over a pound and has a built-in battery life display.

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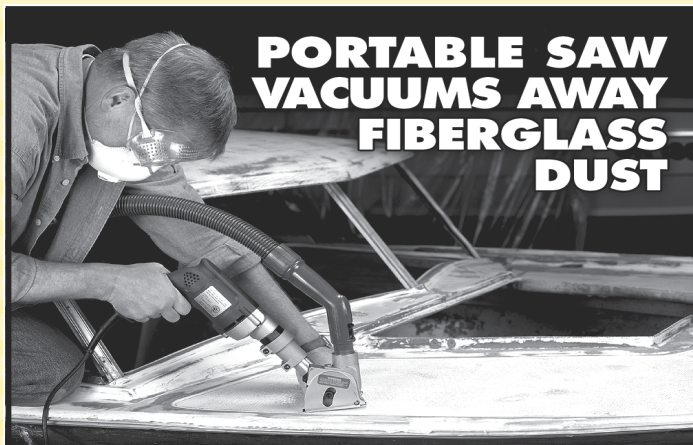


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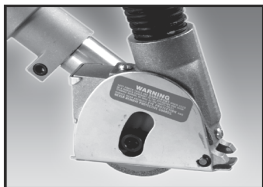
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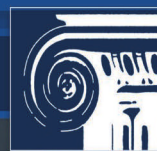


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## CONTACT INFO:

### Associate Publisher/Director of Sales

Tony Mancini  
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### Regional Manager Northeast

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### Events/Custom Publishing Director

Judy Brociek  
630/288-8184, Fax 630/288-8145  
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### Administrative Support

Rebecca Breskman  
Administrative Assistant  
610/205-1179  
[rebecca.breskman@reedbusiness.com](mailto:rebecca.breskman@reedbusiness.com)

### Arlean Talley

Administrative Assistant  
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[arlean.talley@reedbusiness.com](mailto:arlean.talley@reedbusiness.com)

### Advertising Production Manager

Raj Chauhan, 630/288-8431

### Advertising Contracts

Stephanie West, 630/288-8419  
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### Director of Electronic Media

Karthi Gandhi, 630/288-8145  
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## THE HIRING PROCESS

I have been in business for 19 years, and I will tell you hiring is by far the hardest yet most important aspect of my job as president of my company.

I have tried more approaches to hiring than I ever care to admit. In these past 19 years, I have found a few helpful areas to focus on that I would like to share:

### 1. Hiring is a process.

- Establish a clear picture of your organization's culture (those things that are important to you as the owner; things that you expect from your employees, coworkers, and fellow managers, etc.)

- Define duties, responsibilities and requirements for the position. Determine what types of degrees and experience are necessary.

- Define the personal characteristic necessary for the position. Often personality is the most difficult thing to evaluate in the hiring process, yet it is the most important. Determining skills for a certain position in advance — whether the skills are creative, analytical, decisiveness or communicative — can help in the end.

**2. Have a job description.** A good one should include:

- Title, department, company name, report to
- Duties, responsibilities
- Position requirements
- Personal characteristics
- Compensation, benefits, hours, location, attire

### 3. Search for qualified candidates.

- Look in-house first.

Known qualities are always better than unknown ones.

- If you're looking for someone new or you do not have the talent in-house, consider using Monster.com and Craigslist.org.

- If you're filling an entry-level position, consider trade schools and colleges. Co-op programs are great ways to find young talent. You get to see if they have the aptitude, personality and characteristics you defined earlier. This source is relatively low-risk, and if you're filling a position for the first time it is a great way to iron out the inevitable flaws in your job description or hiring process.

- Personality, intelligence, and skill tests are tools that can be helpful in evaluating a prospective employee.

**4. Interview well.** My biggest word of advice is to listen. The prospect will let you know if they fit your culture.

You can teach skills; you cannot teach personality. Some other pointers:

- The initial part of the interview should be about the company and about you, the interviewer. This will make the prospective employee feel more at ease and open.

- Keep it structured but flexible. All candidates should answer some basic questions, but be flexible if the interview takes a diversion. Bring it back if it gets off track.

- Again, listening will help you determine their ability to get work done, to work with other employees and to work with your clients.

**5. Check references; do background checks.** If they are in contact with families and children, complete your state's "Child Abuse History Clearance." It is an added level of security your clients will appreciate.

**6. Re-evaluate your process.** Once they are on board, you need to "retain, reward and grow the best." Take time to evaluate the process after the hire, talk with everyone involved and perform some process improvement. **PR**



### Bob DuBree

*Advisory Board Columnist*

**Birth Date:** July 7, 1958

**Company:** Creative Contracting

**Location:** North Wales, Pa.

**Industry Involvement:** NARI

**National Board of Directors**

**Favorite Business Book:** "The

7 Habits of Highly Effective

People," by Stephen R. Covey

**If I Weren't a Remodeler:** I'd own

a business in another industry

**Most Important Issue Facing the**

**Industry:** Too many voices in the

industry (NARI, NAHB, NKBA, etc.)

**Greatest Business Achievement:** Being named *Professional*

*Remodeler* Remodeler of the Year in 2004

**Hobby:** Boating

**I Drive an:** Acura MDX

**Favorite Sports Team:** Philadelphia Eagles

**Favorite Meal:** Rack of Lamb

**Favorite Drinks:** Single malt

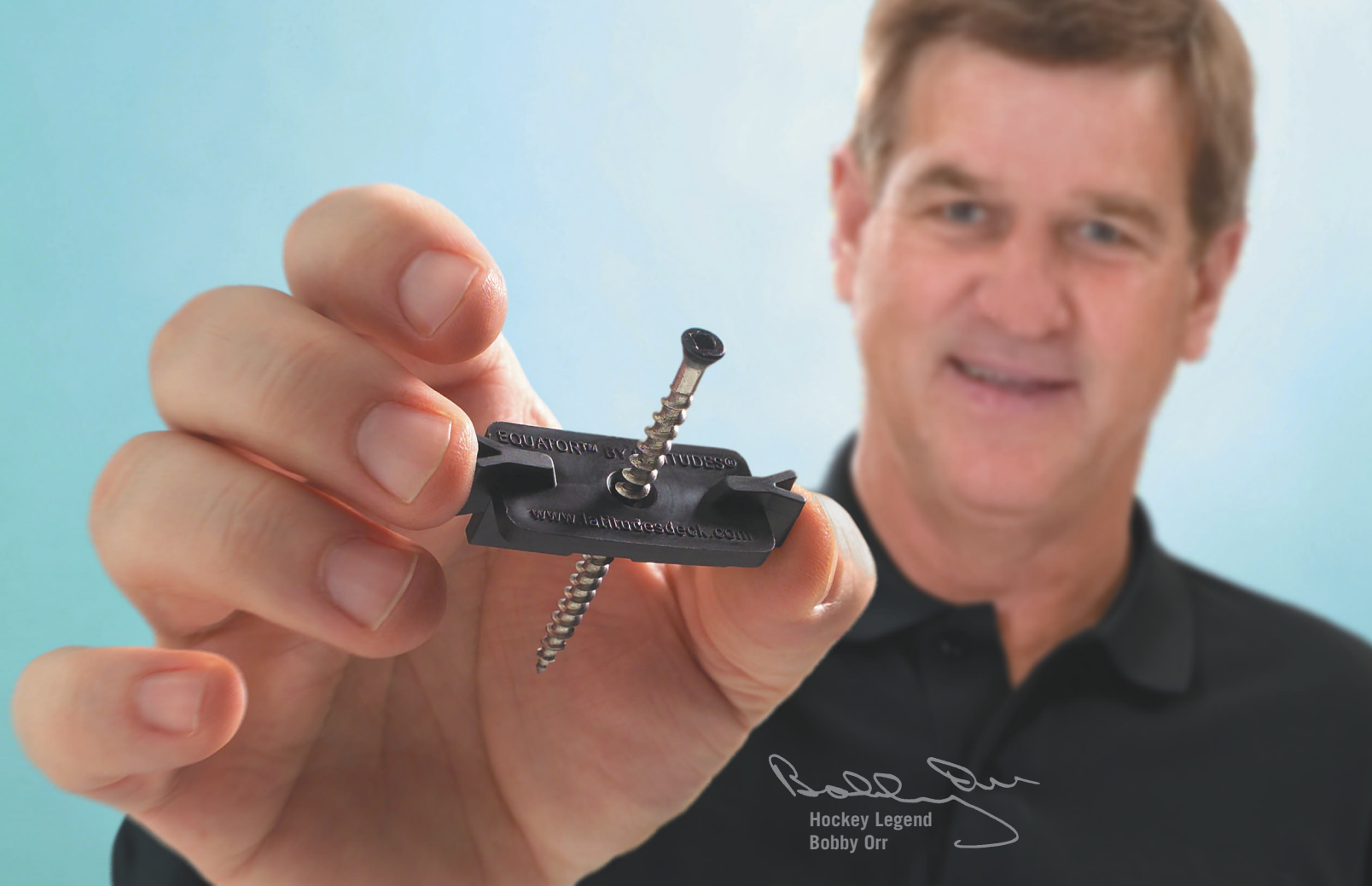
scotch, good red wine

**Favorite Music Type:** Rock & Roll

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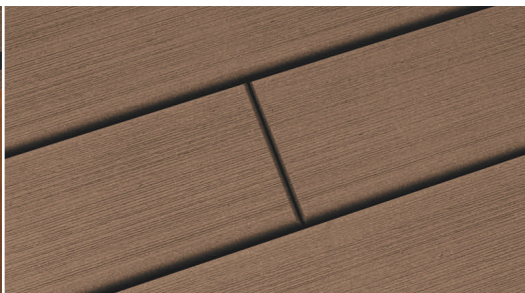
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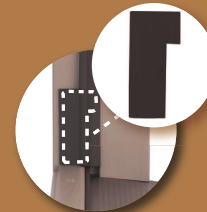
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