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MARROKAL DESIGN & REMODELING

Best of the Best Design Awards Build on Green Theme

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By **Jonathan Sweet**, Editor in Chief

Professional Remodeler

STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Jonathan Sweet

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

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Sara Zailskas

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

PRODUCTS EDITOR

Nick Bajzek

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

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Wendy A. Jordan

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bruce Case, Jud Motsenbocker, Tom Swartz

GROUP CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Patton

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR

Larry Nigh

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Judy Brociek

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Karen Ruesch

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mike Rotz

AUDIENCE MARKETING MANAGER

Angela Tanner

GENERAL MANAGER,

CONSTRUCTION MEDIA

Dean Horowitz

GROUP DIRECTOR,

SALES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Tony Mancini

DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL TITLES

Jeff Elliot

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Bruce Ksiazek

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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

submail@reedbusiness.com

CEO/CFO, RBI-US

John Poulin

PRESIDENT, RBI-US

Jeff DeBalko

VICE PRESIDENT INTERACTIVE MEDIA & SALES MANAGEMENT

Karthik Krishnan



Success by design

Great design is about more than good looks; it's also about problem-solving, quality and creativity. That's brought home to me every time we judge our Best of the Best Design Awards.

This month we bring you the results of our Best of the Best awards as part of our Annual Design Issue. Not surprisingly, this year's competition reflected the realities of today's remodeling market.

Green remodeling — especially energy efficiency — has been dominating the remodeling conversation this year, and nearly every award winner chosen by our judges incorporated sustainable features. The Project of the Year, by Marrokal Design & Remodeling in San Diego, is a perfect example of how creative design can be sustainable. While the homeowners certainly wanted the home to reflect their personal style, they also came into the project with defined green goals, a trait we found in many of the homeowners of this year's winning projects.

(Besides our coverage of the Best of the Best here in print, be sure to check out HousingZone.com for video interviews with the judges, photo slide-shows of all of the winners and more.)

We also noticed a marked decline in average project size. Our Project of the Year notwithstanding, the multi-million dollar luxury jobs of years past have been replaced with smaller, less expensive kitchens and bathrooms.

It's a big change, but a good one for the long-term health of the industry. An industry

built on more reasonable jobs is by its very nature more sustainable and stable than one resting on big-ticket projects.

There's little doubt we're facing a challenge today that few if any of us have been through before. This year was the most tumultuous year most us have experienced in the remodeling industry. With a housing crisis and high unemployment that show little indication of ending anytime soon, 2010 appears challenging as well.

It's also a time of opportunity. The best companies are getting creative, finding ways

The best companies are getting creative, finding ways to separate themselves from the competition.



to separate themselves from the competition or capitalizing on alternative sources of revenue to survive in this environment. Whether it's with winning design or investing in rental properties, smart firms are finding ways to make it in this new reality (read Jud Motsenbocker's conversation

about rental properties in this month's Remodelers' Exchange on page 7).

For some remodelers it's energy audits, for others it's ramping up warranty work or handyman divisions. The answer's different for every company, but it's out there. And in the end, that's what really matters — finding the way that makes sense for you to separate yourself from the competition. And here at *Professional Remodeler*, we'll keep looking for and sharing the ways the best companies are preparing for the turnaround. •

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Rental properties can be a road to success

Remodelers have advantages over the average investor when it comes to rental properties. *Professional Remodeler's* Jud Motzenbocker talked to remodelers Bill Connor and Diane Menke about the opportunity and challenges of investing in property. Highlights of that conversation appear here. To listen to the full discussion, visit www.HousingZone.com/remex.

This month featuring:

Bill Connor, President

Connor & Co., Indianapolis

Connor started Connor & Co. in 1979 as a painting and finishing firm, but he has since expanded it to include three divisions: design/build, commercial services and residential handyman. The company has 15 employees. Connor bought his first rental property in 1987.



Diane Menke, Vice President

Myers Constructs, Philadelphia

Menke and Tamara Myers started Myers Constructs, a full-service remodeling firm with six employees, in 1998. The company's work is mostly in residential remodeling. Menke has been investing in rental properties for eight years.



JUD MOTSENBOCKER: Bill, how did you get started in buying rental properties?

BILL CONNOR: Back in 1987, we bought our first double. It was around the corner from my house. It seemed like a good thing to do, wasn't very expensive, needed a lot of work and was a good looking 1920 house that had good bones, and so we invested.

MOTSENBOCKER: Diane, tell me how you got started.

DIANE MENKE: I was eager to start working on developing some extra cash flow for myself and was scratching my head over it, and I realized I was sitting in a house that had appreciated really nicely over about the span of five years. I just took a

[home equity line of credit] and went out and started buying up houses to flip.

MOTSENBOCKER: So Diane, do you buy and flip them or do you keep them for rental properties?

MENKE: I do both. Sometimes it is better to hold on for a while and rent it until you can get the equity to the place where a flip might be a good idea. I am not really interested in having a lot of single-family homes that I rent out to students so much as doing that while I develop the wealth and cash flow to such a state that I can start to hand it off, or maybe invest in commercial, getting into some larger projects.

MOTSENBOCKER: What type of properties do you look for?

CONNOR: Generally, ours are older, somewhat historic. Our business is sort of tied to older buildings, and we have always been in historic districts. We are always looking for something that has got some character to it.

MOTSENBOCKER: Do they need repair work when you take them over?

CONNOR: Yes. We don't buy anything that is already complete. My sense is that we will buy properties that other people won't buy because of our skill set and our ability to look at a building a little bit differently than the public.

Sometimes they are a little dogged, or they don't appear to the market as being something that is valuable.

MOTSENBOCKER: Diane, what do you look for? What neighborhoods or what type of buildings do you look for when you try to buy?

MENKE: It depends on what my aim is. If I want to make some cash flow in the next 12 months, I am looking at a neighborhood where maybe there is some outside pressure, where the neighborhood is going to be improving in value. Usually, if there is a sort of transitional neighborhood, you may have that. In our

city, you might have a house that is boarded up in the same block as a house you are buying, but because you have done your homework you know that there is enough pressure on that block that within a year the property values are going to come up, and that boarded up house is going to be sold or renovated. I just kind of keep my ear to the ground.

MOTSENBOCKER: In this case, your company does the maintenance. How do you charge for that?

MENKE: We charge by the hour, and then we mark it up. We get a marked up bill to the real-estate entity from the company.

MOTSENBOCKER: The company makes a profit on that particular project. Bill, how about you?

CONNOR: Pretty much the same. We just don't bill it at the standard public rate. I get a bill,

and the hourly rate is just a little bit less. I feel like just because I own property, the company shouldn't really subsidize that, and the only way it does is that I get preferred rate.

MOTSENBOCKER: Bill, what are the advantages in buying investment properties?

CONNOR: Obviously return. It seems to me that sometimes I compare it to a sports car and a mechanic. A mechanic sees an old sports car and says, "Wow, that can be something," and he knows that he is going to spend X amount of hours on it and then he is going to have a return on it at the end. We look at houses in a similar fashion. •

Remodelers' Exchange Online
To listen to a podcast of the full conversation, visit
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5 ways to manage leads for growth

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Smart companies are cranking up their marketing budgets to generate more business and leads. Even if overall business is down, devoting more to marketing is a great opportunity to grab market share and position your company for the recovery.

But managing leads from sources other than referrals can be a challenge for many remodelers. We talked to Kim Renstrom, vice president of marketing at K-Designers, one of the country's largest remodelers, to get tips on how the company successfully manages its flood of nearly 7,500 leads a month and gets the most out of them. The Gold River, Calif.-based exterior remodeler has 11 branch locations that serve 18 states in the Western half of the United States.

1. Make follow-up count

K-Designers follows up on every lead, no matter what the source, but the sheer volume means they have to be prioritized. The company tracks more than 30 types of lead sources. Of course, repeat business and referrals top the list of best leads, while past experience has taught the company that leads that come from events such as county fairs and community festivals are much less likely to result in business. Sources such as direct mail and the Internet fall in the middle.

2. Don't be too picky

While K-Designers' call center employees do prequalify some prospects, the company will usually make an appointment if the lead wants one. (Salespeople only go out to appointments scheduled by the main office in Gold River.)

"If they're willing to let us come out, willing to have both people home, willing to sit down and have a demonstration, we're going to make an appointment," Renstrom says.

That approach is even more important in the current economic climate, she says, if the company wants to keep its sales and installation teams busy.

3. Analyze the data

K-Designers relies on a robust database that tracks every lead from beginning to end. With hundreds of leads coming in every day, it'd be easy to lose track of them. It allows the employees to see where the lead came from, who has talked to the prospect so far and what the result was.

"That way it's not like going back to a cold call," Renstrom says. "We can say, 'We met you at the North Dakota state fair and you were interested in hearing about window products.' Our computer system is key."

If a client asks to be contacted again in 90 days, for example, the system will also track that and prompt the callback so the information is not lost or forgotten.

4. Favor the hot hand

The database also allows the corporate office to see at a glance the closing rate of the various salespeople, which they can use when assigning leads.

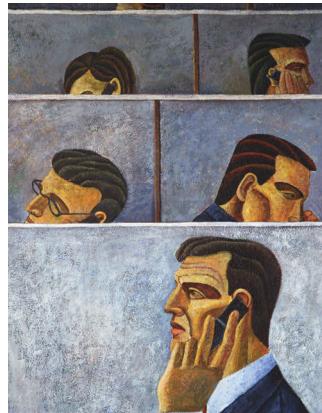
"We're always watching the numbers, and that helps us determine how many of these valuable appointments I want to give to a salesperson on any given day or week," Renstrom says. "If I've got somebody who's hot and putting up business like gangbusters, I want to give them as much as possible, and if I've got somebody who's struggling, maybe I want to give them less until their manager has a chance to work with them."

5. Remember: Persistence pays

It's a fine line between persistence and harassment, and K-Designers tries to walk it.

"We're very sensitive about it, but we try to be persistent," Renstrom says. "Even if they don't say yes once, they go into the file to call back in 30 days or 60 days or 90 days. A name and phone number of somebody who's willing to let us call them is a very valuable piece of information."

— JONATHAN SWEET, EDITOR IN CHIEF





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Leadership lessons from the military

Many remodelers served in the military before going into construction, and they say that experience has helped make them successful in business.

"I rely on my military experience a lot," says Zett Quinn, president of Quality Craftsmen in Marietta, Ga.

Quinn, who served 10 years in the U.S. Army Reserves as an engineer and ordinance officer, attributes his service with teaching him how to lead by example, a skill he now uses when managing teams of up to 50 employees and trade contractors on projects.

Setting an example to the people he leads is a key part of being a leader both in and out of the military, says Marc Chavaree, a remodeling consultant with Case Handyman and Remodeling in Charlotte, N.C., and a six-year veteran of the Navy.

"People see a leader who is trustworthy, and they aspire to that," says Chavaree.

One of the most useful things Matt Hoots learned during his time in the Marine Corps is the importance of getting a job done right, a lesson he applies everyday at The Hoots Group in Atlanta.

"In the Marine Corps, it's all about mission accomplishment and troop welfare," Hoots says. "Our staff knows that they're allowed to build correctly, and I'll stand by them. They also know if they try and take any shortcuts, we're going to call them on it."

— JONATHAN SWEET, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Military lessons in business

Digest these key tips from remodelers who have adapted their military experience to business:

- **Lead by example.** Your employees will work the way you do. Treat them and your clients with respect and integrity and they'll do the same.
- **Set standards.** Make sure your employees know what you expect and that you'll stand

behind them.

• **Plan.** Just like a mission in the military, properly running a company or a project takes good planning.

• **Stay calm.** Keeping your composure in the face of adversity keeps your employees, clients and trade partners calm.

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Why toxic employees can harm your business

My daughter smiles more than anyone I know, tries hard, listens and is a kind soul. To build on these qualities and to have some fun, we signed her up for her first foray into team sports with soccer a couple months ago. Above all, we hope that it will be fun for her and introduces her to being on a team, life lessons about hard work and a level of coordination that I missed out on as a youth.

one of its toughest challenges.

My compass for this and any other difficult challenge is what is important in the short-, medium- and long-terms. There are three primary goals of a business for its shareholders and owners:

1. Income: This is all about maximizing net profit/owners compensation. Many business people assume this is the only goal for business, and their cultures reflect that belief.

Since the first practice, one child stands out. In scrimmages, his talent and results are evident. He deftly dribbles, kicks and defends. He is fast, competitive and focused. In the first scrimmage, he scored about 90 percent of the goals; coach switched him to the losing team halfway through. In practice, however, he stands out for his lack of discipline. In dribbling drills, he's kicking the ball 20 yards. He's scoring goals while the coach is giving instruction. He isn't friendly.

In such a business, a toxic employee will typically thrive and will be further enabled as long as they are hitting quantifiable milestones.

2. Lifestyle: You need a level of compensation that will enable your pursuit of hobbies and lifestyle, but you are not interested in squeezing every dollar out of your business. For instance, you might invest a little more in your team so that you can take time off for travel, sports or other hobbies. In such a business, a toxic employee will survive for the short- and medium-terms, but eventually the havoc caused by a toxic employee will be their demise. If lifestyle drives you and your business, a strong team is required. A note of caution here: I see many business owners who sway between the goals of income and lifestyle. This can cause severe tension within your business because one must have priority over the other to be sustainable.

3. Equity: Think of this as building a business that has value over and above any individual. If this is your goal, income becomes

only one piece of the puzzle; the power of team and the strength of your brand are equally important elements. Toxic employees will either fall in line or will not last long in a business focused on equity because results are not the only scorecard.

What is important to me is equity. Yes, we need income. Yes, I need some time off to pursue hobbies and other lifestyle pursuits. But my drive is to build equity

because that will give us long-term stability, opportunity and strength. There are times we consciously sacrifice short-term returns in the hopes of creating more equity. As a result, toxic

employees will not last in my culture.

That is why we are creating equitable compensation programs that are consistent for every team member. We are holding everyone — even the high performers — equally accountable to follow our process. We are focused on creating true team rather than a

group of individuals. We will retain as many all-stars as we can, but they need to follow our processes, and they need to work constructively with team members. Terrell Owens need not apply.

It will be interesting to see how the coach works with the soccer prodigy. Is it all about playing him as much as possible to try to win every game? Or is it about teaching strong fundamentals, discipline and team spirit — the foundations of equity that will allow the team to succeed far down the road? •

Bruce Case is the president of Case Design/Remodeling and Case's national franchise organization, Case Handyman & Remodeling. He can be reached at bcase@casedesign.com.



We will retain as many all-stars as we can, but they need to work constructively with team members.

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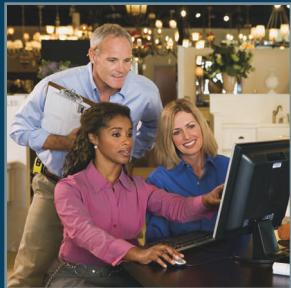
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MARROKAL DESIGN & REMODELING

Green Theme

Environmentally friendly design is prevalent in this year's Best of the Best Awards

By Jonathan Sweet, Editor in Chief

This year's Best of the Best Design Awards reflect the realities of the remodeling industry, with an emphasis on green remodeling. From our Project of the Year, featured on the following pages, by Marrokal Design & Remodeling to the bronze award winners, sustainability was a common theme in this year's entries. Be sure to visit www.housingzone.com/awards for more coverage including videos, slideshows and more.

The Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired front entrance and foyer (above) accentuates the natural beauty of the site and replaces the cramped original (at right).



Coastal Contemporary

Beautiful coastal location overlooking the Pacific. Great offshore breezes. And a home with a few tiny windows that did almost nothing for the view. “They were on the side of a hill that afforded a 200-degree view, a spectacular view of San Diego – probably one of the best,” says John Davies, director of design at Marrokal Design & Remodeling, of the Spanish-style San Diego home. “The original house basically ignored the advantages of the site. When you came into the house you had no idea there was even a view there.”

The new owners of the home wanted to transform this boring 1970s house into a world-class home that took advantage of the natural benefits of the site, offered extensive space to entertain and was environmentally friendly. It was a goal that the Marrokal team pulled off flawlessly and for which the company was recognized as the Project of the Year in the Best of the Best Design Awards.

Frank Lloyd Wright meets Spanish-style

The homeowners were both fans of architecture and design and brought a lot of ideas to the table when they first started working with Marrokal.

“They travel extensively and had a lot of ideas from their trips,” Davies says. “They wanted contemporary but wanted a little bit of flavor without going Old World or Tuscan.”

The clients brought in photos of several homes they liked from magazines and their travels. They frequently mentioned elements of many Frank Lloyd Wright designs, including elements of Falling Water and many of his other homes.

“They were consistently showing me images of his early work in Chicago,” Davies says. “The exterior of the home was heavily influenced by very horizontal lines from Frank Lloyd Wright’s Prairie Style.”

The challenge for Davies and the rest of the design team was to incorporate all of these disparate ideas. Although the clients were a wealth of ideas, they also gave the designers freedom to work. They made it clear that they wanted an original structure that was inspired by those ideas, not simply copied.

“They didn’t have the reins on us design-wise at all,” Davies says. “They were very specific in saying take this and digest this and show us what you’ve got. They were able to steer us



MARROKAL DESIGN & REMODELING

Marrokal Design & Remodeling designed the new pool pavilion to take advantage of the site’s natural offshore breezes and angles to the sun for passive heating and cooling.

without directing us.”

That combination allowed the design process to go smoothly and quickly, taking only six months instead of the 12 months a project like this might typically take, Davies says.

The design/build advantage

Marrokal Design & Remodeling’s use of the design/build model was a key factor in the company’s landing the multi-million dollar project. Because of the clients’ frequent travels and busy work schedules they wanted one contact for all of their issues.

“They had worked with one architect before and felt like this was not a good fit for them,” Davies says. “They were concerned there’d be something lost in the translation when designs go out to bid or that some static might occur between what they wanted to achieve aesthetically and the practicum of construction.”

At Marrokal, the design/build model also includes interior design, so every design decision was made with knowledge of the realities of construction. It also allowed the clients and designers to tweak designs throughout the process while

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– Joseph Irons, CGR, GMB, CAPS, CGP
Irons Brothers Construction, Inc.
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Coastal Contemporary

MARROKAL DESIGN & REMODELING



The Marrokal team removed the entire original dark center of the home and replaced it with an open, two-story design.

working with the production team.

"A lot of times, as a designer you have to be on the site and read the client and their temperament and translate what they're telling you into reality," Davies says. "That's a lot easier when everybody is part of the same company."

Dream realized

After extensive discussions, the clients and Marrokal team agreed that the best way to optimize the view was to essentially start over in the center of the house.

The existing center of the house was completely demolished and replaced with a new two-story core that contained the living room, dining room, foyer and an office loft.

The new large windows overlook the expansive view, and French doors open out onto a new patio with a fireplace and outdoor kitchen. Paths from the patio lead to a series of patios off of the newly constructed pool pavilion.

The pool pavilion was another feature designed to take advantage of the location. The entire pavilion is surrounded by Nana Walls that are fully retractable into pockets, allowing the natural ocean breezes to passively cool the area but also making it possible to secure the area when nobody's home.

"They wanted an indoor pool that was also open air," Davies says. "You would never know, other than the little tracks,

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The mahogany-wrapped pillars feature a small channel for LED lighting at the top of the stone base, a small detail but one of designer John Davies' favorite features of the project.

that there are windows there when it is opened up."

The pool and outdoor spaces were important to the owners because of their frequent entertaining.

"A lot of people say that they want to entertain, but these guys really meant it," Davies says. "It's not unusual for them to have fundraisers with 500 people there."

The clients wanted a "cocktail party pool" that was something people could stand in, as well as a hot tub that could accommodate at least 15 people. The pool itself is about

5 feet deep and only about 6 inches off of the floor, while the tub is elevated 18 inches.

"The actual design concept is that the floor elevation would not be disturbed," Davies says.

In both the pool and the tub, the water cascades off of the edges and is recirculated from a trough pack into the pools. The idea came from a hotel pool that Davies saw during a trip to Florida for a design convention.

The pool pavilion also featured one of the home's significant green features. While also architecturally important to the exterior design, the clerestory windows and cupola over the pool actually function as a thermal chimney to heat and cool the house as needed. It is the highest point in the house, so heat naturally travels there and is released through the clerestory windows by a computer-controlled system that automatically opens those windows when the air reaches a

MARROKAL DESIGN & REMODELING



The cupola and clerestory windows above the pool pavilion function as a thermal chimney to release excess heat.

certain temperature. During the winter, it does the opposite, blowing the heat down to warm the space when needed.

"The whole structure was designed as a feature that would be able to be cooled without air conditioning or anything," Davies says.

Green goal

Incorporating extensive green features was a priority for the homeowners from the beginning of the design process. The Marrokal staff studied sun angles in both summer and winter, as well as the prevailing breezes to harness those for natural heating and cooling of the home.

"In this house, they wouldn't have to run the air conditioning," Davies says. "The idea was really to keep the energy consumption down by taking into consideration the site conditions and designing for that."

The clients also opted to install a large photovoltaic array on the side of the canyon that powers the entire house and feeds energy back to the grid even when the house is at full use.

Although the home has extensive landscaping, the designers also found ways to minimize its environmental impact. During site preparation, they discovered there was an underground aquifer fed by runoff from a housing development on



The Marrokal team carried the theme of stone and mahogany throughout the interior and exterior of the home.

the mesa above the home. That water is now used as the source for the landscape irrigation. They also installed collection grids under the turf areas to collect excess water, which is then recycled back into the irrigation system.

The whole house is controlled by the same computer system that regulates the thermal chimney in the pool pavilion. It allows the homeowners to control the systems of the house from anywhere in the world and also self-regulates many of its operations. The on-site weather station tracks temperatures, sun and rainfall and only waters the landscaping when needed. It also controls shade screens on the outside and

"When you came into the house you had no idea there was even a view."

— JOHN DAVIES

inside of the house to help manage the heating and cooling.

Finally, materials were chosen for their low carbon footprint and all of the materials removed from the house were recycled either in the home's reconstruction or donated to charities such as Habitat for Humanity. •



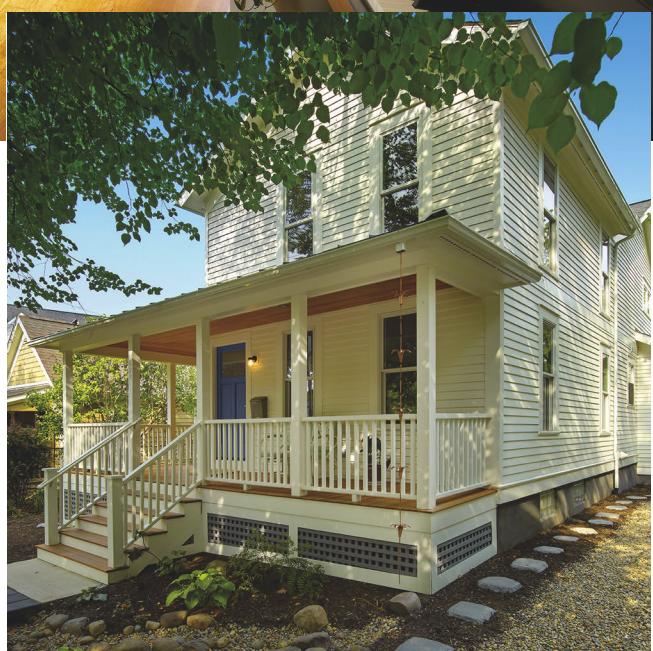
Right-Size Green

When they started working on this Michigan whole-house remodel, the design and construction team had no intention of trying to achieve LEED certification. But after budget challenges and some creative solutions, the project became only the fifth LEED Platinum addition/remodel in the country and the first in the state of Michigan.

The initial plan for the remodel called for a larger addition, but as with many clients, the original vision had to be changed for budget realities, says architect Michael Klement, principal of Architectural Resource.

At the same time, the clients didn't want to sacrifice any of the features they desired. The answer lay in incorporating Sarah Susanka's Not-So-Big design philosophy, which emphasizes the idea of designing for how clients live instead of just focusing on adding more space.

Working with Meadowlark Builders, the remodeler on the project, Klement found ways to make spaces work for multiple uses. For example, the second-story landing is both a hallway and yoga studio, and the traditional mudroom was also designed to serve as a bicycle staging area for the homeowners, who made the bicycle their primary mode of transport.



JAMES HAEFNER PHOTOGRAPHY

GREEN REMODEL
Architect:
 Architectural Resource,
 Ann Arbor, Mich.
Remodeler:
 Meadowlark Builders,
 Ann Arbor, Mich.
Kitchen/Bath Designer:
 Meadowlark Builders,
 Ann Arbor, Mich.
Project Location:
 Ann Arbor, Mich.





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A362 Mahogany

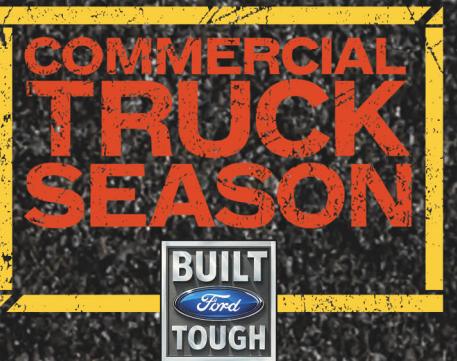


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ADDITION OVER
\$200,000Architect: Heffner
Architects,
Alexandria, Va.Remodeler: Bozzuto
Construction,
Greenbelt, Md.Interior Designer:
Louis Mazer Inc.,
Baltimore
Project Location:
Baltimore

Wooded Retreat



The owners of this 1970s home wanted to expand their master suite and make the home stand out more on the wooded, sloping property. "As you drove up to the site, it appeared to be a small, one-story house," says architect Jim Heffner, president of Heffner Architects. "They just wanted to try to create something that would give the house a little more distinct presence."

Because of the steep slopes of the site, the best solution was to simply add on to the existing end of the home, where the master suite was. The existing suite was remodeled and turned into a music room to house the owners' baby grand piano.

The new master suite features a 400-square-foot bedroom, along with his-and-her bathrooms and dressing rooms. The rooms were finished in a contemporary style that matched the décor of the rest of the home.

The biggest challenge of the project was matching the addition to the site and existing exterior with its copper mansard roof.

"We had to fit the style, which had a dated appearance to it," Heffner says. "We had to come up with an idea that would not be so overly striking that it doesn't really fit with the house."

Heffner accomplished that by designing the roof addition



BEFORE



BOB NAROD PHOTOGRAPHY

to mirror the original roof. The flat roof takes the slope of the existing roof and reverses it, flaring the roof out as opposed to sloping it back. Beneath the roof is a series of clerestory windows, the bottom of which line up with the base of the existing mansard roof. Heffner maintained the reverse slope of the roof by creating a frieze under the windows. The addition was finished with cedar siding to match the existing home.

Heffner used 6-inch steel posts to hold the addition up over the more than 20-foot drop-off to further emphasize the connection to its wooded setting. "They're angled in several directions, because we were trying to get back to the idea of there being multiple tree trunks and limbs," he says.



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**OUTDOOR LIVING
OVER \$100,000**

Remodeler:

Steve Reitz Co.,
Marble Falls, Texas

Architect:

Rhotenberry Wollen
Architects,
Midland, Texas

Project Location:
Deer Haven, Texas

The Steve Reitz Co. was six months into a nine-month whole-house remodel of a Central Texas lakefront home when the owners decided they also wanted to replace the existing, dilapidated boathouse.

"They wanted to do something with the waterfront that was unique, different than the run-of-the-mill boathouse that you see surrounding the whole perimeter of the lake," says company owner Steve Reitz.

With that goal in mind, the Reitz team worked with architect Mark Wollen to design an outdoor retreat that would incorporate not only a covered boat dock but also a luxury outdoor kitchen, fireplace, bathroom, pool and hot tub.

While the clients were content to let the team come up with its own design for the project, they were the ones who brought the idea to use stone throughout. The inspiration for the extensive stone came from a small, 5-by-7-foot waterfall the clients had seen in a Midland, Texas, hotel lobby. The company brought in almost 300 tons of stone from Oklahoma to complete the project.

For insurance and permitting reasons, the cabana building



BEFORE



KELLY CAUBLE / HOME VIEW

could not be connected to the dock. The design team addressed that by designing sloping, overlapping roofs that give the impression of a connection, Reitz says.

At the same time, the cabana had to be at least 5 feet off of the ground to conform with local zoning regulations for the flood plain in which it was located. The company designed a series of stone and ipe steps that made for a seamless transition from the stone of the cabana floor to the ipe dock.

"We wanted it to flow smoothly from the dock to the cabana up to the house," Reitz says. "We had to figure out ways to make this thing look like we didn't just stick it up in the air 5 feet."



Restored Glory

For 20 years, the owners of this 1883 Victorian farmhouse had been working to restore its interior. When they came to Smiley Renovations in 2007, they were finally ready to bring its exterior back to its past glory.

The Silver Spring, Md., remodeler was charged with rebuilding two porches and restoring the exterior siding, trim, shutters and hardware. The rear screened-in porch had fallen into disrepair and been torn down in the 1980s. The homeowners wanted a new porch built to replicate the original. A second porch off of the kitchen had been rebuilt in the 1940s, and the clients wanted it removed and replaced with a porch that better reflected the 1880s style of the home.

Under the conditions of the Historical Area Work Permit from Prince George's County, Md., the renovations had to remain true to the character of the historic home, and only era-appropriate materials could be used. Many modern materials, such as pressure-treated lumber, could not be visible on the exterior of the home.

Smiley and the homeowners worked with Douglass Reed of Preservation Associates, an expert on older homes, who



BEFORE



VERKO PALLOMINI/PRO ARC PHOTOGRAPHY

provided information on historically accurate details. So did historical photos. The original stone piers for the rear porch were also partially standing. While the piers were not stable enough to provide support for the new porch, the Smiley team was able to use them to mark the location of the porch and replicate the stones used.

The exterior hardware and shutters were either salvaged or recreated based on research or the photos. The aluminum storm windows were replaced with wood storm windows, and the rotting wood siding was replaced and repaired.



EXTERIOR
Remodeler/Designer:
Streeter & Associates,
Wayzata, Minn.
Project Location:
Minnetonka, Minn.

Exterior Transformation

The owners of this home were looking for a number of benefits from this remodeling project when they came to Streeter & Associates: an owner's suite, one-level living and space for extended family. But most important was addressing the "horrendous" exterior, says lead designer Jeff Lindgren.

The home, which started as a small cabin in this lake-front neighborhood west of Minnesota's Twin Cities, had been through multiple poorly planned additions over the years, leaving it without much charm or curb appeal, Lindgren says. The transformation was impressive enough that the Best of Best judges rewarded it with a Platinum award in the Exterior category.

The homeowners spend a lot of time traveling in Minnesota's northwoods and in the western United States and wanted a lodge-inspired home with some craftsman details. The Streeter team took its inspiration from other homes in the area, as well as several homes that Lindgren visited on a trip to Colorado.

The goal was to liven up the exterior with more vibrant tones and varying textures. The designers accomplished this by using materials including natural stone; cedar columns, garage doors and board-and-batten siding; and fiber cement siding, fascia and soffits. The company installed metal roofs



BEFORE



STREETER & ASSOCIATES

over the porch and dormers to accent those areas and set them off. "I wanted the materials to be different so your eye would be moving around the space and not settle on just one area," Lindgren says.

While the final product was impressive, the project was not without its challenges. The property's dimensions (80-by-300 feet, with a third of that wetlands) and long history of unpermitted additions and remodels by previous owners had left it in violation of local setback codes. Because of that, Streeter & Associates had to submit plans multiple times over a six-month period.

Professional Remodeler

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Design
Awards

**ADDITION****UNDER \$200,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Michael Nash Custom
Kitchens & Homes,
Fairfax, Va.
Project Location:
Oakton, Va.

**BATHROOM****OVER \$50,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Stimmel Consulting
Group, Ambler, Pa.
Project Location:
Villanova, Pa.

**BATHROOM****OVER \$50,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Case Design/Remodel-
ing, Bethesda, Md.
Project Location:
Washington, D.C.

**FINISHED
BASEMENT**

Remodeler/Designer:
Finished Basement
Co., Eagan, Minn.
Project Location:
Minnetonka, Minn.

**KITCHEN****\$75,000-\$125,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Normandy Builders,
Hinsdale, Ill.
Project Location:
Wilmette, Ill.

**KITCHEN****OVER \$125,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Case Design/Remodel-
ing, Bethesda, Md.
Project Location:
Washington, D.C.

**SPECIALTY ROOM**

Designer: Stimmel
Consulting Group,
Ambler, Pa.
Remodeler: Gardner/
Fox Associates,
Bryn Mawr, Pa.
Project Location:
Newtown Square, Pa.

**WHOLE HOUSE
UNDER \$500,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Case Design/Remodel-
ing, Bethesda, Md.
Project Location:
Washington, D.C.



**ADDITION
OVER \$200,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Normandy Builders,
Hinsdale, Ill.
Project Location:
Hinsdale, Ill.



**BATHROOM
UNDER \$50,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Kirkpatrick's
Construction,
Centreville, Va.
Project Location:
Fairfax, Va.



EXTERIOR

Remodeler/Designer:
Castle Crafters,
Austin, Texas
Project Location:
Austin, Texas



**FINISHED
BASEMENT**

Remodeler/Designer:
Finished Basement
Co., Maple Grove,
Minn.
Project Location:
Medina, Minn.



**KITCHEN
\$125,000-\$175,000**

Remodeler: Steve
Gray Renovations,
Indianapolis
Architect: Geiger
O'Herren by Nance,
Indianapolis
Project Location:
Carmel, Ind.



**OUTDOOR LIVING
UNDER \$100,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Winn Design,
Fairfax, Va.
Project Location:
Fairfax, Va.



**OUTDOOR LIVING
UNDER \$100,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
Charlotte Design-
Build, Charlotte, N.C.
Project Location:
Cornelius, N.C.



**OUTDOOR LIVING
OVER \$100,000**

Remodeler/Designer:
HartmanBaldwin
Design/Build,
Claremont, Calif.
Project Location:
Claremont, Calif.



SPECIALTY ROOM

Remodeler: Magleby Renovation Group, Pleasant Grove, Utah
Architect: Schiel Architects, Salt Lake City
Project Location: Park City, Utah



WHOLE HOUSE OVER \$500,000

Remodeler: Jackson & LeRoy Remodeling, Salt Lake City
Architect: HSA Architects, Salt Lake City
Interior Designer: HSA Interiors, Salt Lake City
Project Location: Salt Lake City



WHOLE HOUSE UNDER \$500,000

Remodeler/Designer: JG Development, Blue Mounds, Wis.
Project Location: Lodi, Wis.



WHOLE HOUSE OVER \$500,000

Architect: Krieger + Associates Architects, Philadelphia
Remodeler: Dennis F. Meyer Inc., Ambler, Pa.
Project Location: Philadelphia

BEST OF THE BEST DESIGN AWARDS: BRONZE AWARDS

ADDITION OVER \$200,000

Architect: Architectural Resource, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Remodeler: S.R. Stricklen Building Co., Ann Arbor, Mich.
Kitchen/Bath Designer: Expo Kitchen & Bath, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Project Location: Ann Arbor, Mich.

BATHROOM UNDER \$50,000

Remodeler/Designer: Interiors for Modern Living, Palo Alto, Calif.
Project Location: San Carlos, Calif.

BATHROOM OVER \$50,000

Remodeler/Designer: Streeter & Associates, Wayzata, Minn.
Project Location: North Oaks, Minn.

Remodeler/Designer: Castle Crafters, Austin, Texas
Project Location: Austin, Texas

EXTERIOR

Remodeler: Lellbach Builders, Naperville, Ill.
Architect: Charles Vincent George Design Group, Naperville, Ill.
Project Location: Naperville, Ill.

GREEN REMODEL

Remodeler/Designer: Marrokal Design & Remodeling, San Diego
Project Location: San Diego

KITCHENS UNDER \$75,000

Remodeler/Designer: Interiors for Modern Living, Palo Alto, Calif.
Project Location: Sunnyvale, Calif.

KITCHENS \$75,000-\$125,000

Remodeler/Designer: Renewal Design-Build, Decatur, Ga.
Cabinet Designer: TrueSource Cabinets, Marietta, Ga.
Project Location: Atlanta

KITCHENS \$75,000-\$125,000

Remodeler/Designer: Don Van Cura Construction Co., Chicago
Interior Designer: Foster Hill Design, Chicago
Project Location: Chicago

KITCHENS OVER \$125,000

Remodeler/Designer: Landis Construction Corp., Washington, D.C.
Project Location: Arlington, Va.

OUTDOOR LIVING OVER \$100,000

Remodeler: Lellbach Builders, Naperville, Ill.
Designer: Hursthause, Bolingbrook, Ill.
Project Location: Wheaton, Ill.

WHOLE HOUSE UNDER \$500,000

Architect: Architectural Resource, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Remodeler: Meadowlark Builders, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Project Location: Ann Arbor, Mich.

WHOLE HOUSE OVER \$500,000

Architect: Architectural Resource, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Remodeler: Meadowlark Builders, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Project Location: Ann Arbor, Mich.

THIS YEAR'S JUDGES

Andy Poticha, Design Construction Concepts
 David Callahan, Callahan & Peters
 Dan Griffin, Griffin & Associates

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INNOVATIONS FOR LIVING®

Clients' wants drive remodeling choices

Not many clients remodel because of life changes or repairs, our monthly survey shows

By Jonathan Sweet, Editor in Chief

Changing the home to fit a lifestyle and home upgrades are the top reasons clients choose to remodel, according to the latest *Professional Remodeler* research.

This month, we asked remodelers what drives their clients' design decisions and how homeowners make those decisions. More than 80 percent of remodelers listed one of those two reasons as the top drivers of remodeling, with the reason "changing the home to fit how they live" coming in slightly more popular (43 percent to 39 percent).

We asked remodelers to rank six factors in their importance in prompting clients to remodel, and those two reasons were the only ones that more than 10 percent of remodelers identified as the top driver behind decisions. Eight percent cited life changes (such as a birth or parents' moving in) as the top reason, followed by repair (6 percent), return on investment (3 percent) and preparing the home for sale (1 percent). Clearly, when homeowners are remodeling it's because they want to, not because they need to.

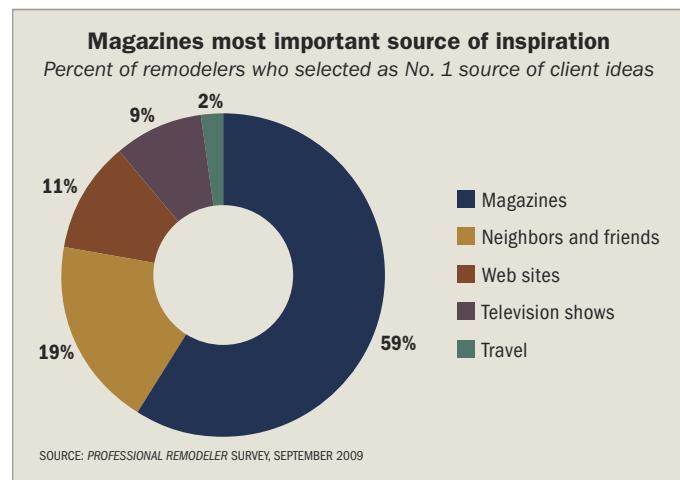
Majority of remodelers offer design

More than 90 percent of remodelers offer some sort of design services to their clients. A quarter do so in partnership with outside designers or architects, but another 35 percent offer in-house design staff. Thirty-one percent of remodelers offer both in-house and outsourced design.

Remodelers in the Midwest are the most likely to offer in-house design services — 45 percent of remodelers there said they do, compared with 34 percent in the Northeast, 31 percent in the South and 29 percent in the West. In total, 95 percent of Midwest remodelers offer some sort of design services, compared with 92 percent in the West, 89 percent in the South and 88 percent in the Northeast.

Once the design process starts, it tends to be relatively short for the average remodeling firm. Nearly three-quarters of remodel-

ers said the design process on their average project takes less than six weeks, with 45 percent reporting two to six weeks and 27 percent saying it takes less than two weeks. Only 22 percent said it took six weeks to four months, and just 6 percent said the aver-



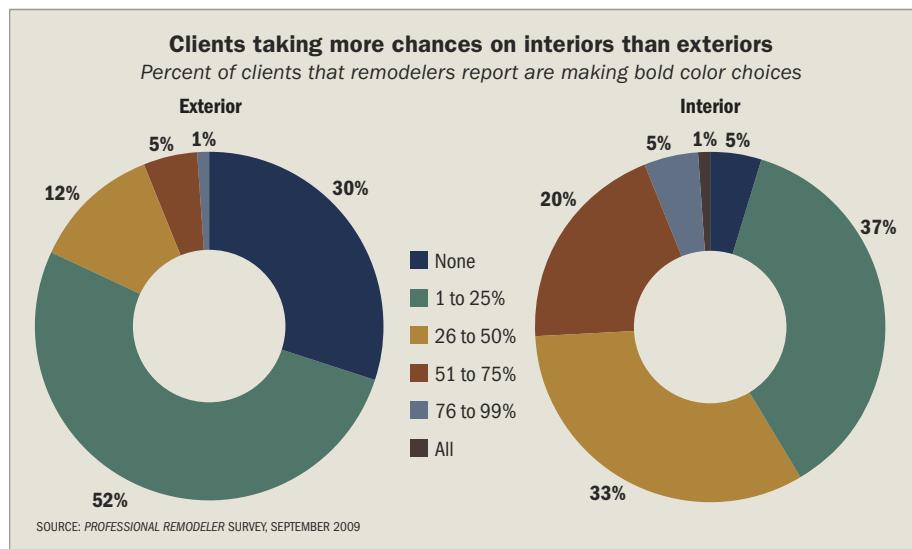
Magazines are overwhelmingly the top source for clients' design ideas, with 81 percent of remodelers naming it the No. 1 or No. 2 choice.

Average length of design project by company size

Annual revenues	< 2 weeks	2 to 6 weeks	6 weeks to 4 months	> 4 months
< \$500,000	48%	42%	8%	2%
\$500,000 - \$1 million	30%	50%	17%	3%
\$1 to \$2 million	19%	45%	29%	6%
> \$2 million	11%	44%	34%	12%

SOURCE: PROFESSIONAL REMODELER SURVEY, SEPTEMBER 2009

As average revenues increase, so does the time companies spend in the design stage of a project.



Remodelers clients are choosing bold colors more often for interior colors than exterior colors.

age project took more than four months to design.

Not surprisingly, the results show a big difference between companies of varying revenues, with average design time increasing as revenues increase (see chart). For example, 48 percent of companies with installed volumes less than \$500,000 spend two weeks or less designing the average project, compared with just 11 percent of companies with volume of more than \$2 million.

What's driving decisions?

The average client spends the most time on the floor plan of their remodel, our respondents said, with 71 percent identifying it as the No. 1 item. Seventeen percent of respondents identified materials/product selection as the top factor, and 12 percent chose finish/color selection.

When they are making those color selections, though, clients are much more likely to take chances on the interior of the house than the exterior. More than 80 percent of remodelers reported that less than 25 percent of their clients are making bold exterior choices, and 30 percent of remodelers said that none of their clients are doing so. Only 6 percent said more than half of their clients are choosing bold

exteriors. On the interior, 26 percent of remodelers responded that more than half of their clients are opting for bold colors.

Even in this digital age, magazines are the No.1 source for client inspiration, with nearly 60 percent of remodelers ranking it at the top of the list, followed by neighbors and friends (19 percent); Web sites (11 percent); television shows (9 percent); and travel (2 percent). As often as we hear travel cited as a source for design ideas, it was rated as least important by 58 percent of remodelers.

Finally, homeowners seem to have some — but not an overwhelming — interest in green, with 85 percent of remodelers saying their clients are at least somewhat interested. Only 13 percent said they were very interested — less than the 16 percent that reported their clients are not at all interested in green. •

Methodology

400 remodelers completed the survey via the Internet from Sept. 10 to Sept. 19, 2009. Participants were chosen from a random sample of subscribers to *Professional Remodeler* magazine and *Professional Remodeler* e-newsletters.

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Stat Sheet

The need-to-know on the latest products to hit the remodeling industry

By Nick Bajzek,
Products Editor



Timberland PRO Endurance PR Boot
Attributes: Polyurethane mid-sole
Sizes: 7-12; 13, 14, 15 M/W
Other Features: 8" boot meets CSA Electric Shock Resistant requirements; "Ladder-Lock" zone
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 251
www.timberland.com



Crossville Americana Series
Applications: Interiors
Sizes: 12" by 12" and 18" by 18"
Accessories: 4" by 12" Single Bull-nose and 6" by 12" Cove Base
Finish: Cross-Sheen finish
Colors: Monticello, gold rush, Alamo, Grand Canyon, Rushmore, Plymouth Rock
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 252
www.crossvilleinc.com



Sea Gull Lighting UNiQUE
Applications: Decking/Outdoor Living lighting
Power: Management system overcomes voltage drop
Features: Anti-Moisture Migration Connections
Options: Various beam spreads, light output and long runs
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 253
www.seagulllighting.com



Kolbe
Magnum Series tilt-turn wood window
Applications: Tilt-turn sash for in-swing/casement functionality
Glass: Proprietary LoE²-270
Finish: 30 standard colors
Interior: Stain can be customized to match décor
Wood: Some FSC-certified species
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 254
www.kolbe-kolbe.com



Luxaire
LX Series Gas Furnaces
Profile: 33" furnaces
AFUE Ratings: Up to 96 percent
Motor: 5-speed direct drive on single-stage models
Options: Variable speed models available
Warranty: 80% models include 20-year warranty on heat exchanger
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 255
www.luxairebelievesinme.com



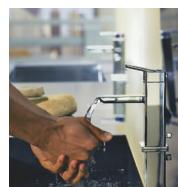
Mansfield Plumbing Products
Enso Suite
Attributes: 1.1-gallon, dual-flush toilet
Features: 3" valve, 2¹/₈" glazed trap way
Other features: 2-piece design
Options: ADA-compliant model available
For more info, go to HousingZone.com/PRInfo and enter # 256
www.mansfieldplumbing.com



Milwaukee
M12 Cordless 3/8" Drill/Driver
Motor: 0-1,500 RPM high speed; 0-400 RPM low speed
Power: 250 in-pounds of torque
Weight: 2.5 pounds
Other: Metal locking chuck
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www.milwaukeetool.com



Saniflo
Sanicubic Classic Lifting Station
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www.saniflo.com



Moen
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Applications: Bath faucet
Features: Minimalist design
Finish: Chrome
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Size: 4-foot Strip
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Other: Baffle deflects debris, snow, ice, etc.
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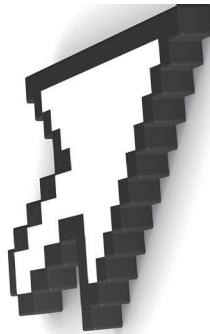
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Paint

Paint manufacturers look to paint/primer combinations to boost sales and save time

Industry giants say paint/primer combinations lead the way

By **Nick Bajzek**
 Products Editor

The less time spraying, rolling and brushing paint the better, says Steve Revnew, director of marketing for Sherwin-Williams. The company has been testing a prototype paint that contains no VOCs, dries quickly and also has odor-absorbing capabilities — perfect for rooms with a lot of smells such as kitchens.

Revnew notices in the past few years the majority of the focus from industry to the trades was placed on environmentally friendly products, but now durability and easy-use are the topic du jour. Though the \$11 billion dollar paint industry saw a 2.9 percent drop in 2008, the Home Improvement Research Institute predicts the consumer demand for paint will rise 10.9 percent in 2010 to \$12.5 billion. These gains will be driven by premium and eco-friendly options, the institute maintains.

Revnew says the demand for more durable products will spur further innovation. "Performance is defined as durable, long-lasting coatings — coatings that are washable and hide in fewer coats." According to Sherwin-Williams, this holistic approach speaks to not only the low VOC emissions but the fact that high-performance paint with primer coatings require fewer coats of product, which can also reduce the environmental impact.

Self-priming products are an option. Behr paints maintains that although there are a few interior products available on the market that are self-priming, the self priming claim on many of these coatings is simply for a previously painted wall. Primer could still be required for new substrates as well as

problem areas such as tile, metal, plastic and stain blocking.

However, Behr isn't denying the potential growth of paint/primer combinations. The company has entered the category with its Premium Ultra Plus line. "These (formulas) increase job-site profitability by allowing professionals to complete work in fewer coats," says Joe Richardson, senior vice president of professional products and services at Behr. "In the future, I think we will see normalized pricing and improvements in quality as these products become more widely available. I suspect this phenomenon is true across a variety of product categories, not just coatings."

SEEING SILVER

One new and exciting technology in the works: paint formulas mixed with silver particles. The silver particles, which are small enough to be dubbed "nano-silver," have antimicrobial properties and can help create a paint that can potentially resist germs, mold and moisture.

"We have invested time exploring silver nano particles and acknowledge that it is an effective method of fighting bacteria," says Richardson, adding that the most practical applications for technologies like this include hospitals and other care facilities vulnerable to bacteria. "However, there is more to learn and understand about the use of silver nano-sized particles in commercialized coatings before we would introduce a (residential) line of products that include them," he says. •

Tools

Home energy auditors hit the market to shore up shoddy construction and give remodelers a unique business opportunity

Ready to rate

By Nick Bajzek
Products Editor

No matter how well a home's building envelope performs, air can still infiltrate through cracks around windows; gaps under the front door; or penetration points for cam lights, wires and pipes, says Mickey Schuch, president of home auditing and retrofitting firm Building Energy Experts. The government agrees, too. The U.S. Department of Energy says these leaks can account for as much as 30 percent of a home's annual heating cost.

Home energy audits, Schuch says, are a blend of high technology and common sense. The main weapons auditors employ are the well-known blower door tests coupled with Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) Thermography cameras that can see subtle temperature swings around the inside and outside of a home.

Thermography, according to The Residential Energy Services Network, measures surface temperatures by using handheld infrared video and still cameras. These tools see light that is in the heat spectrum. Images on the video or film record the temperature variations of the building's skin, ranging from white for warm regions to black for cooler areas. When a blower door test is conducted, says Anthony Stonis of Building Energy Experts, air leaking out of electrical outlets and cam lights can be seen as black streaks in the image. The resulting images help the auditor determine whether insulation is needed. They also serve as a quality control tool to ensure that insulation has been installed correctly.

Schuch warns that there is a fairly hefty investment for a remodeler to re-tool his or her business. "We have about \$35,000 in each truck on the road — just in testing equip-

ment. It's just like any high-technology item. The technology in the cameras has gotten so much better, but the price tends to stay about the same."

Though Schuch says the tools can add up, those interested in conducting energy audits

www.HousingZone.com/PR

Head online to learn about the steps homeowners should take to prepare for an audit.



FLIR systems, such as this Fluke model, spot air leaks and temperature changes.

will also have to hit the books. Remodelers and contractors, says ASERusa's Gary Fries, C-HERS, G-HERS, NAHB-AV, will probably need to take at least two extensive courses at about \$1,200 each.

"There's plenty of work to be done for auditors," says Fries. "The top problems we see are HVAC duct distribution. Leaks average 30 percent before reaching each room in the home." •

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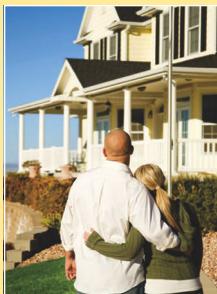


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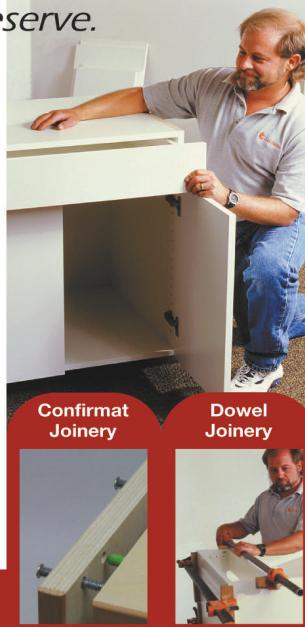
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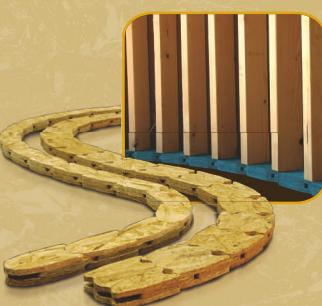
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WESTERN REGION

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Key Accounts – Integrated Sales

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Mike Ostrowski, 630/288-8139
michael.ostrowski@reedbusiness.com

States: AK, CA, HI, OR, WA, Western Canada

Product Specialists – Integrated Sales

Brian Grohe, 630/288-8159
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Dan Colunio, 781/734-8360
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Adam Grubb, 317/913-1608
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Tim Gillerlain, 630/288-8168
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Mary Nasiri, 630/288-8576
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Emily Yarina, 630/288-8109
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60,056	57,841
5,123	6,484
65,179	64,325

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