

Builder/Architect

John McDonald Company

Laying the Foundation for
Lifelong Customers



PRST STD
Auto
U.S. Postage Paid
Tucson, AZ
Permit No. 2172

Congratulations John McDonald Company!
Schrappner's is proud to be a part of your team



"Distinctive designs from Traditional to Contemporary for over twenty-five years"
Kitchens • Baths • Entertainment Centers • Closet Systems



Schrappner's Fine Cabinetry & Design
is proud to have earned "Green" status
within our industry

240 W. Indiantown Road
Jupiter, FL 33458
561.746.3827

Schrappner's
Fine Cabinetry
and Design, Inc.
www.schrappers.com

Elegance, Style and Detail Are the Cornerstones of Every Great Design by Schrapper's Fine Cabinetry and Design

The essential element required of any design or remodel is the planning. Choices regarding contractors, materials, products and options are often critical to the final result. Thankfully, for the most discerning customer who has thoughts of improving or beautifying his or her home, Schrapper's Fine Cabinetry and Design, Inc. of Jupiter offers unparalleled quality and service. For 26 years, Schrapper's has provided its clientele an exemplary approach to creating masterful designs for kitchens, baths, closet systems, home offices and libraries.

Though their name reflects their com-

The incredible range of their products includes an impressive variety of timeless custom cabinetry that reflects Old-World charm as well as cabinetry that boasts bold New-World applications such as a custom finish with eight coats of hand-applied, pearlescent lacquer.

mitment to fine cabinetry, Schrapper's is ultimately more than a simple cabinet-maker. Schrapper's superlative service stretches well into the realm of design. "We have created an excellent business model which offers our clients a

one-stop solution for all of their designing needs," remarked Beverly Levine, who with her husband, Keith, acquired the company eight years ago. With an emphasis on quality, service and

See Page 5



M.A. Johnston Construction
Old World Craftsmanship in the 21st Century

Office: (561) 585-3616 14780 Stirrup Lane,
Fax: (561) 585-0762 Wellington, FL 33414
majohnston@bellsouth.net



**The Perfect
"Enviro-nomic" Storm
is Here!**

- Solar Electricity – Photovoltaic
- Solar Panels on your Roof
- Ready for Installation
- \$4.00 per watt State Rebate
- 30% Federal Tax Credit
- Sales & Property Tax Exempt
- "SPIN" your Electrical meter backwards:
making money, helping the environment

POWERHOUSE
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

888-247-3005
www.powerhousecontractors.com

FL ER0012421

contents

VOL. 12, NO. 5

JUNE 2008

6 COVER STORY

JOHN MCDONALD COMPANY

Laying the Foundation for Lifelong
Customers

14 FEATURE

THE NEXT GENERATION OF BUILDING SYSTEMS

18

South Palm Construction,
Inc. Wins Build Florida
Award of Merit for Vecellio
Group, Inc. Addition

22

Affiniti Architects Designs
Will Accommodate More
Than 50,000 Residents in
Dubai

DEPARTMENTS

4 from the publisher

20 product showcase

22 news

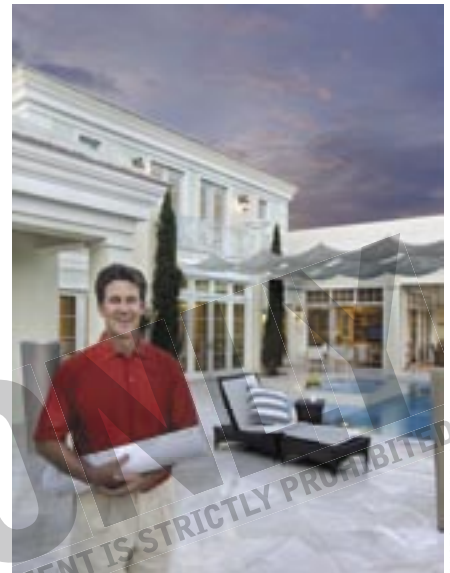


PHOTO BY RANDY SMITH

ON THE COVER

Dennis McDonald, President of John
McDonald, Co. Photo shot on location in
West Palm Beach, FL.



14



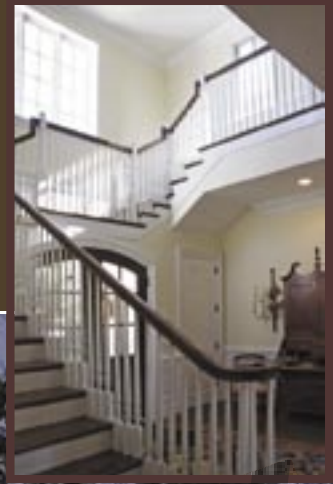
6



14



Printed on
Recycled Paper



VILLAGE ARCHITECTS AIA

MITCHELL E. MILLER, AIA, NCARB

400 N. CYPRESS DRIVE, SUITE 21
TEQUESTA, FL 33469

(561) 743-4959 OFFICE

(561) 743-1225 FAX

www.Village-Architects.com
mitch.miller@village-architects.com



Photographer: Ron Rosensweig

Gracing the cover of this month's issue is the steadfast, award-winning South Florida custom-home builder John McDonald Company. We are pleased to bring you the cover story of this amazing, award-winning builder as we explore Dennis McDonald and his team's dedication to "laying the foundation for lifelong customers."

Today's home buyers, especially the luxury clientele to whom John McDonald Company caters, demand distinctive architecture combined with top-notch customer service and interaction and John McDonald Company delivers! With consistent interaction between buyers and company principals, an enjoyable design-build process and a postbuild maintenance program led by company VP Ed Ustinowich, it is easy to see why John McDonald Company earns repeat customer's business five, 10, even 20 years later for remodels and upgrade projects.

Nationally speaking, energy prices are skyrocketing with no clear end or resolution in sight. Our focus this month turns to energy control, including upgrades such as solar products and insulation and other energy-saving techniques that builders across the nation are adopting to deal with this ongoing issue.

Till next month, all the best ...

Rhenne Leon

Rhenne Leon
Publisher



We would like to thank the following companies for their commitment of excellence to the John McDonald Co. and for their participation in this issue:

Acme Lighting
Altec Roofing, Inc.
Amber Electric
Custom Cabinetry
Definitive Electronics
Duren Roofing
Master Plumbing Inc. of Palm Beach County
Monument Plastering, Inc.
North County Painting & Decorating
Schrapp's Fine Cabinetry and Design, Inc.
Village Architects AIA



Painting and Faux Finishing Specialists

Serving Palm Beach and Martin Counties

*Residential - Commercial
Interiors - Exteriors - Faux Finishes*

561-745-1110

fax: 561-745-4811

226 Center Street, Suite A8
Jupiter, Florida 33458

Lic#U-17220

Builder/Architect

Gold and Treasure Coast Edition

Publisher: Rhenne Leon

Photographer: John Stillman

Contributing Writers: Jim Parsons, Lesley Boyd

Advertise in Builder/Architect

For more information on advertising in the Builder/Architect Gold and Treasure Coast edition, call Publisher Rhenne Leon at (561) 213-3360
e-mail: rleon@builderarchitect.com

Contact Information

Send press releases and all other information related to this local edition of Builder/Architect c/o: Builder/Architect Magazine of Gold and Treasure Coast
21485 Campo Allegro Dr.
Boca Raton, FL 33433



SUNSHINE MEDIA
Builder/Architect is published by **Sunshine Media, Inc.**
8283 N. Hayden Rd., Ste 220
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
(480) 522-2900 | sunshinemedia.com

President/CEO: Jim Martin
Chief Financial Officer: Nick Cranz
Editor-in-Chief: Genilee Swope Parente
Vice President of Marketing: Andrea Hood
Marketing Specialist: Kristine Aldrin
Vice President of Recruiting & Publisher Development: Ken Minniti
Publisher Development Manager: Teri Burke
Director of Publisher Development: Howard LaGrafte
Recruiting Specialists: Elisha Davis, Stephanie Michaud
Manager of Sales Administration: Cindy Maestas
Vice President of Creative Services: Tyler Hardekopf
Production Manager: Tanna Kempe
Editorial Manager: Shannon Wisbon
Production Specialist Manager: Brenda Holzworth
Creative Services: Josh Bergmann, David Drew, Gerry Dunlap, Breanna Fellows, Kristen Gantler, Amelia Gates, Tess Kane, Lana May, Jodi Nielsen
Controller: Darrell Dragoo
Financial Services: Malia Collins, Lori Elliott, Allison Jeffrey, Sharon Lardeo, Christian Williams, Cheng Wan Zheng
Circulation Director: Holly Carnahan
Circulation Manager: Beth Lalim
Manager of Human Resources: Carrie Hildreth
Manager of Information Technology: Eric Hibbs
Printed by Sunshine Media Printing
William H. Hibbs, Vice President & General Manager

Subscription rates: \$36.00 per year; \$62.00 two years; \$3.50 single copy. Advertising rates on request. Bulk third class mail paid in Tucson, AZ.

Although every precaution is taken to ensure accuracy of published materials, Builder/Architect cannot be held responsible for opinions expressed or facts supplied by its authors. Copyright 2008, Sunshine Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Postmaster: Please send notices on Form 3579 to P.O. Box 27427, Tucson, AZ 85726.

attention to the needs of their clients, Schrappner's has created a design center that is unrivaled on the Treasure and Gold Coasts.

The company's new 3,500-square-foot showroom, scheduled to open after the first of the year, is an amazing display of product, design and technology. The showroom was created specifically to enhance "every facet of the clients' showroom experience." Mrs. Levine describes the new showroom as "an important step in our evolution." Indeed, the new showroom will offer its clientele a relaxing alternative to the rough and tumble world of chain stores, overzealous sales people and lackadaisical customer service representatives.

Instead, Schrappner's offers their clients an opportunity "to be spoiled by regionally renowned designers while envisioning their new cabinetry on 3-D monitors."

Mrs. Levine explained further that

Schrappner's designers "have the ability to manipulate designs right before their clients' eyes by leveraging digital magic and old-fashioned artistry." Beyond the technical advantage of the Schrappner's experience is the enormous selection of cabinetry they offer. Distinctive designs from the contemporary to the traditional are the staple of Schrappner's continuing success.

The incredible range of their products includes an impressive variety of timeless custom cabinetry that reflects Old-World charm as well as cabinetry that boasts bold New-World applications such as a custom finish with eight coats of hand-applied, pearlescent lacquer. Schrappner's also offers a fine collection of countertops that can be custom crafted using exotic natural stone, granite, corian, zodiaq, silestone, laminate or wood. Equally as impressive are the elegant hardware pieces and fixtures that are perfectly

matched to complement your exciting new designs. Lastly, Schrappner's has positioned themselves as quality space planners with an extraordinary line of custom-closet solutions.

To be sure, Schrappner's Fine Cabinetry and Design, Inc. has earned an impeccable reputation among its manufacturing partners, designers, builders, developers and homeowners alike. The staff is well trained and well equipped to create successful results for their clients. Their army of installation professionals is courteous and skilled. Moreover, Schrappner's guarantees its workmanship. "We are dedicated to our clients and have a responsibility to deliver quality and satisfaction," said Mrs. Levine.

You are encouraged to contact the friendly and knowledgeable staff at Schrappner's Fine Cabinetry & Design, Inc. at 1-888-645-2565 or visit their award-winning website at www.schrappers.com. ■



Propane Gas ... clean, efficient, reliable

Florida Propane Gas Safety, Education and Research Council
(877) 776-7260 info@flgasassc.com

PROPANE
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY®



www.PropaneFL.com

John McDonald Company

Laying the Foundation for Lifelong Customers

By Lesley Boyd

Throughout history, lions have symbolized strength, power, leadership, fortitude and pride. These attributes lay at the center of every interaction that John McDonald Company conducts with its luxury home buying clientele, from initial meetings and design stages

through the building process and ultimately in their finished projects.

Led by longtime business partners and visionaries John “Dennis” McDonald, President, and Ed Ustinowich, Vice President, the award-winning team at John McDonald

This Anglo Caribbean gem won the 2007 Aurora Award for Custom Homes Category: \$1.5 to \$2 million. Architect: Fairfax & Sammons Architecture. General Contractor: John McDonald Co. Inset: Elegantly detailed living area and entry hallway. Architect: Fairfax & Sammons Architecture



PHOTOS BY RANDY SMITH

2007 PRISM "Best of Show" features
radius turned ceilings. Architect:
Village Architects, Tequesta, FL





An Admirals Cove whole-house remodel — Gold Prism winner.
Architects: Omura, Casey, Morel Inc.

John McDonald Company is focused on developing business in Martin and Palm Beach counties with a high concentration of projects in Jupiter and Jupiter Island communities.

Company is united by their passion for quality craftsmanship with impeccable attention to detail, earning them respect in the industry and a reputation as distinct as their homes for more than 25 years.

“We believe in building solid foundations for lifelong customers,” said McDonald. “We pride ourselves on accurately interpreting each client’s vision and executing it with style and beauty to ensure that a client’s dream home

PRISM Award-winning “Best of Show,” French-Mediterranean mix. Architecture by: Village Architects, Tequesta, FL



PHOTOS BY RANDY SMITH

Led by longtime business partners and visionaries John “Dennis” McDonald, President, and Ed Ustinowich, Vice President, the award-winning team at John McDonald Company is united by their passion for quality craftsmanship with impeccable attention to detail, earning them respect in the industry and a reputation as distinct as their homes for more than 25 years.

comes to fruition. It is not surprising to get a call from a satisfied client for whom we built a home five, 10, even 20

“Best of Show” PRISM Award rear porch; featuring pecky cypress-beamed ceiling and terra cotta floor. Architect: Village Architects, Tequesta, FL



Recent Italian Renaissance home in Loxahatchee Club, West Palm Beach, FL. Architect: Village Architects, Tequesta, FL



PHOTOS BY RANDY SMITH



PHOTOS BY RANDY SMITH

strives toward perfection in all aspects of construction while being sensitive to clients' budgetary constraints.

3. Company principals are involved in the actual construction of the home to provide a wealth of knowledge for decisions, maintain expediency in the construction process and provide a tried-and-true team for all home buyers.
4. John McDonald Company has solidified decade-plus-long relationships with the best subcontractors and suppliers in the region and has instilled results-oriented goals in all associates and employees.
5. John McDonald Company has created an unparalleled zest for after move-in service.
6. The company is sensitive to the amount of work a building project can produce and both McDonald and Ustinowich make the experience and work pleasant and even fun.

years ago who is ready for a renovation or even a new home.”

BUILDING IDEALS

Armed with a plethora of building ideals, McDonald and his team assure potential home buyers that John McDonald Company is the best choice when building a new home because:

1. John McDonald Company recognizes great design and is aligned with the best design professionals in the area, resulting in a 100% consumer success rate and notable industry accolades.
2. Armed with passion and commitment, John McDonald Company





The company is proud of all of their well-deserved local recognition; however, they were also recently recognized at the national level by the Best in American Living Awards for a home between 4,000 and 5,500 square feet and a kitchen in a home between 2,401 and 4,000 square feet.

“The best testament to our building process commitment is that most of our clients have expressed in writing how fulfilling the building process was for them,” commented McDonald.



Although the majority of John McDonald Company’s projects involve the residential home building and renovation market, the company has broken ground on its first commercial project in many years.

AWARDS

“We pride ourselves on our innovation, attention to detail and high quality of work,” said McDonald. “Our company continues to earn distinctive recognition for our accomplishments from local, regional and national organizations.”

McDonald estimates that nearly 80% of the projects completed by the company contain award-winning design elements. More objectively, John McDonald Company has earned multiple gold awards and the coveted “Best of Show”

recognition from the PRISM Awards, the most sought-after awards in the local building industry. They have also recently added Aurora Awards to their list of industry accolades.

A timeless kitchen that won a national BALA award. Architect: Mitch O’Neil, AIA



PHOTOS BY RANDY SMITH



PHOTO BY RANDY SMITH

The company is proud of all of their well-deserved local recognition; however, they were also recently recognized at the national level by the Best in American Living Awards for a home between 4,000 and 5,500 square feet and a kitchen in a home between 2,401 and 4,000 square feet. Sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders' Design Committee and *Professional Builder* magazine, this design competition is open to builders, architects, designers, developers, land planners and interior designers nationwide.

McDonald estimates that nearly 80% of the projects completed by the company contain award-winning design elements. More objectively, John McDonald Company has earned multiple gold awards and the coveted "Best of Show" recognition from the PRISM Awards, the most sought-after awards in the local building industry.

COMMERCIAL — THE NEW FRONTIER

Although the majority of John McDonald Company's projects involve the residential home building and renovation market, the company has broken ground on its first commercial project in many years. Recently approached by a client for whom the company had previously built, John McDonald Company was asked to design and build a private residential hangar on a private airstrip.

This three-building project boasts over 13,000 square feet, while large structural steel beams create overhead doors measuring 60x16 and 48x16 on this massive structure. The targeted completion date is September '08.

"Building upon our solid footing and reputation in the residential luxury-building arena, this commercial project was brought to us for our innovative techniques and due to our existing relationship with the customer," says McDonald. "We have enjoyed working on this project and hope to earn more like it. In fact, we are excited to be interviewing for another hangar project at this time."

John McDonald Company is focused on developing business in Martin and Palm Beach counties with a high concentration of projects in Jupiter and Jupiter Island communities. The company continues to build its reputation as one of the area's finest custom-home builders and renovation specialists.

For more information about John McDonald Company, please call (561) 747-4114, or visit www.JohnMcDonaldCo.com. ■



947 Alternate A1A, Suite F
Jupiter, FL 33447
(561) 747-4114
fax (561) 746-9651
www.JohnMcDonaldCo.com

DEFINING THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN HOME

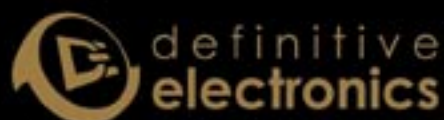


Theater Architecture and Design by
First Impressions Theme Theatres

The American home is fast becoming more than a comfortable place in which to live. It is becoming the home of some of the most sophisticated technology ever to be developed by modern man. And no company is doing more to make that possible than Definitive Electronics.

Every day we are transforming ordinary homes into models of convenience, safety and efficiency - and putting our clients in total control of everything that is seen and heard in their personal environments.

The theater above was featured in Robb Report Home Entertainment Magazine. For more information please go to www.desflorida.com/Testimonials.html to review the article.



1097 Jupiter Park Lane P: 561.748.3564 info@definitiveelectronics.com
Jupiter, FL 33458 F: 561.748.3565 www.definitiveelectronics.com



LUTRON

The Next Generation of Building Systems

By Jim Parsons

Much has been written about the tastes and traits that differentiate baby boomers from their generation-X successors, as well as the current group of youth (gen-Y or millennials) who will be the next wave of home buyers. But these generations have more in common than most realize.

For example, compared to generations before, the general home-buying population (those with the greatest buying power) are highly educated, relatively affluent, insistent on receiving maximum value from investments and — in the words of the fast-food chain jingle — eager to have things their “own way.” And they are joined by those with lower buying resources in the push towards demanding energy efficiency, sustainable construction techniques, healthy homes and natural resource preservation.

Fortunately, the home building industry offers a wider range of design and construction options than ever before, and those options meet a broad range of consumer demands. With the uncertainties surrounding the housing market’s immediate future in some areas of the country, the innovative building systems of today are not merely curiosities of popular culture — they may determine both short- and long-term successes.

TOUCHES OF STYLE

One type of building system that many feel closely matches the requirements of newer generations — modular building — is actually a legacy of the venerated World War II generation and goes back as far as the early 20th century when catalogs offered home kits. A boom in the 1940s/early 1950s in premade homes was caused by an overabundance of need and a shortage of housing for the many veterans who wanted to start families and savor their share of the hard-won postwar prosperity. Today’s popularity has more to do with the improvements in technologies and wider selections in style.

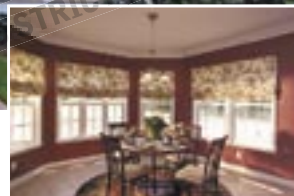
This attractive modular home was the 2007 *Southern Living* Idea House.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAVEN CUSTOM HOMES



Today’s modular home is beautiful both inside and outside.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HANDCRAFTED HOMES AND ARTISAN PHOTOGRAPHY

In fact, today’s factory-furnished models have little in common with the square boxes of 50 years past. Along with taking advantage of advancements in materials and fabrication processes, builders have increasingly offered a wider range of designs and customizable features that now span every taste and pocketbook level.

“As recently as six years ago, the prevailing approach was, ‘Here’s what we build; take it or leave it,’” says Bill Murray, General Manager of HandCrafted Homes, LLC, Henderson, NC. Today, it’s more like, “If we can’t do it, we’ll tell you, but there’s very little left that can’t be done,” he says.

One event bringing this reality to the forefront is that well-known architects are creating plans specific to the modular world, he adds. Murray refers to two of HandCrafted Homes’ lines created in partnership with famed Wilmington, NC-designer William E. Poole. For modular builders, such partnerships, “will add credibility to us and our industry,” he says.

But while modular designs are reaching ever-higher levels, fancy renderings and glowing descriptions will not be enough to sell the idea of building a home in a factory.

Instead, “It’s best when prospective buyers can touch and feel the superior craftsmanship,” explains John Ragland, Executive Vice President of Acquisitions and Marketing for Haven Custom Homes, Linthicum, MD. For Haven, that was evident when the company teamed with Memphis-based architect Looney Ricks Kiss to create a 3,544-square-foot shingle-sided, tin-roofed Southern cottage in Watersound, FL, that was featured as the 2007 *Southern Living* Idea House.

“Many of the 16,000 visitors who toured the home remarked they were surprised such detail could be brought to a modular house,” Ragland says.



Concrete is gaining in popularity not just for its strength in weather-challenged areas but for its insulated properties, durability and unique style.

Some builders understand that modular means quality, while others don't have a grasp of that idea yet, modular proponents say.

But according to Michelle A. Roberts, Principal of Ecohealth Homes, Boston, MA, builders reluctant to embrace modular might well be missing out on many financial advantages that are particularly critical in a slow market.

As she explains it, "A site-built custom home may take from one to

Circular Thinking

Custom homes come in all shapes and sizes, but there's something about a round house that draws more than a few double takes.

That comes as no surprise to Joseph Schlenk of Asheville, NC-based Deltec Homes, which has specialized in circular structures since its founding in 1968. However, the buyers of such homes have changed. "For a long time, much of our work was for second homes and vacation areas," he says. Over the past 20 years, Deltec's project mix has shifted dramatically, with most buyers choosing circular homes as a primary residence.

While many buyers are willing to think outside the box (literally) for this distinctive design, they're attracted more by the inherent durability and energy efficiency afforded by prefabricated round homes.

And the strongest selling point may be the inherent aerodynamics, particularly in areas susceptible to major windstorms.

"The trusses radiate to the center-like spokes on a wheel," Schlenk explains. "When one side is under stress, the energy is dissipated through the whole structure. In a rectangular house, a flat side will act like a sail. The energy builds up and something has to give."

In addition, he adds, "our self-supporting roofs have a 6 to 12 pitch, which also deflects wind better than the higher-pitched roofs found on many rectangular homes."

Radial roof and floor systems also eliminate the need for load-bearing walls, providing near unlimited floor plan flexibility, he explains. And multiple round structures can be connected in a variety of configurations, or augmented with rectangular and crescent wings, he adds.

Round homes are partly catching on for the same reasons as other types of prefabrication. "The expansion of modular construction has helped increase [consumer and builder] familiarity with circular homes," Schlenk says.

two years to build, which is a long time to carry a loan, plus the burden of staff and insurance," she explains. Modular homes can be built in as little as a few weeks or months. Also, "You can also argue that modular is a safer way to build, as workers spend less time on tall ladders." Finally, many modular manufacturers are touting these homes as healthier for their residents because of the quality control that building in a factory provides, Roberts points out.

Modular and other types of component builders who choose steel framing can also bolster their bottom lines through lower insurance costs, often the largest expense after labor and materials, steel-framing proponents say.

As Larry Williams, President of the Washington, DC-based Steel Framing Alliance, explains, "Builders can save as much as 30-40 cents per square foot of a residential structure" by building with steel.

Williams adds that a number of technical innovations have also enhanced the efficiency of steel framing. For example, pneumatic-driven pins are now being used instead of screws to attach sheathing and trim to steel components. "They're also being used for metal-to-metal fastening, just like a nail gun," Williams adds. "That helps speed both the panelization process and work at the building site."

'SIP'-SHAPING

Among the most intriguing byproducts of the modular movement may be increased popularity of a smaller cousin of the wholly factory-built home: structural insulated panels (SIPs). SIPs have been around many years, but as people learn more about quality building methods, they will also look to these panels, proponents say.

Possessing the same production control and efficiency attributes as larger, prefabricated components, SIPs contain "a core of foam plastic insulation sandwiched by structural skins of oriented strand board or other materials," as described by the Structural Insulated Panel Association.

Perhaps the best way to think of SIPs are as "adult-size Lego blocks," according to Mike Speciale, owner of Speciale Homes Ltd., Cedar Park, TX.

"Working with SIPs is more of an on-site process than full modular construction, but you still save time in the full construction process," Speciale explains. Still, the promise of lower household utility bills for customers "was their main attraction for us," he says.

Founder and principal architect of CleverHomes Toby Long notes that SIPs provided an ideal systematic home design and building platform for his five-year-old firm in San Francisco, CA.

"SIPs are very accommodating of design, which drives every project, and the site conditions, particularly the sloped sites here in the San Francisco area," he says. At the same time, "they require the same tools and skills for framing that builders have always used," he adds.

As with any building system, SIPs have trade-offs, including a greater influence on other components, which requires an early commitment to details such as windows. "The efficiency and productivity needed for what you're building is also a consideration," Long says. Traditional framing may well be more cost effective for some projects, such as unusually shaped walls, he explains. "As you work with SIPs, you understand what you can and can't do. The learning curve is steep, but short."

FORMS AND FUNCTIONS

Martine Vogel, owner of Open Range Construction Co., Colorado Springs, CO, has compared the costs of another type of sandwiched-style material — insulated concrete forms (ICFs), and has found the technology comes out ahead.

With ICFs, which have long been praised for their structural durability and high R-values: "We found that a 2,000-square-foot, tract-style house and



Log cabins are a lifestyle choice. Their buyers are seeking a more relaxed feel to their homes.



a radiant heat system actually costs less [to build] than a comparable structure with wood framing and a forced air system,” Vogel says. Such a revelation — that ICFs can compete with 2 by 4 construction methods but get the extra benefits — is vastly important in the marketplace, proponents say.

And that’s exactly what’s leading more consumers to consider ICF construction, according to Kelly Hemp, owner and President of Cornerstone Custom Construction, St. Paul, MN.

“The need for better energy efficiency is forcing buyers to think differently,” he says. “Smart customers like the idea of investing in a house and immediately getting a return, even if it means sacrificing some square feet to lower the cost.”

Vogel says she has found few limitations in building homes with ICFs as large as 5,300 square feet. Such homes are “also attractive to aging baby boomers because they accommodate universal design [through open floor plans, wider corridors, etc.] and require less maintenance.”

Still, it’s the energy-efficiency aspect that Hemp believes will drive the continued interest in ICFs, and the building community needs to be ready, he said.

“These days, if a builder can’t do an ICF home, the customer will simply go to someone who can,” he says. Builders “have to be ready to serve [the need for ICFs] or else lose the sale — something no builder can afford in this market,” he adds.

BLOCK BENEFITS

As with modular components, ICFs have their own “Lego-scale” version — concrete blocks. And thanks to builders such as Greg Messer, President of Palladium Homes, Inc., Raleigh, NC, the concept of using concrete masonry is no longer limited to hurricane-prone, high-humidity regions.

“The key is insulation,” Messer explains. To accommodate the temperature extremes of the Mid-Atlantic, for example, 60% of the walls built with concrete blocks use hollow ‘bricks’ injected with water-based foam insulation. The remainder of the block is poured solid with grout and reinforcing steel. “As a result, every cavity has something in it,” Messer says. “In colder climates, materials such as rigid insulated board and synthetic stucco can increase the insulating properties,” he says.

Messer has used concrete masonry for styles ranging from a Habitat for Humanity project to custom designs of 5,000 square feet and more, noting that the biggest construction consideration is wall height, which usually tops out in practicality at one-and-a-half stories.

“We can go higher, but the cost goes up because of the reinforcing required,” he says.

Still, the possibilities are immense. “The walls can accommodate any exterior material — stucco, stone, brick, hardy plank. The only thing we don’t

recommend is vinyl siding, as it makes no sense to put a high-maintenance material on an otherwise low-maintenance structure,” Messer says.

TREE HOUSES

Another popular convergence of today’s home building tastes is a system of component building that literally and figuratively started the house construction industry many years ago in much of the U.S. — log homes.

Such homes are “a lifestyle choice,” explains Elizabeth Reece of Estermerwalt Log Homes, Honesdale, PA — a desire for a more relaxed, rustic feel. “Many people don’t want to wait until retirement to live in a home that gives the laid-back feel of country living,” she says.

Unlike their forebears, who spent months crafting simple structures, buyers of log homes today can take advantage of ready-made packages that include exterior walls, roof systems, interior stick-frame walls, windows, doors and decking for houses ranging from 500-10,000 square feet.

Modern log homes are also far more sustainable and energy efficient than their “homemade” predecessors, which makes them more comfortable for inhabitants. Since, “Logs have inherent insulating properties,” they warm and cool more slowly than traditional walls, Reece explains. “When the interior temperature does change, the house [its thermostat system] can detect and respond to it well before occupants notice,” she says.

Reece adds that a log home is no different to work with than any other packaged home, though she cautions that builders need to choose the right quality product and method to build it. “Even with its inherent energy-efficient properties, a log home would not perform well if it’s not put together correctly,” she points out.

Despite the long history, log homes share the same misperception challenges their modern modular relatives experience. “We often get questions about a higher risk of termites,” Reece says with a laugh. “The risk is the same as with a stick-built or modular home. In fact, termites will have an easier time eating through a 2x4 than a 12-inch diameter log.”

As Michelle Roberts of Ecohealth, who spent more than a year researching modular before deciding to take the plunge, explains: “I realized that getting the word out about this new way of building will be one of my biggest challenges. But once that word is out, people will begin to see that to get quality, they may want to forgo the granite countertops for an overall better-built home.”

Jim Parsons is a freelance writer frequently called upon to write about home building, construction and engineering. Reach him at www.parsonage.net/jimsworld/. ■



<http://www.randysmithphoto.com>



Randy Smith, Photographer
(561) 644-1000 cel

randysmith
photo.com

South Palm Construction, Inc. Wins Build Florida Award of Merit for Vecellio Group, Inc. Addition

Category: \$1 Million to \$4 Million

The scope was to add 10,000 square feet to their corporate headquarters while keeping them completely operational. The owners wanted to take an environmentally friendly approach to their corporate headquarters and were very interested in indoor air quality as well as energy-efficient strategies, while achieving a high-quality lighting environment for their personnel. They have numerous lighting sources throughout the building, including windows in most offices and conference rooms along with three large, beautifully landscaped atriums and skylights in the main corridor of the building.

The existing building was occupied and



the owners were concerned about disrupting the ongoing work environment. The impact of the noise during construction was a continuous challenge.

From the beginning of this project, the owner of the Vecellio Group, Inc. and

the South Palm Construction team were committed to maximizing energy efficiencies. The building exterior was enveloped using high-performance insulation,

roofing materials and window glazing.

The project involving numerous change orders from beginning to end did not delay the completion date.

For more information on this project, please contact Charles Adams at (561) 301-8131. ■



MASTER GARDENERS
NURSERY & LANDSCAPING INC.

561 496-1985
561 496-1988
Fax: 561 498-3522
scottmgn@aol.com

DESIGN BUILD FIRM

Registered Landscape Architect

Turn Key Operations: Entry Features
POOLS • HARDSCAPES • LANDSCAPE

Congratulations to an Award Winning Builder — Dennis McDonald

Duren Roofing Inc.



ph: 772-546-7595
fax: 561-546-6840

3210 S.E. Slater Street
Hobe Sound, FL 33475

© 2008 SUNSHINE MEDIA, INC. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.



Acme Lighting

phone: 561-746-7191
fax: 561-743-0115
1629 Cypress Drive, Tequesta FL 33469



AMBER electric
electrical contractor

theaters • stand-by generators • remodeling
servicing the building industry of southern florida since 1984

561-747-3273

General Contractor: John McDonald Co. photo by Randy Smith

WALL SYSTEM



The accel-E Thermal Efficient Panel (STEP) wall system developed by Accelerated Building Technologies, LLC, combines cold-formed steel framing with the insulation properties of expandable polystyrene. The result is a building technology that replaces traditional framing, insulation and sheathing components with a single, easily installed system. Using a proprietary production technology, the steel framing components and expandable polystyrene are fused together to create energy efficiency and strength. The panels offer sound dampening. Since panels are designed specifically to each project's specifications, on-site waste and disposal costs are cut dramatically. Windows and door opening are pre-cut, and the open cavity on the panel's interior offers generous space for electrical and plumbing components.

For more information, go to www.accbt.com.

SHEAR BRACE



The iLevel Shear Brace by Weyerhaeuser is a prebuilt, engineered panel with more predictable and consistent performance than site-built shear walls, providing

critical lateral bracing to help homes resist the forces imposed on them by high winds and earthquakes. The panel is optimized to resist high lateral loads with the ability to fit in narrower wall sections, engineered for performance and manufactured in a controlled setting. The iLevel Shear Brace is also able to resist vertical gravity loads and out-of-plane lateral loads, which gives it greater design flexibility as well as options for the now-popular larger windows. The brace is available in 12-inch and 18-inch widths and in various stock and custom heights that can be trimmed in the field, if needed. It offers ease of installation through mounting brackets that allow builders to adjust the panel from front to back for ready alignment with bolts installed in a home's foundation.

For more information, go to www.ilevel.com.

INSULATED SHEATHING



The new Styrofoam Sis brand structural insulated sheathing from Dow is a three-in-one solution that combines structural shear bracing, insulation and water-resistive barrier protection in one product. Styrofoam Sis is lightweight and saves builders time and labor costs by allowing them to complete three steps in one pass around the house, while eliminating the need for OSB and T-bracing or wood let-in bracing. At the same time, this product will reduce energy consumption and improve moisture management. It meets building code regulations for racking shear while also achieving significant R-values (insulating properties). When installed as a water-resistive barrier, the sheathing

reduces air infiltration, which accounts for approximately 40% of heating and cooling costs for a home, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

For more information, go to www.insulateyourhome.com.

STRONG WRAP



Typar recently expanded its weather protection system to include Typar StormWrap, a fiber-reinforced weather-resistant barrier that couples unparalleled impact resistance with superior water holdout for applications in extreme weather conditions. Designed for use in both residential and commercial applications, StormWrap has properties similar to the company's Typar Housewrap, such as outstanding tear strength, the ability to block exterior water penetration and optimal moisture vapor transmission that allows wall cavities to breathe and stay dry. The difference is a unique web of fibers that act as a kinetic energy-dissipating net to catch and resist large projectile penetrations while protecting against high wind-pressure cycling. As part of the Typar's weather protection system, StormWrap will not support the growth of mold or degradation of interior air quality.

For information, go to www.typar.com.

LOG PRODUCTS

Woodhaven Log & Lumber offers an array of quality log products crafted from premium pine and cedar. The company buys most of its premium grade woods exclusively from an Amish mill in northern Michigan, but distributes through various dealers nationwide. Among the products offered, besides the whole logs for walls,



are paneling, siding, roof and loft decking, stairs, railings, cabinets, countertops, doors, mantels and lighting.

For more information, go to
www.woodhavenlog.com.

ICF SYSTEM

LiteForm Technologies recently introduced Flexx Block, a preassembled ICF block system with an exclusive folding technology that cuts shipping by 40% and more. The 16-inch by 48-inch block system goes up fast and requires less labor. The blocks produce concrete walls from 6-inch to 12-inch thick in 2-inch increments. The insulating forms are R-20 and the finished walls are R-25. Siding and drywall can be installed quickly and utility strips are every 6 inches and concealed for faster EIFS application. Less bracing is required.

For more information, go to
www.flexxblock.com.

WALL SHEATHING

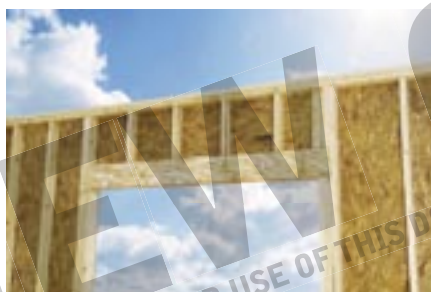


Georgia-Pacific Wood Products, LLC introduced Nautilus wall sheathing, an OSB panel with a preapplied weather-resistant barrier that eliminates the need for separate building wrap installation.

The sheathing offers builders and contractors an efficient installation process because sheathing and building wrap are combined. Nautilus panels also resist rain and moisture during the construction period. The panels are installed like typical wall sheathing and are backed by a lifetime limited warranty to the homeowner and a 90-day exposure warranty to the builder.

For more information, go to
www.gp.com/build.

NEW LUMBER



LP building products recently began production of LP SolidStart laminated strand lumber (LSL). LSL, a structural engineered wood product, is made from thin, longer length wood strands that are oriented parallel to the product's length — a key to superior strength. Available in lengths up to 64 feet and a maximum thickness of 3½, LP SolidStart LSL has superior durability, strength and consistency in comparison to dimensional lumber and offers greater design flexibility than dimensional lumber. Builders benefit from fewer call backs and less waste on the job site. Backed by a lifetime, fully transferable limited warranty, LP SolidStart LSL is ideal for a wide variety of residential construction uses, including headers and beams, wall-stud applications, roof beams and rafters, truss chords, rim board and stair stringers. Its superior design flexibility easily accommodates the tall wall and large room spans of today's construction designs.

For more information, go to
www.lpcorp.com.

CERTIFIED ICF



American PolySteel recently announced that its line of Insulating Concrete Forms earned Silver Certification from McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry under the Cradle to Cradle protocol, which means it has gone through a rigorous review with regard to using environmentally safe materials and practices. The company offers a number of ICFs including the PS 4000 flat wall and the PS 3000 waffle grid. The flat wall system is an easy tongue and groove design that simplifies design. The waffle grid provides superior structural performance in a reversible design that has reference lines on both sides.

For more information, go to
www.polysteel.com. ■



Affiniti Architects Designs Will Accommodate More Than 50,000 Residents in Dubai

Affiniti Architects, based in Boca Raton, has been commissioned to design a new town in Dubai. The town will accommodate more than 50,000 residents and will encompass all aspects of a community, including but not limited to residences, commercial and retail space, education facilities, cultural institutions and parks. Affiniti

Architects will utilize concepts of green planning and building to minimize the community's energy needs. The land is currently undeveloped.

Affiniti, which has completed multiple projects in North America, the Caribbean and Central America, is a full-service architectural firm headquartered at 6100 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 8, in Boca Raton, FL.

Specializing in resort, luxury and multifamily residences, Affiniti also has offices in Tampa and the Bahamas.

Affiniti has earned more than 200 national and regional design awards for residential architecture, including numerous "Best of Show" awards from the Builders Association of South Florida. For more information, call (561) 750-0445 or visit www.affinitiarchitects.com. ■

STABLER MARKETS REMAIN STEADY

The housing markets that didn't see steep run-ups in prices during the housing boom are the ones that are starting to show less risk of price decline for the next two years, according to an index by PMI Mortgage Insurance Company.

The index measures the likelihood of home price declines in two years in 381 metropolitan statistical areas using economic, housing and mortgage market factors including price appreciation, employment, affordability, excess housing supply, interest rates and foreclosure activity.

The most recent index, for the fourth quarter of last year, showed that in 32 of the 50 largest markets, the chances of prices lowering declined, which compares to the third quarter of 2007, when 39 markets showed increases in possibilities for price declines.

PMI says its index is showing signs that prices are diverging along two paths — those where prices boomed way above historical norms when the market was soaring are showing increased risk of price increases while those with more sustainable rates are showing declines starting in the fourth quarter of last year.

A survey found that the ages of children have a major influence on when a family moves.

The company said that with federal monetary encouragements, it expects the market to stabilize in the second half of 2008 if builders continue to reduce the number of single-family housing starts into 2009. Still, the company said its models indicate that national declines in home prices are only about one-third to one-half over.

SURVEY FINDS LIFESTYLES DETERMINE MOVES

A survey by Coldwell Banker Real



Builders have been affected by a credit crunch in several ways.

Estate, LLC and BabyCenter, LLC found that children's ages and needs play a major role in when a family moves.

The survey of 2,432 mothers nationwide found that 68% who moved in the last 18 months did so within the first two years of their children's lives compared to 13% who moved after their children entered school.

See Page 24

Congratulations to an Award Winning Builder — Dennis McDonald



Custom Cabinetry

561-842-5275

Fax: 844-2694

1321-B South Killian Drive
Lake Park, Florida 33403

MONUMENT PLASTERING, INC.



STUCCO • DRYWALL • METAL FRAMING

561.746.8656 Fax: 561.746.9367

253 W. Juno Street, Jupiter, FL 33458



Master Plumbing Inc.

OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

PHONE: 561-747-0114

FAX: 561-747-0201

326 Hibiscus St.
Jupiter, FL 33458

lic.# CFC029099

The results also showed that the main reasons for moving are more space, a nicer home and a better school district. Yet, other reasons cited for moving shed more light on how important the children are to the move. For example, those who cited moving to shorten their commutes were at a high of 34% during pregnancy falling to 21% once the children are in school.

The survey also showed how important the kitchen is to a family. Thirty-nine percent of mothers surveyed said they wanted the latest technology in the kitchen, which scored higher than any other room, and 33% said they would welcome a kitchen renovation over any other remodeling to the home.

BUILDERS SUFFERING CREDIT CRUNCH

The mortgage credit crunch has spilled over into land acquisition, land development and home construction (AD&C) lending, increasing the challenges faced by builders in the current housing downturn, according to a representative from the National Association of Home Builders.

"With private securities markets in disarray and banks retrenching, a bona fide credit crunch is underway," Bob Mitchell, a home builder from Rockville, MD, and former NAHB president told the Senate Small Business Committee.

"This credit crunch actually appears to be worsening despite the concerted efforts of central banks here and abroad," he added. "Tighter mortgage-lending terms have made it difficult for home buyers to obtain financing to purchase new homes. Likewise, there have been dramatic adverse swings in the cost and availability of AD&C loans for home builders."

Funding for viable residential development and construction projects has been severely limited or blocked entirely at federally insured depository institutions, which are the sole source of housing production credit for the small businesses

that comprise most of the home building industry, Mitchell told lawmakers.

The current financing quagmire for home builders illustrates the importance of developing additional sources of AD&C credit, Mitchell said. He suggested that a secondary market for such loans would directly benefit builders and lenders by transferring risk away from lenders, increasing availability of funds so that projects could be more reliably completed and mitigating the devastating impact of equity calls on builders, or transfers of partially completed projects to banks under capital and/or regulatory pressure.

Meanwhile, stimulating demand for homes and stabilizing housing prices would do the most to relieve the financing and other business difficulties faced by home builders, Mitchell said.

FEDERAL HOUSING AUTHORITY PROGRAMS EXPANDED

Home buyers and owners got relief from their economic woes recently through several Federal Housing Authority (FHA) programs.

Nearly 250,000 more families can qualify this year to purchase or refinance their homes using FHA-insured mortgages, thanks to an economic growth package signed by President Bush. The stimulus package allows FHA to temporarily increase its loan limits and insure larger mortgages at more affordable prices for high-cost areas of the country. Those limits range from \$720,750 in very high-cost areas to \$271,050 in low-cost areas.

FHA also expanded a program designed to help home borrowers in trouble so that more people will qualify for help, and lenders were given incentive to work with them.

The program increases eligibility requirements for FHASecure so that about 500,000 more families will qualify for refinancing from a troubled mortgage

to a prime-rate FHA-insured program by the end of this year. Borrowers with adjustable-rate mortgages late on two consecutive monthly payments or at two different times over the last 12 months would need a 97% loan-to-value (LTV) ratio to refinance. Those who were late on three payment or three times would require a 90% LTV. The program also allows lenders to voluntarily write down the outstanding subprime mortgage principal balances to a 97% or 90% LTV ratio depending on borrower circumstances and to fill the gap with other arrangements, such as subordinate financing. In exchange, the FHA has promised to insure new, more affordable mortgages.

Since September 2007, FHA has pumped nearly \$68 billion into the mortgage market, of which \$28.5 billion has been through FHASecure. ■

advertisers' index

Acme Lighting	19
Altec Roofing, Inc.....	21
Amber Electric	19
Custom Cabinetry	23
Deerfield Builders Supply.....	Back Cover
Definitive Electronics.....	13
Duren Roofing Inc.....	19
Florida Propane Gas Safety, Education and Research Council...	5
M.A. Johnston Construction	1
Master Gardeners Nursery & Landscaping Inc.....	18
Master Plumbing Inc.	23
Monument Plastering, Inc.	23
North County Painting & Decorating.....	4
Powerhouse Electrical Contractors ...	1
Randy Smith, Photographer.....	17
Schrappert's Fine Cabinetry and Design, Inc.....	Inside Front Cover
Village Architects AIA.....	3
Window Classics ...	Inside Back Cover

Your calling card has just been installed.



©2006 Marvin Windows and Doors. All rights reserved. ©Registered trademark of Marvin Windows and Doors.



Why are more custom builders choosing our windows – and using them in their own homes? Simple: reputation and referrals. Marvin Windows and Doors are superior, from their design and craftsmanship to the way they perform. And our cladding is the highest quality available, able to stand up to the rigors of construction, weather and time. Just like you have to. Visit a Marvin professional millwork expert or marvin.com to find out more.



Window Classics 1-800-344-7650

Hollywood
Miami
W. Palm Beach

Orlando
Tampa
Bonita Springs

Gainesville/Ocala
Sarasota
Destin

For Caribbean/Export Sales Department Please Call 954-966-1148

www.windowclassics.com

MARVIN 
Windows and Doors

Built around you.™

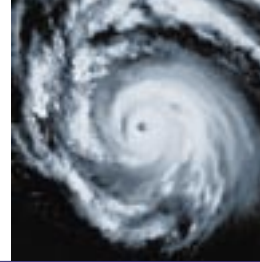
Marvin Windows and Doors ranks "Highest in Builder and Remodeler Satisfaction among Residential Window and Patio Door Manufacturers"



Marvin Windows and Doors received the highest numerical score in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Builder and Remodeler Residential Window and Patio Door Satisfaction Study®. Study based on responses from 2,677 builders and remodelers measuring 12 manufacturers. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of builders and remodelers surveyed in May through July 2007. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com



IMPACT RESISTANT WINDOW & DOOR SYSTEMS



Failure
is not an
option.

Everything else
is open
for discussion.



It takes strength to face a hurricane head on and survive. Which is exactly what new LifeGuard™ windows and doors by Weather Shield® are designed to do. They're certified to withstand winds up to 150 mph*. They're available in a multitude of sizes, and allow you to choose the style, shape, color or species of interior wood to beautifully complement any home. To learn how LifeGuard windows and doors can help protect families and their most valuable possessions, stop by our showroom or visit www.weathershield.com.

DEERFIELD BUILDERS SUPPLY
954-427-1010

www.deerfieldbuildersupply.com • 77 SE 2nd Ave., Deerfield Beach, FL 33441

DBS DESIGN CENTER
941-343-9355

1155 Cattlemen Rd, Sarasota 34232

DBS DESIGN CENTER
239-768-9220

5860 Enterprise Pkwy, Ft. Myers 33905

DBS DESIGN CENTER
727-561-9150

13130 56th Ct., Clearwater, FL 33760