

Remodeler's Corner

Stonebridge Builders of Rochester:

Mission – fresh, innovative ideas

By Debi Neville

Don't let the dignified appearance of Bob Ashton and the quiet demeanor of Scott Travis fool you. Two minutes into a discussion of design and building homes, their enthusiasm for the business is clearly evident. Also evident, is that these two are no ordinary builders. Stonebridge Builders of Rochester offer fresh, innovative ideas and are on a mission to build a more vibrant place to live.

"The design, and the thought process that produces the design, are so important," Ashton said. "No job will turn out better than the design."

With a background in art, Ashton pays particular attention to the aesthetics of a plan and carries through with almost fanatic attention to detail.

Travis has a background in construction. "I swing a hammer but also keep an eye on design," he said.

It's a great combination according to Ashton. "Scott knows if we can do something structurally. He also will develop innovative options as we go."

Both Ashton and Travis speak of the 'changes in the wind' in construction.

"People like to have lots of things but not clutter," Ashton said. "Our customers want a nice clean look, they want everything put away. That necessitates cabinetry, closets, and better use of space."



A corner of glass windows and two sided fireplace set the tone for the open floor plan

Stonebridge Builders see a trend toward a smaller home of higher quality.

Last year, the average size of a new home decreased for the first time in nearly thirty years.

"We like to give design and construction options, then the homeowner can decide where to put their money," Travis said.

They help the client assess how big the home needs to be to live the way they need or want, giving the most house for the dollar. A clever design can enhance less square footage.

Ashton and Travis also encourage their clients to look ahead; building with consideration for future expansion or the ability to adapt to handicap accessibility.

Eighty percent of their new construction has geo-thermal heating systems. With the rising cost of fuels, energy efficiency is a big concern to their customers,

Using sustainable building materials is another trend Stonebridge sees.

"I think that concern is here to stay. It doesn't matter if its young people or Baby-Boomers, we hear people wanting to be more environmentally responsible," said Ashton.

Advocating the use of a wide variety of materials is something Ashton and Travis have been doing for years.

"Making the home unique and personalized is important

to us,” Travis said. “Our goal is to include an unusual design or a specialized look in each home.”

A recent major construction remodel is a good example. The twenty five year old home was stripped to the sheetrock. A Prairie design with Asian influence was carried through out the house. The combination of the two styles may seem unusual, but work together very well.

Custom cherry woodwork with a smooth, sleek style, angled at the top edges has an Asian quality and compliments the new Prairie style windows and doors.

Original oak floors were removed and replaced with a darker Cumaru wood. Doors were designed to match the new woodwork.

Along with changing the style of the home, a three story addition was built on the back of the home. This allowed for an entirely new kitchen on the main floor, a master bedroom and bath suite on the second level and an office area in the lower level.

A large wall of windows in the kitchen visually extends the room into the woods, enhancing the relationship between the home and its surroundings. Countertops in the kitchen and island are honed black granite. An eating bar sports a contrasting walnut wood top which keeps the area fresh and exciting. The entire area allows for more than ample space for entertaining or cooking a gourmet meal.

The spacious kitchen addition flows seamlessly into the dining area, (the old kitchen/dining space). Alder was the wood of



Kitchen windows look out to adjacent deck with Asian pergola, bringing the style outside, in.

choice for the kitchen cabinetry and also for a long bank of cabinets in the dining room.

“Alder is a sustainable wood with a great deal of character and blends with the other wood in the house,” said Ashton.

Careful choice of the stone facing on the double sided fireplace, and custom built furniture compliment the architectural design. The master bedroom also brings the outside-in with a large window bench inviting the owners to read and relax. Custom built drawers in the dressing area, a stone and tile bath and two large walk-in closets complete the suite.

Stonebridge Builders use past work as examples for potential clients.

“We don’t do spec houses or models per se’,” Ashton said. “We are fortunate that we have people who are happy with our work and proud to share their homes as examples.” Stonebridge Builders won first place in the Builder’s show in 2007 and 2008. They placed second in 2009.

Careful, thoughtful design that is a reflection of the client is one reason for their success. Getting to know the client and developing a relationship during the building process is another important element, according to Travis.

“Communication. Before, during and after the build, it’s how we end up with a beautiful home and satisfied homeowners,” Travis said.

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Unique shaped window in large front entry shows attention to detail