

# Concepts



inside

► **Orren Pickell**  
Building Homes and Relationships

► **Maintenance Group**  
Maintenance Tips

▲ Their dreams have materialized into beautiful new one-of-a-kind homes. Left, the Weisberg home; right, the Daly home; and below, the Kim home.

## Living the dream Homeowners talk about bringing their visions to life

**W**hen Cheryl and Richard Weisberg set out to build the home of their dreams, they knew exactly what they had in mind: A house with an old-time spirit yet all the amenities of a modern residence; architectural features galore—curved walls, niches, the special features that make a home truly one of a kind; and a beautiful setting, one where deer, fox and raccoon were just as likely to pass by the window as the newspaper delivery boy. It was a cozy yet beautiful urban retreat they were after, but the question for them, as with any prospective homeowner, remained, “How do we make this vision come to life?”

With the Weisbergs, Orren Pickell Designers & Builders began by taking them on a tour of some older homes, since they were considering renovating. The problem they encountered again and again was layout. They’d loved the floor plan of the home they’d left behind in St. Louis, and nothing was measuring up. Thus, after finding a home site that had the spectacular views and natural setting they were looking for, the Weisbergs decided to build new, confident after seeing one of Pickell’s Concept Houses they didn’t have to compromise on charm.

“We took the best of our old house and worked with what we loved and dropped what we hated,” says Cheryl. “Pickell

See **LIVING THE DREAM** page 2



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## Living the dream (from page 1)

started off by having us make a wish list, prioritize it, and then we went from there.”

In fact, every one of our dream homes begins just like that—with ideas, and the more the better, according to Dave Heigl, manager of CabinetWerks, the company’s Cabinetry Division. “Our job is to make a house function and yet be entirely individual to the client,” he explains. “For example, we don’t just change kitchen layouts and cabinetry styles. We take the time to really listen to our clients, then offer our own advice and creativity, coming up with a design *together*. It’s an on-going, step-by-step team effort.”

Once the site was selected, it was on to the selections process, which was likened to being “a kid in a candy store” by Cheryl. Teams of design and landscape architects meet with clients to assist them as they make decisions from countertops to driveway stone, accompanied by a huge computerized photo database as well as actual samples to aid them in the decision-making process. Once all the selections are made, clients have the option of using Computer Assisted Design Software to provide a virtual reality fly-by, so they get a real sense of the home both inside and outside of the house.

For the Weisbergs this process led to a two-story French Country home full of architectural details. The turret on the side of the house features a unique, cone-shaped ceiling. Columns

and arches lead into the dining room and library, which have plenty of light-up niches for displaying collectibles. The center island in the kitchen is the perfect spot for Richard and his son to watch sporting events. Cheryl particularly loves the home’s two winding staircases. “I go upstairs at night and it feels like I’m in a different house,” she says.

For Bob and Laurie Daly, building their home with Pickell took two years from start to finish to complete, although the dream of it had begun years before. Laurie had created an entire book of ideas from magazine clippings. Bob, who had dabbled in architecture in college, had his vision too.

“We started out by drawing circles and saying, we want the family room here and no dining room,” says Bob. “We even got all the way to the final drawing that had a great room as you walk in the front door. Then we realized—we’ve got three small children and anybody coming in will just see a sea of toys. So we said, no, and scrubbed the layout.”

The Dalys are not unusual in this respect. A client’s vision often evolves and changes as the home begins to materialize. What the Pickell team came up with was a smaller but beautiful living room in addition to a dining room, which the Dalys ultimately concluded was important for memory-making during holiday seasons. The great room was moved to the back of the house, and with features such a magnificent fireplace,



▲ **Top:** A series of arches, millwork columns, and a tray ceiling with crown moldings highlight the Kim master bedroom.

▲ **Above:** A domed ceiling tops the spectacular staircase in the Daly foyer.



huge bay windows, a desk area for Laurie and a table for the kids to do their homework on, the area still was a focal point for the house. All the latest in high-tech visual technology was also a must for this family, as Bob is in the business. This created a need for plenty of top-of-the-line custom cabinetry to house a high-definition TV. There's even a TV in the master bath mirror that is completely concealed unless it is turned on!

In fact, a dream home is just as much about details and lifestyle as it is about architecture, landscaping and interior design. Like the Daly family, Van Anh and Tae Kim saw their dream home as one that would accommodate their young children yet still be welcoming to friends and family, as they love to entertain. An open floor plan, with the kitchen and eating area flowing into a magnificent great room, helped accommodate this. So did "tons" of closet space for toy storage and architectural details such as high ceilings and soffits in the basement, so they could expand their actual living space. Other special touches, such as drawers in the kitchen specially outfitted for crayons and markers, a music room for piano practice, and his and her master baths that match the Kim's individual styles, make this home uniquely their own.

"There are as many different dreams as there are people, and as many different needs as there are families," adds Dennis Ward, executive vice president of construction. "It's the job of every Pickell employee to listen from beginning to end, and to create great homes that match the imaginations of our clients."



▲ The Weisberg (top left) and Daly (bottom right) kitchens, both by CabinetWerks, feature Wood-Mode fine custom cabinetry. The Kim family room (top right) includes a limestone fireplace, vaulted ceiling, and transom windows, while their library (bottom left) includes exquisite built-in custom carpentry. A limestone fireplace is again the focal point, as it is in the Weisberg Great Room (below), which also includes a custom built-in entertainment center.



# Dreams



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## The journey along the way

by Orren T. Pickell

It was with great pleasure that I visited with clients both old and new at the grand opening party of the Jewel Box, our seventh Concept House. Short of the pride I have in my own family, I can't think of anything that brings me more personal satisfaction than clients being thoroughly happy with their "dream homes." And this includes not only architectural features and functions but also the path that got them there in the first place.



The fact is, the life of your dream home doesn't begin on the day you move in. I've come to learn that the home is really a means to an end—building the dream. As much as we try, and we try harder than anyone, building a custom home is an imperfect

process. There are lots of ups and downs. But some of the greatest memories homeowners have are of the people they've met along the way, the friendships and camaraderie they've formed with our staff as they overcame obstacles together, and the creative energy and joy of seeing their dreams unfold. There's nothing like watching the house you and your family have been thinking about and working toward for years, come to life. It's exhilarating.

That's why it's such an honor for any builder to be chosen to fulfill these aspirations. It takes an incredible leap of faith on behalf of clients when they choose a builder, and a reputable company acknowledges this by aspiring to go well out of its way to not only meet, but exceed clients' expectations and to build a bond of mutual trust and respect. We do this by shining when we can and working together to overcome the unexpected—bad weather, late deliveries, etc.—when we can't. Clients almost always know this and appreciate our efforts.

For example, the Pickell sales department strives to serve as consultants, not just sales people, leading clients through the complicated process of choosing a lot and maintaining a budget. In design, instead of having just one or two architects meet clients, we have at least four, and sometimes five staff members closely watch, listen, and comprehend as the clients articulate their dreams. Our estimators don't stop at getting one or two bids, but read between the lines and search out areas that will positively impact the design and budget. In construction, we think beyond the plan, constantly offering suggestions



▲ Scenes from the Jewel Box, our arts and crafts Concept House in Lake Forest. Clockwise from upper left: The family room fireplace mantel is a rough hewn Douglas Fir; a five foot tall chair railing with a notch for plates and accessories surrounds the dining room; Brookhaven fine cabinetry, slate floors and honed black absolute granite countertops highlight the CabinetWerks kitchen. Furniture by Toms-Price.

to our clients on how to make their home function or look better.

Then at closing, we don't just walk away, providing clients with a simple owner's manual and a wish of good luck. Our service continues through our maintenance department's proactive approach to tuning and tweaking the client's new dream home. From our initial follow-up to the grand finale, the one-year walk through, our building and service departments come together to analyze the home and handle those final little items. Many clients are so happy that they hire our maintenance department to continue caring for their home.

It's this "How can I help you?" mentality that clients of any business appreciate. When they see you are giving your all, every step of the way, they see beyond the small bumps in the road to the big picture—their homes, their dreams, their families.

All the marketing in the world can't build a solid reputation. Without putting forth that extra effort, our client relationships—the most valuable assets of any firm—would soon falter. To stand the test of time, it takes high quality, exceptional service, and great integrity, which can ultimately only be articulated by your clients. People are what our company is all about. Thanks to all those who help make my dreams (and yours!) possible.

## Maintenance tips

To keep your house looking like new all year long, Warren Schwartz of the Maintenance Department offers the following tips:

- ▶ Clean out gutters, inspecting to ensure all spikes, straps and clips are tightly fastened.
- ▶ Wash windows, inside and out.
- ▶ Clean and seal decks. Remember, you'll need three consecutive warm, sunny days for this task.
- ▶ Wash the exterior of your house, being sure to use an ordinary garden hose as pressure washers are powerful enough to force water under the siding where it may mildew and rot.
- ▶ Caulk exterior joints around windows and doors.
- ▶ Our maintenance department is always here to help you. For an appointment, call Warren Schwartz at 847-914-9629.