

Concepts



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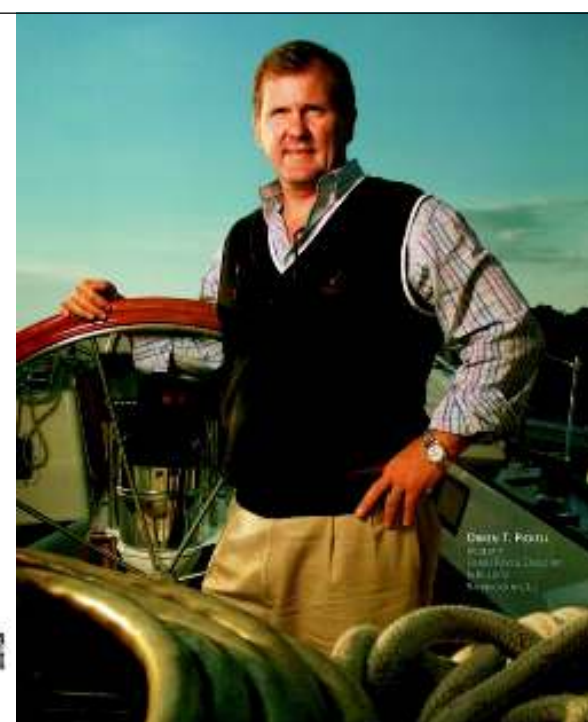
Pickell Named America's "Custom Builder of the Year for 2001"

Talk about proud! Our company has been named America's "Custom Builder of the Year for 2001" by Custom Home magazine. No firm in the Midwest has ever received this honor. In the cover article of its January 2001 issue, the magazine states that our dedication to excellence as well as our commitment to cutting-edge technology, set us apart. We also know that our clients, who seek out and appreciate creativity, innovation and quality are the keys to our success. "This is an award for all of us—clients, employees and subcontractors," said Wendy Cohen, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

"Our mission is to be profoundly better at what we do than anyone else, and every employee is dedicated to just that," added Cohen. "This obsession with excellence, performance, improvement and, most importantly, customer service and client satisfaction has produced a corporate culture that spawns innovation at every level in every department."

In the Design Group, one example of this obsession with customer service is the use of animation software, which our architects developed and customized so that clients can see exactly what their homes will look like, inside and out, when all

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It's a bonanza! Pickell wins 13 key awards

► This Long Grove home was a Key Award winner in 2000.



▲ All of the above homes won Key Awards this year.



Orren Pickell Designers received an unprecedented 13 Key Awards at the 28th Annual Key Presentation recently held at Navy Pier.

These special honors, sponsored by the Home Builder's Association of Greater Chicago (HBAGC), pay tribute to architects and builders who set the standards for design and technology in the housing industry. Judged by our peers from many hundreds of entries, we look forward to this annual toast to the industry's best and brightest.

The Lake Forest home pictured on the cover captured Gold Keys in two categories. This French Country residence was unique in that its design was limited by many of the community's building and design regulations. We used these strict regulations to our advantage by creating interesting roof lines and varying gables. On the interior, a unique step-up and step-down vertical floor plan provided special interest as did a series of grand arches. A screened porch with a volume ceiling overlooked the picturesque golf course view. Crown and ceiling treatments throughout plus a brilliant fireplace in the master suite added to the overall charm.

The Pickell Transition House in Glencoe also captured a Gold Key. One of Pickell's "Concept" homes, this residence combines old-fashioned charm with state-of-the-art technology, and was designed so that every room in the house could be used for a different purpose. For example, the three-car garage boasted a specially vaulted ceiling allowing this space to double as an indoor basketball court, while the master bedroom's magnificent sitting room can also be a library, office or study with built-in floor-to-ceiling bookcases.

Constantly creating imaginative designs and experimenting with new materials, our company has won well over 100 Key Awards for Excellence in Architecture and Building. Pickell has also won Crystal Key Awards for Innovation in Architecture, the highest design award given in the state of Illinois, in four of the five years it has been in existence.

Custom Builder of the Year (from page 1)

that exist are floor plans. From plumbing fixtures to the stones on the driveway, clients can get an amazingly accurate virtual reality presentation of their homes before a shovel touches the ground.

Another example is the company's use of highly complex software, employed most often in the construction of skyscrapers. We use it to plot the progress of many hundreds of tasks involved in the custom homebuilding or remodeling process. The software, customized and made proprietary by our technical experts, alerts all involved—from the estimators to the cabinetry craftsmen—about timeline changes. Nothing is missed, everyone remains informed, the project moves forward, and because delays are minimized, many potential cost overruns are eliminated. As a result, vendors want to work with us. They offer us better quality at better prices. We then pass these benefits on to our clients.

We've even used technology to streamline the selections process, a crucial phase in the building process that can wreak havoc on deadlines and budgets—not to mention causing

clients great stress. In our Selections Resource Center, clients meet with designers to go over a huge computerized photo database and to touch and see actual samples. Orren is also a founder, beta tester and will be the first client of SOS (Solutions on Site), an Internet company that will soon bring selections, from bricks to bathroom fixtures, to a client's personal computer, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, anywhere in the world.

Yet, as we all know, our company runs on much more than technology. It is our people, and the commitment of time, energy and personal pride they put into their jobs that makes the difference. Clients tell us that their 10-year-old Pickell homes look and feel just like they did when they were brand new. "This thrills us more than any award," says Cohen.

"For our clients, building their dream homes should be a milestone in their lives, an exciting adventure," she adds. "This award represents more than just our abilities to design and build exceptional and beautiful custom homes. It speaks of every employee who rededicates himself or herself each morning to meeting and exceeding client expectations."



▲ This beautiful Highland Park home won a Gold Key Award.

A “Jewel Box” in Lake Forest

Bigger Isn't Always Better, Better is Better

The “Jewel Box” is an architectural movement away from large boxes and towards aesthetic splendor. Rather than build ever-bigger spaces—size for the sake of size—design/build firms have begun producing Jewel Boxes. Here, the size of the home has been limited on purpose, with the money saved on size being spent instead on upgrading the level of finish. Thus, every room of the home becomes a pleasure to live in, an aesthetic joy, every day of your life.

Romantic details after romantic details are built into our “Jewel Box” Concept House, the largest 3,622 square foot house (plus a 1,500 square foot, luxury finished basement) you’ve ever



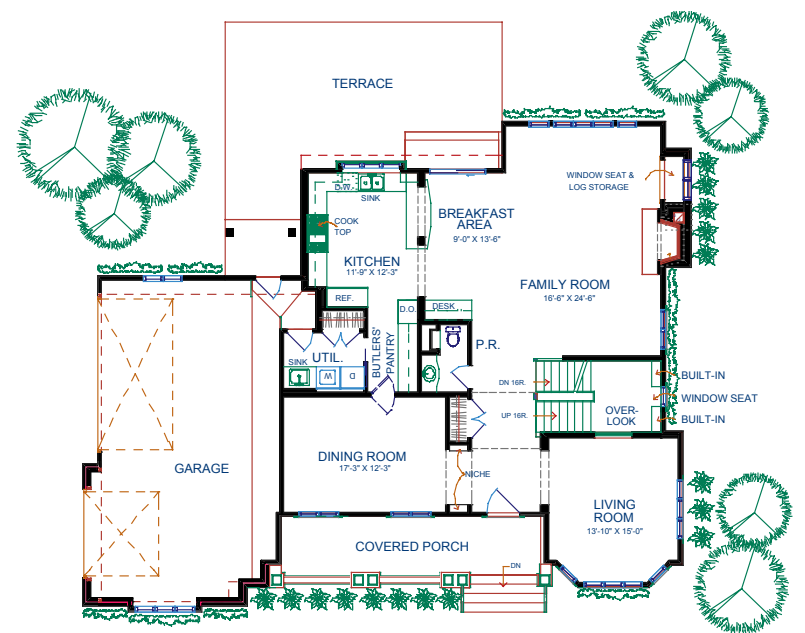
The Jewel Box Concept House is open from mid-February through early April. All proceeds from the suggested \$3 entry donation go to Ragdale Foundation in Lake Forest, a place in which writers and artists are given the time, peace, and quiet they need to do their best work.

seen, thanks to an exceptional floor plan. The home is available for purchase for \$1,395,000. Scheduled to open Valentine’s weekend, the Jewel Box is located in Middlefork Farm, Lake Forest. The entrance to the gorgeous subdivision is immediately across from the Waukegan Road entrance to Lake Forest Hospital. The exterior of this Arts & Crafts inspired

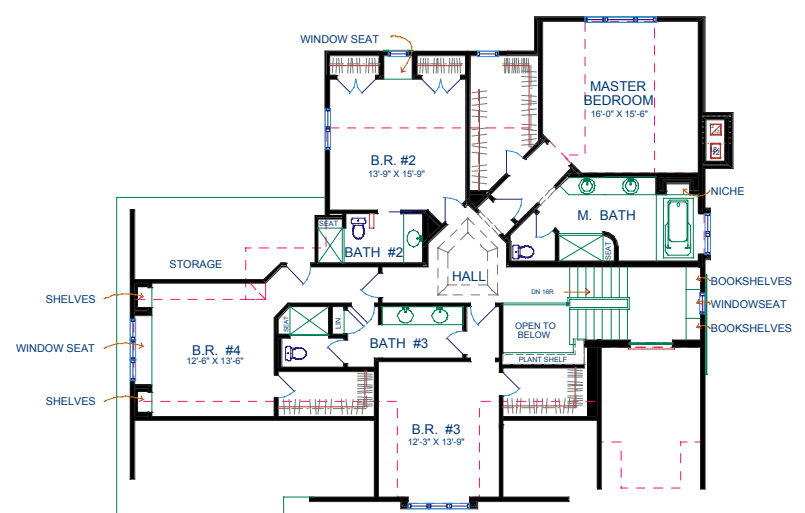
house is a combination of shingle-style and craftsman-style architecture. Like a great statue, it exhibits excitement all around the house, from all angles. All sides feature gable on gable highlights with bracket details and opulent crown moldings. The interior overflows with custom trim and woodwork in every room. There’s a surprise in every nook and cranny. Dripping with architectural jewels, nothing was spared, from the two layers of crown molding in the master bedroom to satin nickel faucets in the master bath to antique seeded-glass inserts in the custom-made cherry cabinets in the gourmet kitchen (created by CabinetWerks with Brookhaven custom cabinetry).

The Jewel Box features exquisite interior design, furnishings, and area rugs by Toms-Price, all of which compliment the Arts & Crafts style. For more information, call us at (847) 914-9629 or visit our web site, www.pickellbuilders.com.

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AAB

Smooth sailing

by Orren T. Pickell

It has been a fruitful and, as always, interesting winter season for the staff at Pickell and for me, personally. First off, I wanted you to know about our recent success in a copyright infringement lawsuit, which awarded our company a significant sum. Every Pickell client should know that we will go to great lengths to protect you and the design of your home. Your home is unique and individual, and we intend to make sure it stays that way.

"The court's decision was a complete victory from a legal standpoint with an award not only of damages but also pre-judgment interest, court costs and attorney's fees," said attorney Alan L. Stefaniak, trial attorney for DiMonte & Lizak.

He continued, "More importantly, the court's decision is vindication of the Pickell organization's premier design/build reputation and company philosophy. Orren Pickell made it clear to us as his attorney that protection of his organization's design concepts and the commitment he makes to his customers to build one-of-a-kind custom homes that may not be duplicated by others are really what mattered to him. Orren spent a great deal of time and money to stand up for this principle. The court victory validates his position, the integrity of his organization and the company's commitment to its customers."

In other news, as some of you already know, I began an eight-month-long sailing trip along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and around the Bahamas with my wife Tina and son Eric, an eighth-grader whom we decided to home-school this year in order to make this trip possible. Thus far it has been quite an adventure what with the cold fronts and low water levels, but that, as they say, is another story . . .

What you may be wondering is, how can the president of a successful company afford to take the time off for such an excursion? For me, the answer is easy, and it's called our Executive Management Group, which consists of myself and four top executives: Dennis Ward, Vice President of Construction; Wendy Cohen, Vice President of Sales and Marketing;



Jeffrey Camp

▲ From left, members of the Executive Management Group: Tony Perry, Dennis Ward, Wendy Cohen, George Skweres, and Orren Pickell.

Tony Perry, Vice President of Design; and George Skweres, Chief Financial Officer.

Officially formalized this year, the EMG, which has been working together for many years, is instrumental to our success as well as to the satisfaction of our clients. Although I am coming in on a monthly basis to work alongside the EMG in the leadership of the company, when I'm away or if anything were to ever happen to me, the company doesn't skip a beat and your investment in Orren Pickell Designers & Builders is protected.

Presidential power by committee is the smartest way for any company to run, as each team member brings to the table a different set of skills and talents. During bi-weekly meetings, they offer each other valuable insights and fresh perspectives and stay up-to-date on the goings-on within the entire company, not just their specific departments. It is this cross-pollination of ideas and expertise that keeps our company alive and its creativity pumping.

Aweigh anchor!

Pickell maintenance group adds to its list of services

Clients who have built their dream homes want to keep them as beautiful as the day they moved in. This is why Orren Pickell Designers & Builders created and has recently grown the company's Maintenance Group. We see it as a way for us to better serve our customers and for homeowners to better protect their investments.

One important job of the Maintenance Group is conducting walk-throughs of every Pickell home. This is done upon closing. The home is then under warranty for one year. After that, many clients opt to extend this same top-quality service. If so, Pickell will continue to conduct detailed inspections on a quarterly basis as the seasons change. This is especially helpful for some of our clients with multiple homes who need to keep their main residence winterized and maintained.

"Our clients take great pride in their homes," says Warren Schwartz, head of the Maintenance Group. "Utilizing the maintenance service preserves the house's original beauty, not to mention keeping up its resale value."

Recently, we added a 24/7 option to our list of maintenance services. This means we are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additionally, we are now offering maintenance on non-Pickell homes as we've discovered that there are many homeowners who are seeking but are unable to find companies who offer this same level of service. Pickell's work is top quality. Our people arrive on time and complete the job quickly, professionally and politely.

For more information about the Pickell Maintenance Group's services, please call Warren Schwartz at 847/914-9629.