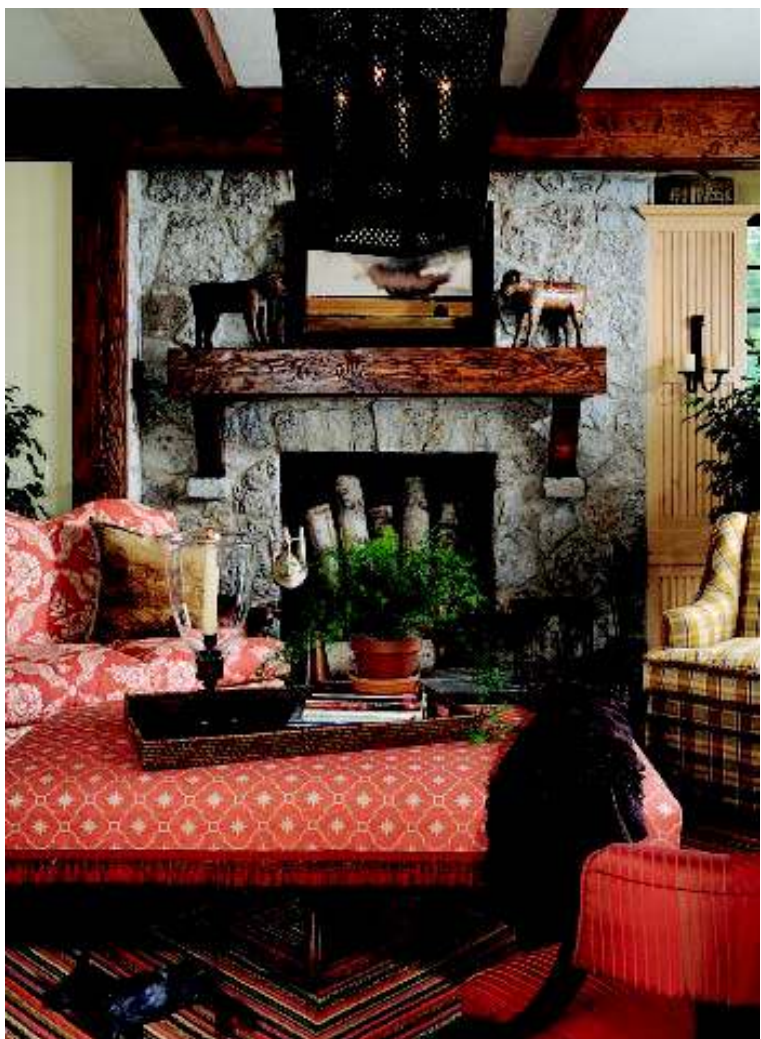


Concepts



Courtesy of Chicago Home & Garden Magazine



inside

► **Remodeling Group**
Going That Extra Mile

► **South Shore Club**
The Dream Comes True

► **Key Awards**
Client Homes Earn Top Honors

► **Client Web Sites**
National Award for Innovation

▲ The South Shore Club has gone from CAD architectural drawings by the Orren Pickell Design Group to the real thing. Shown above are interiors from The Design House (left) and The Vacation House.

More Affordable Than Ever

Introducing The Custom Series: Pickell Quality and Imagination from \$600,000 (plus land)

Building a beautiful custom home is a long-held dream of most people. Who wouldn't want a home built to their exact specifications, a home that includes all of the details their mind's eye can conceive? At Pickell, we consider it a privilege to turn people's ultimate fantasies into realities. It is an adventure that never loses its excitement or meaning.

Recently, however, customer requests caused us to think, "What about those people who would love to build a Pickell custom home at a lower cost? Could there be a way to build them a scaled-down—yet still absolutely beautiful—custom home?"

The answer we came up with was a resounding "yes," and the solution was to create two lines of Pickell homes, the "Estate Homes" and the "Custom Series." Our Estate Homes are simply the finest created anywhere. Estate clients can create without



▲ Seeing is believing. The Cornerstone House at 922 Rollingwood in east Highland Park, opens for tours in mid-December.



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Custom Series (from page 1)

limits, wherever and whatever their tastes, styles, and imaginations lead them. These are “no holds barred,” luxury dream homes with only the finest details . . . anything and everything a client could ever hope for and imagine.

Our Custom Series, on the other hand, will allow us to meet the needs of more time- and budget-conscious families. Priced as low as \$600,000 plus the cost of land, these homes may not have all of the appointments of an Estate home . . . the floors may be oak instead of walnut, the roof less complicated, and the size 2,500 to 3,900 square feet rather than 4,000+ square feet. However, Custom Series homes will still incorporate all of the quality and beauty for which Pickell is known. Because of the smaller size and reduced design complexity, Custom Series’ homes can be designed and built in just six months or even less.

Cornerstone House: One Great Custom Series Home

To illustrate the new Custom Series line, Pickell is building the Cornerstone House in east Highland Park. The home will open in mid-December and we will continue to show it through January. A New England, “cottage-style” residence of approximately 3,000 square feet (4,100 square feet including the finished basement), the Cornerstone House (with lot) is priced at \$1,189,000, which is virtually unheard of for a home of this caliber in east Highland Park.

“We called this home the Cornerstone House because it was this type of home—one of exceptional quality but smaller in size and simpler in design—that was the foundation of our company, when Orren first began building custom homes more than 28 years ago,” says Wendy Cohen, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. “ Today there is still a huge demand for this type of custom residence. So, we created a formula that allows us to build Pickell homes with all their quality and style, for these discriminating families. We can do it quickly and efficiently, without compromising our values or our standards.”

Three things drive up the cost of a custom home: the architect’s time, the complexity of the architectural design (driving up labor costs to build what has been designed), and the cost of materials (including the prices of the materials

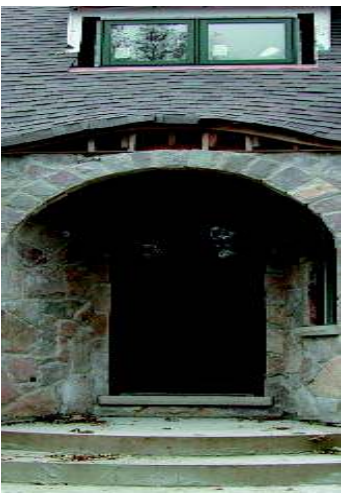


A nearly completed Custom Series home in Barrington.

chosen and the volume needed—in other words, the size of the house). Pickell has simplified and streamlined its processes to cut back on these basic costs. We’ve harnessed our buying power and employed efficiencies of scale to drive down client costs. Closer control of architectural design and better management of cost overruns also make these Custom Series homes possible.

Custom series homes involve less meetings with the architects, less complex architectural designs, homes between 2,500 and 3,900 sq. ft., and materials from Pickell’s Custom Series specifications—fine materials, but not necessarily the most expensive. If the client decides to choose one of the product packages that the Pickell team has put together, they also benefit from a much easier selections process and a much faster construction timeframe (The Cornerstone House will have been built in four months). With the daily cost of labor and the carrying cost of land, this is more than a convenience—it’s a money-saver.

“Your home may not include a turret, porte-cochere, or elaborate limestone keys and exterior trim, however, Custom Series homes are one-of-a-kind, custom-designed homes with a full spectrum of architectural styles, each one client and lot specific,” adds Wendy. “Rustic, Contemporary, New England, Mountain Retreat, European Chateau, French Cottage, Formal French, Prairie, Arts and Crafts . . . you choose whatever you wish and make it all your own.”



They’re less expensive, but Custom Series homes can include details like the stone arch featured above.

Below: The Design House in the South Shore Club is a prime example of an Estate Home. Note the two stone and stucco chimneys and custom arched wood garage doors.

Custom & Estate





The exquisite taste of the homeowner is evident in this remarkable Gold Key Award winner. This residence is another fine example of an Estate Home.

Going the Extra Mile

Client Satisfaction Key to Remodeling Group’s Success

by Orren T. Pickell

While many companies across the nation are continuing to feel the pinch of the last economic recession, the remodeling industry has surged. Low interest rates have homeowners refinancing, and subsequently, putting the money back into their homes through remodeling. And what could be a better investment? It’s virtually guaranteed to substantially increase the value of your property, plus you get the added benefit of living in a more



beautiful, state-of-the-art home.

However, I attribute the tremendous success of our own remodeling group only partially to economic factors. The other big reason is client satisfaction, which is a real rarity in this sector of the business. Ask anyone whose home has undergone a major or minor remodel, and chances are they will give you an earful of horror stories. “The job took twice as long and cost three times as much as was originally anticipated.” “It was just one big disaster after another.”

But the responses we receive from clients, both past and present, go something more like this:

“Not only were your people always at my house when they said they would be, but they also made sure that all the other workers were at my house at their scheduled times (and that included the painter. I know from past experience how difficult that is)! They made sure that the work was done neatly, so as not to ruin any of my furniture or flooring, and they followed up on all the day’s work to make sure I was happy.”
—Highland Park

“I was particularly interested in adding on the extra space, but maintaining the integrity of the existing house, so that the addition did not appear to be ‘tacked on.’ Your architects did a superb job of accomplishing this, and improving the appearance of the house as a whole.” —Lake Forest

“Your superintendent did an outstanding job of coordinating the project. He is an excellent craftsman. All of my questions and concerns were addressed in a professional and timely manner.” —Riverwoods

“My neighbors were particularly impressed with the way the site was cleaned up on a regular basis, and the way employees conducted themselves on the job site.” —Winnetka

These are excerpts taken from the dozens of letters we have gratefully received. Their satisfaction comes from the fact that every staff member at Pickell works to exceed client expecta-



It’s a whole new look. The Remodeling Group patched, repaired, and matched slate tiles in the shower and floor, reused the granite top from the kitchen, and created an arch with recessed lighting. The mirrored vanity is by Cabinet-Werks, using Wood-Mode brandywine recessed custom cabinets. The finish is a black glaze on cherry. Note the 9” deep medicine cabinets on either side.



▲ This summer the Design House was operated by *Chicago Home & Garden* magazine and the Junior League of Chicago. The CabinetWerks kitchen (left) features marble countertops, double Viking ovens, sterling silver hand-hammered sinks, and Wood-Mode custom cabinetry. The breakfast room (right) affords wonderful views of Geneva Lake.

From Imagination To Reality



▲ The Vacation House library is a celebration of talents. The Trim Carpentry division and CabinetWerks created this room using alder wood cabinets and ceiling detail with reclaimed oak floors.



▲ CabinetWerks designed this exquisite mahogany bar for the lower level of The Vacation House.

Along the shores of Geneva lake, there is now even more to observe than breathtaking fall scenery. “It was an extremely busy and successful summer with two of our Concept Houses open at once and many thousands of people coming through to tour these architectural masterpieces,” says Vice President of Marketing Wendy Cohen. “The storybook community we’ve dreamed and talked about since embarking on this project last April is now coming true.”

Of the 40 home sites originally available at this extraordinary, 40+ acre, lakefront vacation community, 23 are left. Two Pickell Concept Houses, the Vacation House and the *Chicago Home & Garden Magazine* 2003 Design House, opened this summer. Both of these spectacular homes are helping to introduce the Old World, European-style ambience that will soon be the neighborhood’s trademark.

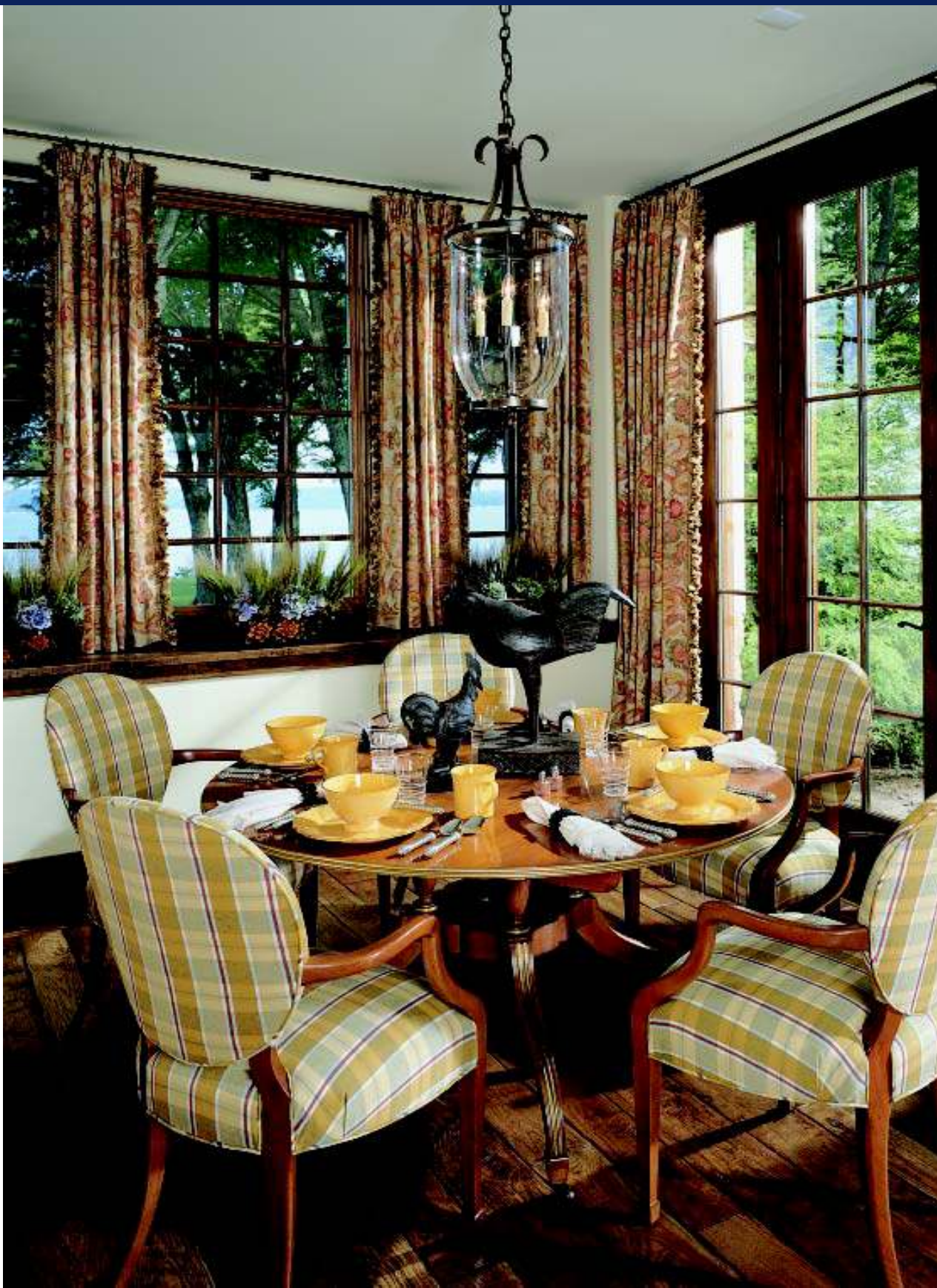
In addition to the Concept Houses and the first three magnificent homes completed for club members, the charming brick pavers and romantic stone bridges have been installed, enhancing this pastoral, storybook setting. The 4,000-square-foot, cloverleaf shaped, zero-depth pool has been poured, and the shell of the subterranean club house is in place, with craftsmen putting the finishing touches on the interior this winter. Boating enthusiasts will be pleased to note that the first of the docks was operating this summer, with a second to be added next year, and three of the 12 boats that will be available to South Shore Club resi-

dents have been purchased—a 22' Cobalt, a 24' CrissCraft Mahogany Heritage edition, and an 18' Hobi sailboat. The tennis court, chipping green, and bocce ball court will be completed in the spring. All of these amenities are maintenance free.

Proudly, we can say that the Vacation House (which was profiled in detail in the last issue of the Pickell newsletter) was the most popular home on the Lakeland Builders Association’s Tour of Homes. Tours of the home raised several thousand dollars for the Greater Chicagoland Housing Foundation and breast cancer research at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare.

The reception for the *CH&G* Design House, which is priced at just under \$4 million, was no less spectacular. Like the Vacation House, the Design House explores the finest European traditions of design, while incorporating all the modern-day conveniences. This is a home that could just as easily be found among the centuries-old chateaus and farmhouses of the French

The Sou



Photos left, above, and below courtesy of Chicago Home & Garden Magazine

countryside. With its gabled rooftop, stucco facade, aged stonework, and enchanting courtyard, it looks as if it stepped out of another time. The goal was to make the home resemble a 300-year-old chateau that had been impeccably maintained. For



Stone fireplace in the Vacation House great room.

example, the hand-troweled texture on the side wall that surrounds the side patio was created by using several layers of different plasters. The result is a weathered, seasoned, almost crumbling look.

It was also essential that the home took advantage of the sweeping, lakefront views. We brought the “outside in” to the home by incorporating the

very same flagstone that is used on the exterior walkway in the entry way. In fact, throughout the home there is a blend of natural, organic materials. Hand-beveled, hickory plank floors flow through the rooms. The knotty pine walls contrast beautifully with the central limestone “see-through” fireplace in the library. Similarly, flagstone floors set off the magnificent Wood-

Mode pine cabinetry kitchen, which contains many unusual elements. Countertops are sealed white marble, and the German sterling silver sink, which is the centerpiece of the kitchen, was actually hammered to give it a vintage flavor.

The Orren Pickell Design Group also incorporated dramatic floor to ceiling windows at every turn, such as in the absolutely fantastic great room and adjoining dining room, which capture wide-angle views of the landscape’s towering, 100-year-old oaks and maples. At 7,177 square feet, this is a home of big, open rooms and expansive spaces, making it an interplay of openness and intimacy. The home includes both a boys’ and girls’ suite, a fabulous master bedroom suite that boasts a custom-designed covered balcony and coffee bar, and a summer porch with hand-hewn beams. An impressive lower level with its Wood-Mode kitchenette (complete with another sterling silver sink!) and custom fireplace also add to the ambience of this cozy 16-room estate. For more information, call 800/572-5200 or visit www.thesouthshoreclub.com.



Great details abound in the Design House lower level (top) and library (bottom).

South Shore Club

Client Web Sites Garner National Award For Innovation

When people embark on building their dream homes with Orren Pickell Designers & Builders, they attain more than the experience, time and talent of award-winning architects, master craftsmen, selections specialists, realtors, CabinetWerks professionals, etc. They also receive their very own customized, password-protected Web site!

Through their Web site, clients can access an up-to-the-minute, “real-time” timeline of their project, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere around the world. Frequently updated digital photographs of their “work in progress” are also posted, as are architectural drawings, floor plans and renderings. This allows the client to study them at their convenience. Additionally, clients receive automatic updates that alert them to key selection deadlines that they need to meet in order to keep the building or remodeling process on time and on budget. The Web site gives clients the ability to use *Selections On-Site*, so they can view photographs of over 80,000 items, such as tile samples, faucet fixtures, flooring, etc., and actually make their selections for the project online.

This innovative new tool is unlike anything offered by other custom homebuilders in the nation, and because of it, Pickell has been honored with the 2003 Pacesetter Award for Innovation. Named “most innovative custom builder in America” by the National Association of Home Builders’ Custom Builders Committee, the Pacesetter award honors custom builders for their commitment to high standards of service and integrity.

The benefits of the Web site for our clients are endless. In the past, clients received voluminous ‘spec sheets’ that were updated monthly. The new Web sites are updated much more frequently, ensuring a far higher degree of accuracy. The Web sites also make it more feasible and affordable for out-of-town clients to build with Pickell. Now, a client in Maryland can hire our architects to design their home, and the distance won’t matter. Virtual meetings can take place over the phone.



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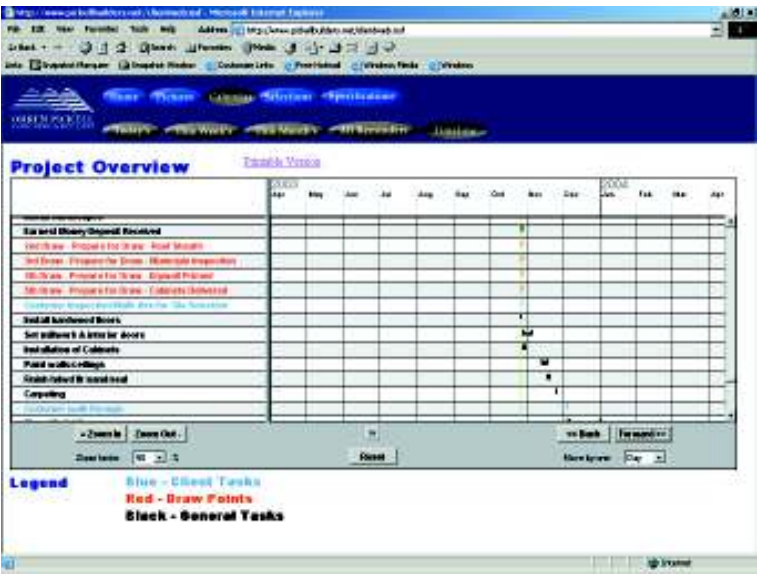
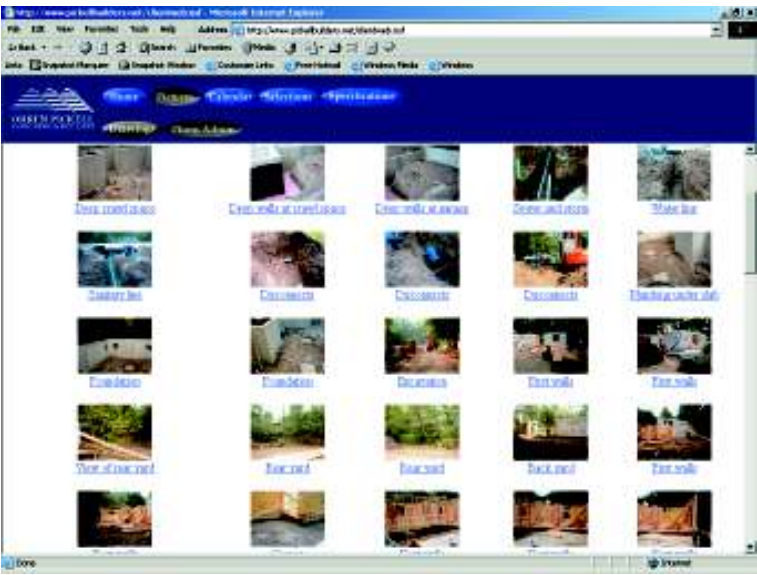


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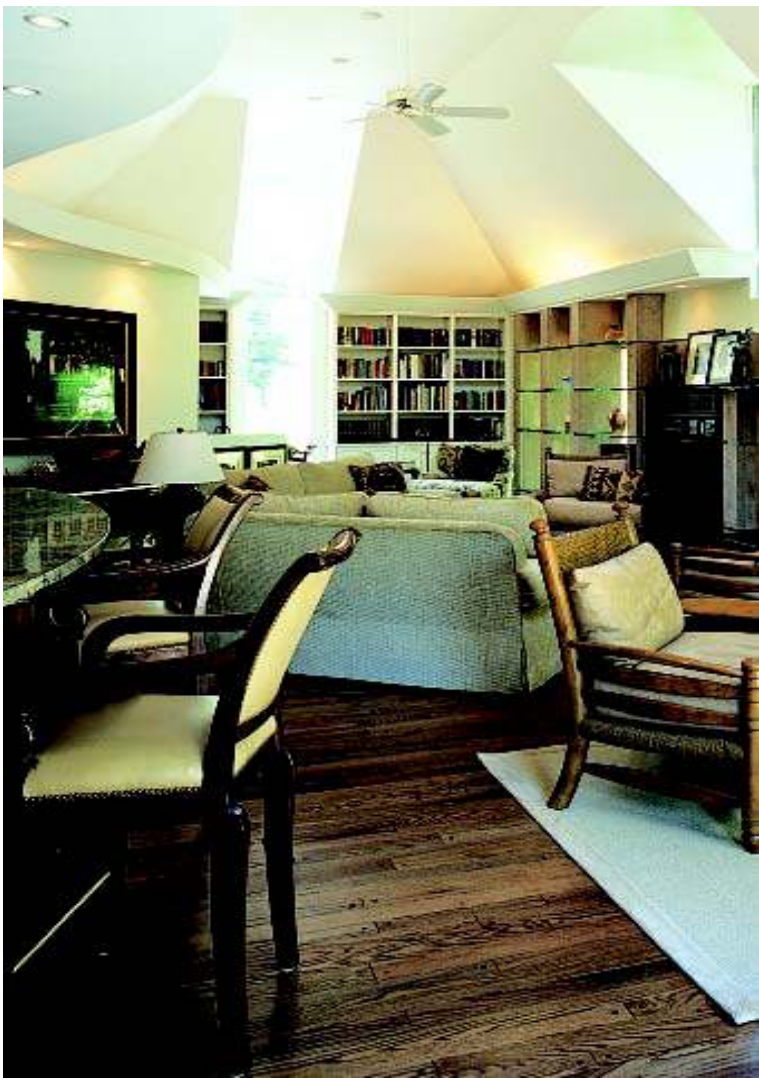
A recent example of how Web sites can be “put to work” took place in Deerfield. The clients were examining the location of their home’s outdoor terrace, as they frequently entertain in the evening and wanted to be sure that they had maximum sunlight as long as possible into the evening hours. To help make their decision easier, our architectural designer created a time-elapsed, animated simulation of the sun’s movement throughout the day. When the QuickTime presentation on the web site began, daylight, darkness and shadows were shown moving across the home over a 24 hour period. This is just one illustration of how the Web site has helped clients build their dream home, while enjoying the process.



▲ Photos of your home under construction and a live timeline are just two of the many benefits of Pickell’s client web sites.

Below: A reflection of the homeowner’s sense of style and classic, sleek taste. This Glenview home was a 2003 Gold Key award winner.





◀ Key Award winners from Lake Forest, Glencoe and Winnetka. Note the ceiling details in the interior remodeling winners.



Our Clients Are the True Winners!

Seven golds, three silvers, and a bronze were awarded to Orren Pickell Designers & Builders by the Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago during its annual Key Awards ceremony on Oct. 10th . This brings the total awards won by Pickell to well over 160, an amount unmatched by all other custom homebuilders in the entire state of Illinois *combined*! Pickell has also won 5 of 8 possible Crystal Key awards.

Specifically, Pickell was awarded five Gold Keys and two Silver Keys in the custom home category, which includes the two golds and one silver awarded to the South Shore Club’s resplendent Vacation House (see story page 4). Pickell is also particularly proud of the two golds, silver, and bronze awarded to its Remodeling Division. This was the first year the remodeling category was expanded to include kitchens and baths, whole houses and room additions, making these achievements most exciting.

We cannot begin to thank our clients for their exquisite taste and style, but also for putting their faith in our company and honoring us with the ultimate privilege—designing, building, or remodeling their family’s home.



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Concepts is published by Orren Pickell Designers & Builders, 2201 Waukegan Road, Ste. W-285, Bannockburn, IL 60015.

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Designer: Allegro Design Inc.
Agency: Winger & Associates, Ltd.
Photographer: Linda Oyama Bryan

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Remodeling Group (from page 3)

tions. This goal is achieved through painstaking attention to detail, going well beyond the unparalleled craftsmanship for which we are known. In the Remodeling Group especially, our staff strives to be a “good neighbor.” “A neighbor?” you might ask. Well, when you consider that our staff may be in a client’s home from sun up to sun down, they need to do more than excellent work. They need to be courteous and polite—not now and then, but all the time. We also take great pains to work around your schedule and not the other way around.

At the same time, they know it is their duty to keep you informed of any and every possible change to timelines and the like. We like to call it “chronic communication,” and the tool that helps us accomplish this differentiates us from every other remodeler. Part of it is a personalized Web site available 24/7 with a “real time” schedule of their project (see story on page 6). More importantly, this is how our vendors will soon receive all of their information, from schedules to purchase orders. That will go a long way in eliminating miscommunication and speeding up the entire process.

Speaking of vendors, the relationships we’ve developed over the years are tremendous benefits to our remodeling clients. They make our work a priority because they know we do our job better than anyone else. However, I am quick to note that relationships will only get you so far in this business. The loyalty of our vendors and subcontractors is also based on our purchasing power. This year alone our company is slated to do \$60 million in volume, and this just can’t compare to what a



▲ CabinetWerks and the Remodeling Group combined to create this exquisite kitchen. Light woods contrast with dark countertops, giving the clients exactly what they wanted.

smaller architect or builder or remodeler can offer a vendor in terms of business. As a result, these vendors give us the best possible prices on their products and services (savings we can pass on to our clients!), and are almost always on time as far as schedule and delivery for our projects. Combine this with our in-house technological tools and streamlined processes, and it’s no wonder we complete our remodels 1/3 faster than anyone in the business.

The word is definitely spreading about the Remodeling Group’s success. How do I know? We are currently remodeling in the home of a top WGN radio celebrity—Judy Markey of Kathy and Judy. If we can impress journalists, it’s a sure sign that we must be doing our job right!



◀ Warm wood tones grace this remodeled kitchen.

CabinetWerks used Wood-Mode custom cabinetry to complete the look.

Note the ceiling detail with its recessed lighting.

Maintenance Tips

by Warren Schwartz

- It may seem like autumn’s cool breezes just arrived, but before you know it, falling leaves will give way to drifting snowflakes. That means it is time for homeowners to winterize their residences.
- Inspect your home’s HVAC system to make sure it is up and running. Don’t forget to change filters!
 - Clean gutters and downspouts of any debris.
 - Check exterior caulking for cracks and gaps. Other than fire, water causes the most destructive damage to a home.
 - Remove hoses from outside spigots. The last thing you want is burst pipes!
 - Inspect weather stripping around doors and windows to maximize your home’s energy efficiency.
 - Change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to keep your family safe.
 - Call us to do these services, or, just call our warranty department for a pre-winter inspection of your home.

