

Concepts



▲ The Transition House in Glencoe—its garage has a vaulted ceiling which allows it to double as basketball court!

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► **Restoration**

The Turn of the Century House debuts in March.

► **Pickell Publishes Coffee Table Book**

Exploring the design/build philosophy.

► **Spring Maintenance Tips**

Don't wait for the summer heat to begin planning routine maintenance.

Homes for today's lifestyles

It has been an exciting winter at Orren Pickell Designers & Builders, what with the debut of the Transition House in December 1999. In less than two months, nearly 12,000 people came to Glencoe to tour the house.

For us, The Transition House is representative of a change that Orren Pickell Designers & Builders, and most custom homebuilders for that matter, are making at the turn of the century. More and more, homes are being built to suit homeowners' lifestyles. There are extended families, career couples, empty nesters, elderly parents, returning grown children, etc., and they all have different desires and needs, so why shouldn't homes reflect this?

We customized The Transition House for a couple going through a "transition" in their lives. People who soon may be sending their children off to college or inviting grandchildren over require a flexible home. Thus, the spectacular Great Room serves the same purpose as a formal living room, yet is still a cozy place to light a fire and watch a movie. The spacious, sunken room on the lower level can turn into an indoor sports court for anything from a driving range to a field hockey rink. By eliminating "quarterly" rooms (like a formal dining room or separate living room that might be used four times or less each

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► **Cabinetry Trends**

What's old is new again.

◀ The Transition House's exquisite kitchen by CabinetWerks features Wood-Mode fine custom cabinetry. The island is slightly lower than normal, to accommodate the owner's needs.



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Lifestyles



▲ The rear view of The Transition House, with its spa to the left, deck to the right, and plenty of windows in between!

Lifestyles (from page 1)

year) and incorporating plans for future lifestyle changes (such as a master bedroom suite on the first floor), this is a residence that the homeowners can live in for the rest of their lives.

To add features that would drive up the cost in most houses, we kept the Transition House at 4,800 square feet. We call this the “jewel box” approach, and it is a trend that builders are emphasizing as the 21st century unfolds. The “jewel box” approach means making use of all spaces by cutting back on rarely used areas, and investing the savings into those details that make living in the home a pleasure and a glorious aesthetic experience. People are opting for a cozier “cocoon,” a place to escape from the hubbub of an ever-changing, high-tech world. The Transition House’s details included exquisite woodwork, sweater drying racks in the laundry room, and absolutely top-of-the-line appliances and cabinetry in the kitchen. Even the kitchen island was lowered to make it the perfect height for the owner.

You can also see the same focus on lifestyle in other Pickell homes. A Long Grove residence includes the “Bijou Palace,” a movie viewing room that brings home the visual experience and sound quality of the plays, movies, and concerts that the family so enjoys. People today see the value of staying home more, of retreating to a warm and soothing environment. Our Concept Homes are perfect examples. In The Concept House the master bath and steam area are pure serenity, while The Entertainment House’s kitchen is an intimate gathering place or a setting for entertaining a larger group. The Organization House has mail slots, cubby holes, and lockers for each member of an active, two-income, three-child household. These are homes designed not for generic homeowners, but for the real families that live within them.



▲ **Top:** This glorious sunroom in The Transition House offers incredible views of the ravine. **Bottom:** Cherry wood ceiling and oak floors grace The Transition House foyer and Great Room.



▲ **Top:** The Great Room fireplace area and floors are quartersawn oak. **Bottom:** This warm, sunny study, rich in maple with quartersawn oak floors, is part of the first floor master suite in The Transition House.

Cabinetry Trends: What's Old Is New Again

Step into one of the kitchens the CabinetWerks team is designing today, and you'll likely see a room that has all the charm and beauty of a living room filled with beautiful antiques. This is largely due to a current trend that favors an "unfitted look" rather than rows and rows of cabinetry. People are asking for cabinets, islands, and appliances that look more like pieces of furniture and less like functional storage units.

One way Pickell achieves this is through the use of actual antiques. A 100-year-old farm or butcher-block table can be transformed into a stunning island. We are also building cabinetry around appliances, and using exquisite hand-carved appliques and molding to achieve an armoire-like effect. Glazed, distressed finishes and countertops, running the gamut from butcher block to soap stone, also help add a certain richness to the room.

Interestingly enough, baking areas, which were central to kitchens of fine homes hundreds of years ago, are in vogue again. We often accomplish this by lowering and adding a marble surface to a portion of a kitchen island. We're also building entertainment centers and bookshelves, as sitting areas in kitchens become increasingly popular. The final result is a room with a quiet charm and timeless quality that a family can really enjoy.



Left: This exquisite kitchen island looks like antique furniture, but functions too, with a refrigerated wine rack, cutting board, dishwasher, sink, and more.
Bottom: The cabinetry on the right serves as a breakfront between the dining room and kitchen in The Transition House.



Turn Of The Century House's Spotlight On Restoration

In early March 2000, Orren Pickell Designers & Builders unveils The Turn of the Century House, our sixth concept home. Located at 224 Sheridan Road, the sight itself, sneaking a peak of Lake Michigan, makes this home very special. But, it is how this 75-year-old Kenilworth property incorporates the best of both worlds—the beautiful details of early 20th century homes with all of our 21st Century amenities—that makes it a model for homeowners interested in the restoration and remodeling process.

From the beginning, there were many challenges. An addition allowed us to add a spectacular Great Room as well as a second-level master bedroom suite, bringing the home into today's lifestyle. The 1925-style kitchen, which was purely functional, was doubled in size and made into a gathering place and key element. Every consideration had to be made to improving traffic flow as the entire first floor was reincarnated.

With all this construction going on, it became more important than ever to preserve the integrity and historic spirit of the house. Craftsmen stripped layers and layers of paint in order to restore the classic mahogany trim and went to great lengths to refurbish the original doors and hardwood floors. Rooms were kept rectilinear, without all the curves and angles so often seen in modern homes. Details such as custom-built, mahogany bookshelves in the Great Room, bead boarding in the master bath, and antique-style fixtures in the kitchen added nostalgia. From the stone around the fireplace to the finish on the Wood-Mode cabinetry in the kitchen, everything had to be top-of-the-line, yet maintain a traditional Old-World style.

In order to really appreciate all of the work that goes into restoring a house such as this, one needs to look beyond the rooms and go inside the walls and underneath the floors. Workers installed completely new sewer, heating, cooling, and electrical systems as well as highly efficient windows and Category 5 cabling to accommodate a state-of-the-art computer system and entertainment center. On the exterior, all of the original brick was retucked, and a mansort roof was added onto what is now a three-car garage. Moving the driveway (now asphalt with a brick paver border) from the north to the south end of the house, and adding a blue stone front porch gives this home great presentation as you approach.

All proceeds from the \$3 per person charitable donation at The Turn of the Century House will be shared between Breast Cancer Research at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare and the International Center on Deafness & the Arts. Public viewing hours for The Turn of the Century House will be Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and by private appointment, from March 4 through mid-April. Adults only, please. For appointments, call (847) 914-9629.

Third, second, and first floor plans from The Turn of the Century House (from top to bottom).



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Putting it in print

by Orren Pickell

For people who are interested in building their dream homes or have a passion for architecture and beautiful photography, Orren Pickell Designers & Builders has published a coffee table book, "Luxury Homes and Lifestyles: Elements for the New Millennium."

Coinciding with our 25th anniversary, the book shares not only my perspectives, but also the insights of the entire Pickell staff, who've accumulated a wealth of knowledge after working together for so many years. It's both a teaching tool for us and a learning resource for those embarking on the adventure of building a home.

People familiar with our company know how much we believe in the design/build



philosophy. By having every possible service under one roof—

from landscape architects to cabinetry master craftsmen— it

saves people money, eliminates middlemen, streamlines the project, and results in a more enjoyable

building experience. The purpose of the book was not to *tell* readers this, but to *show* them, taking them

through every step of the design/build process. We took beautiful photographs, gathered ideas from

staff members in every department, and chronicled the entire Pickell experience from beginning to end.

Unfortunately, some of my favorite houses aren't featured because the photographs of those resi-

dences were not of sufficient quality. That's not to say next time around they won't be rephotographed

and spotlighted. If I once had reservations about writing a book of this nature, I now realize how rewarding it is, not only for myself

but also for our entire staff.

Thanks to everyone who put their time, energy and talent into making this book a success.

Did you know . . .

- ▶ The current trend is for people to combine wood handrails with iron spindles. This makes grand staircases both economical and extremely dramatic!
- ▶ 77% of our current clients used our website (www.pickellbuilders.com) to educate themselves about our company and industry trends.
- ▶ We receive on average 10 calls each week from people who want to sell their homes or lots. They choose to call us PRIOR to putting it on the market, so we can match it with a buyer.



Spring maintenance tips

by Warren Schwartz and Mitch Roper

Spring's just around the corner, and summer's heat is not far behind. By following these simple maintenance tips, you and your house will be ready for the rain and warmer weather:

- ▶ Check outside caulking, including windows, bricks and the entire exterior.
- ▶ Clean gutters and downspouts so that they're free of debris. Inspect your grading to ensure it's sloping away, not into, your home.
- ▶ Test your battery backup sump pump to make sure it's fully operational.
- ▶ Remember to shut off your main water supply whenever you're out of town.
- ▶ Set up an appointment to have your air conditioner checked and cleaned.
- ▶ Have your pools and spas readied and begin regular upkeep. Don't wait until it's already 90 degrees and maintenance sources are all booked up! Do it now.

