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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF NAHB

## THE NEW AMERICAN HOME 2024

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Kaitlin Guerin, owner of Lagniappe Baking, New Orleans, LA



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# Affordable Housing Options?

**THE UNITED STATES HAS A HOUSING AFFORDABILITY PROBLEM.** You know it, I know it, and certainly people who want to buy or rent homes know it.

In Q3 2023 (the most recent data available), just 37.4% of new and existing homes sold were affordable to families earning the U.S. median income of \$96,300, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index—a record low.

Reversing that trend is a complex issue. There is no silver bullet that will better align home prices and income. But rather than streamline stick-building—the most impactful thing in a builder’s control—some in our industry seem fixated on relatively fringe, albeit innovative, ideas to address the crisis. I’m all for solutions that offer more choices, but are they truly solutions to affordability? Consider:

**Accessory dwelling units and tiny homes.** Unless you’re a single person or are with a partner who doesn’t need privacy, these options can get really small really fast. And if they aren’t built at scale (a dubious assumption given current zoning and covenants, conditions, and restrictions), their cost per square foot is comparable to building a full-size home, eroding their affordability.

**3D printed homes.** I’m impressed with this technology’s evolution, but is it a panacea for affordability? Like panelization and modular housing—two far more mature technologies—3D printing suffers from high capital costs and distribution issues. It’s also a new way to build and finish out a house—a disruption likely to face resistance at scale.

**HUD-code homes.** The average price of a double-wide is 40% of a new stick-built home and their design and construction quality is vastly improved. But shipments have stalled at 100,000 a year since 2017, a third of what they were in the late 1980s, largely due to the segment’s inability to weather and recover from economic downturns that make traditional homes more price-competitive. Can this old-school model attract new money to expand capacity and gain market share?

**Single-family build-to-rent.** The hype around single-family B2R has cooled recently, despite the fact that renting—especially within exclusive B2R communities or sections of master plans—is favored by wannabe homeowners and renters-by-choice over apartment living. But SFB2R suffers from the same production challenges as new for-sale homes (land, regulations, labor, building costs, etc.), and I question the depth of the “renters by choice” cohort once interest rates drop below 5%.

**Office-to-residential conversions.** Like B2R a few years ago, O2R is getting a lot of media play (and money) in today’s work-from-home economy. I’m a fan of adaptive reuse (see page 54), but it’s tricky and costly to transform a corner office (much less a cubicle farm) into legit living spaces. And large, open-concept commercial buildings are often located in industrial parks with little infrastructure nearby for residents. Time (and investment returns) will tell if it’s a plausible affordable-housing solution.



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# NAHB Focuses on Key Advocacy Issues

At any given time, policy experts at the National Association of Home Builders are working on scores of issues in the regulatory, legislative, and legal arenas. Below is a summary of three key congressional issues and two cases pending in the U.S. Supreme Court that have NAHB's attention.



## TAX RELIEF BILL

In the House, the NAHB-supported Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 includes a number of pro-business provisions. The nearly \$80 billion tax package would:

- Strengthen the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), which helps to finance the construction of affordable rental housing by temporarily increasing the amount of tax credits issued by 12.5% and providing greater flexibility when using bond financing to build or preserve LIHTC properties.
- Extend the 100% bonus depreciation, increase the maximum amount a taxpayer may expense under Section 179 of the tax code, and increase the threshold for information reporting on Forms 1099-NEC and 1099-MISC.



## JOB CORPS FUNDING

With strong bipartisan support (44 to 1), the House Committee on Education & the Workforce approved NAHB-supported legislation that would reaffirm congressional support for the Job Corps and help address the nation's skilled labor shortage.

Of particular importance to NAHB and the housing community, the A Stronger Workforce for America Act explicitly recommends the full \$1.7 billion per year in funding for the Job Corps, the nation's most successful career preparation program for

disadvantaged youth. This legislation is especially important given that a recent House Labor-U.S. Department of Health & Human Services budget proposal completely eliminated Job Corps funding. The Home Builders Institute, NAHB's workforce development partner, is Job Corps' largest skilled trades training provider.

As a result of the continuing resolution passed by Congress in January, Job Corps funding will continue at its current level until March 8.



## PROMOTING RESILIENT BUILDINGS ACT

In a positive development on the codes front, the House has passed the Promoting Resilient Buildings Act of 2023. The bill would allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency to consider whether a jurisdiction has adopted one of the two latest editions of building codes, rather than just the latest edition, when awarding funds from its pre-disaster mitigation program. It would also allow state and local governments flexibility in amending the codes prior to adoption. The measure is awaiting action in the Senate.



## THE 'CHEVRON DEFERENCE'

In 1984, the Supreme Court issued an opinion that created "Chevron Deference" (not to be confused with the oil and gas company), which requires courts to defer to a federal agency's interpretation of an unclear statute if the interpretation is "reasonable." In other words, it gives federal agencies the latitude to interpret the scope of regulations.

In January, the Supreme Court heard arguments in two cases challenging the Chevron Deference that are of interest to home builders. Plaintiffs in *Loper Bright*

*Enterprises v. Raimondo* and *Relentless Inc. v. Department of Commerce* seek to overturn the statute on the basis that it gives the government an unfair advantage when a regulation is challenged in court.

NAHB filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the plaintiffs, arguing that the Chevron Deference is clearly biased toward federal agencies by granting them broad leeway to interpret and implement regulations.

If Chevron is overturned, federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Environmental Protection Agency—all of which impact home building—will have less discretion to impose new regulations that Congress didn't clearly authorize.



## IMPACT FEES

In a separate Supreme Court case, *Sheetz v. County of El Dorado, Calif.*, the plaintiff, George Sheetz, argued that a \$23,000 traffic impact fee imposed on him by El Dorado County for putting a manufactured home on a small parcel of land was unconstitutional under the Constitution's Takings Clause.

In a California state court, Sheetz argued that the fee was not closely connected to or proportional to the actual impact his new residence would have on roads. Sheetz lost his decision in California state court and appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

NAHB filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting Sheetz on the merits of the case, arguing that it's unfair to permit legislative action to shield a government from the Takings Clause. From the property owner's standpoint, a taking is a taking, no matter how it comes about.

Decisions in these Supreme Court cases are expected between April and June. **PB**

# Overcoming Challenges, Celebrating Victories

**L**ike many of you, I found 2023 challenging as a home builder. Dealing with high interest rates and their impact on the housing market, trying to predict the Federal Reserve's strategy for inflation, and receiving criticism from the media and the public for not building enough homes to meet demand were just some of the hurdles. But, in my last *Pro Builder* column as chairman of the National Association of Home Builders, I want to focus on our progress over the last 12 months.

The year got off to a great start with the International Builders' Show boasting the largest attendance and the second-largest exhibit floor since the Great Recession. Seeing so many of you walking the show floor, engaging with exhibitors, and networking and learning was inspiring.

One of my priorities as NAHB chairman was to emphasize well-being within the industry. We partnered with the SAFE Project and the Job-Site Safety Institute in 2023 to produce educational resources for home builders about the dangers of opioid use and the correct way to administer naloxone on the jobsite. And we worked to elevate the importance of and reduce stigma around mental health in the industry.

We also emphasized recovery from external forces such as natural disasters. In March, NAHB responded to unprecedented tornado damage affecting thousands of families across the Southern states, working with the Home Builders Association of Mississippi and local aid groups to provide relief in the affected areas.

In the policy arena, NAHB chief economist Dr. Robert Dietz and I testified before Congress on multiple occasions about issues important to residential construction. Our engagement on Capitol Hill helped move the needle in a positive direction for the industry and for potential homebuyers as well. In May we saw a major victory on the regulatory front when the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision to define water regulations in a way that's beneficial to both builders and homebuyers. And in June, NAHB members from across the nation headed to Capitol Hill to advocate for increased transformer supply, continued workforce development funding, and more reasonable building codes.

Also in June, NAHB and the Department of Housing and Urban Development hosted the third Innovative Housing Showcase on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., presenting the latest trends in residential construction. The showcase tripled in size in 2023, with more than 60 exhibitors presenting techniques and products to make housing more affordable, sustainable, adaptive, and resistant to environmental impacts and natural disasters.

And in the fall, NAHB member volunteers and staff participated in events across the country to demonstrate the importance of workforce development and to recruit a more diverse range of young people into the industry. By laying a strong foundation today, we can build an amazing future.

As we move boldly into this new year, NAHB is guided by a recently approved strategic plan developed with input from hundreds of members and staff. Over the next three years, this plan will help us fulfill our mission and make NAHB's vision for our country—affordable, desirable housing available to all—a reality. I believe this plan, under the direction of new NAHB CEO Jim Tobin, will benefit not just NAHB and its members but everyone in our industry. 2024 is here and our work continues.



**ALICIA HUEY**  
2023 NAHB Chairman  
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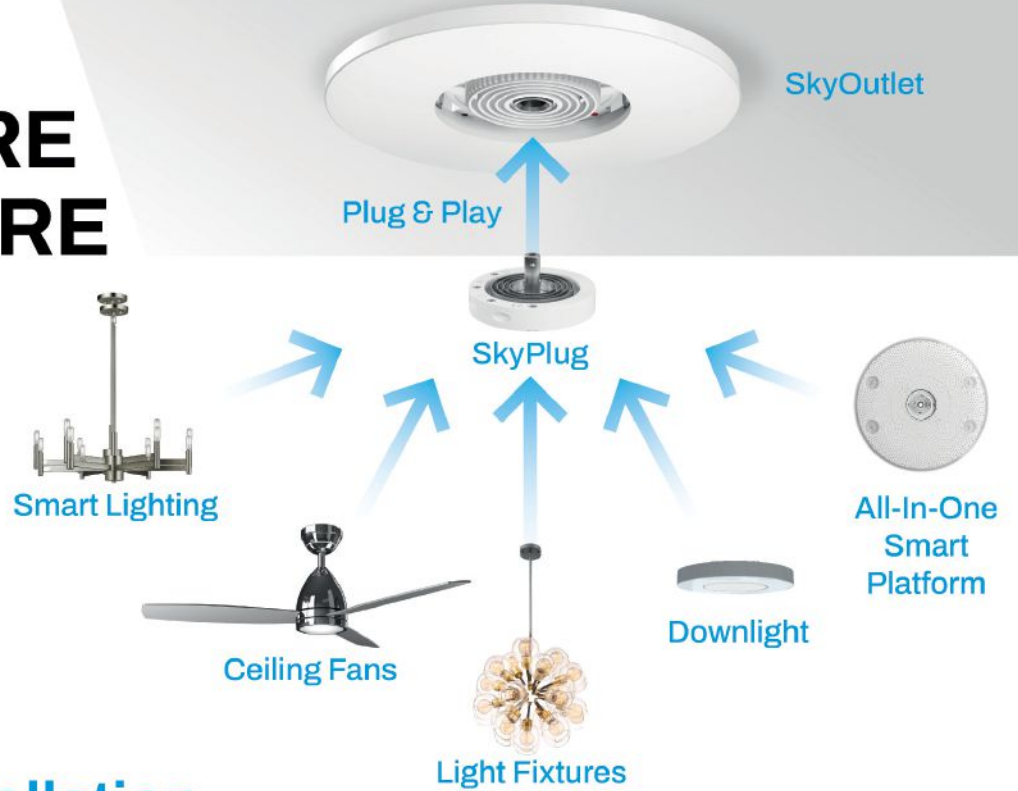


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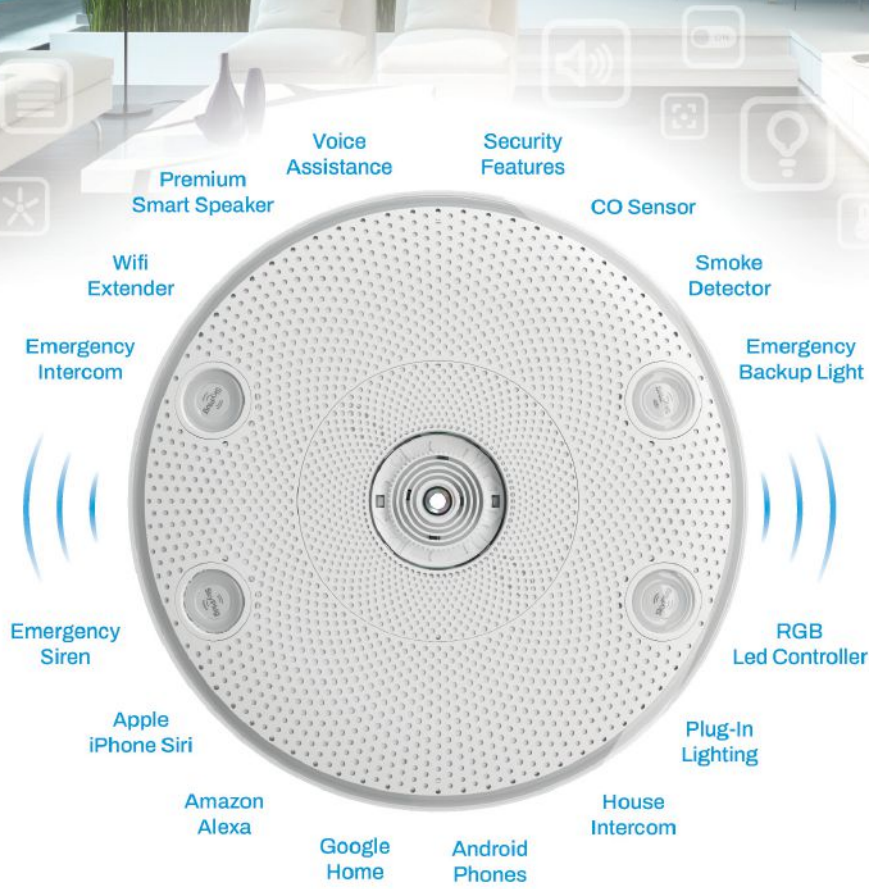
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# Four Kinds of Kid-Friendly

Do your ‘family’ homes really deliver for parents and their children? Here are four solutions that consider kids and adults alike

By Jenni Nichols



As part of my job for DesignLens, I tour a lot of homes around the country. One thing I’ve noticed is that current trends (read: an open great room) are not especially kid-friendly.

As a mother of two children ages 1 ½ and 13, I look for how they would fit in the family homes I walk or feature. Where would a high chair go? Where would they play when they’re outside of their rooms? Where would they study?

Consider these challenges and some creative solutions I’ve seen.

**Challenge:** I want a big, open space for entertaining, but what about a place where the kids can play nearby?

**Solution:** Create a playroom off the great room.

At Leyden Rock, in Arvada, Colo., Epic Homes and KGA Studio Architects have included just such a space (photo 1) as an optional upgrade in the builder’s homes.

Although it’s not large, this play space is big enough to corral the toys when guests come over or allow the kids to play freely, albeit just a barn door away from the adult activity.

The interior design team at TRIO did a fantastic job of highlighting the opportunities for the room, with a kid-size table and chairs, cubbies for toys, a cool chalkboard, and even a TV.

When I saw it, I immediately fell in love and knew the builder understood my needs as a mom.

**Challenge:** A loft that’s open to the great room below doesn’t block the sound between these areas or provide much privacy for those in either area.

**Solution:** Design a more private space for the kids to gather.

Shea Homes and Bassenian Lagoni Architects knock it out of the park at Wedgewood, in Yorba Linda, Calif., by optioning an additional secondary bedroom into an aptly named “kid’s lounge” (photo 2).

Located at the head of the secondary bedroom wing of the home, the space not only provides access to those bedrooms and shared amenities but also creates a great hangout area away from the main living spaces.

PHOTOS: 1. ERIC LUCEO PHOTOGRAPHY; 2. JOHN BARE PHOTOGRAPHY

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**Challenge:** A 10-by-10-foot bedroom isn't always big enough for kids to share.

**Solution:** Bring back the slightly larger shared or twin room concept.

Rising interest rates and land prices mean consumers may not be able to afford a new house with a bedroom for every child; some kids are going to have to share a space. A standard 10-by-10 room barely fits a twin bed with nightstand and dresser, let alone multiple beds with additional furniture.

Woodside Homes partnered with Kimberly Timmons Interiors to outfit such a space as a clever bunk bedroom (photo 3) for the builder's Creekside at Shoreline project in Syracuse, Utah, where Woodside offers multiple plans with oversized rooms.

With two upper bunks and a larger bed below, plus ample play space, this design does a great job of highlighting how an incrementally larger room could easily support multiple children. (I'm seeing more shared or bunk bedrooms in models these days, so clearly this challenge is already being met by some builders.)

**Challenge:** There's just one secondary bathroom that doubles as a hall bath and the bath for kids of different ages vying for bathroom time and privacy.

**Solution:** Design a smarter Jack-and-Jill bathroom.

At Hillside at Broadlands, in Ashburn, Va., Van Metre Homes recreated and modernized the Jack-and-jill bathroom (photo 4) that was common when I was a kid in the 1980s.

The builder's clever design provides access from both secondary bedrooms, with hinged instead of pocket doors.

Meanwhile, dual sinks and separate (and, therefore, more private) shower and toilet areas allow one or more kids to use the vanity area while another uses the shower or toilet in complete privacy.

Although none of these design solutions are necessarily new, they are less common than I (and many other parents) would want or need. The kids may still fight over shower time, but I'm not sure sibling squabbles can be entirely solved by great design!

**Your challenge:** These design solutions put a thoughtful, relevant spin on



accommodating some of the real-world challenges families face.

Focusing on consumer needs is one of the New Home Trends Institute's objectives in 2024. This year, bells and whistles are taking a back seat to the basics of good design that meets the needs of how people live.

Consider these needs—and solutions—as you design family homes because the more you solve real challenges for

prospective buyers, the more they'll see themselves in your homes instead of staying where they are. **PB**



Jenni Nichols is VP of DesignLens for the New Home Trends Institute. Email her at [jnichols@jbrec.com](mailto:jnichols@jbrec.com) or visit [newhometrendsinsitute.com](http://newhometrendsinsitute.com)

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# Improving Home Building Productivity, Part 2: Automation

Maximize efficiencies gained through simplification and standardization by automating both on-site and back-office operations

By Tony Callahan, Contributing Editor



A few issues ago, in Part 1 of this series, I addressed how home building lags other industries in productivity gains and how simplification and standardization are key to improving our productivity. In Part 2, we'll dive into the benefits of automating both the jobsite and the office.

## Construction Automation

In my first job with a large-volume home builder, I saw firsthand the value of building wall, roof, and other components in a factory-controlled setting and delivering them to jobsites on a just-in-time schedule.

Consider the potential benefits of off-site to your current home building process:

It doesn't require skilled framers to know which material goes where and how to fasten it, while the equipment's technology makes precise cuts and identifies fastening patterns. And what's left over can be saved for future use as cripples in rough openings or even finger-jointed studs instead of ending up in a dumpster.

The biggest hurdle to adopting off-site methods is the perception that it costs more than stick-building. If you're serious about it, conduct a true, total cost comparison between the two methods, working closely with a trusted off-site provider to understand your needs, rework your plans to suit a factory setting, and bid the job competitively for a fair and honest assessment.

## Back-Office Automation

Automation isn't limited to off-site manufacturing. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools to improve home building productivity are developing quickly to help boost your back office's efficiency.

For instance, rather than simply dumping data into your enterprise resource planning system, use software that maps specific fields and can upload thousands of rows of data in seconds.

Similarly, consider building digital exception reports that identify potential data inaccuracies in your quality assurance processes and automate your procure-to-pay system to save you and your suppliers and trades a ton of time.

## Vertical Integration

If you have the scale, consider vertically integrating off-site manufacturing. It's an expensive venture but having control over more of your production process may prove to be worth the investment.

It all comes back to simplification and standardization to improve productivity. Reworking your plans for efficient constructability helps reduce warranty work and costs. It will also earn economies of scale associated with plan reuse and SKU minimization, among others advantages.

With that, make it easier for your team by having a common location on your network where everyone can see floor plans, costs per square foot, sales statistics, warranty records, cycle time averages, customer satisfaction feedback, and material quantity take-offs—in short, the whole picture.

Our industry must address its lack of productivity gains to truly solve the housing affordability crisis. We owe it to our business, our employees, and our country to attack the challenge head-on.

**PB+** [probuilder.com/productivity-part-2](http://probuilder.com/productivity-part-2)



*Tony Callahan, CPSM, CSCP, has worked in the building industry for two-plus decades and is an expert in purchasing and supply chain management.*

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# Billboards Are Back!

A recent study shows the renewed power of outdoor advertising. But are home builders ready to go old-school with their sales and marketing efforts?

By Emily Zick



**A**fter falling out of favor during the pandemic, outdoor advertising revenue from transit ads, street furniture, and billboards is on the rise.

A recent report by Solomon Partners, a leading financial advisory firm, found that outdoor media produces higher levels of customer recall than online marketing.

While no one's suggesting home builders should drop their digital marketing programs, is it time to consider (or reconsider) outdoor media as part of your strategy?

## Who Is Using Billboards?

The Las Vegas division of national builder Tri Pointe Homes currently devotes about 15% of its total advertising budget to digital billboards, according to division

president Klif Andrews, and they're not the only ones. "In our market, typically all of the larger builders do," he says.

In Plano, Texas, Trophy Signature Homes (a subsidiary of Green Brick Partners) has billboard placements near many of its communities. Recently recognized as the seventh largest home builder in the Dallas-Fort Worth market, Trophy is aggressively opening new communities, says VP of marketing Yvette Rhea, and billboards are part of its strategy.

Meanwhile, Middletown Homes, a modular and manufactured home builder in West Virginia serving its home state and parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, uses one billboard close to its New Martinsville, W.Va., location to

attract passersby, according to marketing coordinator Sydney Starkey.

## How Are Billboards Being Used?

Tri Pointe recently put a large LED billboard in a downtown shopping area of the Summerlin master plan (photo, left) in Las Vegas and included a phone number—a no-no for drive-by advertising but perfect for pedestrian shoppers. "They can take a photo or just pick up their phone and call," says marketing VP Traci Sexton-Hall. "We started to see an uptick in sales really early on."

In Texas, Trophy places billboards as close as possible to those of its communities that may be a bit harder to find, Rhea says, to guide potential buyers.

Starkey says she has definitely seen in-person traffic increase as a result of Middletown's billboard, which supports the builder's digital marketing efforts: "We try to integrate all of our marketing so our digital and traditional media work together to accomplish the same goals."

## Tips for Billboard Success

If you do decide to use billboards, consider these tips:

- Keep it simple. One tagline, one main point. Make it easy to read and make sure the logo is prominent.
- Plan ahead. If you know a year in advance that you're going to want a particular billboard location, reach out to the owner and ask to be contacted when the current lease expires.
- Don't discount the cross-reads. Drivers do look across a road to see a billboard.
- See for yourself. Drive the routes of your target market to see the billboard locations you're considering and how effective they are at catching your attention.

**PB+** [probuilder.com/billboards](http://probuilder.com/billboards)



*Emily Zick is a freelance writer and editor based in Ypsilanti, Mich., helping business owners reach their target audiences with custom content. Email her at [hello@emilyzick.com](mailto:hello@emilyzick.com) or visit [emilyzick.com](http://emilyzick.com).*



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# TIPS FOR PLACING DUCTS IN CONDITIONED SPACE

THE BENEFITS TO YOU AND YOUR HOMEOWNERS ARE UNDENIABLE

BY CLEM NEWCAMP

**C**hange—that dreaded word no one really wants to hear. But quite often, changes in construction practices do deliver tangible value, and moving ducts inside conditioned space definitely qualifies.

Locating the entire heating and cooling system (equipment and supply and return ductwork) within a home’s thermal enclosure may seem like an insurmountable challenge, but the benefits far outweigh the effort required to do it, including:

- System efficiency
- Occupant comfort
- Lower costs
- Environmental “friendliness”
- Reduced thermal loss
- Easier code compliance/approvals
- Healthier indoor air
- Moisture management and mitigation
- Right-sized, cost-efficient equipment
- Better overall system performance

## HOW-TO TIPS

There are multiple ways to achieve these benefits, and there are new technologies that address common challenges.

One option is to make the attic a conditioned space by encasing it in insulation. You can also use plenum trusses as sealed chases or install ductwork in a suspended ceiling, chase, or soffit.

For multistory homes, run ducts through the floor system—especially when using open-web trusses that create pathways for mechanical runs. For homes with conventionally vented crawlspaces or unconditioned basements, transition to



conditioning those spaces (like the attic) to run ductwork through them.

Also consider these best practices:

- Tightly seal ducts and test for leaks (yes, even in conditioned space).
- Use ducts to carry the air instead of relying on an open or dropped chase.
- Pay strict attention to mitigating air leaks in your thermal enclosure.
- Provide adequate return-air pathways for every room in the house.
- Avoid equipment or appliances that may back-draft or are prone to spill.

## WHAT’S THE RIGHT DUCT?

The most common ductwork for conditioned space includes flex duct, ductboard, and sheet metal ducts. When working

with any of these, make sure all ductwork is installed to manufacturer specifications and follows protocols in the Air Conditioning Contractors of America manuals and local building codes.

Regardless of how you decide to approach it, placing ducts in conditioned space is a great way to build long-lasting, comfortable homes. With so many benefits, it’s hard to make a case for *not* doing it.

**PB+** [probuilder.com/ducts-conditioned](https://probuilder.com/ducts-conditioned)

*Clem Newcamp drives quality and performance in home building as a building performance specialist on the PERFORM Builder Solutions team at IBACOS.*

PHOTO: IBACOS

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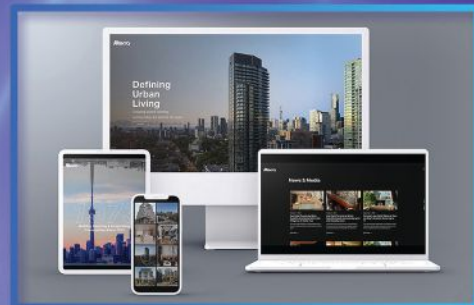
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THE NEW  
AMERICAN HOME  
2024

# TIMELESS COMFORT

THE NEW AMERICAN HOME 2024 IS A LESSON IN WHAT  
MAKES A HOUSE A PLACE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE

BY RICH BINSACCA, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
PHOTOS BY LEVI ELLYSON/501 STUDIOS

**PROJECT SPECS: THE NEW  
AMERICAN HOME 2024**

**LOCATION:** Ascaya, Henderson, Nev.

**DESIGNER/BUILDER/INTERIOR DESIGNER:**

Sun West Custom Homes, Las Vegas

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Vangson Consulting,  
Las Vegas

**LOT SIZE:** 0.7 acres

**HOME SIZE:** 7,800 square feet (conditioned),  
including attached casita

**BEDS:** 4 + 1 (casita)

**BATHS:** 4.5 + 1 (casita)



Bold roof forms and timeless materials heighten the impact of the home's all-glass entry, which provides a glimpse of the interior and dramatic views of the Las Vegas Valley beyond.

## THE NEW AMERICAN HOME 2024

If you're designing a home on a lot cut out of a mountainside with panoramic views of the Las Vegas Valley and the Strip below, where do you begin?

If you're Dan Coletti, the designer and builder of The New American Home 2024 in the luxury custom-home community of Ascaya in Henderson, Nev., it all starts in the kitchen.

"I knew the view from the back of the lot would be great but also a little off-center to the right," Coletti says, "so I put the kitchen in the left back corner of the floor plan to capture the best view."

The rest of the 7,800-square-foot, single-level plan (see page 48) flowed fairly easily from there, he says. It includes an owner's bedroom on the opposite end of the rear elevation that fully embraces the valley, and walls of glass at the home's entry and



In designing the home, Dan Coletti began with the kitchen, and its placement in the floor plan evolved to become a jewel of complementary colors, textures, and tones. The intricate hand-crafted ceiling creates "architecture as art," which has become a trademark in Sun West Custom Homes' work.



**THE NEW  
AMERICAN HOME  
2024**



along the back of the house that showcase a through-view to the lights of Las Vegas and the mountain range beyond.

The home's front elevation also came together more quickly than Coletti expected. "I began playing with shapes and inverting them," he says, "and it started looking pretty good pretty fast, which is

**"I BEGAN PLAYING WITH  
SHAPES AND INVERTING  
THEM ... AND I THINK IT CAME  
TOGETHER VERY WELL."**

**—DAN COLETTI, DESIGNER**

unusual for me. We kept working at it and I think it came together very well."

The entry, set back from the garages and a casita that flank it, is further protected by a pair of prow-like roof shapes that add distinction and weight to the otherwise all-glass façade. That form is expressed throughout the house in





several other places, most prominently over a glass-enclosed wine room that juts into the main living area, as an indoor-outdoor wet bar adjacent to the kitchen, in the shower enclosure in the owner's bathroom, and in the staggered roof forms stepped along the rear elevation (above).



The rear elevation (top) optimizes the home's view of the Las Vegas Valley and the Strip with floor-to-ceiling telescoping glass doors that pocket into adjacent walls for seamless indoor-outdoor flow. An outdoor grill and pizza oven (above) extend the footprint, look, and feel of the main kitchen.

**THE NEW  
AMERICAN HOME  
2024**



The owner's bedroom enjoys panoramic views of the valley and has direct access to a firepit, pool/spa, and outdoor shower. Telescoping, fully pocketing glass panels and richly toned woodwork on the walls and ceiling—the latter extending into the outdoor spaces—create a comfortable setting and an easy transition.

**BACK TO BASICS**

Coletti's Sun West Custom Homes has now delivered three New American Homes in Ascaya, each of them showcasing wood, stone, and glass to great effect.

"I always try to make our houses feel like homes, not commercial spaces," Coletti says. Key to avoiding a cold, cavernous interior in an expansive home like this one is the use of those materials, which the designer says are "timeless and beautiful, comfortable and familiar."

That materials choice is also evidence of Coletti's penchant for creating architecture as art. Examples are in the kitchen ceiling's intricate, hand-placed wood slats and the burnt-wood-look paneling of the owner's bedroom. The playful trio of floor-to-ceiling pivoting wood panels that enclose the back of the media room are another example. The panels break up the mass of textured engineered stone in the great room, accentuating the stone's beauty.

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The extensive use of glass heightens the experience of transparency, with views into and along the back of the house, but it also serves to lighten the mood elsewhere. For example, instead of being concealed behind solid walls, the office (page 46) is designed as a jewel box set off from the foyer. “In a perfect world with an unlimited budget, I’d never want to see a piece of Sheetrock,” Coletti says.

### FIRE AND WATER

Coletti is also drawn to fire and water, and the two elements routinely find their way into his designs. The New American Home 2024 is no exception. It features natural gas fireplaces inside and out, and open-flame fire features flank the pool and front walk.

But water as a design element in this year’s show home has been severely curtailed by a recent local ordinance that limits the surface area for single-family swimming pools, spas, and hot tubs to no

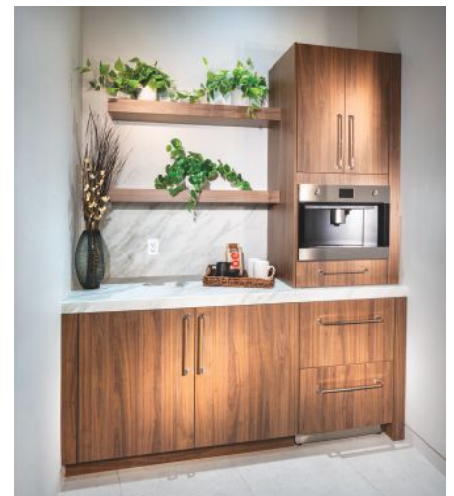
more than 600 square feet per home. As a result, the pool and adjacent spa take up far less area than one might expect for a multi-million-dollar custom home, and other water elements in the front of the home and elsewhere, like those used in previous Sun West designs, are sadly missing.

“The current water restrictions are brutal here,” Coletti laments. “But we didn’t have a really big backyard for this house, so the size of the pool feels appropriate.”

### LEAVING A LEGACY

As many New American Homes as Sun West has produced (and will again in 2025), Coletti and his team respect the fact that all eyes are on them when thousands of home builders and designers tour the home during the 2024 International Builders’ Show looking for ideas they can apply in their own markets and price points.

But while the extensive use of natural materials, the detailed craftsmanship, and



The prow-like design of the shower in the owner’s bathroom (top) follows similar forms used elsewhere in the home and is a central feature of the space. A handy coffee bar (above) between the bath and bedroom includes a pair of refrigerated drawers for storing beverages and snacks.



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THE NEW  
AMERICAN HOME  
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Stone, glass, and wood dominate in the home's design and finishes. The media room's trio of full-length pivoting wood panels (above) deliver both form and function, while a glass-enclosed office gains natural and shared interior light. A blackout curtain concealed in a stone-clad return wall encloses the media room.

products such as a ceiling-mounted kitchen faucet and a 136-inch direct-view home video display (above) are sure to wow them, Coletti thinks some of the key takeaways from this year's New American Home are more subtle and perhaps more applicable across the residential spectrum.

"Things are always changing, the products are always getting better, and the variety of products you can pull into a residential project is ever expanding," he says. This is evident not only throughout this year's show home but also—and perhaps more so—in what's hidden behind the finishes.

"We've learned so much about energy efficiency since the 2020 house [the last New American Home completed by Sun West]. The products are so much better, as is our understanding of them and how they work together," he says. "And that's something you can put in a 3,000-square-foot home or a 30,000-square-foot home and get the same impact." **PB**

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## THE NEW AMERICAN HOME 2024



### FLOOR PLAN

The New American Home 2024's floor plan is designed to capture dramatic views, deliver comfort and privacy, and facilitate casual entertaining inside and out. Surrounded by stone walls and a dramatic overhang, the main entry **A** is all glass, providing a direct sight line from the front walk through the great room to the view of the Las Vegas Valley beyond. An attached casita **B** is separated from the main house by a garage to create privacy for guests or to enable it to be used as a working office or studio. A subtle but well-appointed drop zone **C** is conveniently located to serve both the front entry and the family entry from the garage, while the adjacent wine room **D** juts out, making a statement. The placement of the kitchen **E** provides a direct view to the valley below, even through the telescoping windows of the indoor-outdoor wet bar. The owner's bedroom **F**, equipped with floor-to-ceiling patio doors that pocket away, affords an unobstructed view and leads out to one of two fire pits **G** flanking the pool.

*The New American Home 2024 is produced by the Leading Suppliers Council of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), with Pro Builder serving as the exclusive media partner. Turn to page 93 for details about products from the program's sponsors, and look for a follow-up feature in the March/April 2024 issue. There will also be two live webinars, one about the home's design and impressive energy and water savings and another focused on the home's indoor air quality. Visit [tnah.com](http://tnah.com) for a virtual tour and more articles, videos, and information about the products and systems used in The New American Home's construction and finish, as well insights into our valued partners.*



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# THE NEW AMERICAN HOME 2024



## MEET THE PROJECT TEAM

Members of The New American Home (TNAH) 2024 project team include (seated, L-R): Jamahl Gibbons, manager, IBS Show Homes; Tucker Bernard, executive director, NAHB Leading Suppliers Council and the TNAH program; Jennie Marsh, interior designer, Sun West Custom Homes; Nicole Maiers, assistant project manager, Sun West; Daniel Coletti, owner, Sun West; Ted Mahoney III, TNAH 2024 task force chairman; Tim Unick, project manager, Sun West; (standing, L-R): Angel Leon-Zapata, assistant superintendent, Sun West; Christopher Coletti, executive assistant, Sun West; Bob Hanbury, 2024 task force vice chairman, The New American Remodel; Lee Nave, CAD manager, Sun West; Omar Drummond, interior design assistant, Sun West; Michael Cotter, CAD designer, Sun West; Mark Schlachter, superintendent, Sun West; Hiram Lowe, CAD Designer, Sun West

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## PROJECT TEAM

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT/INTERIOR DESIGNER**  
Sun West Custom Homes, Las Vegas

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**  
Vangson Consulting, Las Vegas

**ENERGY AND GREEN BUILDING CONSULTANT**  
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Where's Pawley Benjamin? Find our cuddly 30th anniversary mascot on the Show Village map and stop by at the show to get one of your own.



**TO CENTRAL HALL**

Your self-guided tour of Show Village demonstration homes starts with the Canyon (left) and the Glacier models from Genesis Homes that defy the HUD-code stigma and target move-up buyers with marketable façades and open floor plans.

It's an outdoor trade show! Visit one, two, or all 12 of our sponsors exhibiting in Show Village. Chances are good you'll see something new.



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Tour Cavco's "dual pod" tiny home (left) and its cozy coastal Wedge model (below), marrying high style with construction cost efficiencies.

Take a break, get some fresh air, and invite a friend, colleague, or client for a chat in the great outdoors at Show Village.

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The tour continues with the fun, efficient Via model designed by Liv-Connected, offering a tight but light-filled interior, including a loft.

More sponsor booths!

ILLUSTRATION: ADAM GRUBB MEDIA / BAILEY SHELTON

# EXTREME MAKEOVERS

THESE ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECTS—WINNERS IN THE 2023 BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING AWARDS—SUCCEED IN CREATING NEW HOUSING AND REVITALIZING THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

BY MICHELE LERNER

**PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF** sustainability is imagining new uses for obsolete, distressed, or abandoned buildings. Honoring the past while giving new life to a structure—and with it, often an entire neighborhood—requires creative thinking to successfully meld modern codes with preservation goals. These four adaptive reuse projects, all 2023 Best in American Living Award winners, exemplify that mission and spirit.



## **CHRONICLE MILL: FROM TEXTILES TO MODERN LIVING**

Built in 1901, the Chronicle Mill, a textile mill in Belmont, N.C., was abandoned after spinning its final thread in 2010.

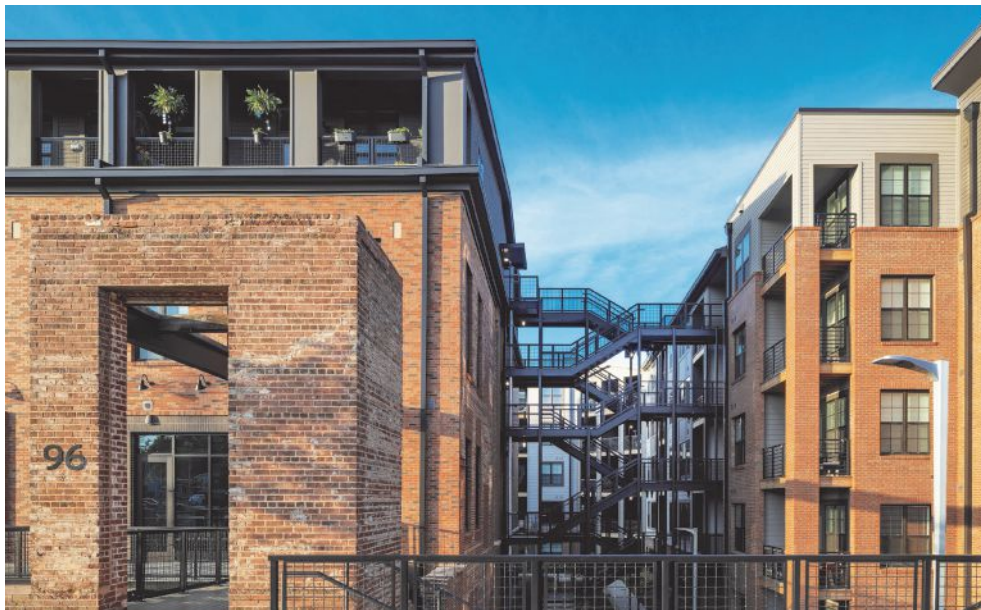
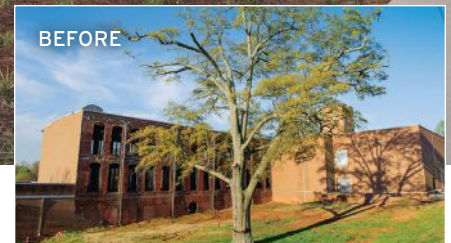
Lacking appeal for redevelopment due to its industrial past and numerous regulatory barriers, it also suffered from a large

transmission line running through the site, an existing creek flanking its western edge, and a conglomeration of decaying ancillary spaces that had been tacked-on throughout the mill's 109-year history.

Today, thanks to the vision of the project team, the revamped Chronicle Mill features 238 market-rate apartments ranging

in size from 460 to 1,133 square feet. BB+M Architecture focused on creating livable, modern spaces while retaining the mill's historical character.

Remnants of the original façade were preserved to indicate where the mill stood, while the face of the newly built section offers a modern interpretation that evokes



**PROJECT SPECS: CHRONICLE MILL**  
**LOCATION:** Belmont, N.C.  
**ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER (ENTRANT):** BB+M Architecture, Charlotte, N.C.  
**BUILDER AND DEVELOPER:** Armada Hoffler Construction, Virginia Beach, Va.  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Site Solutions, Atlanta  
**SIZE:** 261,217 sf  
**NO. OF UNITS:** 238 (460 - 1,133 sf)  
**RENTAL RATE:** \$2,000 - \$3,000/mo.  
**PHOTOS:** Tim Buchman / Easterday Creative

the rhythm of the original mill's fenestration without creating a replica.

The adaptation also included demolishing two structural bays, adding a fourth level, and creating a primary entry set back from the sidewalk and accessed by an elevated catwalk—all of which combine to create a more interesting streetscape.

On the opposite side, previously occupied space was transformed into an open pool deck with outdoor grill areas set among remnants of the original façade.

Handwoven art panels and a rope ceiling in the clubhouse are a nod to the textile mill's past, while salvaged and repurposed items from the mill are incorporated into

many of the amenity spaces. The mill, originally built with heavy timber columns and beams with pine decking, also features steel columns and wood decking from the 1930s. Elements such as exposed brick and the old columns are visible in both the public spaces and apartments, lending the development an industrial vibe.

**BEST IN  
AMERICAN LIVING  
AWARDS**



**PROJECT SPECS: PEABODY SCHOOL APARTMENTS**  
**LOCATION:** Chicago  
**ARCHITECT (ENTRANT):** Pappageorge Haymes Partners, Chicago  
**BUILDER:** Svigos Development, Buffalo Grove, Ill.  
**DEVELOPER:** Svigos Asset Management, Buffalo Grove  
**SIZE:** 38,850 sf  
**NO. OF UNITS:** 23 (878 - 1,380 sf)  
**RENTAL RATE:** \$3,000 - \$4,000/mo.  
**PHOTOS:** Darris Lee Harris Photography

**PEABODY SCHOOL APARTMENTS: LESSONS IN PRESERVING HISTORY**

Installing a chalkboard in your home for family messages may be a fun, decorative touch but living in an apartment that has a chalkboard from a school built during the 1800s is way cooler.

The 23 apartments now occupying what was the Elizabeth Peabody School, designed and built in 1894 by architect August Fiedler in Chicago's Wicker Park/Noble Square neighborhood, preserve many of the school's original (and still functional) features. Iron coat hooks, built-in cabinets, interior trim, doorways, and windows from

more than a century ago have been given new life in this adaptive reuse project.

The apartments also feature recycled materials from other parts of the school, with bricks used for accent walls and repurposed wood joists for kitchen open shelving. Refurbished school furniture, including filing cabinets from the principal's





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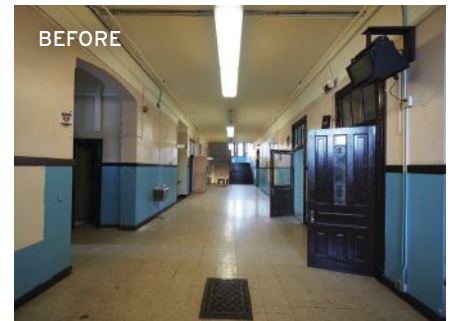
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office and tables from the cafeteria, are now used in the building's common areas.

After the Peabody School closed in 2013, the property was sold at public auction for redevelopment. Svigos Development requested Chicago Landmark status for the building and was able to use federal historic tax credits for its adaptive reuse.

Svigos collaborated with Pappageorge Haymes Partners architects to meet modern code requirements while preserving the building's historical character. New two-bedroom apartments were seamlessly

integrated into the original classroom footprints, most of which are 1,200 square feet and arranged along a central

**THE PROJECT TEAM WORKED  
TO MEET MODERN CODE  
REQUIREMENTS WHILE  
PRESERVING THE BUILDING'S  
HISTORICAL CHARACTER**

14-foot-wide hallway (see above). An elevator is tucked away from the main hall, so as not to interrupt the view to the staircases at either end.

To meet current fire safety regulations, the stairwells were updated with fire-rated glass and protective shutters that have an automatic screen system to seal off the stairwells in a fire emergency.

The apartments feature 14-foot-high ceilings and tall windows that flood living spaces with natural light, while a new rooftop deck offers residents panoramic views.

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BEFORE



**PROJECT SPECS: TRIBUNE TOWER CONVERSION**

- LOCATION:** Chicago
- ARCHITECT (ENTRANT):** Solomon Cordwell Buenz, Chicago
- BUILDER:** Walsh Group, Chicago
- DEVELOPER:** Golub & Company, Chicago
- INTERIOR DESIGNER:** The Gettys Group, Chicago
- LANDSCAPE DESIGNER:** Site Design Group, Chicago
- SIZE:** 950,000 sf
- NO. OF UNITS:** 162 (1,100 - 4,400 sf)
- SALES PRICE:** Over \$500,000
- PHOTOS:** Dave Burk Photography

**TRIBUNE TOWER:  
FROM HISTORIC ICON  
TO NEW LANDMARK**

Honoring history while transforming spaces for more modern uses can be a challenge in adaptive-reuse work. But the pressure is compounded when the project involves a highly recognizable, much treasured

building like Chicago's Tribune Tower.

Built in 1925 next to an adjacent printing plant, the Tribune Tower served as the headquarters of the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper for 93 years. The expanding media empire added the Radio Building to the site in 1935 and the Television Building in 1950. But even with those expansions, the Tribune

conglomerate struggled, vacating the building in 2018. That enabled conversion of the tower into 162 luxury condominiums.

Restoration work preserved the Tribune Tower's iconic façade and landmark sign, and the original entry and lobby remain open to the public. The printing plant's original frontage was also redeveloped as

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\*2022 Andersen brand surveys of U.S. builders, architects, and homeowners.

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part of Pioneer Court, a public pedestrian plaza. The Radio and TV buildings received historically sensitive updates and include retail sites and private, street-level entrances for residents.

To address a common challenge of office-to-residential conversions, architects at Solomon Cordwell Buenz artfully scooped out some of the tower's center to create an elevated landscaped courtyard for residents and to admit more natural light into the units. The limestone walls surrounding the courtyard include details that match

the historic tower façades, while a four-story modern glass addition expands living space on the building's northeastern side.

---

**ARCHITECTS SCOOPED OUT  
SOME OF THE CENTER OF  
THE TOWER TO CREATE AN  
ELEVATED LANDSCAPED  
COURTYARD FOR RESIDENTS**

---

Amenities include an indoor swimming pool and a sundeck tucked behind the Chicago Tribune sign. A lounge and wrap-around terrace built on the tower's crown offer skyline views from behind the building's Gothic-style buttresses. The tower also has a fitness center, spa, meeting rooms, lounges, and another outdoor terrace.

The new landmark offers 55 different floor plans ranging in size from 1,100 to 4,400 square feet. Each residence features custom-designed details to complement the building's neo-Gothic style.

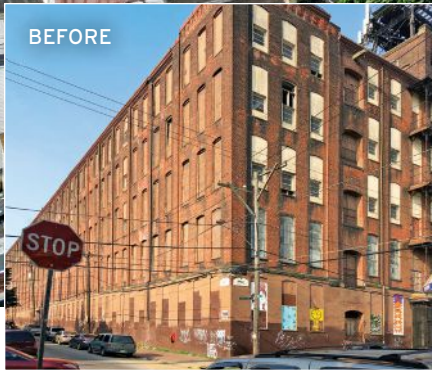


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**PROJECT SPECS: A & INDIANA**

**LOCATION:** Philadelphia

**ARCHITECT (ENRANT):** Barton-Partners Architects and Planners, Norristown, Pa.

**BUILDER:** Clemens Construction Company, Philadelphia

**DEVELOPER:** Impact Services Group, Philadelphia

**SIZE:** 78,315 sf

**NO. OF UNITS:** 48 (782 - 1,559 sf)

**RENTAL RATE:** Under \$1,000/mo.

**PHOTOS:** Taylor Photo



**A & INDIANA:  
FROM WAREHOUSE TO  
COMMUNITY BEACON**

A circa-1893 abandoned textile warehouse at the corner of A Street and E. Indiana Avenue in Northeast Philadelphia's economically disadvantaged Kensington neighborhood

may not seem like an ideal candidate for renovation, but BartonPartners Architects and Planners had a goal to add much-needed affordable housing to the community.

In addition to 48 one-, two-, and three-bedroom subsidized apartments, the former warehouse now includes a community

room, conference room, bike room, and a landscaped courtyard to reinforce the sense of social connection among residents.

As important, the mixed-use development provides an anchor for the neighborhood and includes ground-floor commercial retail space.





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The dilapidated five-story warehouse, built of heavy timber and brick, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. BartonPartners worked in tandem with other firms experienced in historical preservation to reconfigure the building and to restore features such as the original windows, ironwork, and brickwork.

Windows that were boarded up when the warehouse closed now boast intricate ironwork, while the apartments enjoy high ceilings with exposed beams, white-painted exposed brick walls, and

floor-to-ceiling windows framing skyline views. The industrial feel of the development is enhanced by large pendant light

---

**THE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT  
PROVIDES AN ANCHOR FOR  
THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND  
INCLUDES GROUND-FLOOR  
COMMERCIAL RETAIL SPACE**

---

fixtures and black window trim, along with structural columns that add definition to the open floor plans.

The adaptive reuse project was funded through a mix of sources, including federal historic tax credits, which provide an incentive for private developers to rehabilitate historical properties for income-producing uses such as rental units. Additional funding came from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. **PB**

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## BEST IN AMERICAN LIVING AWARDS

### MORE FROM BALA

The 2023 Best in American Living Awards (BALA), celebrating its 40th year as the housing industry's premiere architectural design awards program, attracted nearly 500 entries across 78 categories, from

single-family production and custom homes to master planned communities, whole-house and room-specific remodels, and design details. Of those entries, 158 projects earned awards, which will be presented later this month at the International

Builders' Show. As the exclusive media partner of BALA, *Pro Builder* will proudly profile select winners and the design trends they represent (or set) throughout this year. Here's a sneak peek at what you can expect in the coming months.



**THE BURCH CREEK HOME** Located in South Ogden, Utah, this 4,750-square-foot custom home embraces a mid-century look and feel, with a concealed garage door, sleek modern features inside and out, expansive windows to views along the back, and a welcoming courtyard. (Builder: Peterson Builders, Architect: EDA Architects)



**SAGUARO SERENITY** Among entire home remodels with a budget over \$750,000, this magnificent makeover in Tucson, Ariz., transformed a drab, dated 2,485-square-foot home into a 7,560-square-foot villa-like estate while preserving the charm of its Spanish Mission-style roots. (Builder: Wilson Builders, Architect: Soloway Designs and Celaya)



**STRATUS AT SOLIS PARK** Designed for corner lots and end rows, the 2,669-square-foot Stratus model (far left) in the Solis master plan in Irvine, Calif., features well-executed three-sided architecture and layers at each level to break up its mass and deliver comfortable single-family living on tight lots. (Builder: Taylor Morrison; Architect: SDK Atelier)



**LC GERMANTOWN** Nashville, Tenn., is booming, and this intimate mixed-use urban infill project serves that growth with a composition of buildings that draw upon the site's warehouse history. Among 450 housing units, the master plan also offers several venues that are open to the surrounding community. (Builder: Lifestyle Communities Construction, Architect: LRK)



**ISLAND BREEZE CABANA** Outdoor living and hosting overnight guests is a way of life in Sarasota, Fla., and this 875-square-foot cabana within a 10,582-square-foot custom home redefines guest hospitality with a cozy patio, a ground-level living room and full bath, and an upstairs bunkhouse. (Builder: Nautilus Homes, Architect: Zobrist Design Group)

### MEET THE JUDGES



The judging panel for the 2023 Best in American Living Awards featured an all-star cast of housing design professionals, builders, and industry experts, as well as our own editorial director.

**CHAIRMAN:** Seth Hart, partner, DTJ Design, Boulder, Colo.

**VICE CHAIR:** Angela Visbeen, director of sales and marketing, Visbeen Architects, Grand Rapids, Mich.

**Paul Lanni**, president and CEO, Averton Group of Companies, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

**Lesley McCarthy**, senior VP of model division, Builders Design, Gaithersburg, Md.

**Louis Bretana**, AIA, NCARB, creative director, Danielian Associates, Irvine, Calif.

**Erin Hurley**, director of business development, Lita Dirks & Co., Greenwood Village, Colo.

**Justin Schopp**, Halstead, Fairfax, Va.

**Rich Binsacca**, editorial director, Pro Builder Media, Palatine, Ill.

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# HOW TO AI IN HOME

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS A TRAIN COMING DOWN THE TRACK.  
HOW CAN BUILDERS CLIMB ABOARD? HERE'S A PRIMER

BY PAUL DEFFENBAUGH

**S**cience fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke famously said, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

In many ways, that’s an apt description of today’s attitudes toward artificial intelligence, more commonly referred to as “AI.” Type a request into ChatGPT, arguably the most well-known AI chatbot, and in seconds it can spit out paragraphs of relevant content—a boon for academically challenged high school students faced with writing college-level essays. But how can AI serve the home building industry?

## WHAT IS AI?

Simply put, AI attempts to simulate the human brain’s neural pathways and use machines to learn and think like humans. There is, of course, considerable concern about how dangerous AI could potentially be. But for home builders, what is available now can be a useful tool in enabling aspects of their business operations to be more productive and cost-effective.

There are two types of AI: generative and predictive. Generative AI uses machines to

create original content such as text, images, and music. The ubiquitous ChatGPT, launched in November 2022, is a generative AI product from AI research company OpenAI that creates text. Graphic design suites, such as Adobe, now include AI, allowing users to alter photos and remove elements to create an improved image in seconds. Meanwhile, cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) software company Salesforce has an AI product that works with its CRM system to write follow-up emails, generate texts, and so on.

Predictive AI, however, digs deep into Internet-accessible databases to find behavior patterns that can then be used to predict future conditions or behaviors. A good example is Arx City. A real

estate website serving three metropolitan areas, Arx employs predictive AI to scan public databases of available real estate, local zoning and code regulations, and other databases and then applies that information to financial modeling datasets to allow users to predict returns on investment for different real estate properties under various development scenarios.

For example, can you get a 20% return on an awkwardly shaped infill lot by building attached single-family homes for first-time

# BUILDING



homebuyers? It may take several months for a land acquisition manager to find that answer (and perhaps you'll lose out on the deal in the meantime). Arx City's AI engine provides reliable analysis in mere minutes.

Right now, home builders are taking advantage of AI in three main areas of their business: marketing and sales, customer satisfaction, and purchasing.

**MARKETING AND SALES**

Although AI could eventually affect almost every part of a home builder's operations, it's coming for marketing first.

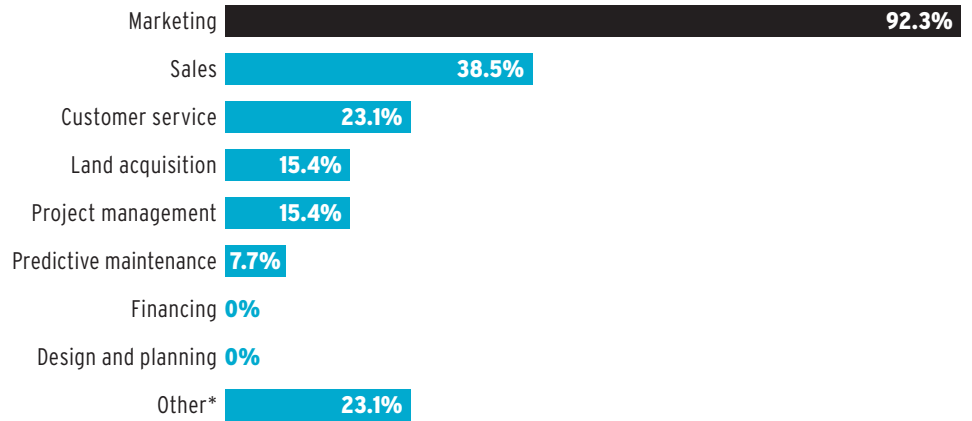
In late November 2023, *Pro Builder* partnered with management and consulting company Shinn Builder Partnerships to survey about 400 builders in its network about their use of AI. Although just 37 builders responded, 35.1% reported using AI. And among those, 92.3% were using it for marketing (see chart 1, above, right).

Why marketing? With proper prompts, AI applications such as ChatGPT can generate on-point copy for ads, brochures, websites, and other texty content in seconds.

There's a learning curve, of course. "The tool is only as good as the prompt," says Genevieve Benson, director of business development at Milesbrand, a marketing and branding agency serving home builders. "Typically, it takes three prompts to get anything usable, but it's like having a junior copywriter."

The upshot is that using AI still requires expertise—something everyone currently using AI agrees on. ChatGPT won't replace your marketing department, but it can

**CHART 1: HOW HOME BUILDERS ARE USING AI**



\* INCLUDES EMAIL AND LETTER DRAFTING, TRAINING, AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION / SOURCE: SHINN BUILDER PARTNERSHIPS, NOV. 2023; 37 RESPONDENTS

make it more efficient by generating raw copy at a faster pace for the experts to edit.

"We chose to bring AI into our sales and marketing department before others because it was a low-hanging fruit," says Miles Terry, sales and marketing manager at Terry Homes, in Kalispell, Mont. "It was also a lower risk and cost to implement."

The Shinn survey asked home builders about the benefits of AI as well. The largest number of respondents identified increased efficiency (76.9%), improved quality (30.8%), and reduced costs (23.1%) (see chart 2, below) as the main benefits.

Use of AI on the sales side involves replacing human-monitored chatbots on builder websites with AI programs such as AtlasRTX, which quickly learn a builder's processes, products, and branding language

to reliably answer questions, provide information, and schedule appointments with online visitors 24/7—all without involving a human in those early interactions.

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

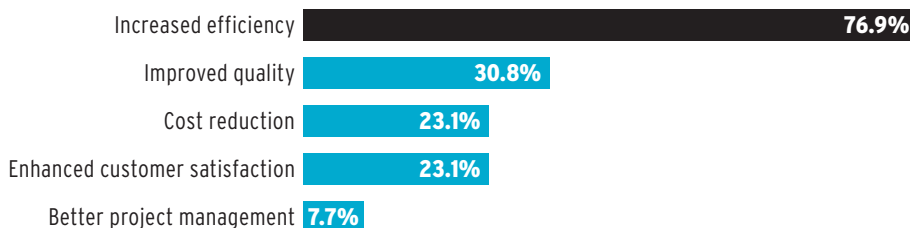
Eliant, a research firm well-known in the housing space, surveys recent homebuyers and trade contractors to provide feedback to its builder clients to help identify areas for improvement and raise red flags for significant issues.

As part of its surveys, Eliant asks open-ended questions to learn more about what customers and trades think. Until AI came along, the only way to analyze that information was to read all of the comments word for word.

Not anymore. "With natural language processing, AI can do that legwork and summarize thousands of comments," says Eric Mitchell, the firm's VP of innovation.

Eliant is "training" ChatGPT to learn the firm's extensive dataset and blend employee, trade, and customer feedback. It would then use that data to give builders more detailed information about areas for improvement.

**CHART 2: BENEFITS OF AI FOR HOME BUILDERS**



SOURCE: SHINN BUILDER PARTNERSHIPS, NOV. 2023; 37 RESPONDENTS

**PURCHASING**

That kind of large-scale data analysis will be a boon to home builder purchasing departments as well. Comparing pricing and cost data is labor-intensive. "We spend





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too much time trying to make our data as accurate as possible,” says Tony Callahan, an expert in purchasing and supply chain management for home builders and a regular columnist for *Pro Builder*.

The most common process, he says, involves someone poring over lengthy reports looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. “AI could manage exception reports so purchasers only need to look at records AI thinks are wrong,” Callahan says.

He points out other purchasing tasks AI could improve, such as contract management, demand planning, and material expediting. Having AI look for patterns across databases for each of those areas could identify errors. In addition, AI can handle repetitious, boring tasks such as filing reports.

**THE CAVEATS**

Early predictions of AI’s impact on all industries, specifically the job security of certain rank-and-file office workers, is a concern but one that has yet to be proven.

More likely, AI aficionados say, AI won’t take your job, but someone who knows AI will. The consensus is that subject-matter experts will be invaluable for optimizing these “magic” tools. For home builders, specifically, AI-generated material won’t meet their needs unless an expert is able to evaluate and direct it. “If we prompt AI for 10 names for a community, it spits out 10 very generic names,” Benson says. Humans still need to provide the creative ingenuity to get the answers they want and need from AI.

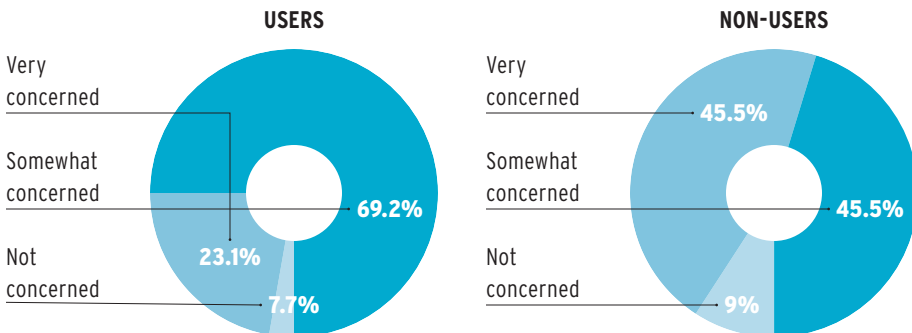
AI is also developing a reputation for producing errors and hallucinations. Errors can originate when AI apps find factually incorrect information from a public database, blog post, or other online content source and regurgitate it as fact. Hallucinations, meanwhile, are AI inventions with no source to credit. An example would be if AI conjured a community called Broad Oaks for a builder marketing campaign where no such community exists.

Other caveats about adopting AI in home building include the significant legal issues associated with the technology and its use. Questions about privacy, for instance, are a major concern among home builders. In the Shinn survey, more than 90% of respondents said they were “very or somewhat concerned” about ethics and data privacy in AI applications (see chart 3, below).

In early 2023, OpenAI worked to address ChatGPT’s privacy issues by isolating users. “The blob of data being trained on the public internet is like its own animal,” says Barrett Davis, CEO and co-founder of HomeScribe AI, an AI-based sales and marketing service for the housing industry. “As you interact with ChatGPT, it now keeps your information as a little slice of the blob. That’s just for you. That wasn’t the case a few months ago until OpenAI changed ChatGPT to address a lot of its privacy concerns.”

Of course, such upgrades don’t eliminate privacy issues completely, and the inability to identify information sources can lead to charges of copyright infringement.

**CHART 3: HOW CONCERNED ARE BUILDERS ABOUT AI?**



SOURCE: SHINN BUILDER PARTNERSHIPS, NOV. 2023; 37 RESPONDENTS

**AI GLOSSARY**

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI):**

The simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think and learn like humans.

**MACHINE LEARNING:**

A subset of AI that enables machines to learn from data and improve their performance over time without being explicitly programmed.

**GENERATIVE AI:**

AI that uses algorithms to create new and original content, such as text, images, or music, by learning and mimicking patterns from existing data.

**PREDICTIVE AI:**

AI that uses machine learning to make informed predictions about future events or outcomes across domains such as finance, real estate, and safety.

**DEEP LEARNING:**

A type of machine learning that uses neural networks with many layers (deep neural networks) to analyze and learn from data.

**NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING:**

A field of AI that focuses on the interaction between computers and humans using natural language, enabling machines to understand, interpret, and generate text that feels like it’s written by a human.

It’s a thorny issue that’s working its way through the judicial system now.

The AI revolution is moving fast, probably faster than the growth of the Internet during the 1990s and with equal or greater potential to disrupt business and daily lives. Adaptable, quick-to-learn companies—home builders included—will be far better equipped to succeed in this new environment than those unwilling to investigate and integrate what AI has to offer. **PB**

*Paul Deffenbaugh is a former contractor and an award-winning journalist who has been writing about the construction industry for more than 25 years. He can be reached at paul@deepbrookmedia.com.*

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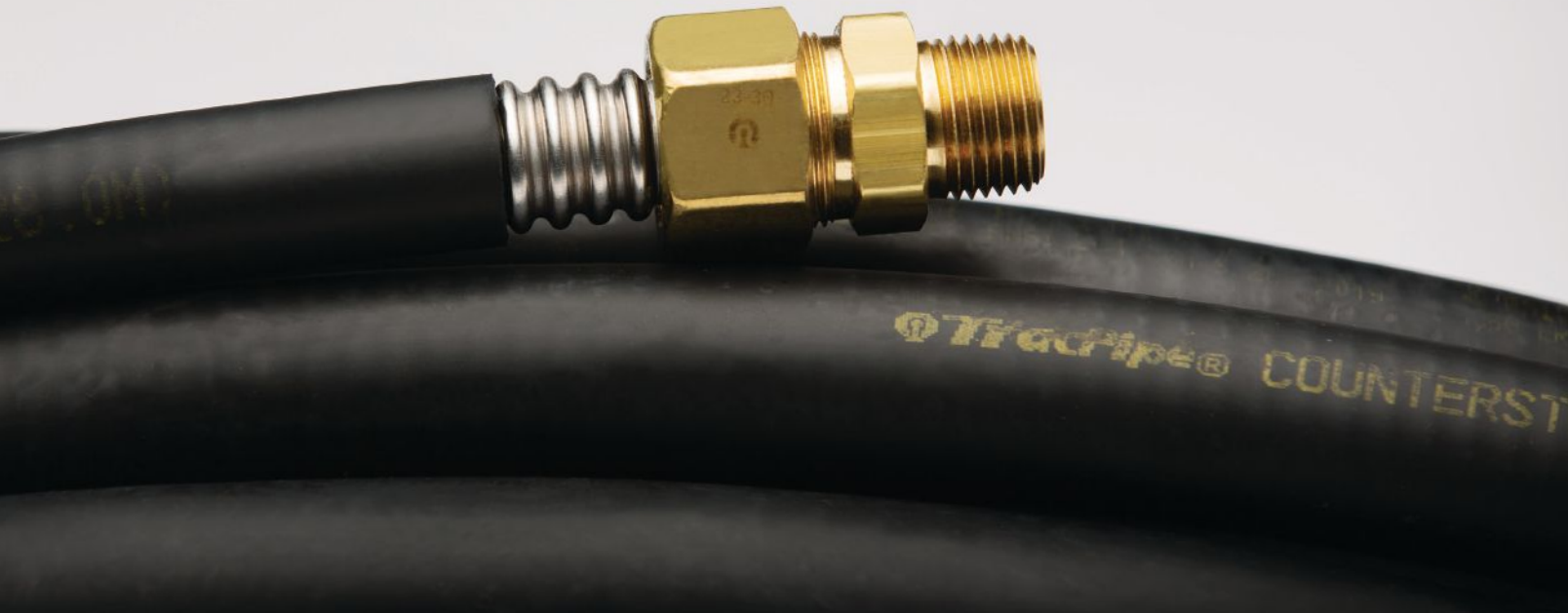
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FGP-759 Rev 1223

# SINGLE-FAMILY BUILD-TO-RENT

By Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD,  
House Review Lead Designer

Interest in and production of new single-family rental homes has steadily increased during the past few years, fueled most recently by housing price inflation and rising mortgage rates.

Now there are entire neighborhoods of single-family build-to-rent (SFB2R) homes that provide an alternative for folks who would rather live in a detached home than a multifamily community.

While SFB2R communities are certainly appealing, often offering a full slate of amenities akin to for-sale projects, smaller-scale opportunities also are emerging for single renters seeking compact homes with a small, private yard for outdoor living and for their pets.

In addition, more communities are allowing homeowners to build secondary living structures on their properties to offer as affordable “cottage” rentals or as independent living options for family members.



## 55+ COTTAGES

### DESIGNER

Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD  
larrygarnett@larrygarnett  
designs.com  
254.205.2597  
larrygarnettdesigns.com

### DIMENSIONS

Width: 24 feet  
Depth: 40 feet  
Total built area: 960 sf  
Renderings: Larry Garnett

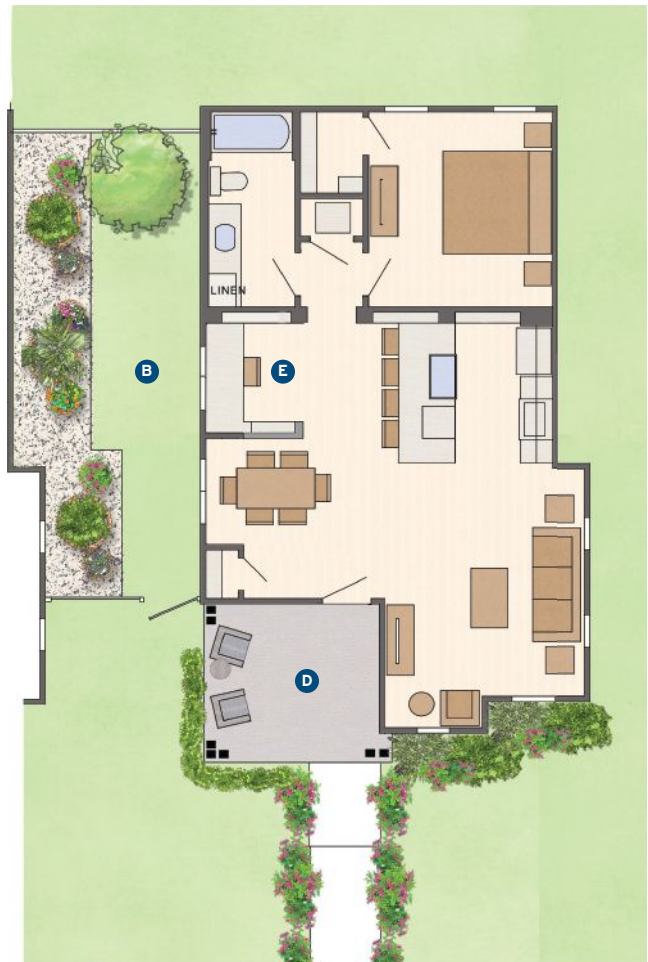
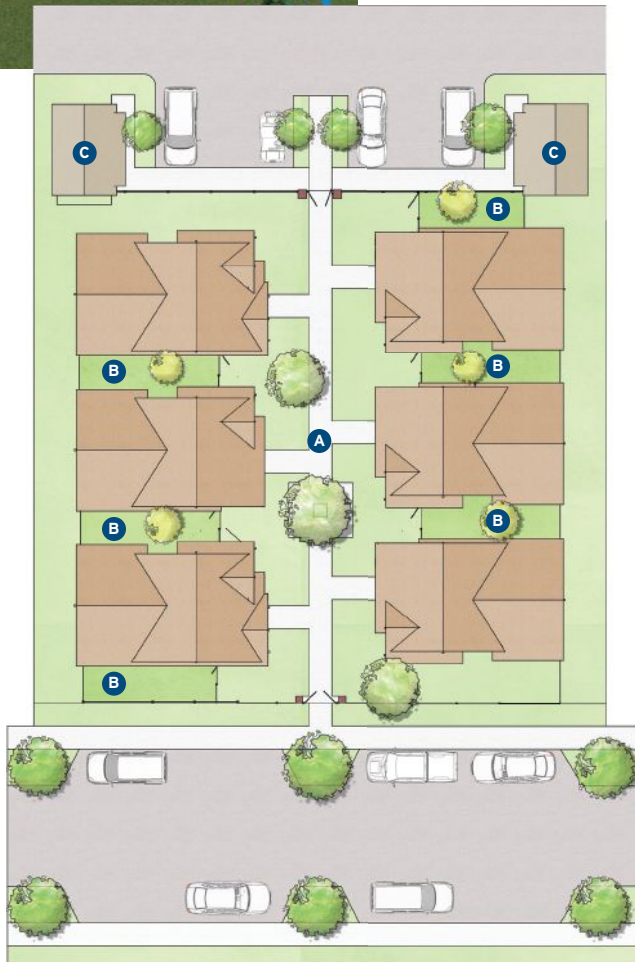


**Developed as a 55-plus neighborhood,** these single-bedroom cottages also appeal to younger individuals seeking detached rental housing.

The open floor plan includes an alcove with a built-in desk, file storage, and shelves, and each cottage has a private side yard ideal for pets. Residents are provided with a secure 6-by-12-foot storage space adjacent to the resident parking area. Inset parking along the street allows guests to enter the courtyard through a wrought-iron gate.

- A** Common courtyard
- B** Private side yards ideal for pet owners
- C** Individual storage for each resident
- D** Front porches overlooking common courtyard provide outdoor living space
- E** Study alcove with built-in desk





## HOUSE REVIEW:



### WESTVIEW

#### DESIGNER

Donnie McGrath  
GMD Design Group  
donnie@gmddesigngroup.com  
770.375.7351  
gmddesigngroup.com

#### DIMENSIONS

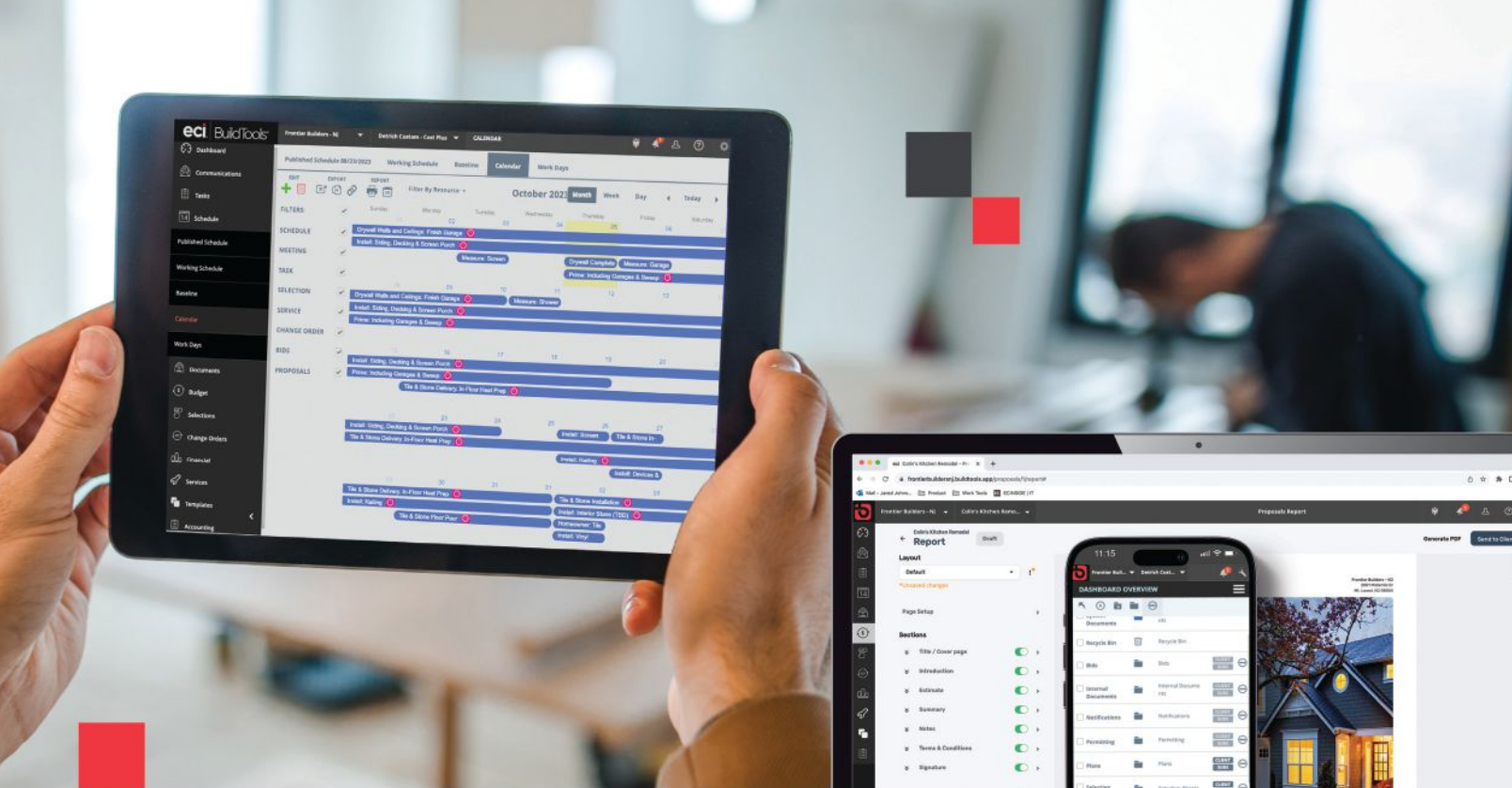
Width: 40 feet  
Depth: 64 feet  
Living area: 1,639 sf

**This home was designed** for a premium home-rental experience.

The focus is an outdoor living space that wraps around the home's main living areas, providing multiple access points to the outdoors. The layout also puts distance between the secondary bedrooms and the owner's suite to reduce noise transfer and offer greater privacy.

- A** Large entry porch
- B** Entry and dining space with views to the rear yard
- C** Secondary bedrooms separated from owner's suite
- D** Open kitchen, family, and dining spaces
- E** Walk-in pantry, drop zone, and home office alcove
- F** Large, covered wraparound outdoor space
- G** Owner's suite at rear of home overlooking the yard





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## HOUSE REVIEW:



### COTTAGE PLAN

#### DESIGNER

Gregg Taylerson  
DTJ Design  
gtaylerson@dtjdesign.com  
303.443.7533  
dtjdesign.com

#### DIMENSIONS

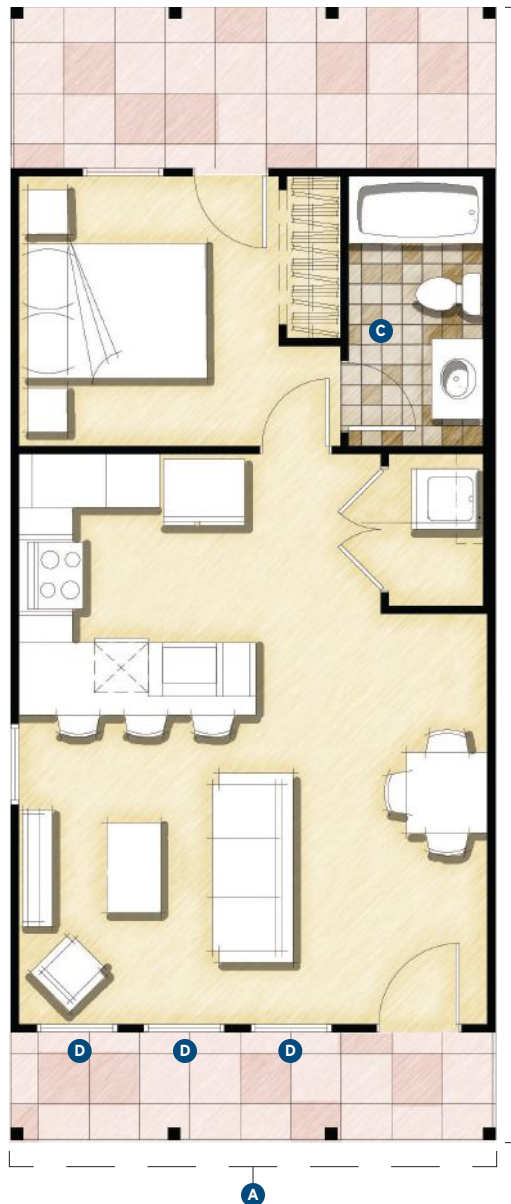
Width: 18 feet  
Depth: 32 feet  
Living area: 576 sf

**Build-to-rent housing** is one of the fastest growing segments in the single-family construction market.

Increasing property taxes and lack of affordability, as well as less home maintenance and the ability to live more “mobile,” make B2R appealing for all demographics.

The primary challenge is applying cost-effective construction techniques while offering a quality product that’s competitive in the market. The techniques below, especially when applied at scale, can help achieve an efficient yet pleasing design.

- A** Simple foundation shape reduces concrete
- B** Exterior dimensions in 2-foot increments create less material waste
- C** Consistent bathroom layouts and appliance offerings
- D** Consistent window sizes and minimal window counts, particularly on side elevations, as well as standardized interior door sizes and removal of closet doors
- E** Familiar, simple-yet-elegant elevation styles and roof forms create variety while reducing costs and maintenance





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"We're kind of tapping into what's special about the city and how do we connect the architecture to our time and place. Part of it's about our natural time and place - Mojave Desert, the materials, the different elements that are part of the architecture." Tyler Jones, CEO and founder, Blue Heron



## HOUSE REVIEW:

### THE AUBREY

#### ARCHITECT

Todd Hallett, AIA  
TK Design & Associates  
thallett@tkhomedesign.com  
248.446.1960  
tkhomedesign.com

#### DIMENSIONS

Width: 30 feet  
Depth: 30 feet  
Living area: 1,000 sf

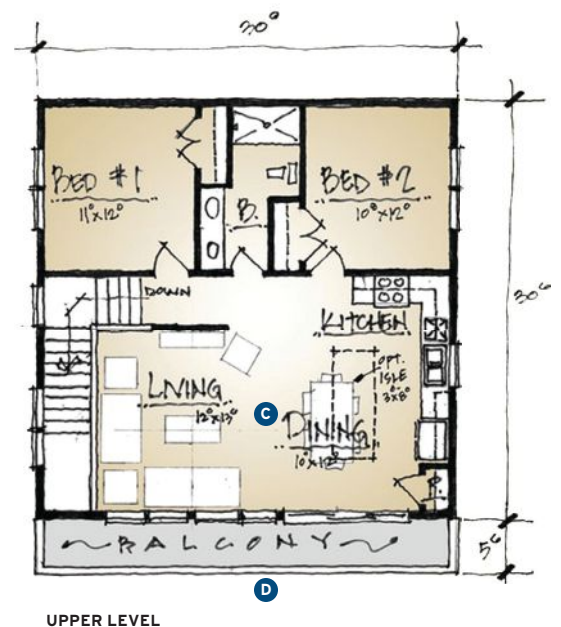
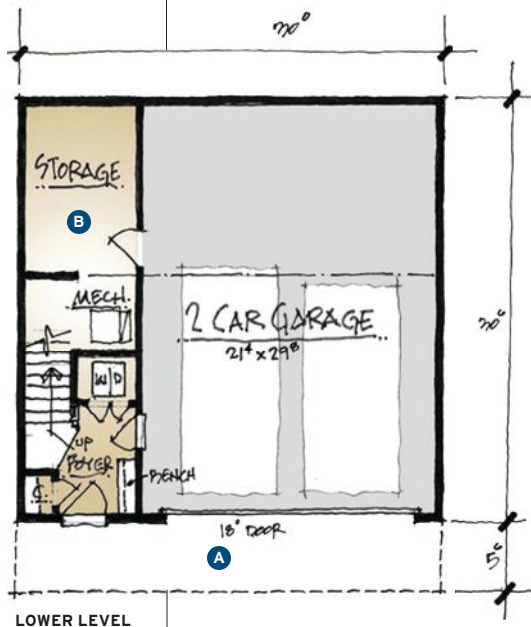
#### Build-to-rent designs

must be both efficient to build and functional.

Cost is a major factor in determining feasibility. Lean design is a great tool for achieving cost savings without sacrificing aesthetics or construction quality.



- A** Squares are by far the most cost-efficient building shape
- B** Don't overlook storage—a valued amenity for this market
- C** An open floor plan makes the home feel larger
- D** A balcony that is the width of the building is a cost-effective way to extend living space



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### Envelope Sealing Report

**Envelope Sealing Performed For:**  
 Daniel, Dennis, Cullen, Oatman, Benjamin & Benjamin, 324 45th St

**DATE:** 9/25/2020  
**BUILDING TYPE:** Single Family Detached  
**AEROBARRIER CASE ID:** 2049  
**HARDWARE:** AeroBarrier Connect

**Envelope Sealing Results:**

BEFORE SERVICE
3917.3 CFM of Leakage, equivalent to a 471.6 Square Inch Hole, or 17.19 Air Changes per Hour (for your 1426 square-foot structure enclosing a volume of 32871 cubic feet)
AFTER SERVICE
195.3 CFM of Leakage, equivalent to a 23.5 Square Inch Hole, or 0.86 Air Changes per Hour
This corresponds to a <b>95.0% Reduction in Envelope Leakage</b>
<b>NOTE:</b> Envelope leakage and air-change results are calculated at a standard pressure of 50 Pa.

**Envelope Sealing Progress:**

Sealing Time in Minutes	CFM Leakage at 50 Pa
0	3917.3
20	3200
40	2500
60	1800
80	1200
100	800
120	600
140	195.3

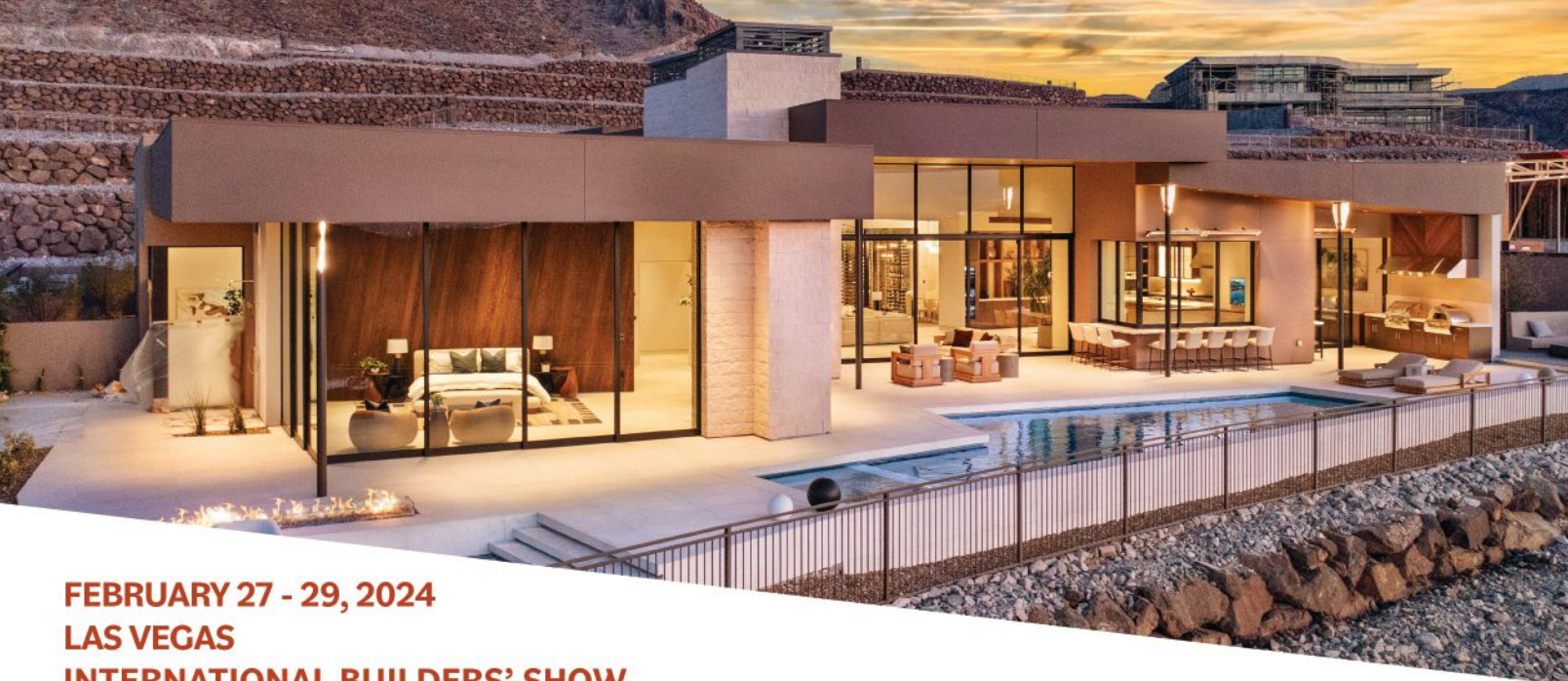
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This incredible one-story 7,722 sq. ft. home, built in the foothills of Ascaya in Henderson, Nev., not only boasts scenic views of the Las Vegas skyline, but also incorporates a resort lifestyle at home with ready access to upscale nightlife. The home features five bedrooms and five-and-a-half baths, a state-of-the-art outdoor kitchen, a pool courtyard, a beautiful casita and astonishing fire features throughout.

The home's unique design was inspired by the beautiful landscape and abundant natural light opportunities, while the use of a variety of color schemes capture the relaxed ambiance of a "Tulum Resort" in the desert. This show home is the 41st edition of the annual New American Home and another example of how this program remains on the cutting-edge of housing innovation, technology, and energy efficiency.

For more information, including guided tours of the home at IBS 2024, go to [tnah.com](http://tnah.com).



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**▲ AIR CONDITIONING**

**LG Air Conditioning Technologies'** Single Zone Inverter Heat Pump outdoor units offer efficient climate control with single-zone configuration, low-static ducted design, optimized airflow, dehumidification, and auto-operation for maximum comfort. LG's Smart Kit provides convenient remote-control features. [lghvac.com](http://lghvac.com)



**▲ WALL OVEN**

The Double Wall Oven With Steam-Combi from **Signature Kitchen Suite\*** provides everything for sous vide cooking. The steam feature traps odors to ensure there's no flavor transfer during multi-rack cooking, the company says, and the oven's Speed Clean feature takes just 10 minutes. Cooks can use and monitor the oven from any location using Wi-Fi, and the oven can be installed completely flush to match any kitchen style. [IBS #W2343 / signaturekitchensuite.com](http://IBS #W2343 / signaturekitchensuite.com)

**KITCHEN FAUCET >**

Designed to maximize functionality and make kitchen tasks easier, the Purist Suspend kitchen faucet from **Kohler\*** mounts from the ceiling, remaining out of the way until needed. The 7-foot braided hose offers the freedom to move the spray head around the kitchen to fill a kettle on the stove or water a potted plant on the floor, eliminating the need to lift heavy items in and out of the sink to fill or clean.

[IBS #N2205 / kohler.com](http://IBS #N2205 / kohler.com)



**< SURFACING**

Sleet, from **Caesarstone's** Super Natural Collection, aspires to capture the crystalline magic of marble in a highly durable porcelain surface. Combining the warmth and beauty of marble's iconic veining, several prominent slanted veins trace Sleet's surface, while whites and off-whites interplay within the material's honed-finish base.

[IBS #N663 / caesarstoneus.com](http://IBS #N663 / caesarstoneus.com)

**LAUNDRY SYSTEM >**

The Mega Capacity Smart Front Load Washer, Ultra Large Capacity Front Load Dryer, and Styler create a full-service laundry system from **LG Laundry**. The washer's built-in sensors automatically select wash motions and temperature settings for each load. The washer and dryer have Smart Pairing to achieve a compatible drying cycle. The Styler sanitizes and reduces odors and refreshes clothing between dry cleanings. [lg.com/us/washers-dryers](http://lg.com/us/washers-dryers)



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**▲ CABINETS**

**Wellborn Cabinet** combines craftsmanship, innovation, and top-notch materials in its cabinets for the kitchen and bath. Cabinets are crafted with precision, ensuring durability and timeless style, the company says, and a wide range of customizable options means cabinets can be tailored to any taste. Plus, Wellborn's commitment to sustainability ensures you're choosing environmentally responsible materials.

**IBS #N1021 / wellborn.com**

**▼ GARAGE DOORS**

**Clopay's Canyon Ridge (5-Layer) Carriage House Doors** are made from a durable, low-maintenance faux wood composite that the company says resists rot and weathering. Available in 15 designs with optional windows and decorative hardware, door cladding and overlays can be primed, painted, or stained. An energy-efficient, polyurethane foam insulated steel core provides a 20.4 R-value.

**IBS #C1825 / clopaydoor.com**



**LIGHT FIXTURE >**

The **Laila Chandelier**, part of the Design Series from **Progress Lighting\***, features an artisanal double-cage frame design created from hand-knotted jute strands that creates an interplay of shadows and ambient light



suitable for dining rooms, bedrooms, and great rooms.

**IBS #W3031 / progresslighting.com**



**< OUTDOOR KITCHEN**

Made from 100% stainless steel for maximum durability and strength, cabinets from **Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchens\*** feature maintenance-free powder-coated finishes and exclusive door styles and colors to create unique

outdoor kitchens. Each project is made to order in the U.S. (Key West door, shown.)

**IBS #SU1243 / brownjordanoutdoorkitchens.com**

**STONE VENEER >**

An elegantly textured modern-look castle stone, **Beardsley Panel Grezzo stone veneer** from **StoneWorks\*** is available in five precision-cut sizes and multiple colors that can be mixed and matched to create endless design options.

**IBS #C3830  
estoneworks.com**



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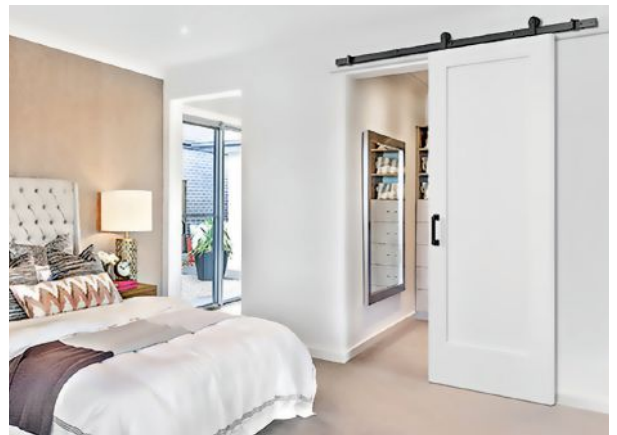
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### ▲ DOWNLIGHTS

The HALO ML4 Modular LED Downlight Series from **Cooper Lighting Solutions\*** lets homeowners customize their lighting with interchangeable optics and magnetic trims to match any finish and the ability to select brightness and color temperature settings. HALO is also committed to sustainability, with Energy Star certification, compliance with high-efficiency standards, and plastic-free packaging.

**IBS #W3219 / [cooperlighting.com](http://cooperlighting.com)**



### ▲ INTERIOR DOORS

The Lincoln Park Solid Core Interior Door from **Masonite International\*** used throughout The New American Home 2024 has 70% more sound-dampening material than the company's standard hollow-core doors, helping ensure noise control and privacy. The door's enhanced durability also reduces the likelihood of callbacks, the company says, saving builders time and resources. Available in a wide range of designs to suit any decor.

**IBS #C5930 / [masonite.com](http://masonite.com)**

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**IBS #C5919 / tamlyn.com**



### ▲ SLIDING DOORS

**Western Window Systems'** Series 600 Multi-Slide Door features wide panels, modern details, smooth operation, and multiple sill height options to blend easily into almost any space. Panels can be up to 12 feet tall (maximum 70 square feet) to maximize the experience of indoor-outdoor living.

**IBS #C4525 / westernwindowsystems.com**



### < INSULATION

Multi-Layer Reflective Wall and Ceiling Insulation from **Fi-Foil Company\*** reduces 95% of radiant heat transfer across wall and ceiling systems for greater thermal performance, the company says, boosting indoor comfort and energy efficiency. Available in 16- and 24-inch widths with a 10-year transferable warranty.

**IBS #C7448 / fifoil.com**

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**▲ SMART GARAGE DOOR OPENER**

The myQ Smart Garage Video Keypad from **LiftMaster\*** lets homeowners see and control who opens their garage door. By assigning unique PIN codes for family, guests, or service providers, owners can manage household access. Features include a 100° swivel mount for a clear view of the driveway and beyond, live-stream HD video, advanced motion detection, and two-way audio. **IBS #W4033 / [liftmaster.com](http://liftmaster.com)**



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storage. The

rack system is easy to install, the company says, and comes in four configurations in a choice of finishes including Matte Black, Cool Gray, and Golden Bronze (shown). A companion post system allows for floor-to-ceiling installations up to 17 feet high.

**IBS #W4337 / <https://vwineracks.co/TNAH2024>**

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**▲ GAS FIREPLACE**

**DaVinci Custom Fireplaces'** Linear Collection offers near-limitless options to fit any design, the company says. Choose from eight modular configurations, six glass heights, and lengths from 2 to 66 feet in 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-foot modules. All models include the TouchSmart Wall Control and Safe Touch Glass.

**IBS #W3407 / davincifireplace.com**

**◀ DISPLAY SCREEN**

**LG Electronics'** Signature OLED 97-inch screen is the first consumer TV with wireless connectivity capable of real-time video and audio transmission, eliminating the need to run cables and wires to the device, the company says. AI technology senses what you're watching to select the best picture and sound settings, and an included wall bracket leaves virtually no space between the wall and TV when hung.

**lg.com/us/tvs**



**◀ VIDEO DOOR STATION**

The IP Video Door Station D1101KV from **DoorBird** offers a solution for single-family homes and businesses with just one unit and one call button. The smart home and NVR-compatible unit has a choice of flush- or surface-mount options in a range of finishes and colors (Bronze, shown). The unit can be accessed via

keypad, RFID reader, or app.

**IBS #W4701 / doorbird.com**

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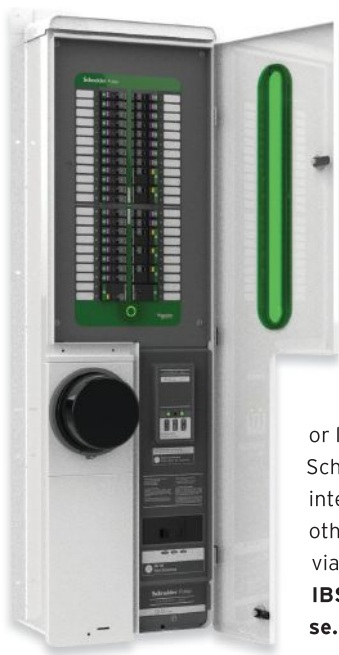
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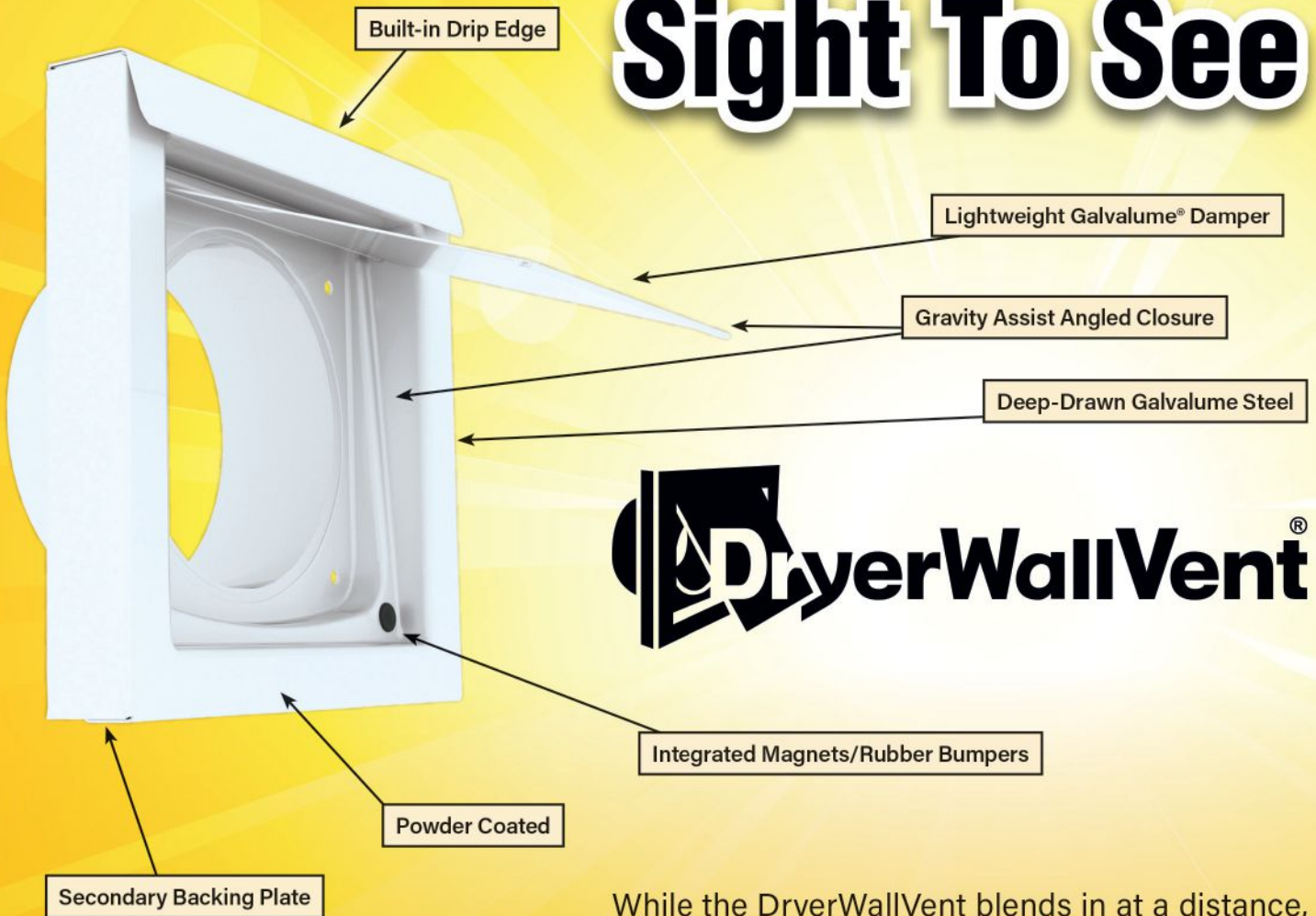


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90  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Which of the following best describes your company's primary business? (Check one box only.)

- 10  Builder, Developer, General Contractor  
20  Architectural Firm, Engineering Firm, Architectural/Engineering Firm, Designer of Homes  
30  Manufactured or Modular Home Builder  
40  Remodeler working in building activities

### 4. Which category best describes your job title? (Check one box only.)

- 10  Owner, Partner, Corporate Executive, Director, General Manager  
20  Architect, Designer, Engineer  
30  Construction Manager, Superintendent, Purchasing Agent, Buyer  
40  Other Management personnel  
50  Sales or Marketing Manager  
90  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. What type of construction is your firm involved in? (Check ALL that apply.)

- A  Single Family - Custom  
B  Single Family  
C  Multi-Family  
D  Remodeling  
E  Light Commercial  
F  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. How many homes does your firm build per year? (Check one box only.)

- A  Over 500 units  
B  101 - 500 units  
C  26 - 100 units  
D  11 - 25 units  
E  1 - 10 units  
F  0 units

### 7. What is your firm's annual revenue? (Check one box only.)

- A  More than \$10 million  
B  \$5 million to \$10 million  
C  \$1 million to \$4,999,999  
D  \$1 to \$999,999  
E  \$0

### 8. Which of the following building materials, products or equipment do you buy, specify or influence the selection of? (Check ALL that apply.)

- 01  Appliances  
02  Cabinets & Countertop Materials  
03  Caulks & Sealants  
04  Central Vacuum Systems  
05  Computer Hardware & Software  
06  Construction Equipment  
07  Decking / Fence Materials  
08  Doors  
09  Engineered Wood Products

- 10  Fireplaces & Accessories  
11  Flooring & Floor Coverings  
12  Garage Doors  
13  Green Building Products  
14  Hand & Power Tools  
15  Home Automation Systems  
16  HVAC & Environmental Controls  
17  Insulation & Related Products  
18  Lighting Fixtures  
19  Locksets & Hardware  
20  Paint, Stains & Finishes  
21  Plumbing Fixtures / Faucets  
22  Roofing Materials  
23  Siding  
24  Sound & Security Systems  
25  Tile  
26  Trucks  
27  Windows  
99  None of the above

### 9. Which of the following publications do you receive personally addressed to you? (Check ALL that apply.)

- A  Builder  
B  Custom Home  
C  Neither of the above

### 10. Excluding land, please indicate the cost per square foot of the homes your company builds. (Check ALL that apply.)

- A  \$25/sq ft or more  
B  \$201-\$250/sq ft  
C  \$151-\$200/sq ft  
D  \$121-\$150/sq ft  
E  \$101-\$120/sq ft  
F  \$100 sq ft or less

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**MENARDS**

# Grit Leads to Greatness ... and a Book

BY RICH BINSACCA, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

**U**ntil about a year ago, Chris Eccleston wasn't a published author; he was the founder and president of Delmarva Veteran Builders (DVB), in Salisbury, Md., the commercial contracting firm he launched in 2013 to help give military veterans opportunities in the construction trades.

That foundation, and an increasing awareness of the construction industry's dwindling skilled labor pool, led Eccleston and DVB creative developer Jenny Kerr Schroen to conceive, write, and commission illustrations for *Grit Leads to Greatness: An Epic Quest Built to Change the World*. The book, which takes its title from DVB's tagline, targets third-grade students with a message about the critical importance of construction in our society, told via a fantastical storyline complete with magical characters and world-class illustrations.



**JENNY KERR SCHROEN / CHRIS ECCLESTON**  
Creative developer / Founder and president  
Delmarva Veteran Builders

**PRO BUILDER:** *What was the impetus for the book?*

**CHRIS ECCLESTON:** I wanted kids to feel how I feel about our industry and to let them know they have a role to play in the future of our planet and our world, and that construction plays an important role in everything that touches our lives.

I realized that nobody's coming to save us. We've been complaining about labor shortages for 10 years or more. We can just sit around and wait and do nothing, or we can do something about it.

**JENNY KERR SCHROEN:** Since I started working with Chris I've been hearing about how contractors are struggling to find workers and carry the torch. So it was like ... how can we start to solve this and bring awareness to this issue?

**PB:** *How is your book different from other kids' books about construction or building?*

**CE:** We wanted to go to a little bit older audience [third-graders] and get them interested and excited about the opportunities. So we created this futuristic society that has forgotten how to build and then came up with an epic journey adventure story with magical, fantastical characters. It's a pretty good metaphor for where we are today with the lack of skilled trades.

**JKS:** We both like stories about how challenges shape who we are. What we created is almost like a map for kids to follow; they go on an adventure and run into obstacles, and characters teach them about lost trade skills. But [readers] don't realize until the end that the journey actually turns them to the path they're supposed to be on.

**PB:** *What's been the response to the book?*

**JKS:** We launched it in the first week of March last year during Read Across America Week. We told all of our local contractors what we were doing and asked them to consider buying a classroom-full of books and to then go into a school and read to the kids. About 50 companies stepped up to buy 25 or 30 books each.

**CE:** Originally it was just going to be something we did for our local area to help solve our own problem here.

Then I sent the manuscript to a few people I knew in the industry and within two weeks we were getting national attention. So we thought, maybe we've struck a nerve here.

We sold about 3,000 books right away, but we'd only ordered 5,000. We thought we were going to sell out before we even launched on Amazon. So we made the decision to publish another 10,000 copies

and we have them piled in boxes in one of our offices.

**JKS:** We wanted each kid to have their own book to take home so they could read it again to reinforce the message, and read it with their parents. Not just a book you can check out from the library but that you can actually take home and feel special because you have your own copy.

Some of these kids live at the poverty level and don't own a book, so to get one that happens to be about grit and about construction is a cool way to start to change the minds of a generation.

**PB:** *How do you define "grit"?*

**JKS:** In the book, it's like a superpower; a courageous force from within that gives you the power to face any challenge and also the guts to keep going even when things are difficult.

We used it for the title to highlight that grit plays a huge role in construction. It should be looked at as something heroic to be admired. And to show that construction really does save the world.

**PB+** [probuilder.com/grit-greatness](http://probuilder.com/grit-greatness)

*To purchase the book and support the cause, go to [gritleadstogreatness.com](http://gritleadstogreatness.com).*



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