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Classic Remodeling eases stress of renovation

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Most of us treasure the home we own, but it's a safe bet there's at least one aspect we would change to bring it closer to dream home status—imagining how it could be improved by enlarging the kitchen, adding a great room, renovating the master bath complete with whirlpool tub or, perhaps, building a wrap-around porch.



Fleming

The chances of finding time to do it yourself and do it correctly are slim, especially if your home has a history worth preserving and you're not familiar with turn-of-the-century building techniques.

There's also the discomfort that comes with living amidst the hassle and mess of a remodeling project. Frustrations can arise between a home's owners as the result of differing agendas and tastes. Trying to agree on colors, texture and fixtures is no simple task.

Imagine how nice it would be if you could hire someone else to handle all the details and turning your house into your dream home was a fun and rewarding process? Imagine being able to sit back and watch your dreams become a reality.

Charleston-based Classic Remodeling and Construction Inc. is one such company. They begin the process by exploring a client's dreams, helping that client construct a realistic budget, then holding the client's hand throughout the renovation process.

Building Blocks

Classic Remodeling owner, Bob Fleming, attended Clemson University to major in architecture but soon changed his degree to building science because he felt that architecture's philosophy promoted design at the expense of functionality.

Fleming's appreciation for the marriage of the design process and the building trades is a primary reason for his company's success. As Classic Remodeling grew, he hired freelance designers and architects on a project-by-project basis. The company eventually sought more hands-on involvement from concept through completion and brought its



As part of a major renovation project, Classic Remodeling expanded a home's great room to include French doors, a porch and a fireplace.

freelance design team in house, and, in the process, streamlined the company and its projects.

Today, Classic Remodeling is a one-stop builder serving an upscale-client base with a cadre of top-notch designers and craftsmen. "The one-stop approach has been fairly common in Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago and other major cities; it's still something new in smaller communities.

"I've been in the design-build business for 10 years now and our company has grown steadily," Fleming said. "Since we went to a full-time, in-house staff two years ago, our business has increased 50 percent. The marketplace, which was chaotic last year, has slowed a bit but is still really strong, especially for the homes priced less than \$250,000 and those over \$1 million."

Fleming attributes his firm's success to his full-time staff, which includes 13 office staff and 19 field workers and project managers who work directly with clients while handling the daily challenges involved in a remodeling job.

Classic Remodeling's training facility/classroom is the base for monthly seminars that focus on the latest products, technology and installation techniques.

This spring, the company unveiled a new John's Island design complex on 2.5 acres. The facility includes a 3,800-square-foot office building and a 5,000-square-foot warehouse and employee training facility.

The office building is home to the company's administrative offices and includes a selection center/showroom that allows clients to view and choose from a varied array of fabrics, masonry, cabinetry, tile and appliances without having to drive from vendor to vendor.

Fleming, who serves as a trustee for the American College of the Building Arts, an organization devoted to the education of future building artisans, encouraging preservation, enrichment and understanding of the world's architectural heritage, is especially proud of the company's in-house training facility.

"Training is critical to our future growth," Fleming said. "Designers



Built in the '50s, this lakeside home is in a secluded neighborhood. The goal was to expand the home's dimensions to provide comfortable accommodations for a family with three teenage boys, while retaining the character of the original structure. An essential element was to enhance the views of the lakefront and surrounding oaks



The house was extended 20 feet to the rear and a two-story porch was added that offers panoramic lake views from both levels. The upper porch is accessed through French doors from a new second-story master suite with wings at either end. Downstairs, an open floor plan enables the centrally located kitchen to meld with the family room, which is accented by a coffered ceiling and two-sided hearth that also serves the adjacent library.

and craftsmen are now seeking us out. The upfront training allows us to identify the best people in every discipline then train them in the way we work. We're seeking skilled workers who also have the ability to deal on a professional level with our clients who come from every walk of life."

Fleming is a member of the Remodelers Advantage Roundtable, a peer-driven think tank, composed of remodeling business owners from across the nation and is active in the Charleston Trident Home Builders Association.