

Builder/Architect



Claybridge Builders

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By Mary Tobiason

The American family has many faces. They come in different shapes and sizes, different origins, different beliefs and, most importantly, have different needs. Scott Brindle, president of Claybridge Builders, Inc. in Naperville, IL, has mastered the skill of building truly custom homes to meet the diverse lifestyles of his clients.

Scott was born in Ohio and raised in the Midwest. Understanding the complexities of the building process were innate, as his father is a mechanical engineer for General Motors, and his grandfather a trim carpenter, and the builder of the family home.

"I was never very far from the building business growing up," said Scott. "During my high school summers I worked punch-out for a local builder, and during my college years I worked part-time for a local lumberyard as a salesman. After graduating from Purdue University, and starting work for a fortune 200 company



in the Chicagoland area, I worked as a part-time Realtor." Several remodeling jobs later, in 1989, Scott Brindle built his first home. It was a modest, 1,400-square-foot, presold home in a lower-income area. Eventually, the Claybridge team found that their forte was in the intricate details that they bestow on every home, and that their market was with more affluent housing. They have been flourishing in that arena ever since.

The primary focus for the team at Claybridge Builders, Inc., is new home construction in predeveloped subdivisions, and tear-downs in cities undergoing downtown revitalization. However, over the years, they have been asked to grow with their clients, accommodating a number of basement finishes and room additions. This spring, they will begin their first commercial project. Scott remarked, "We are finding that once we have worked with a client, a strong bond and trust are created. They naturally gravitate back to us whenever they have a need for a 'contractor.' Many of our clients are small business owners themselves, so their needs vary over the years. We hope to continue to grow with them."



Ed and Karen Grom of Naperville were thrilled with the finished basement Claybridge added to their home. "Scott understood our lifestyle and had a great plan," remarked Ed. "The basement has a sense of continuity with the rest of our home. It does not seem like an addition. Scott was very careful to observe our design style and carried it throughout the lower level. He even duplicated our living room shelving in the basement to reinforce a sense of flow. We were very happy with the results."

Scott commented, "The greatest reward we receive is observing the excitement our clients feel living in the new environment we have created for them."

Offering a genuinely custom home requires a builder who is willing to understand his client's needs and wishes. Scott Brindle is that builder. He listens to his clients and their families to help guide the home's design, features and construction to meet and exceed the home buyer's greatest expectations. The buyer is brought into the building process as much as possible. Scott remarked, "Every client is unique and every home is unique, so we listen very carefully to our clients during our meetings. We also listen to their conversations with their children throughout the process. This provides invaluable insight into pinpointing exactly what they want. So much can be learned about the real heart and soul of the family by listening. It enables the Claybridge team to include the small details and extras that mean so much to the individuals buying the home. These defining touches are a trademark of Claybridge Builders.

Greg and Debbie Geppert, parents of four, had Claybridge build their

Naperville home. Debbie explained, "Scott designed the upper level to meet the needs of our four children. Each one of them wanted their own bed and bath, and they each wanted something different. Scott took the time to talk to each of them so that he could design a space that reflected each child's individual taste. Knowing that we entertain often, Scott put a giant island in the kitchen. It can seat more than six people. He also put a lot of thought into our extra large laundry room. He added a custom-designed bench and storage unit to house the countless acces-



sories that come with children — backpacks, shoes, sporting equipment and other various items. He did a spectacular job!”

“As we go through the design process, we try to layout the flow of the home — the room orientation, the stair style and the exterior curb appeal, being sensitive to the input we’ve received from the family we’re building for. This level of willingness to go the extra mile for our clients has earned Claybridge the opportunity to build for people with very specific needs and desires.”

One Claybridge home was designed with a mud room that served as living quarters for two hunting dogs. It came complete with a walk-in dog shower, and built-in cages. Another home buyer who suffered from claustrophobia needed windows placed in very specific locations, so that the outside could be seen from each room, including the oversized master bath restroom.

Stu and Kathy Miller were very pleased with their experience with Claybridge Builders. Stu remarked, “Scott did an amazing job with our home. He listened to our ideas and concepts, and turned them into things that really worked for us and our lifestyle. Our kitchen is full



of amazing detail. All of his work is unique and custom, in a very classy way. Our master bathroom has one of the most amazing ceilings one will ever see.

It is a rounded octagon adorned with a spectacular chandelier. We love it.”

Claybridge Builders, Inc. is not a large company, but the staff is comprised of only the highest quality professionals. Beverly Totsch is one of those people.

“Beverly Totsch is a key player on the Claybridge team,” said Scott. She joined the company a year ago to help fill the shoes of Scott’s retiring mother-in-law, Elizabeth Johantgen. “Elizabeth was instrumental in our success over the last decade,” said Scott. “Working with your mother-in-law may seem strange to some, but our business is truly a family business, and I couldn’t have asked for a more devoted team member. The 10 years of experience in the construction industry that Beverly brings to our company helps us



to ensure that we maintain our current level of customer satisfaction, and meet the continually growing expectations of our sophisticated buyers. She is a wonderful complement to our team. She brings a fresh perspective, and a great depth of knowledge about the industry."

On her experience with Claybridge, Beverly remarked, "It is a true pleasure to work with a builder whose primary commitment is to building a distinctive home, and making the homeowners dream come

true. While we keep a close eye on the budget, Scott's first priority is to building a quality home to last for years to come."

Scott remarked, "We offer high-quality at a fair price. Value is the key, from standard to upgraded options. Our sophisticated clientele demand value from start to finish.

"Attention to detail sets us apart from the rest," explained Scott. "We incorporate a fresh perspective to meet the contemporary needs

of today's home buyers. We have a great sense of intuitiveness, and add imaginative touches to define each home's individual personality. Our homes are adorned with intricate trim work and extensive detail. Details are the driving force of each phase. Our company is well known for creating and initiating creative, yet inexpensive solutions to problems along the way. We began lighting trim moldings and cabinets with strands of holiday tree lights, long before conventional rope lighting became readily available."

Quality assurance is a vital part of the success at Claybridge. The plans are reviewed from top to bottom prior to the start of construction by Scott and his team to ensure that nothing has been omitted, and so that the areas of opportunity can be identified. Areas of opportunity are the added touches that define the home as a reflection of the people who live there. Fifteen years of experience have given the Claybridge team a good handle on perspective customer service issues that may arise. A thorough system of checklists, formal walkthroughs and procedures help them manage possible issues in a proactive manner.

Scott prides himself in being a hands-on builder and designer. He personally visits job sites to review work and answer subcontractor questions, particularly during the framing and mechanical process. Scott said, "No one has a better understanding of the level of quality that we demand as a company; nor do they understand our clients' desires and standards better than I do. Site supervision by someone with the entire picture is crucial. During on-site visits, I like to take this time to look for opportunities to add a small something to the home. It might be a special added touch, an unexpected niche in the home, a beautiful ceiling treatment, extra trim or detail, maybe a housewarming gift. Nothing helps get a client's admiration or appreciation more than seeing



an unexpected added touch that exemplifies how well we know them. As a company, we try to identify what this item might be as early as our first meeting with them. As a team, it becomes a competition to see who has the best connection with the family. Once, it was a child with a fascination with clowns, and we had a carpenter cut out a pair of jester hat headboards, then cover them with foam and fabric to match the décor of the child's room. The memory of the building process for the family is priceless."

Upwardly mobile home buyers, retirees and executives have been Scott's primary clientele. "We sell between nine and 15 homes per year, primarily in the western suburbs," said Scott. "In addition, we do between three and four remodels per year. We market our homes through model homes, open houses, Realtor listings and word of mouth. We stay active in the local home builders association; we are a member of the local chamber of commerce association."

It is no surprise that repeat customers and referrals play a major role

Basements are never overlooked in planning and designing a Claybridge custom built home.



in bringing clients to Claybridge. Some of the special extras Scott has added for homeowners include: Prayer rooms, a built-in safe room, wine cellars completely surrounded by concrete walls, steam rooms, saunas, basement basketball courts, basement pitching mounds, theater rooms, indirect lighting to add mood and gourmet kitchens that would please any chef.

Claybridge Builders, Inc. creates an elusive feeling of home that would welcome any family. "Our success is based on a single belief — build each and every home as if it were for your own family," said Scott. "The special details that I add to each room bring excitement to the space each time someone enters the room, time after time, year after year."

For more information on the distinctively unique spaces that Claybridge Builders has to offer, contact them at (630) 904-9333, or visit their website at www.claybridgebuilders.com. ■