

Michael Mills Construction, Inc. Makes Commitment to Quality and Affordability

Business Profile is a regular feature of *The Mid-County Post*. Each issue, a *Post* advertiser is highlighted, offering readers an opportunity to learn more about area business owners. For more information about this feature, or how your company might be included, call 831-476-9130.

by Aldwin Fajardo

For Michael Mills Construction, Inc. quality and affordability are not just a promise, they're a commitment. This business principle has kept the company stable, maintaining steady growth for 32 years after owner Michael Mills realized he has a knack for house construction — home remodeling in particular.

Michael built his own home — a geodesic dome — in Aptos in 1976. His workmanship and attention to details didn't go unnoticed, and soon after completion of his house, Michael started getting calls from other people to design and build their homes.

Michael Mills Construction has since become a household name in renovation, remodeling and restoration. Michael is especially adept at managing the challenges remodeling a home can present.

"Remodeling has more variety than new home construction. It is challenging and fun because you get to meet the people who actually live in the house and work with them in building something they really want. It feels good to be able to make something that fits the needs and lifestyle of the people who are living in the home," says Michael. According to him, the company does not compromise quality and affordability. "They should always go together. One can't stand without the other."

Changing Lifestyles

Michael explains that the company works closely with clients to identify a design that best suits their wants, needs and their lifestyle. "We establish a personal contact with them to find out what they exactly want. We then try to come up with a design that blends with the house," Michael said. "We try to work with them to get a good, functional design that fits their needs and lifestyle within a reasonable budget."

Remodeling projects have shifted in emphasis from looks to function, according to Michael, adding that an increasing number of home makeovers are being done to fit the homeowners' changing lifestyles. But the appearance of the final product remains a high priority.

"Now we see kitchens that are connected to the family or TV room because for many people, the

kitchen has become part of their entertainment area. Their lifestyles are changing so we help adjust their homes to fit those changes," he adds.

Michael Mills Construction, which thrives on customer satisfaction, is engaged in a variety of home makeover projects, including kitchen and bathroom renovations, room additions and restorations.

"We do practically everything. We are a full service company," says Michael, adding that the slowdown in the housing economy is the most opportune time for homeowners to look for improvement projects that work to add value to their homes and their monthly savings.



Left to right: Michael Mills, his wife Opal McAllister and estimator Otis Coen at their showcase office that demonstrates some of their premium cabinets and construction expertise.

"It's a very good time to remodel because we are able to get started on jobs and get the estimates done sooner. Also, prices of some materials have gone down, making them more affordable," he explains.

Homes Go Green

As a Certified Green Building Professional, Michael seizes the opportunity to use "green" products whenever available. "I try to stay updated on what's going on. Some of our clients are very concerned with doing things green. Others aren't so committed to green practices. We always choose the green products if we can get them at the same price as something that isn't," he adds. "Sometimes there may be additional cost involved, and then we give the client the choice. But we always follow green practices to the maximum extent we can within the budget parameters the client has set."

In addition to kitchen and bathroom renovation, Michael Mills Construction also does window and door replacement, which offers homeowners a practical way to conserve energy and improve comfort. "Windows make a big difference in both comfort and

energy conservation. Saving money on heating while doing your part for the environment is a good combination," Michael points out.

Baby Boomer-Proof Homes

The Aptos-based company has taken the initiative to respond to the needs of the times. With baby boomers reaching the retirement age, Michael Mills Construction has also specialized in remodeling houses to make them more accessible to the elderly and the physically challenged.

"There's no place like home," says Michael, pointing out that nothing can replace the bliss of being able to stay comfortable in your own home as you age. He says accessibility is extremely important to people of all ages, but particularly to the elderly and other physically challenged individuals who choose to live independently in their own homes.

He adds that simple renovations to the home can make the transition easier for baby boomers. Installing lever-style door handles for people with arthritis, laying hardwood floors or utilizing a more open layout can, in addition to being more user-friendly for the elderly, actually enhance a home's appearance. "In our practice we make homes friendly to people with physical challenges. Walk-in bathtubs, wheelchair accessible showers and sinks, higher toilet seats, grab rails; all these things make the bath easier for anyone, and especially those who are physically challenged. Having had a son with a physical disability got me interested in adaptive living many years ago. The older I get the better I understand these needs," Michael says.

Michael Mills Construction workers are among the best trained and skilled building professionals in Santa Cruz County. The company believes in using only superior products from manufacturers and distributors who stand behind them. Michael is a member of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), a national association devoted to promoting ethical practices, sound business principles and training of remodeling professionals, and represents his chapter at the national level. The company is also a long-term member of the Better Business Bureau.

One Gold and two Silver awards from NARI and 32 years of stability prove Michael's point that the formula for success is simple: Top quality products plus a knowledgeable and trained staff equal customer satisfaction. ■

Located at 402 Trout Gulch Rd. in Aptos, Michael Mills Construction company's showroom features Dura-Supreme Cabinetry – custom built cabinets for kitchen and bath. For additional information, call 831-688-8997.

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