

HOME

Architecture & Remodeling

Notes from our Team:

It's been a very busy summer for our design and construction teams. We completed quite a number of projects, most of which can be viewed online at our newly remodeled Web site. Be sure to check out our 360 degree virtual tours.

We're also pleased to announce the promotion of two of our architect interns to project managers. Ramona Saldamando, who has been with us for two years and holds a degree in Bachelors of Science in Art and Design, Architectural Design from MIT, and Laurie Torres, a one-year Commonwealth team member with a Masters degree in Architecture from NOVAVA Polytechnic Institute, have been a valuable addition to our operations.

Ramona has also worked as an intern architect in Maryland and New Mexico. Laurie has a daughter, Kaia, age 6 months.

Kelvin Pierce, co-owner, and Jerry Mannix, sales manager, recently returned from Boston, where they attended a Remodelers Advantage (RA) sales seminar, attended by 20 companies. Commonwealth is one of the longest standing members in RA, an organization focused on peer support and education in the remodeling industry.



208-A Dominion Road
Vienna, Virginia 22180
703-255-9861
www.CommonwealthHome.com



The Chantilly experience

The owners of this Colonial home in Chantilly had a good idea of what they wanted, and had a budget in mind. In fact they had several odds 'n ends jobs on their list that involved a lot of interior rearranging rather than adding new space with an addition.

The homeowners wanted to make their space better, more functional, not bigger. From a remodeler's point-of-view, all positive points, but for Commonwealth, where projects usually encompass a scope much larger than they planned for master suite, it presented an opportunity to improve their service structure for smaller jobs. Commonwealth had long pondered how to do smaller projects as well as larger ones within the constraints of

the client's timeline and budget. The homeowner wanted Commonwealth's architects to take a "holistic look at the entire house." Specifically, they wanted an architectural solution to the master suite including the bath on the second floor, and the mudroom and powder room on the first floor.

This approach involved using materials Commonwealth had not before used such as a skirted "free standing tub," and glass block. The design for the master suite has a strong axis down the center of the bedroom and the bathroom, which was the genesis for the new design of the space.



In an effort to have a successful project in terms of design, quality, cost and timeliness, Commonwealth took a new look at the way this size project was handled internally. Commonwealth's team was concerned that if the typical larger project processes were used, it would take longer than necessary.

Most Commonwealth large projects require structural changes, but this project had no structural changes. So, Commonwealth took a totally different approach, which involved much more communication on all internal levels. The complete process resulted in a shorter cycle time between meetings with clients and Commonwealth was able to start the project sooner than expected.

The main thrust of the process changes had to do with taking a very focused and specific look at all the clients needs, listening to them, documenting them and then responding at the next meeting with a clear, concise and complete selection presentation that included color prints of every fixture, faucet and cabinet as well as all plans, sketches and elevations. All team members were involved from the architects to the construction team to the bookkeeper, who developed new methods to track financial data closely in order to provide weekly reports.

For previous, larger projects, this level of detail didn't happen until later in the process. For smaller projects, the development team decided it was in everyone's best interest to go straight to the detail. As it turned out, the client only had a few minor changes to make and was thrilled with selections made by the design team.

In the end, an increased level of cooperation, communication, heightened contribution and total commitment to the client resulted in a win-win for the remodel team and the client. This has become a model for smaller projects and has been adapted for Commonwealth's larger projects as well. ■



gracious

EPA's Energy Star Program: Hot water for less

Commonwealth Home Remodelers has long been a proponent of the EPA Energy Star Program (www.energystar.gov).

"Employing available and emerging technologies to change the ways in which we power our lives will dramatically reduce both energy consumption and emissions of greenhouse gases, helping to preserve energy supplies and address global climate change," said Susan Pierce, who attended the Green Building Conference in Baltimore recently. "Energy efficiency is also a huge economic resource; increased efficiency results in costs savings. We, at Commonwealth, strive to bring environmental and economic suggestions to our clients when designing and constructing new spaces."



In the average home, the electric storage tank water heater is the second largest user of power, ranging from 20 to 40% of total energy use. It is the largest user of electricity in homes with non-electric heat.

Susan recently reviewed two products during the Green Building Conference: SEISCO Tankless Water Heater (seisco.com); and AutoCirc (autocirc.com), an automatic hot water delivery system.

■ SEISCO Tankless Water Heater

SEISCO's energy efficiency and technology gives the homeowner an opportunity to significantly cut the operating cost and energy use for hot water. SEISCO offers 16 models, designed to serve specific design configurations (one and two story homes; remote bathroom location). Moderately priced, the small chambers are installed virtually anywhere and can serve an entire home. There are no moving parts or flow restricting devices. The heaters use a unique flow/no flow detection system with temperature sensors. In standby, the heater maintains a very subtle temperature gradient and flow is detected when there is a change in the gradient. The advanced micro-

processors control turns the power on through a set of relays and turns the power off when flow stops. An important feature is a patented "power sharing" technology that provides for evenly distributed power to the heating elements. This in turn, helps eliminate scalding potential, scaling and sediment build up. In the event of any problem, the control emits a visual or optional built-in sound. There is no maintenance required.

■ AutoCirc

The second product Susan reviewed was the Autocirc pump, which is installed under the sink or faucet farthest from the water heater—the tap where hot water usually takes the longest amount of time to arrive.

A built-in temperature sensor automatically turns the Autocirc pump on when the water temperature in the hot water supply line cools down to 85° F. The pump begins drawing warm water from the water heater pushing the cool water in the hot water supply line (water normally dumped down the drain) back into the water heater.

The Autocirc pump turns off automatically when the hot water supply line to the faucet reaches 95° F, ensuring the instant availability of shower warm water with maximum temperature hot water only seconds behind. When the pump is automatically turned off by the built-in thermostat, an auto closure device prevents hot or cold water from mixing in either supply line.

Hot water will also be instantly available at all other faucets in the supply line between the water heater and the faucet where the Autocirc pump is installed.



Living

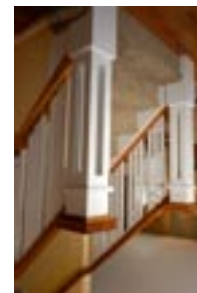
We remodeled our Web site CommonwealthHome.com



Our newly remodeled Web site is now online. Log on and check out our portfolio including our 360 degree virtual tours and read what our past clients have to say. Send us an email if you have any questions about an upcoming project or if you'd like to schedule a consultation.

©2003 Biz-comm, Inc.

Commonwealth Home Remodelers offers the optimum combination of
 architecture and remodeling to create exquisite and unique living spaces.
www.CommonwealthHome.com



PRESORTED
 FIRST CLASS
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 DULLES, VA
 PERMIT NO. 384



208-A Dominion Road, Vienna, VA 22180
 VA Cont. Lic. #035740A • MHC #40888

sound investment