

## Calming Influence

As the pace of daily life speeds up, our need for a serene, restful environment at home increases. Experts say that having the opportunity to relax and slow down during the day is important for our mental and physical health. Much is also said these days regarding the calming influence of the outdoor environment and the benefits of integrating the outdoors with the indoors.

*(continued on page 2)*



Photo by Timberlake Cabinetry

## What is Universal Design?

### *It's Designing for Life*

In the past, "barrier-free" homes had their problems...they were ugly. Most people didn't want to live in them; as a result, builders didn't construct many of them. It's taken many years, but housing designers have found a better way. It's called "universal design." Homes with universal design features look like other homes, but are much easier to use.

Universal design is more than just helping those who find it difficult to get around the home. It's about making a home both functional and beautiful. Just because a homeowner wishes to have their home universally designed, doesn't mean it needs to look that way. The primary goal of universal design is to make the home usable by everyone, without obvious specialization being done to the home.

Universal design is gaining popularity for two reasons. One, it looks nice. Two,

more people want to stay in their home and have it "user friendly" as they age.

#### Here are some common universal design features:

- Eliminate steps into rooms.
- Remodel to allow easy access to all areas.
- Wide doorways. Doorways that are 32-36 inches wide.
- Wide hallways. Hallways should be 36-42 inches wide. That way, everyone and everything moves more easily from room to room.

#### Some universal design features just make good sense and are inexpensive:

- Floors and bathtubs with non-slip surfaces help everyone stay on their feet.

*(continued on page 4)*



Photo: Courtesy of Wellborn (www.wellborn.com)



# Calming Influence

(continued from page 1)

A striking example of the blurring of boundaries between a home's interior and exterior spaces is found in The New American Home (TNAH) 2013. This demonstration home, showcased at the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas in January, serves as an inspiration for other projects that seek this kind of connectivity, even those on a much smaller scale.

Indoor/outdoor living is a trend that has been sweeping the country and is currently in high demand in both warm and cool regions. For remodelers and builders, the take-away from this home in terms of indoor/outdoor living is the integration of design, along with the blending of interior and exterior materials. As part of the design process, consideration must be given to solar orientation, overhangs, and how best to use glass to invite the outdoors in.

Fashioned in what is termed "desert contemporary" style, this year's TNAH is a departure from the more typical Mediterranean-style found in the Las Vegas area. The use of natural elements throughout—plentiful water, light, air, fire, stone, wood, and greenery—creates uncertainty at times as to whether you are standing outside or inside the home. The glass pocket doors in virtually every room allow you to see straight through the home from inside to outside in many places. Simple straight lines, along with a soft neutral color palette, help create a peaceful setting.

One of the most exciting spaces in this 6,721-square-foot home is the great room and kitchen area. (photo on page 1) These

two rooms are beautifully blended together, unified by a horizontal ribbon of dark wood cabinetry and sunny windows. Although this light-filled space soars two-stories high, the warmth of the cabinetry and other materials provides a cozy atmosphere for dining, watching the game on TV, or sitting poolside.

The master suite, with its open-air sleeping porch, also exhibits the careful blending of indoor and outdoor spaces. Gabions—manmade wire structures filled with regional rock—were used along the interior and exterior walls of the master suite. Resysta—a sustainable product that has the appearance of wooden planks, but is produced from recycled rice husks, salt and mineral oil—was used inside and outside as well. Resysta is so versatile, it was chosen for the floors of the indoor and outdoor master showers, as well as for interior and exterior walls in other parts of the home.

This home was designed as an electrical net zero home, achieved primarily through the combined use of roof-top solar panels, an air-tight thermal shell, energy efficient windows with electronically-controlled shades, and LED lighting.



Photo by Timberlake Cabinetry



Photo courtesy of Blue Heron Inc.



Photo courtesy of Blue Heron Inc.

This is a wonderful period in the history of home design and remodeling in the USA. Finally, we are seeing some real progress made toward the thoughtful, human-centric design of home environments—with products that benefit all people, regardless of their ages or abilities.

For example, in the past, round knobs were the only choice homeowners had for door handles in their homes. Lever handles, on the other hand, function better for a wider group of people. If you have arthritis or other hand mobility issues, you can simply depress the lever handle with your forearm



# Going UP



Photo: Courtesy of Residential Elevators LLC (www.residentialelevators.com)

If your home is multi-storied, there is a good chance you have considered installing an elevator. For a variety of reasons, homeowners across the country are deciding that it is worth the extra expense to alleviate any difficulties in getting from one floor of their home to another. Some reports indicate that the residential elevator market grew by 15% last year.

Baby Boomers are thinking ahead and installing elevators, as insurance that they can continue living in their homes and beloved neighborhoods well into the future. Multi-generational households are putting in elevators for the sake of grandparents who have mobility issues. Families are making it easier to carry heavy or multiple loads to the second or third floors of their homes.

If you are remodeling or building a new addition to your existing home and you want to install an elevator, it should be a part of your design plans from the beginning. Your professional remodeler and elevator supplier will help you determine the state and local licensing and permitting requirements. They will also consult with you about the optimal location for the elevator.

Perhaps you are not planning a major remodeling project—all you want at this point is an elevator retrofit. If there is no suitable space inside your existing

home, the best option might be to build an elevator tower on the exterior of your home.

If you are remodeling your home right now, but you wish to wait until the future to install your elevator, it is still more economical to engineer space for the elevator during the current remodel. By stacking two or more closets directly on top of each other, you will be able to utilize the closets until you convert them into a hoistway later on. The conversion cost will be even less if you allow for a recessed elevator pit in the slab, pre-wire for the equipment, include blocking requirements in the wall, and off-set the doors.

There are three basic types of elevators: hydraulic, traction, and pneumatic. A limitation of pneumatic elevators is that they are usually too small to accommodate wheelchairs. A traction elevator is an excellent choice for a retrofit project, since the drive system is mounted inside the elevator shaft and therefore requires no separate machine room or pit.

In addition to the type of elevator, some of the options that influence the cost of an elevator are the number of stops it can make, the cab size, the type of doors and the interior finishes. If the elevator is being installed due to health issues, speak with a tax professional about tax savings eligibility. ■

## Thoughtful Design

or elbow, and the door opens. This is also true if you have a sleeping child in your arms, or a laundry basket, or are carrying groceries into the house.

Manufacturers have begun to rethink the design of their products with the purpose of enabling everyone to use them comfortably and easily. Marvin Windows and Doors showcased several thoughtful products at the International Builders' Show 2013 as a part of an educational Universal Design product tour for remodelers. The following two products were included in the tour:

1



*The Low Profile High Performance Sill is available on Marvin's Sliding French and Sliding Patio doors. The attractive flush threshold provides a smooth transition between the exterior and interior, and is ADA compliant.*

2



*The Ultimate Glider has the handle placed low on the unit in an easy-to-reach position. Challenging top locks have been eliminated. The window features an auto lock that is triggered when the sash is closed.*

Photos: Courtesy of Marvin Windows and Doors (www.marvin.com)

Glaze Design/Build  
PO Box 2405 264 Union Square, Suite 201  
Hickory, NC 28603 Hickory, NC 28601

Experience. Integrity. Passion.

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HICKORY NC  
PERMIT NO 212



IN THIS ISSUE

- Calming Influence
- Universal Design
- Going UP
- Thoughtful Design



Photo: Courtesy of Delta (www.deltafaucet.com)

This kind of planning can help homeowners easily adapt their home to their changing needs. The universal design of the house means that you've included some key usability features in a way that's fully integrated and blended with the overall design of the house and that makes the features invisible. It also gives homeowners a market advantage if they decide to resell the house.

CAPS (Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist) remodelers are uniquely qualified to answer the call of millions who have or will need these types of home modifications. The word is spreading across the country about the expertise of CAPS. CNN has highlighted the CAPS program on television, and articles have also appeared in *Time* magazine, *Business Week*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Chicago Tribune*.

**At Glaze Design/Build, Gene Glaze, CAPS is specifically trained to provide solutions to common barriers, home modifications, technical knowledge of universal design products, and has a greater understanding of the aging-in-place population.**

Take a good look around your home. Make a list of the things that bug you. Tired of bending to plug in the iron? Sick of stretching to reach your favorite platter? Can't stand carrying laundry to the basement? Gene Glaze can help homeowners considering a home remodeling project or just making changes to their home to accommodate a safer home environment. Gene Glaze can be reached at 828.324.9255 or [www.glazedesignbuild.com](http://www.glazedesignbuild.com).

## What is Universal Design? *It's Designing for Life*

(continued from page 1)

- Thresholds that are flush with the floor, making it easy for a wheelchair to get through a doorway. They also keep others from tripping.
  - Door handles on a home can be changed to lever handles. This makes it easier for the older person with arthritis, the young child with developing motor skills and the middle-aged mother coming home from the store with bags in her hand.
  - Installing handrails on both sides of all steps.
  - Installing easy-to-grasp handles for all drawers and cabinet doors.
  - Using brighter light bulbs in all settings.
  - Installing rocker light switches. These are great for people with poor hand strength, but others like them too. Try using these devices when your arms are full of packages.
- Universal design provides homeowners with features that can be enjoyed now, but it also helps plan for the future. Take closets, for example. When building a closet, add adjustable brackets. Later on, those brackets can be moved so clothing rods and shelves can be moved to a better height if needed.



Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist  
Houses For Living, Homes For Life.