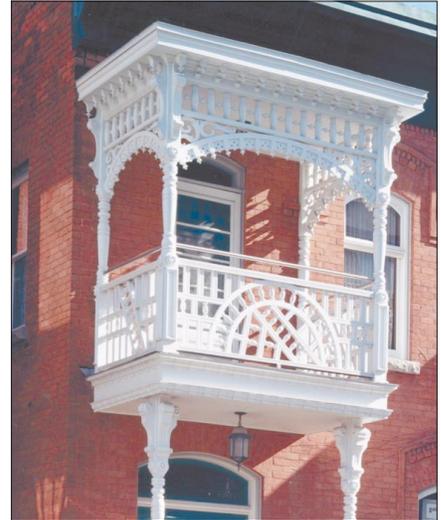
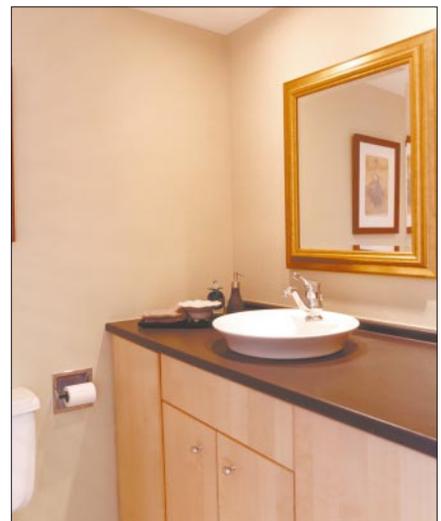


DENYS  
BUILDS  
DESIGNS



# Master of all trades: Denys Builds Designs celebrates 15 years of custom design-build



## Denys Builds

Continued from page 9

Paul Denys, the “one-man show” that is Denys Builds Designs, has a secret to his success.

“The things most people don’t touch, or won’t touch, is what we end up doing,” he laughs.

Indeed, over 15 years—since the company’s inception in 1988—it has succeeded by doing the kinds of projects that are off the beaten path; everything from heritage restoration, to ultra-modern design.

Denys has accumulated a wealth of experience doing a variety of residential renovations and restorations, of which no two projects have ever been the same.

But Denys’ projects are not all that is unique; Denys himself has a unique approach to his business and to his work.

For one, while he talks in terms of “we,” Denys Builds Designs is essentially a one-man show, save for



an apprentice. Denys consults. He designs. And then he builds it himself.

“We do everything. I think our particular niche is the intimate handholding solutions, the one and only unique solution for a partic-

ular client. That’s our niche,” says Denys. “We’re well-versed in the constructive arts so we can do almost anything.”

He says that often designers have wonderful ideas, but they can’t be

practically applied to construction. Likewise, those who simply build are extremely practical, but sometimes lack the aesthetic sense that a designer brings to a project.

“We try to give clients

the best of the building world, and the best of the architectural world,” says Denys. “Everything we have done has been our own design and effort. I think most people, when they are looking for a reno-

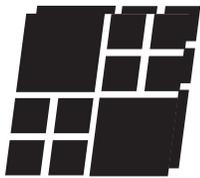
vation experience, are looking for a single individual to come in and give them some aesthetic options and immediately put those into place in their homes.”

Denys says the rapport between himself and his clients is an essential part of a project’s success. “As soon as you get into any sort of hierarchy you lose that intimacy with the work, and things can’t be controlled as much as you would like.”

“It is much more an intimate dynamic. We have clients with different needs and different levels of needs. We want to find what is comfortable for our clients, and we want to find a comfortable fit with each individual client,” he says. “When you get that type of synergy it’s a much more easier experience onsite, and a much more creative experience.”

He cites the project he calls the “modern kitchen” as an example of this rapport. Now a finalist in the Awards of Design

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## Denys Builds

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Excellence, the project is a good example of working intimately with a client to achieve exactly what they want.

But the most unique and rewarding project he has done involved recreating an ornate and detailed porch—using only a photograph.

The porch-attached to the home and art gallery of Jean Claude Bergeron, on St. Patrick Street, is one of a kind. Denys says he scoured the streets of Ottawa, Kingston, Perth, Montreal, Smiths Falls and everywhere in between, trying to find a similar porch. It was to no avail.

“That’s a once-in-three-lifetimes porch,” Denys declares. “It stretched my talents to the maximum. We

didn’t know if it was going to look like a porch until all of the pieces came together.”

His craftsmanship certainly impressed Bergeron, who wrote in a letter of reference: “Paul Denys is an artist in his trade. He completed the work to our great satisfaction and we wholeheartedly recommend him to anyone having heritage rebuilding to do.”

Denys is not keeping his talents all to himself, however. In addition to the rigors of running his own company, he also serves on the Heritage Advisory committee for the Algonquin College Heritage Trades Institute, Perth campus, something he has done for four years.

With an eye to the future, Denys is reveling in the successes of the recent past.

Interest in the trades

runs in his family with a grandfather and uncle that were electricians and two other uncles who were a

plumber and a tinsmith. He is proud of his company, which he started after completing Algonquin College’s

General Carpenter Apprenticeship Program with outstanding achievement. The company was kick-started by the Youth Enterprise Centre, where he was allowed to draw up a business plan, and take courses on accounting, insurance, and marketing. A youth ventures loan helped him to purchase his first truck.

“My first taste of entrepreneurship was back in high school, when I was snow blowing driveways, fixing up stuff for people, painting houses,” says Denys.

His mentor assisted him in starting the business; right around the time the economy was starting to tank.

“It’s been a long haul. It has been a 15-year overnight success. It’s just these last two or three years that things have come into

perspective, and that we’ve been able to do the Web site and solidify who we are as a unique renovation service,” says Denys.

Denys was recently the recipient of two SAMMY awards for best brochure, and best Web site ([www.denys.ca](http://www.denys.ca)). He also has two projects that are finalists in the upcoming OCHBA Awards of Design Excellence.

“I think almost everyone has a sense of what they want, but they need some assistance along the way, and someone to help them achieve it,” he notes. “I’m looking forward to the future with great interest because now I feel like I’m at the top of my game, and I look forward to making that special connection with that individual and help to facilitate their expectations into reality.”





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