

Windows And Doors: More Than Meets The Eye

WRITTEN BY NANCY HAMMOND

First impressions rarely tell the complete story, especially when it comes to windows and doors. An eye-catching design may attract the casual onlooker, but quality and service are the key ingredients that make customers loyal to a specific manufacturer.

Jim Fox, owner and president of Fox Aluminum Products, Inc., Hazel Park, agrees: "Anybody can make it look good — we're more concerned about construction." Fox added that his company offers doors that "last a lifetime." The Fox Aluminum website states that their doors have "heliarc-welded corners" and an "exclusive interlocking hinge system, which results in unmatched strength and performance."

That's not to say that Fox Aluminum isn't concerned about how their products look. In fact, the Fox Aluminum website also states that their Weldoor™ products are "works of art for your home." And they offer a variety of styles and colors in both windows and doors.

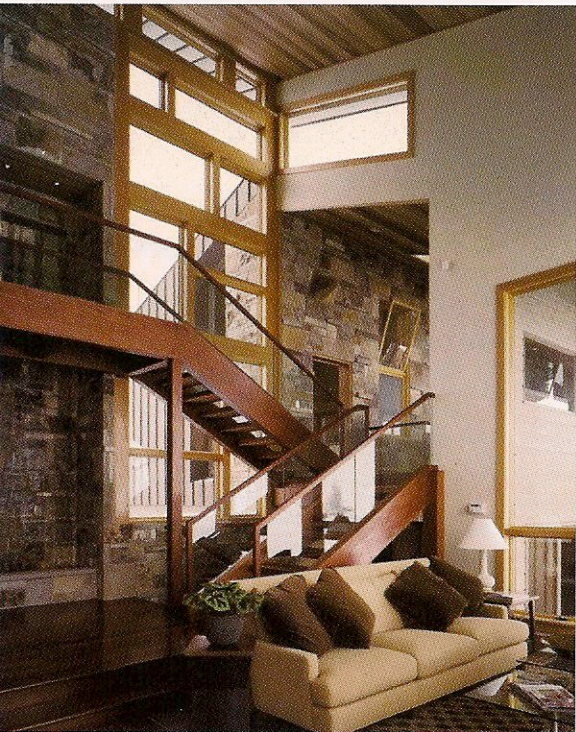
Paul Aggeler, vice president of John's Lumber, Clinton Township and Shelby Township, has similar feelings about quality and design. He says that John's Lumber uses "value engineering," which means they "work hard to combine appearance, functionality and cost to give the builder the best value for a designed window package." Aggeler adds that he wants the customer and the builder to "get the best of all three of these worlds."

Gregg Jarphow, building, window and door sales, also of John's Lumber, says that working with the

builder to achieve value engineering "starts at the architect level." If an architect has designed a curved window, John's Lumber helps the builder, or the consumer, find an already manufactured window that works with the design, which saves the builder and the consumer money. While product quality is important, "service is more important." John's Lumber offers follow-up inspections to check the appearance of their products once they are installed.

Chad Stierwalt, manager of Alside Supply Center, Westland (with two more locations in Southgate and Madison Heights), also works with architects. "We offer CAD specifications on CD-ROM and in printed format, everything an architect needs to spec a job."

Alside customizes windows down to an eighth of an inch. They have a "special shapes" department where vinyl can be bent into customized shapes. All of their windows are also tested to the light commercial standard. According to Stierwalt, this means that many of their



Photos (left) courtesy of Andersen Corporation

Photo courtesy of Vetter Windows & Doors



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windows are “tested for more than they can actually do,” which means they exceed the standard on many levels.

Quality is an important aspect of window and door construction, but making a product that saves energy is starting to be mandated by the government, with strict energy codes planned in the near future. “Energy saving is the ‘big hot button,’ “ says Aggeler. Energy efficient low-e, argon gas-filled windows are gaining in popularity. They work to slow heat loss from the window, which saves the consumer a significant amount in monthly energy bills.

Window and door manufacturers are working harder than ever to go beyond what the eye can see to provide builders and customers with the styles, quality and energy efficiency they demand. ■

Photo courtesy of Weather Shield Windows & Doors

