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2008 KITCHEN CABINET STYLE & DESIGN GUIDE



Award-Winning Firm Cuts Time, Client Costs



Designed and built by Orfield Design & Construction, Inc., this open floorplan kitchen earned the firm the 2008 Chrysalis award in the "\$40,000 - \$75,000 Kitchen" category, according to co-owner and v.p. Laura Orfield-Skrivseth.

By John Filippelli

SAINT LOUIS PARK, MN — There is a long-held business belief that time is money, and perhaps nowhere is this theory more practiced than at Orfield Design & Construction, Inc. The firm, established in 1978 by brothers Ron and Henry Orfield, prides itself not only taking on all ranges of projects — from small bathroom remodels to three-story additions to whole houses — but more importantly, to offering a full-service operation that provides a personal touch through every step of the design and building process to ensure a timely and seamless operation.

"Our primary clientele are people who want their projects managed by a company that has a personal touch, listens to them and takes pride in the final result," says Laura Orfield-Skrivseth co-owner [along with father Ron Orfield] and v.p. of the firm.

She continues: "Clients are always impressed with how smoothly and quickly their projects are going. It also gives us a great forum for discussions — our different points of view along with our common

goal of finding the best solution help us come up with things that may never have crossed a client's mind, whether it's moving walls or a doorway or changing the entire function of a room."

The firm's services include complete design, planning and construction blueprints, remodeling and additions, kitchens and baths, interiors and exteriors and handyman services.

She adds: "We offer any products our clients want, through other showrooms and special order. We always let our clients know what brands are recommended over others for certain products and why, and we give advice based on the style our client is going for, for their budget and what would work best in their home," she explains.

In fact, this approach recently led to the firm earning first-place honors in the "Kitchen Remodel \$40,000-\$75,000" category of this year's Chrysalis Award for a kitchen remodel featured in a 1952-era rambler.

Orfield-Skrivseth offers: "The walls to the living and dining rooms were removed, and the home's exterior kitchen wall was removed

to incorporate the old porch which was converted into a warm, four-season sitting room."

She concludes: "Our secret is that we take into consideration the style of the clients' existing home and their lifestyle to create a design that is unique to their vision. We have learned that the most important element of any design project is to focus on the individual client. Each client has different needs, not only in their project

designs, but in communication and material selections."

In fact, she quickly points out that every one of the Orfield employees brings a different perspective and works together on each project to approach a client's requests with their own unique sensibilities.

"Our differences are our strengths; with combinations of older and younger generations, we get the best of both worlds," she says.

PERSONALIZED PROCESS

A structured, personalized approach is the key to the firm's success.

"We keep in touch with clients throughout all stages of a project with in-home meetings, telephone calls and e-mails to answer any questions and offer advice and information on all aspects of the project. We insist on being upfront, even if it's not what the client wants to hear."

In fact, the firm will work with clients hourly, daily and weekly, depending on the need, via e-mail, fax, phone or meeting at the client's home to double-check selections, obtain approval on project materials and timing, and explain what to expect in the coming design and construction stages.

She continues: "Our clients get to personalize every aspect of their project to make it unique and we are like personal shoppers for any home remodel project."



Laura Orfield-Skrivseth

Orfield Design & Construction, Inc.

AT A GLANCE

Location: St. Louis Park, MN

Principals: Co-owners Ron Orfield and Laura Orfield-Skrivseth

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. — 4:30 p.m., by appointment only.

Showrooms: A virtual online showroom.

Number of Employees: Six

Major Product Lines Carried: Countertops, stained wood cabinetry, carpentry services, outdoor decking and paint samples to aid in the selection process.

Design Software Used: Hand-drafting for a personalized and artistic representation.

Business Philosophy: "We are committed to exceeding our clients' expectations by providing personal attention and high quality workmanship and materials through creative design solutions, professionalism, communication, organization and teamwork. We take pride in delivering what we promise, and treat each client and their property with the utmost respect."

The firm's experienced staff works in partnership with the client, including utilizing staff designers and carpenters that have worked together for years to ensure continuous communication from the planning process and initial construction through all the finishing details.

She adds: "Project scopes here often include mudrooms and basement finishes. Basically, people tend to put more work into finishing the interior of their homes to include entertainment and play areas."

She further notes: "Remodeling should be fun so we do our best to make sure our clients enjoy it."

VIRTUAL PRESENTATIONS

To distinguish its services from typical turnkey operations, the firm has eschewed a typical showroom for an online shopping experience.

The online showroom allows prospective customers to peruse the firm's offerings from the

comfort of their own home.

"We could never have a showroom large enough to show all the new plumbing, lighting, flooring and countertop options that are available. There are infinite combinations possible in every project, and we don't want to limit clients," Orfield-Skrivseth says. "We direct them to plumbing, tile and flooring showrooms that will offer them great options and customer service. We also find that the Internet is the most cutting edge display center we could have."

FLEXIBLE STRATEGIES

According to Orfield-Skrivseth, the staff also takes painstaking efforts to make sure that no project will derail should any unforeseeable circumstances arise.

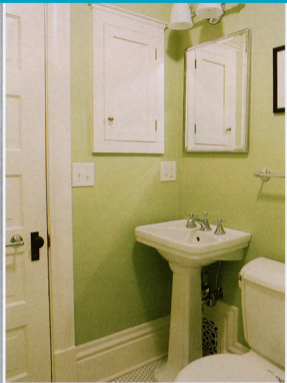
"We put everything in writing throughout the project to ensure that we, the client, our employees and sub-contractors are all on the same page as things progress," she notes.

The initial pricing and contracts lists are itemized line

by line so clients can adjust choices according to what is important to them and what will work with their budget," she adds. Meanwhile, once the contract is signed, a timeline is created and given to the clients so everyone is aware of the construction schedule – a particularly important aspect for clients with children so they can plan accordingly for safety.

"We always make sure steps are taken to create safer and cleaner construction environments by laying out floor protection, dust barriers and blocking off construction areas as well," she notes.

"We also keep abreast of current trends such as 'green' remodeling, Universal Design, kitchen remodels, spa baths, master bedrooms, specialty rooms, storage spaces, outdoor living and technology."



This award-winning bath is another example of the results generated from the firm's commitment to communication and organization.

She concludes: "Our clients are keen to trends and materials, but unfamiliar with the process, which is why we offer guidance, such as material samples and assisting in coordinating all aspects of the project so it comes together beautifully."