



*A great architect is not made of a brain nearly so much  
as he is made up by way of a cultivated, enriched heart.*

**Frank Lloyd Wright**

# Who's



## behind the design?

By Laura Armstrong

Frank Lloyd Wright is considered one of the greatest architects of the 20th century. And, like some of this year's MHI award winners for outstanding design of manufactured and modular homes, he was self-taught after working as an assistant in an architectural firm in Chicago. Some, too, are architects who studied engineering, architecture and its history who "got hooked" on factory built homes. ■ ■ ■ ■



Certainly, the collective talents of today’s factory built housing architects have vastly improved the curb appeal of manufactured and modular housing, to the point where it is nearly impossible to tell the difference between a site built and a factory built home. “Curb appeal is important to

consumers, they want something that is factory built without it looking like it is factory built,” said **Tony Lucas**, Vice President of Design and Product Development for Palm Harbor Homes.

Tony began working in manufactured housing as an engineering draftsman after studying architecture at the College of San Mateo and the University of California at Davis. He has been with Palm Harbor for five years and believes technology and factory efficiencies have helped make design more accessible to more consumers. “Frank Lloyd Wright was an inspiration to me. I admired his approach to using the materials in his buildings that were indigenous to the area,” said Lucas.

Thus, when he goes on “scouting trips” to different areas of the country where Palm Harbor is entering the market for the first time Lucas says, “I am a traditionalist in my approach to architecture. I like to know the history of the area, the geography and demographics, I want to know how people see their area and what they like. Then I design.” That’s why Lucas walked away from Asheville, N.C. with a vision of shingles, stone and a palette of colors from blues and grays, to burnt sienna and deep browns.

The emphasis today, due to consumer demand for curb appeal, is a more balanced approach between a home exterior and interior. “We were inside out,” says **Roberto Kritzer**, Vice President of Corporate Design at Champion Enterprises.

“We (the industry) traditionally concentrated on the home’s interior, but as our products got more sophisticated with advanced technologies in the factories, designers and manufacturers began paying attention to the outside of the home.”



Tony Lucas



Roberto Kritzer

Kritzer went to college in Argentina before moving to Israel where he received a degree in architecture at the Israel Institute of Technology. While there, he became interested in factory built housing construction and continued in the industry when he arrived in the U.S. “This is a satisfying and rewarding job,” he says. “We build homes in a factory controlled environment and make quality products as appealing and exciting as site-built.”

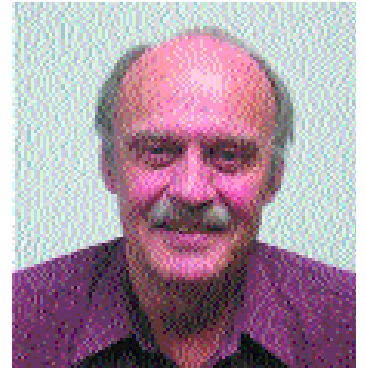
**Jeff Wooldridge**, Director of Product Design, at Fleetwood Enterprises, said “What I enjoy most is trying to emulate site-built exterior elevations, given the challenges we have to work with, including the size of the units we can work with in a factory, transportation issues and other factors.” So, like other manufacturers in the industry, Fleetwood Homes is doing what industry architects call “breaking the box.”

The manufactured and modular housing industries have changed their product lines over the last 20 years by projecting out and/or recessing the exterior, making changes to the roof line with everything from hip roofs to dormer windows. Exterior finishes can include stucco, lapsiding and boardmatt. In the current housing market environment, manufacturers are finding that consumers have high expectations for the homes they want at reasonable prices. And the industry is delivering on both, while balancing the costs of building homes.

“We are always exploring new exteriors that will appeal to consumers. There’s a lot of market research involved with seeing what our competition is doing, visiting site built developments and sending our design managers on the road to potential new market opportunities,” said Wooldridge.

Wooldridge has been in the manufactured housing industry for 38 years, 33 of those years with Fleetwood Enterprises. He studied interior design in college and got into manufactured housing when Boise

Cascade was purchased by a company that produced manufactured housing. He was encouraged by a mentor to move into space and floor planning and exterior design. “I always had a keen interest in architectural design. At first it was trial and error, but I had some one kind enough to tutor



Jeff Wooldridge



Gary Brown

me over the years and I am proud of what our design team has accomplished and will continue to accomplish as design and technology continues to evolve," said Wooldridge.

Another industry architectural designer who has been enormously successful is **Gary Brown** who has been with Cavco Industries for 21 years. "I started on the production end, served in sales and moved into design almost 18 years ago," says Brown. "I had no formal training, I learned as I went...that is a very fulfilling part of the job. I was simply asked to do some design work when our company was smaller and I have truly enjoyed doing what I do," he said.

Curb appeal today also includes porches, garages, shingles and tile roofs. But, it's not all just about the exterior. The exterior must draw the consumer into the home and the interior be just as exciting. Floor plans are more open today, larger gourmet kitchens, fewer dining rooms, spa baths and other designer amenities such as hardwood floors are now incorporated into homes. And, as factory built housing production becomes more energy efficient, more and more consumers see green building as a growing component of manufactured and modular housing.

Brown saw the potential demand for energy and environmentally-friendly homes as a design challenge to tackle. The result? A solar home that Cavco plans to introduce this summer. "It is totally self contained, no electrical hook-up will be necessary. This will be especially appealing to consumers concerned about the environment and use of energy and will also appeal to consumers with lots of land that is not on an electric grid," said Brown. "The design challenge was not placing solar panels on the roof of a home, it was in the battery system. The batteries weigh 2,000 to 3,000 pounds. Figuring out where to put them and support that

kind of weight was the tough part. But, we have succeeded," he said.

These are just a few examples of the talented architects behind the exterior design innovation in manufactured and modular homes. As technology continues to advance over time, factory built homes will transform the housing products consumers have to choose from,

ultimately making them even more indistinguishable from site built homes.

Whether self-taught or trained, these and other design award winners have the vision and the talent to build quality homes from quality living. ■

*Please go to page 16 for a snapshot of all the 2008 design award winners.*



**Seamless. Nonporous. Hygienic.**

**3/4" Thick Solid Surface Vanity Tops**

**1/2" Thick Solid Surface Countertops**

**3/4" Thick Solid Surface Tub Decks**

**Array is the perfect surface.**

- Affordable upgrade from cultured marble
- Sophisticated look of high-end solid surfaces
- 12 popular designer colors, PLUS...ARRAY custom color matching service by project
- Nonporous, easy to clean, seamless, and hygienic
- Resists heat, scratching, bacterial growth, mold, mildew & staining, and surfaces can be repaired.
- 10-year limited warranty

Photos of installations featured at the South Central Show in Tunica, MS, March 28-30, 2007 courtesy of Cavalier Home Builders, LLC

**Array™**  
Acrylic Solid Surfaces

**MAXSTONE®**  
INTERNATIONAL, LLC

7401 Adrienne Place, Memphis, TN 38133, 901.366.2375, Toll Free 877.778.1149, FAX 901.366.6668  
www.MaxstoneUSA.com, email Sales@MaxstoneUSA.com