

## PERFECT SHADE

Green isn't the only color to use when building for the environment.

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## MODERN HOME BUILDER

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## PRACTICED HANDS

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Lettire Construction takes equal care with market-rate and affordable housing. Page 14



“We have built our design and sales business through our service, earning referrals and repeat business.”

**GAIL DRURY, *PRESIDENT***



President Gail Drury (left) estimates that approximately 60 percent of the 100 projects the company completes annually are kitchens, but she explains that Drury Designs works in any area of the home that has built-in cabinetry.



#### PROFILE

##### DRURY DESIGN

[www.drurydesigns.com](http://www.drurydesigns.com) / **Headquarters:**  
Glen Ellyn, Ill. / **Employees:** 14 / **Specialty:** Luxury  
kitchen and bathroom design and sales

# Design Specialists

Drury Design offers a full range of custom cabinet designs and styles, and caters to homeowners, builders and architects. **BY RUSS GAGER**

*Landing repeat and referral customers is a sign of any company's success.* Building a reputation that has sustained Drury Design's success over the past 27 years takes expertise, tenacity and longevity. "Being in business for over 25 years, some of our repeat clients are people that have moved during that time, and we are doing second kitchens for the same clients," President Gail Drury says. "Some are redoing their kitchens we previously remodeled because they are just ready for a change."

Drury Design was founded in 1987 by Gail Drury, who is certified as a master kitchen and bath designer (CMKBD) by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. Her husband, Jim, co-owner and studio manager, joined the company in 2001, the same year the company opened its second location, a 7,500-square-foot showroom in downtown Glen Ellyn, Ill.

The showroom features up to 15 room settings called vignettes that demonstrate the company's design ability. It also features two "live" kitchens that double as demo and prep kitchens during events held in the large showroom. Drury Design has completed more than 2,000 kitchens in its history, and in the last 10 years, it has won more than 50 design awards.

"We are proud to feature Grabill Cabinets in our design work and value our longstanding working relationship with them," Jim Drury says. "Grabill's responsiveness to our design ideas and work is outstanding. Regardless of the application, Grabill Cabinets has provided custom solutions with durable, beautiful, hand-fashioned cabinetry and finishes that stand up to the test of time. As a result, Drury Design has consistently been one of Grabill's top dealers throughout our 20-plus-year history with them."

Although Gail Drury estimates that approximately 60 percent of the 100 projects the company completes annually are kitchens, she emphasizes that the company's expertise in the home extends far beyond that room. "We do any area in the house that has built-in cabinetry," Gail Drury explains. "I've done whole houses, kitchens, master bathrooms, large libraries, mud rooms, master bedrooms, home offices, pool houses, computer centers, family and theater rooms." The company works in new construction and remodeling of existing homes.

## WORKING TOGETHER

Approximately 75 percent of Drury Design's projects are remodels that are contracted directly with clients, and the rest

are contracted with builders and architects. When the company's employees are chosen to design and provide cabinetry and other elements for new construction, they often work with other professionals.

"Depending on the size and cost of a new house, we are often working with the client's builder and their team," Drury says. "It often includes a builder, an architect, an interior designer and a lighting specialist."

For such projects, one or more of Drury Design's six in-house senior designers and an in-house assistant designer often lead the design process with the input of the interior designer, builder and architect.

"Frequently, we are working with builders and their clients after the architect has completed the majority of design work,"



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Drury reports. “We take care of the final space-planning and cabinet design meetings with the designer. On occasion, builders are involved in these meetings, but most of the time, we just keep the builder apprised of the final cabinet designs. The homeowners’ and builders’ budget constraints are always taken into consideration.”

Drury Design also has its own cabinet installation department, which includes a project manager supervising all installations and approximately six crews in the field. “In either construction or remodeling situations, we strongly recommend that we do the cabinet installation,” Drury emphasizes. “When we are acting as the cabinetry designer and supplier on new construction with builders, we want to make sure that our cabinets are installed by our expert installers – who are familiar with our design work – to ensure the best outcome and

to recover quickly from any supplier errors or oversights as it relates to our finished project.”

When working as full-service remodelers – which is the majority of Drury Design’s work – its own crews perform all of the work. That includes tear-outs, build-outs, plumbing and electric. Drury Design works with specialists when needed on projects such as home theaters and wine cellars.

## STEP-BY-STEP

Drury estimates that more than 80 percent of the company’s work is within the Chicago metro area – a 30-mile radius of its showroom – but it has designed kitchens as far away as Bermuda, New York and Maryland, and this year it has three projects in Michigan.

The remodeling process begins with a customer meeting at which the client’s ideas and goals are explored at his or her home and a budget analysis created with a low and high range of estimated costs based on this discussion. At a second meeting, up to four completely different floor-plan layouts are presented. Their individual merits are discussed to leave no stone unturned to achieve the ideal layout.

For the third meeting, those merits are combined into a final floor plan and the beginnings of a full set of drawings, including elevations, renderings, floor plans and electrical plans. These are presented to the customer along with a preliminary budget. Throughout the process, material options – styling, colors, architectural details – are shown and brought into the design discussion for consideration.

During the fourth meeting, the project’s final costs are determined, and the details of the project are fine-tuned. At this point, final tweaks are made, and value engineering is completed as necessary to bring the costs down. Then the project goes into the preconstruction phase. A work schedule is created, and all the materials are ordered and gathered in the company’s warehouse in advance of the confirmed construction start date.

Drury attributes the company’s success to its customer service. “At the end of the day, this is not a design business, this is a people business,” she says. “We have built our design and sales business through our service, earning referrals and repeat business. Our expertise and work examples get us the opportunities, but it is keeping our word and providing the type of service that you would like to receive that sustains our business. And if you take care of people and execute, you have something valuable to offer.

“We take care of people,” Drury stresses. “We’re the company that people come to when they want somebody to help them through the whole project – from where to get started to the very end and beyond. We do things on time, and we stand behind our products and service.” ■