

best of  
Central Vermont

# trend watch

BUILD, REMODEL, DECORATE & LANDSCAPE





**B**lake Hackerson and Alex McKenzie of Waitsfield-based Newschool Builders may be younger than many of the other building contractors on the local scene, but the partners, both in their late twenties, are well-versed in the traditional principles of construction. With more than a decade of experience each, Hackerson and McKenzie have learned the ins and outs of residential construction from master tradesmen in Vermont and beyond. Newschool Builders, now six years old, insists on superior craftsmanship in every project they take on, whether building a deck, installing a roof, or doing a complete remodel.

Combining  
Old-School  
Tradition with  
New-School  
Vision



# AWARD-WINNING NEWSCHOOL BUILDERS



Clockwise: The exterior of the award-winning remodeled home in Fayston features resilient and beautiful Western red cedar clapboard and shiplap siding. A classic, functional style for any kitchen, a deep farmhouse-style sink was a must-have for the clients. Custom-milled heart pine flooring was installed throughout the newly remodeled open floor plan for the first floor.



“We do it all,” says Hackerson. “We really shine on seeing a project all the way through. We use old-school fundamentals combined with new-school vision. We really believe in building things that last and are beautiful and functional. You see houses built 100 years ago that are still strong. That is what we are doing today.”

With their combined experience, Newschool Builders has the expertise to complete projects from framing to fine finish details. Blake and McKenzie were high school buddies at Harwood Union in Moretown. After graduating, they found themselves working as carpenters together and have been a team ever since.

McKenzie comes from a long line of woodworkers. His great-grandfather, Lynwood Smith, founded the Shelburne Craft School, and his grandfather, Lynwood (Woody) Smith, is a well-known local woodworker. “I started in carpentry when I was 14. Woodworking is in my blood and it’s my passion,” says McKenzie.

Hackerson and McKenzie’s strengths complement each other. “Blake is really good with the big picture. He’s good with clients and subcontractors, and he really keeps things flowing, while I excel in the finer details of a project. Our different personalities and abilities make for a balanced and complete team on the job site,” says McKenzie.



## THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOMEBUILDERS

The young company had its chance to shine on a renovation/addition project in Fayston last year. The high quality of their work earned them the 2013 Better Homes Award for Best Residential Renovation in the \$251,000 to \$400,000 category from the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Northern Vermont.

“The property is gorgeous, and the structure is incredible,” says Hackerson. The home’s new owners wanted to lighten up the house, have a bigger kitchen, a master bathroom, and radiant heating. To personalize the home to meet their needs, the owners turned to architect Andrew Volansky at Cushman Design Group in Stowe. Volansky and the Cushman Design team worked closely with Newschool’s Hackerson and McKenzie throughout the extensive remodeling.

The Newschool team brought their own skills to the home, as well as those of other local craftsmen. McKenzie, who specializes in custom furniture, built the dining room table from reclaimed wood that he and the homeowners found at salvage yards. The boards for the heart pine flooring were milled locally.





The kitchen was designed for space, entertaining, and comfort. The two-inch-thick wood island top has a prep sink. Tradition is incorporated in a copper ceiling and Shaker-style cabinets. Two window seats with pull-out storage drawers tie in seamlessly with trim styles and colors. The master bath features a six-foot-long claw-foot tub, his and hers custom cherry vanity, and walk-in shower with built-in bench and custom niches for soap. The dining area was transformed with a custom Shaker-style mantel, wrought iron lighting, and a unique 200-year-old table made of wood locally sourced from Shelburne.

“There aren’t many construction companies as young as we are,” says Hackerson. “We see ourselves as the next generation of fine home-builders. We may be a young company, but we have learned from the masters who have inspired us to be driven towards creating innovative and beautiful designs and to take pride in every project that we undertake.”

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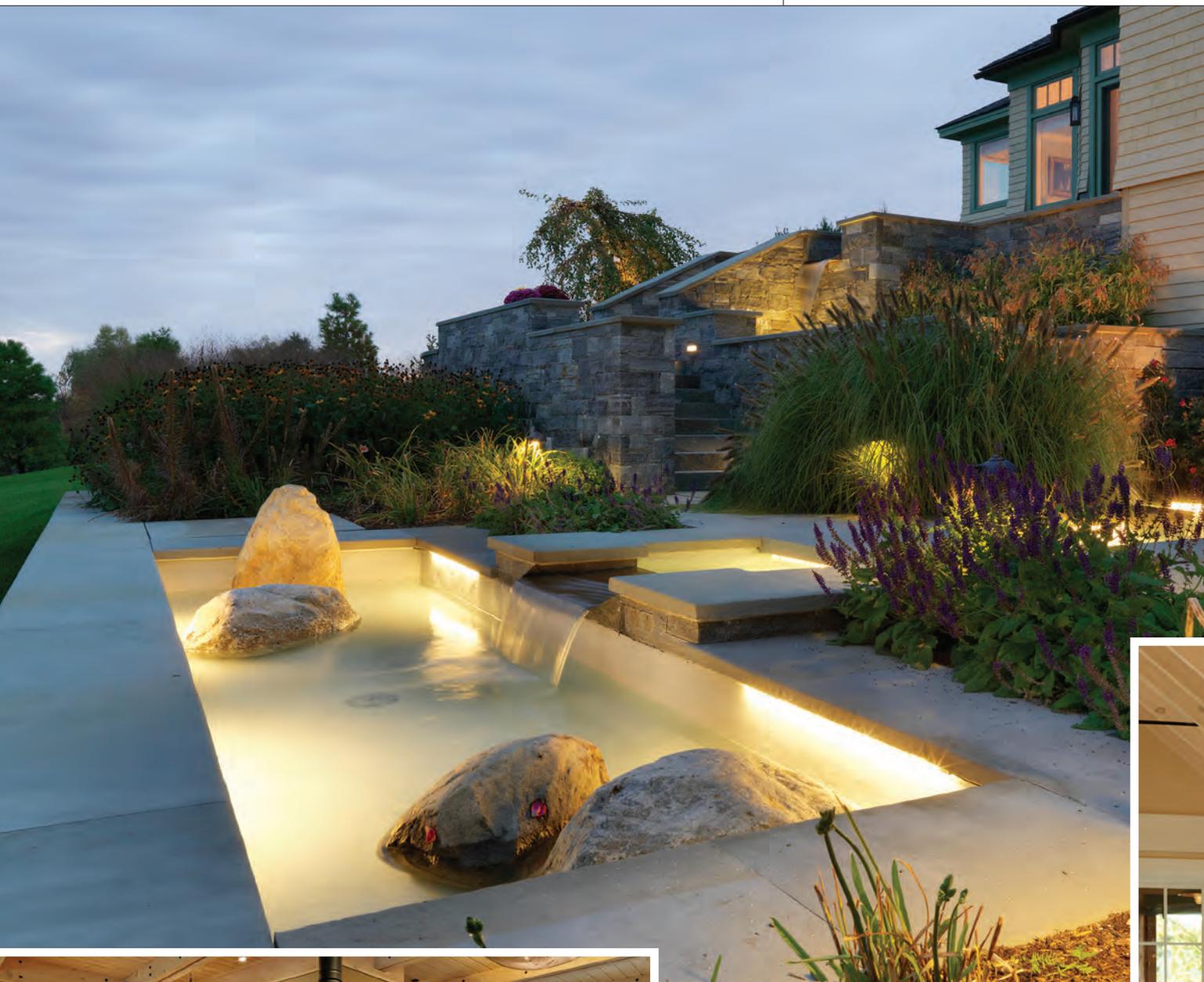


PHOTO BY SUSAN TEARE, COURTESY OF LANDSHAPES



PHOTO BY SUSAN TEARE, COURTESY OF CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP



PHOTO BY CAROLYN BATES, COURTESY OF CYNTHIA KNAUF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

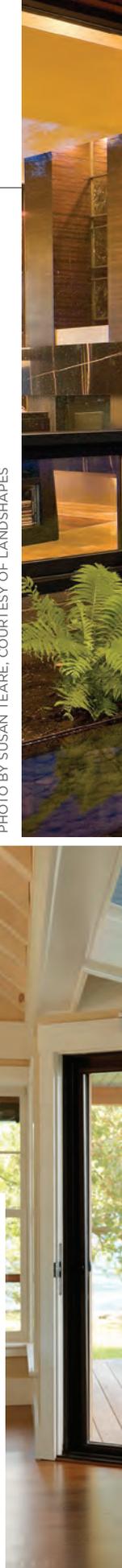




PHOTO BY JIM WESTPHALEN, COURTESY OF WAGNER HODGSON LANDSCAPE



PHOTO BY SUSAN TEARE, COURTESY OF CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP

**F**resh colors, clean lines, elegance, and harmony. This spring, even more than usual, it feels like time to refresh and renew. As we get outdoors and enjoy the delights of spring and summer, our home projects, big and small, energize us and enhance our lifestyles.

Elegant simplicity prevails indoors and out. Design experts are seeing sleek clean lines in interior spaces and furnishings. Multifunctional spaces and open floor plans give homeowners flexibility for daily living and entertaining.

Palettes are light and bright. Vivid and versatile accents bring lively splashes of color to a room. Sumptuous deep chairs and sofas transform outdoor living. Landscape designs create gathering spots around fire pits, water features, and quiet tranquil oases.

Energy efficiency and sustainability are now cornerstones of new and remodeled homes. Homeowners today have abundant options for minimizing energy use, vastly reducing their fuel bills without compromising comfort or style.

Our local architects, builders, decorators, landscape designers, and other experts know the trends and the timeless essentials to truly make our houses our homes. Take a journey through these pages with us and see what the experts are doing. You will be inspired by their skills, knowledge, and talents.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLISS CARPENTRY

“Repurposing of reclaimed objects, the creation of new products using materials in non-traditional ways, and looking for ways to make unique statements in the architecture is a continued current trend,” says Andrew Volansky, architect for Cushman Design Group. “Whether using old metal minnow traps as light fixtures, corrugated metal roofing or diamond plate steel as wall panels, or overhead garage doors to create a generous connection to the outdoors, we have had lots of fun with our clients imagining new ways to provide interesting design solutions.”

— Andrew Volansky  
Cushman Design Group, Stowe, VT



PHOTO BY SUSAN TEARE, COURTESY OF CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP

## GREEN FLOORING

“Greener options in flooring, such as reclaimed lumber and natural local stone, are in demand.”

— Dave Kerr, Owner  
Bliss Carpentry,  
Montpelier, VT