

# AMERICAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY

MAY/JUNE 2010

**TRUMBULL METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY**

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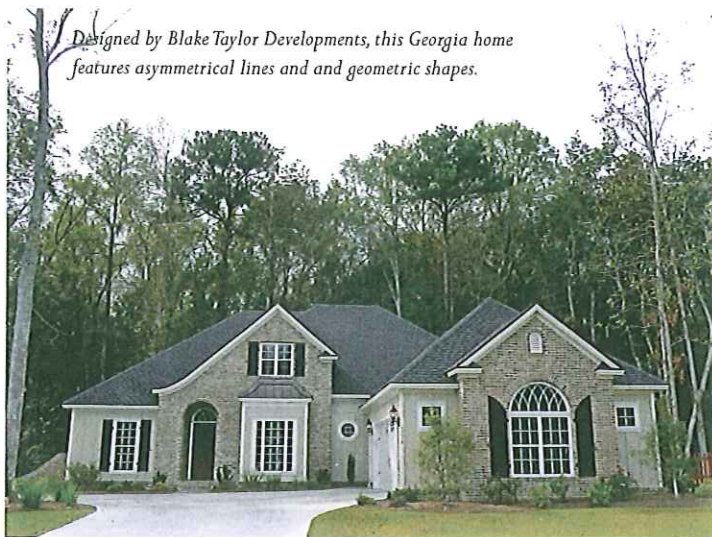
**WESTERN TILE & MARBLE CONTRACTORS, INC.**

Finishing contractor diversifies work and broadens market base to survive economic downturn

## NICKLAUS DESIGN

Legendary golfer-turned-golf-course designer and his son build on 40 years of success in creating the finest courses in the world

*Designed by Blake Taylor Developments, this Georgia home features asymmetrical lines and and geometric shapes.*



## BLAKE TAYLOR DEVELOPMENTS INC.

*Young custom-home designer and builder enjoys double-digit sales growth in a flagging economy*

BY FREDERICK JERANT

BUILDING NEW HOMES ON SPEC SEEMS COUNTER-intuitive in today's real-estate market, but Blake Taylor, the 27-year-old owner and president of Blake Taylor Developments Inc., makes it work. "In 2008, our sales were about \$2.9 million," Taylor says. "For 2009, we're looking at total sales of \$4.6 million."

With its headquarters in Valdosta, Georgia, Blake Taylor Developments specializes in new-home construction throughout the Lowndes County region, building 20 homes per year on average. Most sell in the neighborhood of \$250,000, offering between 2,100 and 2,500 square feet. Approximately two-thirds of the residences are spec homes; the rest are custom orders.

Taylor, the third member of his family to enter the construction business (following his father, Prentice, and brother, Dixon), says the growth of Valdosta State University and Moody Air Force Base are contributing factors to the company's sales increase. "Also, we're near the Florida border, and many Floridians move here because of lower tax rates and insurance costs," he adds.

What sets the company apart is Taylor's belief that, "buying a home is an emotional experience. I want people to love

what they're buying," he says. And he appeals to his customers' emotions by building homes filled with distinctive details, even his spec projects. "I like to be the innovator instead of the follower," he says.

For example, although Taylor designs effective basic floor plans, the plans are constantly evolving. "Every time I finish a house," he says, "I think of ways to improve the next one. For example, I maximize space by including very few halls. And I'm always aware of the view from each room—even if it's just one room leading into another."

Taylor's tendency toward forward thinking proved helpful during the construction of a 2,400-square-foot custom home in Hahira, Georgia, where he was faced with an oddly shaped lot—practically a triangle, he says—that required the creation of a completely new floor plan.

In the plan, the roof's main gable is centered over a bay window, not the front door; it descends 14 feet to the right and 22 feet to the left, overshooting the front door. A new brick wall nearby echoes the roofline by sloping from a height of five feet to three feet.

Other exterior highlights include:

- board-and-batten siding combined with brick and architectural shingles;
- a garage door at right angles to the rest of the property, and a T-shaped driveway;
- a solid, 12-light pine front door with a gothic circle-top window;
- a bay window with pediment crown molding and a copper roof.

The home's interior is rife with Taylor's extra touches. The main room's 22-foot-high vaulted ceiling features stained cedar beams. Rope lighting, tucked into crown molding, emits a soft glow to supplement other light sources.

In the kitchen, black-stained cabinets contrast with sleek granite countertops. Bathroom mirrors are fitted with locally made custom frames, and baseboards are triple-beaded (not flat-faced), a design element that is also included on the interior doors.

For the first five years of Blake Taylor Development's existence, Taylor was the company's sole employee. Actual construction work was handled by trusted local vendors, a practice the company continues today.

But in 2009, Taylor hired his wife, Laci, to help run the office side of the business. "She's been a big help," he says, "and now I have more time to spend in the field, doing what I love."

### AT A GLANCE

**LOCATION:**

VALDOSTA, GA

**EMPLOYEES:**

2

**AREA OF SPECIALTY:**

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF SPEC AND CUSTOM HOMES

**AVERAGE ANNUAL**

**SALES:**

\$4.6 MILLION

“

I like to be the innovator instead of the follower. —Blake Taylor, Owner & President

”

Taylor plans to expand the company slowly, adding a job-site foreman within the next five years, as he focuses on his ultimate goal of developing complete neighborhoods.

“I look at the business as a huge responsibility and privilege,” Taylor says. “I provide people with a place to share their lives together, and I’m blessed to be able to do that.” ABQ

**A MESSAGE FROM REAMES CONCRETE COMPANY**

Reames Concrete Company, est. 1978, is a family-operated businesses based in Valdosta, Georgia. We represent many manufacturers across the Southeast and offer a wide variety of quality masonry building products including brick, concrete pavers, stone, block, architectural colored concrete, bagged masonry supplies, ready-mix concrete, masonry tools, and miscellaneous accessories. Reames Concrete Company provides prompt, reliable delivery of masonry and concrete materials to single-family residences and to large commercial buildings, regardless of size.

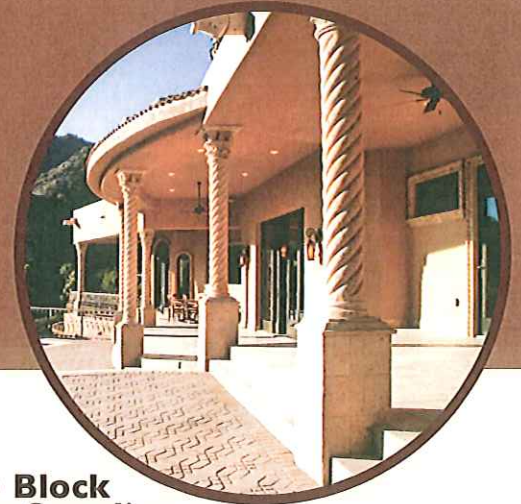
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11567 Troupeville Road  
Valdosta, GA 31602  
229.247.0277

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Valdosta, GA – 229.244.9326  
Sparks, GA – 229.549.6171  
Barretts, GA – 229.242.4042  
Nashville, GA – 229.686.7732

1208 Cypress Street  
Valdosta, GA 31601  
T: 229.244.9286  
F: 229.244.4179

