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# CRAFTING PERFECTION

URLANDO MANAGEMENT STILL BELIEVES IN DOING THINGS "THE PROPER WAY"

In an era of mass-produced, drive through commercialism, true craftsmanship is a discipline few 21st century North Americans can grasp. It's something they may get a glimpse of when they're on holiday in Europe.

As they're touring around the British Isles and they see the rock-solid castles of yore that took years for a stonemason to erect. They wonder how anyone could have the patience to wait that long for something to be built.

Fortunately, Urlando Management Inc. is one company who doesn't believe craftsmanship is a relic of the past. And when it comes to fine details and design, Rocco Urlando's eye leaves nothing unfinished.

So when one of his clients wanted a fine custom kitchen built to their specifications, he knew exactly who to call. Cameo Fine Cabinetry, who has been building custom kitchens and cabinetry for over 25 years, is like-minded with Rocco when it comes to craftsmanship.

"Our customers are looking for quality," said Marwan Rizek, owner of the Toronto-based company. "Everything is built by hand, in house. Nothing is mass-produced. We will not sacrifice quality for the sake of speed or production."

## ONE OF A KIND

Rocco called this particular kitchen a true custom job that was in a category all of its own. Like all Cameo kitchens, every piece was built by hand. "It was a



large kitchen with a very clean, minimalist look," said Rocco.

Rocco notes that a major turn-off when people go for a contemporary look is that the kitchen ends up looking more like a laboratory than a place where the family will gather for meals. However, the design team had a vision that was more warm and inviting and looked to Cameo to make that vision a reality.

Working with Cameo's designer Marcella de Graaf they created the perfect blend of a modern space, yet hospitable gathering area for entertaining or to just catch up with the family after the day's events.

"Originally [the clients] were leaning to a more traditional look, but they were drawn to the modern style kitchen and really began to like that more contemporary look," said Marcella.

By introducing exotic veneers into the cabinetry unlike many kitchens which use domestic woods, it all but eliminates the possibility of the kitchen feeling too cold and clinical. With the linear graining of the Indian Rosewood and the absence of any doorknobs, this helped to give the entire room a streamlined appearance. The oversized cream coloured "Cesar Stone" counter tops beautifully contrast against the dark stained cabinetry and help to ground the large gas cook top and double stainless steel hood.

"It's a very transitional look, both contemporary yet it has a welcome home feeling to it. I think Cameo did a fantastic job of bringing it together," said Rocco.





# FROM DRAWING TABLE TO FINISHED HOUSE

THE REALIZATION OF A DREAM HOME

Good things seem to always start small. For Rocco Urlando, over more than two decades, he's seen his business grow from humble roots as a summertime framer while studying at the University of Toronto to establishing a reputable business building fine custom homes for some of the most discerning clients.



The soft-spoken, Italian-Canadian builder hasn't looked back since he began his career when he was studying architectural design at the University of Toronto in 1982.

"I was boarding with a man who was a carpenter and, during the summer, I worked for his business," says Urlando.

It was an unusual set-up in modern-day North America, but it was strikingly reminiscent of the bygone days of the trade, when apprentices lived with their masters as they painstakingly learned a craft. It would have been fascinating to say that the carpentry trade had been passed down to Rocco through successive



generations from his ancestors in Calabria, Italy, but that wasn't the case. "My dad was a hairdresser," he chuckles.

Just the same, the trusting relationship between Urlando and his boss/landlord gave the inexperienced student the confidence to eventually lead some building projects. Urlando's education in drafting definitely gave him an edge when it came to bringing together the structure of a house.

"I'm able to visualize the space I want to create in a house. My background in design was instrumental in helping me run some of my landlord's jobs."







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## BRINGING CONCEPTS TO LIFE

THE MOST UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE COMPANY IS ITS ONE-STOP CAPACITY TO SERVICE CLIENTS

Urlando Management is now based in Mississauga, Ontario. Most of the company's clientele is in Toronto's neighbourhoods of North York and Forest Hill, but also include many projects throughout the Golden Horseshoe, from the quiet streets of Lorne Park to historic Oakville and even wine country in the Niagara Region.

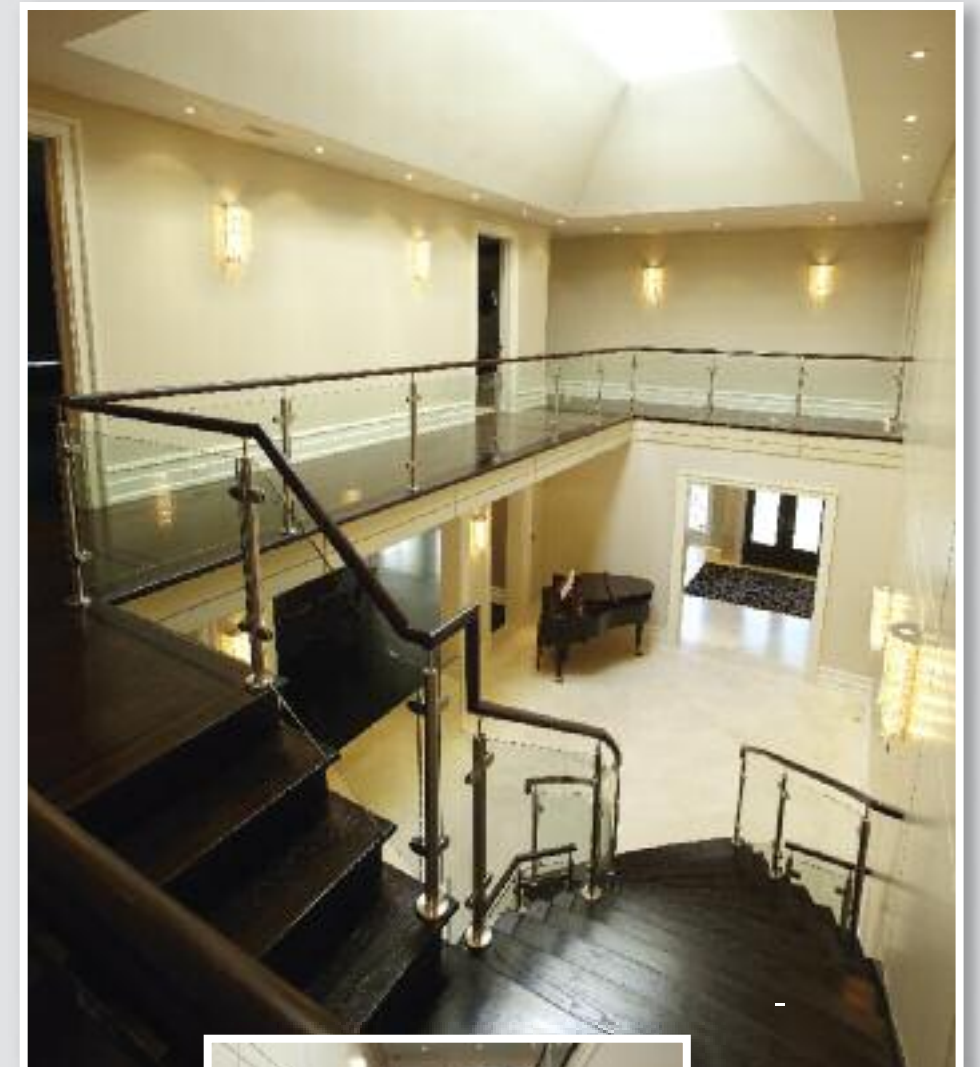
The most unique aspect of the company is its one-stop capacity to service clients. The entire process of building a fine custom home, from drafting plans to construction and even so much as finding furniture, is done under the same roof.

Every piece of an Urlando Management house has its unique signature on it.

"We specialize in everything from the initial design to interior decorating. There is very little that we can't do in-house," says Urlando.

For anyone who has had some experience in the custom home business, the advantages to this kind of "one-stop-shop" are enormous.

Most notable are that the client is dealing only with a specific point person, and the relationship between builder and client becomes more comfortable. The communication breakdown that often occurs between the construction team and designer is eliminated, as are the disparities in knowledge.





# STARTING OUT

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT MY CLIENTS WANT



When customers begin the process of building a custom home, they generally meet with an architect who, after drawing up initial plans, brings the builder into the equation. But when Orlando Management is on the job, the years of practical experience coupled with a flair for design make the process all the more fluid and seamless right from the start.

"After a few initial sketches, we can quickly go to plans. I like to listen carefully to what my clients want, rather than pushing my own ideas on them. We have the practical experience to build whatever we've designed. We never have the vicious circle of builder blaming the architect for oversights and omissions," says Orlando.

"This flexibility helps give our clients more freedom in creating the home of their dreams, and I'm not afraid of any challenges building such homes may bring," he adds.

In fact, Orlando and his team see challenges as more opportunity to find solutions and offer a personal touch. "I'm passionate about my work. I treat any house I build as though it were my own."

Rocco honed his skills over 30 years building custom homes from the ground up, working on large-scale renovations and restoring homes in older neighborhoods of Toronto. That experience became invaluable as the company matured to its present incarnation.

When the time comes to build, Orlando Management has an arsenal of some of the finest trades to call upon. Orlando has worked hard over the years to maintain good relationships with trades that are masters of their craft and he knows as well as any builder that workers make or break the project. Having people who will come through on tough assignments pays off when a challenging task crops up. The loyalty that Orlando has cultivated with his team and trades make everyone go the extra mile for their clients.



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# ALL IN THE FAMILY

FRIENDS LONG AFTER THE PROJECT IS DONE

U rlando's clients have been as varied as his designs. While their needs and dreams for a home have been diverse, they share one thing in common once they meet Rocco—they seem to all catch his contagious passion for building fine homes.

"Most of my clients have remained my friends long after the project is done," he says.

For example, when Dr. Michael Wong of Mississauga wanted to build a 5,000-square-foot bungalow in the venerable Lorne Park neighbourhood, his first call was to the man who had built his own parents' home more than a decade earlier.

"I was very happy with the way the process went. I had seen what a great job he did with my parents place and had a lot of confidence in his company," says Dr. Wong. "Rocco really went above and beyond to get the building permits through in time so that the project wouldn't be held up. He has an excellent eye for design and I was impressed with how he could really bring the new space to life."

Dr. Wong notes that having the construction and design team rolled into one was a great relief. "I felt there was much better communication since I could speak to him directly, rather than going through the builder to speak to the architect, designer or the trades."



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# THE FRENCH CONNECTION

A DREAM FOR AN OLD-STYLE FRENCH CHÂTEAU

Mike Saifer's dream was for an old-style French château to stand on the empty corner lot he owned. But having never built a house before, the task of making his vision a reality seemed daunting to say the least. Until Orlando assured him that his dream was well within reality's reach.



"I'd give Rocco my ideas and he'd make them work. He always listened to what I had in mind, but with his experience, helped me figure out what was achievable and what was over the top. No matter what kind of materials or stone we decided to use, Rocco always had his guy. His trades were phenomenal in the quality of their work."

The finished house boasted some impressive details, including a traditional château-style stone exterior and 27-foot ceilings in some parts of the house, with fireplaces going up the entire height. The neighbours noticed, too.

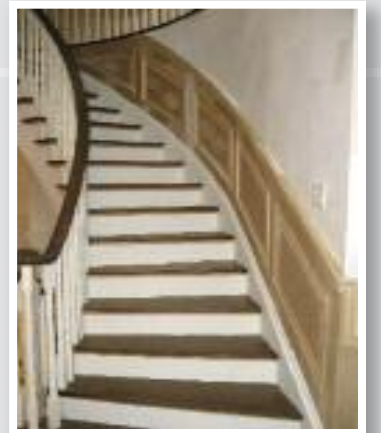
"I've had literally hundreds of people stop on the street to compliment me on the house. I didn't build this for resale. This is my dream house and I'm going to be here for a long time. Everything turned out above average to spectacular," says Saifer.



# RENOVATION RIGOURS

COMPLETELY GUTTING A HOUSE CAN BE A CHALLENGE ON ITS OWN

Completely gutting a house can be a challenge on its own. Living in the house while construction is in progress can amount to nothing short of a nightmare. Yet this was what Dave Branciere and his family decided to do when they wanted to overhaul their two-storey Cape Cod-style home.



"We considered moving, but we liked the area we lived in. We'd been there for 25 years. And we liked the exterior of our house. So we thought the best thing was to renovate," says Branciere.

Finding the right builder was the next challenge. "I wanted someone I could really trust; someone who could really manage the project well for me. I didn't want the hassle of dealing with trades. I needed a guy who could fix any problems when they came up."

A mutual friend put the Branciere's onto Rocco Orlando and they knew instantly he was the man they wanted.



"I put all my faith in Rocco and was never disappointed throughout the whole project," says Branciere. "What really impressed me was his ability to visualize exactly what you want. I had given him only a loose idea of what we needed. But he could walk into a room and see everything in his mind."

The renovation took over a year to complete. "We didn't push hard on schedules; we wanted a good job done." While living in the house was tedious, Orlando Management did their best to make it as painless for the Brancieres as possible. Branciere said he appreciated Rocco going out of his way to get the best deals on materials to ensure they stayed within budget, while not compromising on quality. In the end, it was well worth it, he says.

"I'll be sitting in my family room and looking at the new kitchen and still be awestruck. It turned out better than anything I could have imagined."





# THE FINISHING TOUCHES

IT OFTEN PAYS TO HAVE A FRESH SET OF EYES

While Orlando's company takes its work right to the finish line with the final stages of interior design, "it often pays to have a fresh set of eyes look at something," says Orlando, who doesn't hesitate to include the input of well-known designers.

Susan Brown of the Dilawri Design Group has worked with Orlando on several projects over the past few years. "It is quite rare to work with a company like Orlando Management.

Often when a team is as tight as this one, tensions rise when the client brings in a designer, but that is not the case with Orlando Management.

"They truly welcomed my ideas and I felt part of the team immediately. The quality of workmanship, as well as an approach with such honesty and integrity has enhanced the projects that we have worked on together. From my experience, the energy, creativity and attention to detail that Rocco brings makes everything flow so well for the clients, as well as the job at hand. Nothing is more satisfying as a designer than seeing my ideas and drawings perfectly executed in the home."

The end of a project can be the most critical stage, as can the immediate care afterwards, which is often a time for working out the bugs.

When Rocco says that he treats each project as if it were his own house, it's no better reflected than in his after-sales service. "I recently went back to a house we did five years ago to fix something. We stand behind our product and go well beyond our warranty to take care of our clients."



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# BLUEPRINTS FOR THE FUTURE

PLEASED WITH THE COMPANY'S DIRECTION

Looking ahead, Orlando says he is pleased with the company's direction as a leading quality home builder. "I enjoy working with these people. Staying in touch with different clients keeps things fresh," says Orlando.



He says he stays away from repeating concepts or ideas on his houses, and tries to keep everything as original as possible in each home. It has been quite successful so far, he muses. "We haven't repeated anything yet. Each one is unique in its own way."

Here's a modest man who prefers to talk about his passion for his work instead of boasting about it. But ask any of Rocco Orlando's customers or view any of his projects and either firmly attest to his commitment for fine quality work. From first taking up the pen at the drafting table, to overseeing the pouring of concrete and the framing of walls, to visualizing finishing details, Orlando is a builder that truly believes in turning out a home that is not merely a product, but also a realization of someone's dream.



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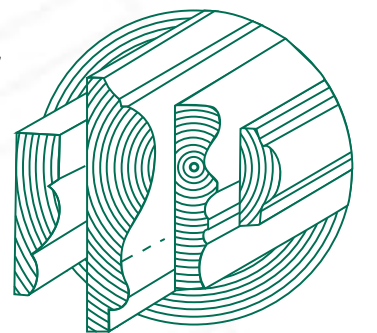
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