

November/December 2003

# Custom Home

The Art and Craft of Custom Home Building / A Hanley-Wood Publication

## 2003 Pacesetter Award Winners



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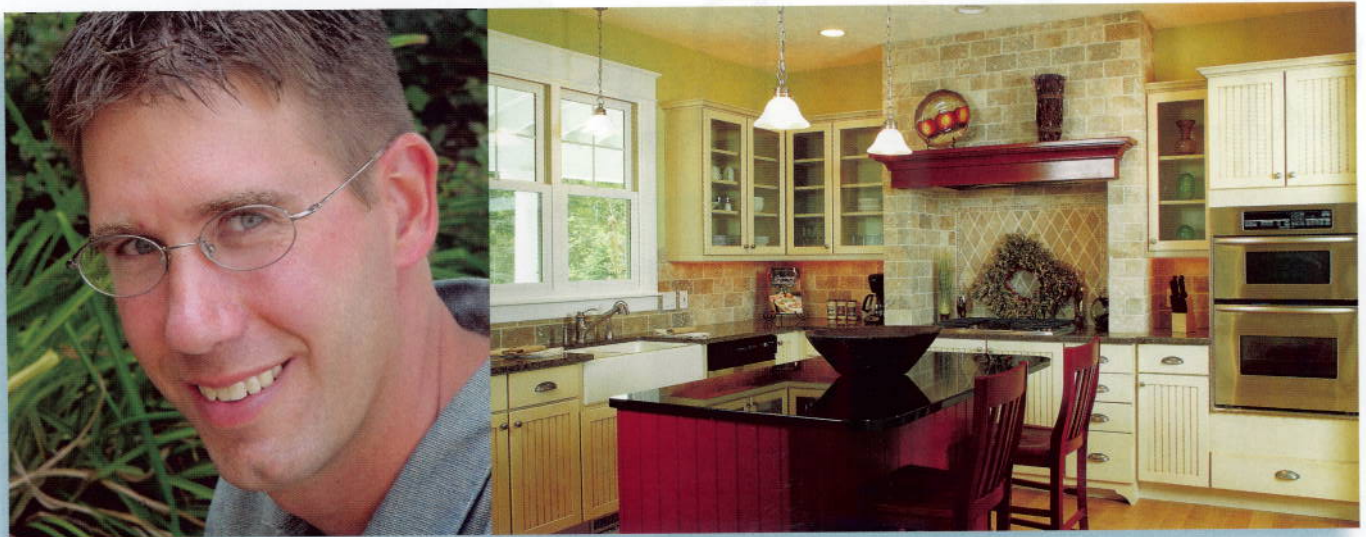
It makes sense that Cottage Home, a company designing and building summer homes on the shores of Lake Michigan, would come up with a marketing scheme that includes a vacation. "We wanted to have a permanent model," says president Brian Bosgraaf, "but I thought it was a waste for it to sit empty." Plus, most people drive two or three hours to get there, so a logical solution was to let clients inhabit the model for a few days. ■ "We invite contracted clients to stay in the house for free," explains Bosgraaf. They're

# Brian Bosgraaf

encouraged to try out everything.

The house is packed with high-end materials and appliances, so there's

usually an upgrade the client can't live without after having lived with it. Bosgraaf jokes with customers that, "we don't charge rent to stay, but it's going to cost you." It's not such a joke considering Cottage Home made approximately \$150,000 in upgrade sales



The kitchen in the live-in model home (above right) tempts clients with granite countertops, an oversized farmer's sink, top-of-the-line appliances, and custom cabinets.

last year. ■ In addition, Cottage Home sponsors an annual summer celebration with food, drink, music, and either a horse-drawn carriage or golf cart to take guests around to open houses. Bosgraaf also hosts a client golf tournament. "It's a great way to get clients together and talking about their experiences," he says, "and it's fun for the staff." ■ Cottage Home also follows through on smaller details like making sure each construction site

prominently displays their company name and logo. Each site is kept clean and safe for people who may be driving by and want to have a look. Before ground is broken, a staff member visits each neighbor to introduce the company and talk about the project.

■ As a personal welcome, Bosgraaf has designed a porch swing (which is part of the company logo) that he offers to build and install free for every client who wants one. —S.D.H.

Cottage Home  
Holland Mich.  
Type of business: design/  
custom home builder and  
remodeler  
Years in business: 3  
Employees: 11  
2002 volume: \$3.8 million  
2002 starts: 6