

## Visit IHP's website

We've added a "featured project" page to our website along with many examples of the work we've done.

If you visit our website at [www.ihpbuilders.com](http://www.ihpbuilders.com) you might even see a picture of the project we did for you!

## Referral Rewards

IHP knows the best advertising is word of mouth from satisfied customers.

So please give the enclosed card to a friend, family member, or neighbor. Tell them about the good experience you had with us, and we'll make it worth your while. You get a \$100 gift check for each job we sign with your referrals.

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## What's New?

We too, are back to school in September. We're never too old to learn. As a matter of fact, we should try to learn something new everyday.

As a remodeling contractor, the State of Minnesota requires annual continuing education as a condition of holding our license. Our world is constantly changing with new technologies, new code requirements

and new discoveries for old problems such as mold and moisture damage.

National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) members have an exceptional opportunity every year at NARI sponsored seminars. This year's seminars are in September at the JLC Live Residential Construction Show in Minneapolis; they are taught and attended by

key people in the remodeling industry. The hidden value in these events extends throughout year. The network of industry experts we develop help us and our clients address remodeling project issues. We are fortunate and proud to be members of NARI Minnesota. The educational opportunities and access to a network of associates in the industry are keys to our success.

## Lower Level Finishing—Points to Ponder

Lower level finishing is a cost-effective way of adding usable square footage to your home while increasing its value.

Whatever you're looking for from your lower level, whether it is more bedrooms, an extra bathroom, entertainment space or an office, there are things to consider when planning for your project that will make the transition from dreams to reality a bit easier. This is the first in a series of articles on lower level finishing that will be a regular segment over several issues of our newsletter.

In this series we will cover project budgeting, trim & cabinet style considerations, options for space utilization, flooring possibilities, wall and ceiling surfaces & designs, lighting, moisture and insulation issues, heating and ventilation, and egress requirements. If your lower level is finished, we encourage you to pass the newsletter on to a friend or relative who may find it helpful.

### THE PROJECT BUDGET

The first two things that need to be determined when planning

for any remodeling project are: "How much do I want to spend?" and "How much will this cost?" The questions need to be answered in that order.

There are several factors in determining how much money to commit to a project. Affordability is one factor. Is the job financed? If so, what payment is affordable? Are the funds coming from savings? Another thing to consider is the reason for finishing the space. If it is a need to add basic functionality like a bedroom and bathroom, then one can stick to the basics and keep costs down. If the project design goals are for a high-end space, for entertaining, recreation, incorporating a fireplace, or a wet bar for example, then you may want to spend more to get what you are looking for.

The value and style of the existing home will many times dictate what makes sense. Always remember when setting a budget to leave yourself some wiggle room (generally 5% of the overall project) for mid-project changes and upgrades. Once your general budget is established then we can design



A wet bar can add a beautiful focal point to your lower level.

around the budget and your goals. At our initial consultation, we use our project review checklist to efficiently cover a majority of the possible options for lower levels in a room by room, floor to ceiling fashion.

During this discussion we address the feasibility of the options and if they affect the project budget. Once through the checklist, we can discuss rough costs and together decide if a detailed bid and proposal is the next step. If there are unanswered questions and extensive design work is needed, a design contract may be the best step forward. We have design resources available for interior design, audio-video-theater, as well as cabinets and counter-tops.

*(continued)*

## Profile: Engstrom Wood Products Inc.



From custom kitchen cabinetry to home theatres and entertainment centers, Engstrom Wood Products works to ensure the cabinetry in your project is the highest quality and delivered on-time. Now four years in business, Engstrom Wood Products specializes in high quality and high value products. Don't be fooled by this relatively new company. Brian Engstrom, owner of Engstrom Wood Products has been in the cabinet making business for over 25 years.

Brian attended North Hennepin Technical College for cabinet making and started his work experience with a company building kitchen

cabinets in new homes. Three years later he was working for a commercial contractor building custom fixtures for stores such as Coach Leatherwear, Calvin Klein and Polo Ralph Lauren, nationally and internationally.

"It really helped [with] experience as far as working with...bent glass, veneering, curved cache wraps; anything they could throw at us, they did... Anything you could do with wood, we pretty much did it."

If you have a vision for your home project, Integrity Home Projects will coordinate with Engstrom Wood Products to fulfill your dreams. When it comes to working with IHP, Brian states:

"They are very organized, they make sure they have all the details covered; [they] have the delivery date and they let me know up front when the job needs to be

done and they are very good at working out the details with me...they are a very unique contractor to work with."

Strong communication means a better end product for the customer. "There is less confusion, so the homeowner gets what they want. [IHP] communicates very well...to make sure everything is right before we start the cabinet."

EWP provides the highest quality in every product. With Brian's experience driving his team of journeymen cabinet makers, all the cabinet construction is done in-house, from building the cabinets, to finishing.

"The focus is on quality: trying to make every project a show-piece...we want everyone to look at their project and say wow...this is really nice." The in-house finishing department keeps the system efficient and lower cost than competitors. In this way, EWP is able to provide more value in their products than competitors.

In a typical project, Brian will coordinate with you and IHP to determine the scope of the project. Using a Computer Aided Design (CAD) program, Brian creates a cut list for the entire project, which is sent to the shop.

After cutting, the body and frame are assembled and shelves are cut.. Depending on the project, the cabinet would then move into the finishing department next to the woodshop. When completed, the cabinet is shipped out and either installed by IHP or by EWP.

Engstrom Wood Products has built custom bars, entertainment centers, theatre rooms and bathroom fixtures, including linen closets and vanities. When it comes down to it, Brian says, "I don't want my customer to be disappointed in their cabinet." To learn more about incorporating Engstrom Wood Products into your home project, contact Dan with IHP at (763) 286-7429, or visit us online at [www.ihpbuilders.com](http://www.ihpbuilders.com).



**"They are a unique contractor to work with"**  
-Brian Engstrom

## Lower Level Finishing—Points to Ponder (continued)

### TRIM AND CABINET STYLES – MATCH OR DIFFERENT?

The existing finished space in a home with an unfinished lower level is likely done with the same species of wood for all of the cabinets, common wood moulding styles and species throughout, and the same general style throughout, with decorating and furniture identifying the character for each room. A finished lower level can maintain the same mouldings and cabinet styles, wood species and stain colors as the upper levels, OR it can be a very different style from the rest of the home, bringing in multiple wood species or changing to enameled wood trim.

Ask yourself, "When I walk into my finished lower level, what do I want to see and feel? What do I want others to see as a first impression?" There is no right answer. It is a personal choice. Your budget may play a role in the decision. If you want a seamless blend with the rest your home, leave the styles alone. If you want to feel like you have a special place, a center-piece, a very noticeable difference when you walk down the steps, then start looking through magazines, touring model homes, surf the net, and get a feel for what is out there. The possibilities are nearly unlimited. We can help make the decision process easier with our interior design resources and 3D CAD

design capabilities. The custom millwork shop at Scherer Brother Lumber provides unlimited possibilities for mouldings. The custom cabinet capabilities of Engstrom Wood Products (see feature

article) gives us the ability to design and install something to match your existing cabinets or match a photo you found. We would love to help you explore the possibilities.



Built-in cabinets can match your upper levels or be totally different.