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AWARD WINNER



3030 W. Salt Creek Lane, Suite 201
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
847.391.1000 • Fax: 847.390.0408

STAFF

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Denise Dersin
703.992.7640; ddersin@sgcmail.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Amy Albert
818.308.6648; aalbert@sgcmail.com

SENIOR EDITOR

Mike Beirne
847.391.1051; mbeirne@sgcmail.com

CONTENT MANAGER

Ingrid Bush
202.780.9591; ibush@sgcmail.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Michael Chamernik
847.954.7976; mchamernik@sgcmail.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Susan Bady | Bob Schultz | Scott Sedam

DESIGNER

Robin Hicks

GROUP DIRECTOR – PRINCIPAL

Tony Mancini
484.412.8686; tmancini@sgcmail.com

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Judy Brociek
847.954.7943; jbrociek@sgcmail.com

DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Doug Riemer

CREATIVE SERVICES ASST. MANAGER

Holly Dryden

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Michael Porcaro
847.954.7925; mporcaro@sgcmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

Circulation Department, Professional Builder
3030 W. Salt Creek Lane, Suite 201
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
circulation@sgcmail.com

REPRINTS

Adrienne Miller
847.391.1036; amiller@sgcmail.com

CORPORATE

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Going All Out

Outdoor spaces that can function as living rooms are expected in warm climates, but they've quickly gained traction in places where it's probably snowing right now. Outdoor spaces make a home live bigger and better, of course—and in northern latitudes especially, who doesn't want to celebrate late sunsets by making each summer day last as long as possible? So why talk about outdoor spaces in the dead of winter? Because as you plan for the year ahead, you may be thinking about them already.

Nick Lehnert, director of research and development at KTG Architecture + Planning, tracks design trends and figures out how best to deliver them in the form of sweet-spot amenities. Outdoor spaces are a biggie. Based in Irvine, Calif., Lehnert has more than four decades in home building and knows about how to make outdoor rooms easier to conceive of. He knows the challenge of working fresh-air spaces into a cohesive array of multiple plan options; he gets the demands of density and tricky lot configurations. Lehnert wants to help builders leverage outdoor spaces like any other asset. On page 126, he offers some how-tos for working exterior spaces into the side, front, rear, or center of a home.

We start 2016 with a hefty issue of *Professional Builder* that's chockablock with interesting and useful content. The cover story is, of course, the 33rd edition of *The New American Home*. But there's more.

While prognosticators have offered promising views on 2016, and we like that, we also offer wisdom from industry veteran Tony Callahan, who takes the long view with excellent business advice in "Lessons From the Downturn," page 38. Callahan reminds us that though we can't control the next dip in the market, we can learn to weather it better than the last down cycle.

As you ponder how best to deliver to your target market in 2016 and beyond, take a look at "50 Must-Haves" on page 79, our story in which industry experts share what buyers are asking for—the features that can help win the sale. Speaking of winners, turn to page 92 to see some of the homes that nabbed platinum awards in this year's Best in American Living Awards from the NAHB.

It seems like there's a smartphone app for everything, but our associate editor Michael Chamernik reports on those that are most useful for builders in "App Happy," on page 133. Finally, on page 140, our House Review team offers plans for pocket neighborhoods.

Here's to a healthy, satisfying, and productive year ahead. Meanwhile, enjoy our January issue.

Amy Albert, Editor-in-Chief

aalbert@sgcmail.com

@ProBuilderMag



WORKING OUTDOOR SPACES INTO A WIDE
ARRAY OF PLAN OFFERINGS IS GOOD BUSINESS