



Quality Craftsmanship | Stowe, Vermont

the craftsman.

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Experience, Knowledge, Creative Solutions Make Dream Homes More Affordable

By Kate Carter

Due to Sisler Builders' extensive experience and knowledge, we have the ability to devise creative solutions for challenging scenarios and guide clients to quality, value-conscious choices, which result in cost savings during construction. We are also able to save money in the long run for our clients. When we build a house, we do it right the first time, so that 50 years later the building still performs well, without having major costly problems. We have been called in to fix other builders' mistakes—rot, ventilation, insulation, air sealing, poor indoor air quality—that are avoidable. Whether it's engineering challenges, design guidance, energy efficiency, or product sourcing, we have the expertise to steer a project so



Little River Overlook. Photo by Kate Carter.

that it is most cost effective. Here are two examples of houses where, with our expertise, we were able to save the owners money while building their dream homes.

Family Getaway

A skiing family took a vacation at Smugglers' Notch Ski Resort and decided to visit Stowe. They fell in love with the town, the ski area, the people, and the fact that it was only a three-hour drive from where they lived on the coast of Massachusetts. A decision was made: Stowe was where they would vacation and



Erica Allen

where they would eventually retire. It was 2013 and real estate inventory was slim. They couldn't find a suitable house, so they decided to build. They found a lot they liked, and they found Sisler Builders.

The couple spent two years planning, and in 2015 they started the building process.

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Homes *cont. from page 1*

The lot was located in Robinson Springs, a neighborhood near the ski slopes that consists of generally high-end luxury homes. This one was going to be on the lower end of that spectrum.

The site was difficult, with a steep grade on one side that required a massive retaining wall to create a level area to build on. The owners and Sisler Builders collaborated with Cushman Design Group. With our guidance we turned the steep grade to our advantage and placed the bedrooms in the window-rich basement level, rather than the usual second story above the main floor, reducing the overall cost. Sisler Builders and



Family Getaway. Photo by Luke Sisler.

the owners detailed the rest of the house as they proceeded through the building process.

Thanks to our expertise, professionalism, and good communication the owners were comfortable working exclusively with us, avoiding design fees and saving additional cost by streamlining the

process. The main level has timber frame accents, native maple flooring, a spalted maple dining bar and staircase handrails, and antique barn wood for the kitchen and bath cabinets and accent paneling. These tastefully implemented accents make the house special without breaking the budget.

“For me, the process was all pleasure,” said the wife. “I had my own ideas and Sisler Builders had input and was easy to work with. I love the wood trim, the way the house smells, how cozy and warm it is. And I love the relationships we’ve developed with Steve and Sharon Sisler and project manager Brian Irwin. It was all so much fun to build my forever home.”

Little River Overlook

Another family, this one from Virginia, wanted a vacation home in a three-season-town. They also wanted airport accessibility and to be close to outdoor recreation. They were open to all options and were willing to buy or build, as long as the project was affordable. While visiting relatives in Montreal, they spent a weekend in Stowe and knew it was where they wanted to be.

“We started looking and found a property with a 1974 chalet on it. We bought that and an adjacent lot,” said the wife. “My husband loves designing houses, and he envisioned one to put on the property next to the chalet. We met with Steve Sisler and began by renovating the chalet first.”

When work began on the adjacent lot, the couple hired Cushman Design Group to design the house’s structure in partnership with the husband’s vision. The challenge was not the house, but the site. It is

situated on a steeply sloping lot overlooking the Little River. We acted as the owners’ representative to work with surveyors, civil engineers, and town representatives to achieve adequate setbacks and a site that was

feasible to build on. The initial design had sloped the house along the steep contours, which is expensive to build. Instead, we employed a simple retaining wall system that saved \$25,000 in foundation costs.

The dramatic three-level home has modern touches on the inside, including black painted kitchen cabinets, structural steel stair supports, and transparent cable balustrades. Tasteful details include partial Douglas fir timber frame, main living area paneling and trim, also of Douglas fir, Brazilian cherry floors



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at upper levels, a radiant polished concrete floor on the lower level, and exotic tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms. A screened porch is outfitted for grilling and the patio is situated for outdoor creek-side dining.

“The house is beautifully done,” said the wife. “We were in Virginia and we got weekly photos from project manager Shawn Thompson. Once in awhile we’d go up to see the progress. It went so smoothly and was a good experience. We love it all year round, but especially in summer.”

Crew With Kids

By Kate Carter

We feel that in order to attract and retain hard-working, capable, and motivated employees we need to respect their busy lives. Our staff is comprised mostly of men. Some are starting families, while others have grown children. It can be tough to juggle schedules to meet everyone's needs. We know. We raised two boys. Meet five exceptional employees who appreciate a flexible schedule so they can be dependable dads, present for their kids.

Seth Allen

Seth works in our wood-working department and has been with Sisler Builders for seven years. He has two daughters, Francis, age seven, and Coco, age five.



His wife, Erica, is a freelance photographer and often travels for work. "Steve gives us the ability to tend to our kids. He knows family is important. Sometimes I have to take the kids to school and don't get in to work until 10 a.m. and Steve is totally flexible about it." Seth was recently diagnosed with nodular sclerosis lymphoma and has missed work due to chemotherapy and its side effects. His job building beautiful cabinetry and furniture is waiting for him to return full time. Seth is grateful and says, "Working for Sisler Builders turned out to be a pleasant surprise. Steve's been good to me and my family."

Bryan Kelley

Bryan is a project manager for a large house going up in Robinson Springs. He started with Sisler Builders two years ago, when he and his wife, Tara, moved to Stowe. Their son Finn is eight months old and goes to daycare most days. Juggling pick-up and drop-off times would be a problem if it weren't for the flexibility Bryan's job provides. "It's awesome working for Sisler Builders," Bryan says. "Family is important, it's not an afterthought. It's nice to know that my employer understands that. I've worked for companies where this was not the case. It's great to have a fresh mindset."



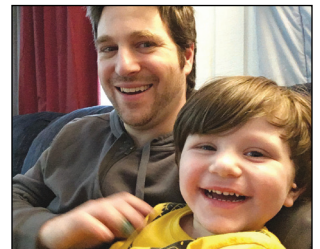
Nate Lewis

The new kid on the block, Nate has been working for Sisler Builders for just over a year. He's been doing construction since he was 16 and is currently a site supervisor for a renovation project in Stowe Hollow. His wife, Chelsea, also works full time. They have a two-and-a-half-year-old son, Jack. "The company is understanding if I have fatherly duties to tend to. It's an advantage, just understanding that when Jack is sick at daycare I will have to pick him up if Chelsea can't." Jack has been to his dad's job site to see what he does all day. He likes it and looks forward to seeing the excavators. "The flexibility we have at Sisler Builders is an added bonus," Nate says. "It's a real advantage to be working for a company that cares about its employees."



Sivan Mesner

A carpenter at the Lifeline project at Spruce Peak, Sivan has been with Sisler Builders for four years. His wife, Mandy, is a gardener; their son, Julius, is three. Mandy has taken Julius to see his dad on the job site. "Although he's only three, he knows what I do all day," Sivan says. Schedule flexibility is important to Sivan, especially when it comes to child care duties and also emergencies. "I come in late two days a week so I can drop Julius off at day care, and I make up the work another time. If Julius is sick at day care, I am able to leave and go help with that." Sivan says Sisler Builders is a good company for work culture, flexibility, and varied schedules. "As long as we are producing results, we can have some freedom."



Shawn Thompson

Shawn has been with Sisler builders for six years, moving through various jobs to where he is now, project facilitator. "I've known the Sislers for most of my life and have a special relationship with the



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Be Social With Us!

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We are also on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Houzz. Like us, love us, follow us, call us!



Crew

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company and the family. When Lily was born they gave her an ‘intro to carpentry’ toy tool set.” Shawn’s soon-to-be-wife Samantha does bodywork and has an unpredictable schedule, so Shawn especially values the company’s flexibility and commitment to family. “I am able to leave at a moment’s notice to pick Lily up at day care if she’s sick,” he says. Lily, age 2, is too young to understand where daddy goes everyday, she just knows he goes somewhere. “Her mom always tells her I’m at work and she replies, ‘daddy working.’”

Ask the craftsmen.

What are the differences between composite decking products and real wood?

We feel composites still have issues that make them less desirable than wood. They have resin, cellular PVC, and fiber-based fillers. The fillers expand, causing the boards to swell. The resins and PVC get uncomfortably hot in summer. Composites also lack dimensional stability, so they sag between structural members.

Wood decking comes primarily in three flavors, listed here in ascending initial cost: pressure-treated southern yellow pine, red cedar, and a tropical hardwood called ipe. Pressure treated is infused with chemicals to make it rot resistant, lasting 20 years, but it shrinks, cracks and splinters, causing a rough unattractive surface. Cedar is beautiful but requires costly maintenance. Ipe can be sealed, giving it a gorgeous teak look, but then needs resealing. We prefer untreated ipe which weathers to a nice medium gray, lasts 50 years, and long term is the lowest cost.