

Building

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Building Perfection An Architect's Perspective

Written By Edie Broida

Someone once said no one ever built the perfect house.

Award-winning architect Dominick Tingal believes he came close enough to perfection with the prototype home he designed last year for Moorari Development's master planned community. The Oaklands, in Oakland Township. The proof? Last June he moved his family into "the Alexis," a home he describes as a sanctuary, its design "shifting away from formality toward livability."

Dominick believes the 21st century has brought an increased emphasis on family life and relaxation, especially since September 11. His new home, which he personally designed, furnished and accessorized, readily accommodates formal occasions in the music and dining rooms and, weather permitting, in lavish classical gardens. The rest of the home emphasizes comfort and fun. The lower level includes an 18th century-style pub, a wine cellar, boxing room, theater and arcade.

Dominick's clients could comprise a "Who's Who of Distinguished Homebuyers in Southeastern Michigan." Their homes are mostly sprawling mansions representing a wide range of architectural styles, but he has also designed equally impressive homes for narrow, in-fill sites. He and his associates have been together for over 18 years, planning and designing over 2,500 of Michigan's most outstanding residential homes and communities.

Custom homebuilders can view the firm's work in his recently published text, *Residential Architecture: Living Places*, first in projected series designed to help builders and homebuyers. It is a stunning volume, worthy of the most elegant library or coffee table.



His book states his professional philosophy: "A house should reflect its inhabitants' lifestyle, not that of the architect's."

Dominick tells clients that the architect and builder cannot work in isolation. He advises them to choose a builder early on, based on reputation and expertise. Then, he says, he and the builder and ideally, an interior designer, become a team with members of his firm. Once the builder understands his design, he gives the builder free rein to develop it any way he can.

Presently Dominick has numerous lavish homes underway, but his newest project and passion is creating neighborhood communities with Biltmore Properties. The concept of "sanctuary" is paramount once again. Both the Cherry Hill Village development in Canton and the new Forester Square development in Auburn Hills, feature neo-traditional homes ranging from cottages to estates, painted in bright colors and featuring inviting porches. They are surrounded by parks, pedestrian paths, bike trails, common areas and neighborhood shopping plazas. They are the first of this type of historic traditional neighborhood development planned communities in the Midwest. Like Dominick's sumptuous Alexis show house, they combine timeless architecture with modern life.