



Builder News

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When Less Is Moore

Builder Tom Moore Takes Efficiency To The Next Level

By Amy Rubin

For more than 30 years, Underhill Center builder Tom Moore has built his reputation on the details. Whether constructing complete structures, doing renovations, or creating custom interiors, Moore, 50, puts his signature craft into everything from countertops to cabinetry, and raised panel walls to coffered ceilings, in expertly blended natural woods, stone and tile. It's the kind of attentive work that has earned Tom Moore Builder, Inc. a total of 12 "Better Homes" awards in the last four years from the Homebuilders and Remodelers Association of Northern Vermont.

"I always try to get my clients involved in Vermont ENERGY STAR Homes. It makes your house healthier and more efficient, and for resale value, having an ENERGY STAR home is a plus thing..."

Tom Moore

You'd think Tom Moore could rest on his laurels. But last year, in keeping with his philosophy that "every home I build, I try to make better," Moore researched a book called *The Not So Big House* by Sarah Susanka. The book's premise – build the sturdiest, most comfortable and detailed house for the

budget, instead of the biggest house – struck a chord.

Moore took that insight and turned it into inspiration. Today – in addition to his existing clientele – Moore is hoping to appeal to customers who'll appreciate living in a smaller detailed space, for its comfort, efficiency, and ease of maintenance. Moore proposes to use his detailed approach in homes averaging less than 3,000 square feet. With nearly every available inch built as functional space – closets, shelving, storage, cabinetry – the houses will be, according to Moore, "like you might have seen 75 years ago, instead of what we have been building the last 50 years. Everything has a little character that you just don't see anymore."

This addition to his business is a natural one for Moore, who considers his latest focus a logical extension of his 30+ year commitment to efficient building practices. Incorporating "as much energy

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This extensively detailed ENERGY STAR® labeled model home was recently constructed by Tom Moore Builder, Inc. in Underhill Center. See page 5 for interiors of this home.

Photos by Barry Lampke.



or 20 cfm continuous exhaust vented to the outdoors. For kitchens, Vermont ENERGY STAR Homes strongly recommends at least 100 cfm intermittent or 25 cfm continuous exhaust vented to the outdoors. All clothes dryers must be vented directly to the outdoors.

Combustion Safety

In today's tight homes, the following precautions must be taken to prevent combustion appliances from venting into living spaces:

- All combustion appliances (boilers furnaces, water heaters) must be vented to the outside and either sealed-combustion, direct vent, power-vented, induced draft, or aerodynamically decoupled from the indoor air.
- Woodstoves and fireplaces (wood or gas) must have tight-fitting doors and ducted outside combustion air.
- Attached garages must be air-sealed from living areas.

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efficiency as the client will allow" into building designs, Moore is a vocal advocate of efficient technology.

"I always try to get my clients involved in Vermont ENERGY STAR Homes," says Moore. "It makes your house healthier and more efficient,



Dining room by Tom Moore Builder, Inc.

and for resale value, having an ENERGY STAR home is a plus thing. I tell my clients, 'You're going to reap the benefits of cost savings and a healthy environment for years to come.' "

Moore comes by his efficient approach honestly. His father, E.T. Moore – who started the company Tom now runs – was, according to the younger Moore, "always a stickler for a well-insulated house." When Tom took over the reins of E.T. Moore & Sons in the 1980s, he renamed it and expanded the company's services to include fine woodworking. The wood shop he built now employs six craftsmen who create furniture, cabinetry, and custom interiors for clients throughout Vermont, New York and Massachusetts.



Kitchen by Tom Moore Builder, Inc.

To showcase the newest facet of his business, Moore recently completed his first "not so big" structure; an ENERGY STAR labeled model home in Underhill Center. The extensively detailed house offers under 2,000 square feet of living space, yet seems to defy visitors to think of it as anything but luxurious. Moore also is using this project to highlight the time-saving benefits of erecting a high-quality modular shell that he describes as "nothing like the double-wide trailer image of modular. The technology is spectacular, and we have a framed shell we can start putting finishes on in one week instead of ten."

The house also serves as home for Moore's sons – Lincoln, 21, and Justin, 23 – who make Tom Moore Builder Incorporated a three-generation company. At 80, company founder, E.T. Moore still plays a vital role in the business as computer programmer. That's a level of ongoing commitment that Tom has clearly inherited.

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Fireplace and mantel by Tom Moore Builder, Inc.

"I'm trying and testing new efficient products all the time," says Tom Moore, who has built four ENERGY STAR® labeled homes in the past three years. "I've learned a tremendous amount from Vermont ENERGY STAR Homes about good and poor building practices. I've been building 30 years and I'm still learning every day."

Efficiency Vermont Builder News is published to inform the Vermont building community about cost-effective, energy-efficient residential construction opportunities.

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