

LUXURY HOME

quarterly



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privacy of residences while minimizing the collective carbon footprint of the community, and the use of tropical woods on the homes' exterior will be prohibited.

Benchmark plans to donate more than five acres of the land to the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, which will act as an environmental steward. Maintaining the area's wild beauty is a critical factor to attract homeowners in the target bracket, Good says. "Most of our clients come to Sanibel because they are not attracted to the more manicured Palm Beach or Naples look that you find in a typical Florida development," Good says. "A lot of our clients feel the islands have a more casual, organic, natural feel to it."

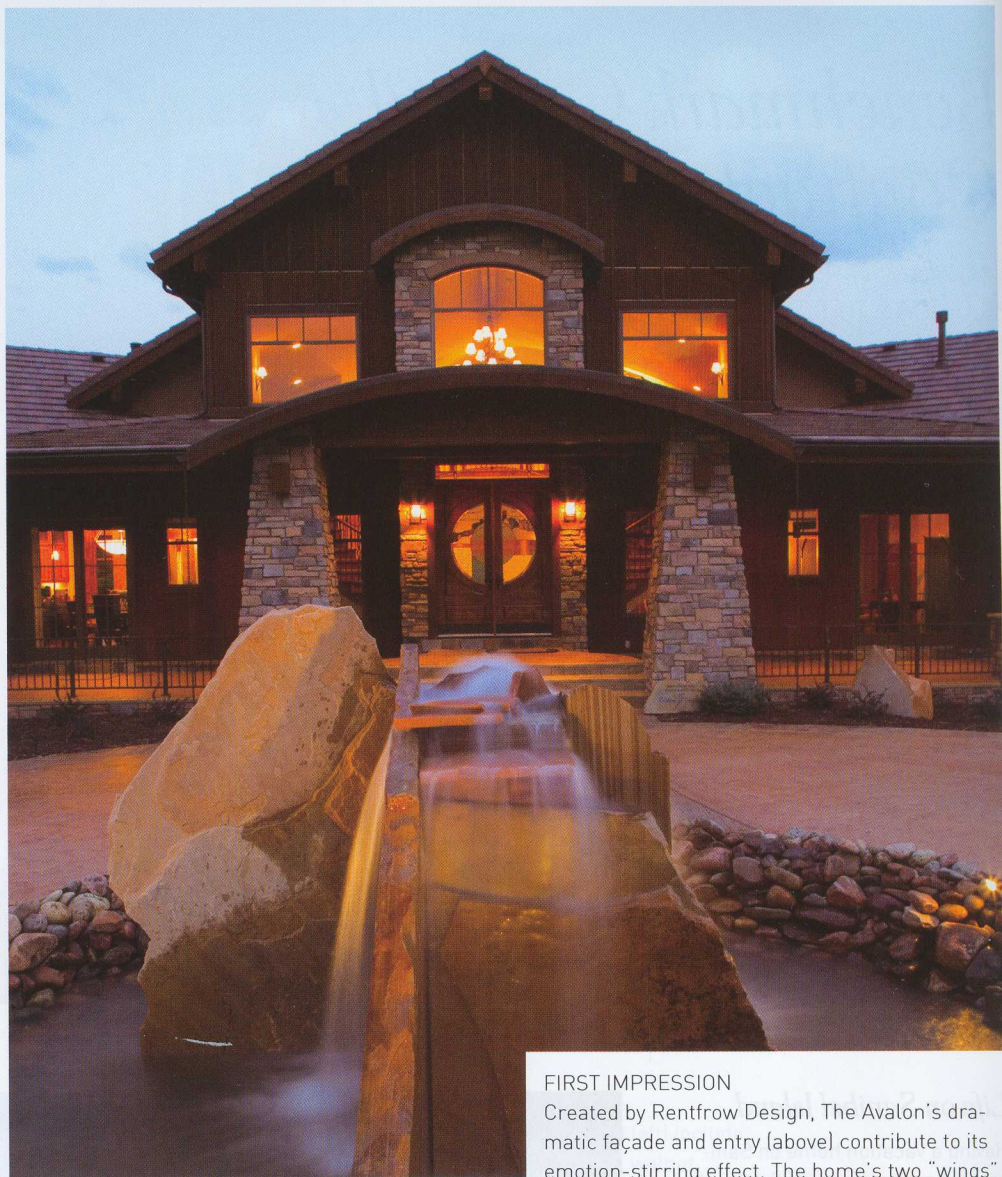
But no matter how much Sanibel-Captiva buyers love rugged nature, at home, they still expect fine amenities, Anderson says. Though these island dwellings are often second homes, they morph into primary homes as owners progress into their twilight years. "Our clients generally are well-traveled, have specific needs and personal tastes, and are demanding as far as quality of design and appointments," Anderson says.

That demand for the quality spans from floor to ceiling—from trim detailing to electrical and audiovisual systems to cabinetry and countertops. Benchmark expects the cost for the Sea Glass homes to be well below the current Sanibel-Captiva price point, which typically runs \$1 million or more.

Storm vulnerability is another key area of awareness, heightened by hurricanes Charlie and Wilma. To ensure resistance, Benchmark primarily uses impact glass on windows and doors, and is shifting to standing-seam metal and other storm-resistant roofs on all its homes.

Another priority is manageability, which Good says he stresses to clients as they plan their new life off the Florida coast. "We all have space that we don't use that we've been led to believe we have to have—whether it's a formal dining room, formal living room, or eight bedrooms," Good says. With the scarcity of available land, the "highest and best use" paradigm—piling as much building as would fit on the lot—has been replaced. Today's market is "downsizing."

Clients now seek Benchmark homes that are more efficient to operate, easier to maintain, and smaller in size, without sacrificing quality or style. "I tell clients, 'Be realistic about the way you live and the way you want to live,'" Good says. "What we've experienced is that people are now taking a harder look as to what is more important to them." ■



FIRST IMPRESSION

Created by Rentfrow Design, The Avalon's dramatic façade and entry (above) contribute to its emotion-stirring effect. The home's two "wings" bend backward to give way to the spectacular mountain view of The Devil's Backbone (right).

Rentfrow Design, LLC

CREATING CUSTOM VACATION HOMES FOR CLIENTS TO SIMPLY EXPERIENCE

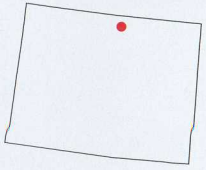
by Megy Karydes

Ask most custom-home builders what sets them apart and they will say they are building more than just a house—they are building a home. However, Jon Rentfrow, designer and manager of Rentfrow Designs, LLC, takes it one step further and helps his clients experience their home. Rentfrow even wrote a book on the subject: *...experiencing home... a guide to finding joy in your home.*

Rentfrow pulls from his interior-design background to bring a sense of livability to his designs. "It's always more important to me that a home be appreciated

for its comfort and livability, as well as its aesthetics," Rentfrow says. "If I do both well, on any given design, then I feel like the project ended up being more than I could've hoped for."

His approach has garnered him much business, and won many awards, since his one-time side business became a full-time enterprise in 1998. Most recently, Rentfrow's firm won the prestigious American Residential Design Award for its home design of The Avalon. The plans won first place in the Published Design: 4,000 Square Feet and Over category.



Fort Collins, CO

POPULATION: 136,509
 ATTRACTIONS: Rocky Mountains, Colorado State University, beer culture, Old Town area

The home, located in a gated community in the foothills of Northern Colorado, presented some challenges initially because of the site. “We had a very steep slope, and wanted to keep the design very low in profile,” Rentfrow says. “I wanted it to settle into the hillside and the high native grasses. And, believe it or not, the trouble with a lot that has 210-plus degrees of views is that you want to put everything on the back side of the house to capture those views.”

Rentfrow also wanted to create something grand and dramatic that would stir emotion immediately upon entering. The result is a stunning home, complete with two “wings” so the house bends backward to take advantage of the site and the “million-dollar view” of the Devil’s Backbone and Long’s Peak, a 14,000-foot peak in the background. Inside, the home includes twin staircases and a large fireplace. Outside, Rentfrow ensured the exterior materials worked well with the native geography.

By listening to clients and their needs, Rentfrow Design ensures that its clients enjoy living in their homes, even years later. In fact, Rentfrow admits that’s one of the ways he knows he’s succeeded in making his clients happy. “It is my role in the design process to flush out

how my clients live and want to live,” Rentfrow notes. Whether it’s asking how someone does laundry or uses their mudroom, he knows what questions to ask so the home suits the family’s lifestyle: “I am successful when my clients tell me a year after they move in that their home is absolutely beautiful and it’s perfect for the way they live everyday,” he adds.

Designing second homes is a specialty of Rentfrow’s and comes with its own set of issues. Unlike one’s primary home, a second home may be used as an escape or for entertaining, or both. Currently, Rentfrow is working on a house in Southern Colorado for a young family from Florida who want to use their second home as an escape from their busy lives. “This family wants to hide in the mountains and enjoy the different seasons,” Rentfrow says. “As a result, their amenities are pretty straightforward and not much different from what their first home may have.”

Alternatively, those seeking a second home to entertain or bring entire families together require rooms to be built a bit larger than a normal home. One home in Beaver Creek, Colorado had two bunk rooms, which were designed to hold 15–20 people in each room. “The bathrooms were male and female gang baths with large showers and an old horse trough for the sink,” Rentfrow notes. “These types of second homes are designed to serve a lot of people together at one time, and are set up for entertaining.” Thus, amenities—such as multiple cooking appliances in the kitchen, a serving bar in the great-room area, fully loaded Butler’s areas, and, of course, many large televisions—are key.

The Avalon

LOCATION: Northern Colorado
 SQUARE FOOTAGE: 7,402
 ROOMS: 4 bedrooms, 4 full baths, 2 half baths
 GARAGE: 4-car garage
 FEATURES AND AMENITIES: Twin staircases, large fireplace
 LAYOUT: Two ‘wings’ of the house bending backward
 VIEWS: A window expanse that captures at least a 210-degree view of a mountain called The Devil’s Backbone that is said to be 65 million years old

During the design process, Rentfrow creates a computerized 3-D model so his clients can get a visual of what their home will look like prior to beginning any work. “My model allows them to see the massing, the roof shapes and lines, and window designs,” Rentfrow says. “It really helps them grasp the overall look of the design. They really love being able to participate at that level.”

Rentfrow wants his clients to enjoy their homes and not treat them as investments or commodities. He says, “Our homes, despite the fact that they may need to be painted, cleaned, or even remodeled, are still our homes. Why not just slow down and experience home?”