

SPECIAL FOCUS

RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MONTHLY

Construction Company Owner Got Early Start to His Career

By Kay Metcalfe

RICHARD ROSANO IS FOLLOWING IN HIS FATHER'S footsteps.

Rosano, owner of R.R. Builders, a full-service construction management firm that specializes in the building of luxury homes in Fairfield County, said he owes his success to his dad.

"If it wasn't for him and working with him as a child, I wouldn't be doing this today," he said. "Working with him gave me so much experience."

Rosano was born in Hillsdale, N.J., and attended New York's Rochester Institute of Technology. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in printing in 1991. He spent his teen years helping out at his father's construction business, working on various commercial build-out projects in New York City and the building of a new home for his family.

After graduating from college, Rosano spent seven years in the printing/imaging industry and five years as a salesman in the software business. During his tenure selling software to Fortune 500 companies and other large firms, he returned to his construction roots and built a house for his own family in New Canaan.

"I enjoyed the process so much that it led me to change careers, so I left the software industry," he said.

Rosano sold his newly constructed 7,000-square-foot home and embarked on building custom and spec luxury properties under the new title of R.R. Builders. "Building luxury homes is my area of interest; it's what I like to do," he said. And, he added, people say he's good at it.

Rosano is the sole employee of his 6-year-old business. He works in close collaboration with his wife, Sharon, who is a Coldwell Banker Real Estate agent, and a team of skilled contract laborers. Rosano said he personally manages each home he builds, working six to seven days a week.

Sharon acts as the broker for all of Rosano's spec homes, mirroring the relationship that befell Rosano's parents when he was growing up. "My mother and father always worked together and that was an inspiration for my wife and me to work together in the same industry also," he noted.

Rosano works regularly with numerous laborers, estimating the number of workers to be as high as 40.

"Over the past six years, we've formulated a very good team of people who are reliable and strong in their areas of expertise," he said. Rosano works closely with each member of the team, from helping with the design to approving moldings.

Working in New York installed a strong work ethic in Rosano. "I manage on- and off-site ... and make sure people are doing their jobs," he said. "My team really appreciates that I'm out there and I've developed credibility and willingness, which helps people want to work with me."

According to Rosano, there are three

homes being built at any one time and the building is staggered to help work around scheduling and to keep the team reliable. "[By doing it this way], I can keep up the consistency and quality that I produce in my building," he said.

The 8,000- to 12,000-square-foot shingle-style Colonials are each unique but feature similar amenities and sell for between \$4 million and \$12 million, depending on size and amenities. Rosano estimated that he builds 30 percent custom homes and 60 percent spec homes.

His extensive work with landscapers results in entertainment-based areas such as fire pits, built-in barbecues and dining areas, as well as swimming pools decorated with waterfalls.

"I work with the landscape architects so that the design matches the house," he said.

Rosano aims to build quality houses in natural surrounding environments and customers seek him out to do so. "People come to me at all different stages of the process, some with plans and others with no ideas at all," he said.

Building one of the homes takes over a year and Rosano said it's much easier to begin working with clients as early on as possible. He has yet to advertise his company, but the name has spread by word-of-mouth. "I see a lot of friends of friends," he said,

adding, "You really need to be able to understand the client and what they are looking for, and be able to make recommendations. I have a practical approach to my work. I look at the plans and talk them through how they might actually live in the [proposed] space. Practicality is very important."

Rosano recently was honored as Fairfield County Builder of the Year by the Home Builders Association of Connecticut. The awards are presented to HBA members who show exemplary craftsmanship and have made a significant impact in the industry in the state. "It was a very nice surprise," noted Rosano, who last year received the Best Spec Home award from the HBA in the \$6 million to \$7 million range.

Rosano, who now serves on the board of directors of the Fairfield County Home Builders Association, has high hopes for the future of his business. He said he is looking forward to expanding the business.

"I get a lot of feedback from my clients and a lot of people ask me to start another division to just focus on the outdoor environment," he said. "People are always asking me if I do renovations – and at this point, I only build – but I'd like to start a new division for that, too."

Rosano puts a lot into his work and gets a lot back. He is engaged in the community, sponsoring baseball and soccer teams and donating to scholarship funds.

"I like building homes for families that will be enjoyed for generations to come," he said. "My favorite thing is handing the set of keys over to a family ... I build houses that will be here for a long time and I put a lot of effort into each house that I build." ■



RICHARD ROSANO
'A practical approach'

PROFILE IN COMMERCE