

Spotlight

Builder's architectural trade sets him apart

BY JACKIE PILOSSOPH | Contributor

NORTHBROOK

When Sally and Jan Carlos Bosacoma bought their Northbrook home eight years ago, their plan was to gut and renovate it in its entirety.

But the project got off to a rough start.

The couple said they spoke with 15 different contractors, including four who came to their home to give estimates. Why so many? Sally said they didn't feel comfortable with any of the companies.

"None of them seemed like a good fit," she said, "We thought maybe we bought the wrong house, and that it wasn't possible to create the living space we wanted."

Then they met Michael Gould, a Northbrook -based architect and builder who has been doing residential remodels for 34 years. Sally said within 24 hours, Gould showed them a hand-drawn sketch as part of his proposal, and they knew he was the right person for the job.

"We looked at each other and said, 'That's what we want,' and we never looked back," said Sally, "He can solve problems other builders can't."



Architect and builder, Michael Gould (center) poses for a photo with his clients, Sally and Juan Carlos Bosacoma in the kitchen he remodeled as part of the reconstruction of their entire home. | **JACKIE PILOSSOPH**-for *Sun-Times Media*

Gould, who holds a B.S. in architecture, and has taken classes at the Milwaukee School of Engineering and the Layton Art School. He also worked for the State of Illinois as a project manager for capital development for several years before deciding to go into residential reconstruction.

Gould said what sets him apart from other contractors is the fact that for every job, he's both the architect and the builder.

"When people work with me, they've got one person: just me," said Gould, who has lived in Northbrook with his wife, Barbara for 23 years. "You only have to talk to me. So, there's no confusion and no duplication of services, and that saves people a lot of money, and it's less chaotic. I go from the drawings to the end result and it's a smooth process."

"The biggest difference is that he understands from a design perspective how

things can fit," said Juan Carlos, "When you talk to a regular builder, they do what you tell them to do. The advantage of working with Michael is that he'll tell you if structurally it won't work, and then he'll give you a better alternative."

With the help of dozens of subcontractors that he has worked with for several years on hundreds of projects, Gould has clients all over the North Shore. His jobs range from a one-room project to a

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whole house.

When it comes to the budget of the project, Gould firmly believes in being up front with the client, and making sure there are no surprises.

"I called several people whose homes he did and everyone was very consistent about what they said," said Juan Carlos. "They'd say, 'He's got an idea of how it's going to work and he'll give you a number and he sticks with it.'"

When asked what his passion is when it comes to his career, Gould said it all comes down to solving people's problems.

"I help people take action to improve their environment, and that gives them a better quality of life," he said, "And all my clients end up being close friends."

"Michael can see both the design aspect and the actual construction of each job," said Sally, "And he truly is a man of his word." ■