



RED LEVEL RENOVATIONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 9

BY THE NUMBERS

25%

Projected increase in new home starts nationally from 2009 to 2010

Source: National Association of Homebuilders

19.6%

Reduction in single family detached home inventory in metro Atlanta from Q4 '08 to Q4 '09

Source: US Green Building Council

2

Atlanta's rank as a cost-competitive business environment amongst 22 large U.S. cities

Source: KPMG, Competitive Alternatives

RECENT PROJECT

SANDY SPRINGS ESTATE RENOVATION

Red Level recently completed the full renovation of this estate home on the Chattahoochee River in Sandy Springs. The project consisted of tearing down and rebuilding one wing of the house, and completely gutting and renovating the remaining space. The new wing now contains a master suite upstairs, and the family's beautiful kitchen and keeping room downstairs. Highlights of this space are the large center island with double-marble countertops, custom cherry cabinets and mouldings, and a limestone vent hood.



The entry foyer features a striking double staircase with custom fabricated iron stair rails. The wide plank back walnut flooring installed throughout the house was used in this room with marble tiles in a diagonal grid pattern.



Outside, the rear of the home also underwent a complete transformation. The new pool and integrated spa are surrounded by limestone decking and flanked by an elevated terrace and covered loggia, both with their own masonry fireplaces.



This home will be featured in an upcoming version of *Kitchen Trends* magazine, scheduled to be released in May.

To see more photos of this renovation project, please visit the photo gallery at www.red-level.com.

INDUSTRY

GREENWASHING

With the tremendous momentum that "green", or sustainable building has generated over the last several years, there has also been a somewhat predictable increase in another trend - Greenwashing. Loosely defined, Greenwashing is the practice of companies or organizations misleading consumers about the environmental qualities of their products or services. This sort of practice has existed for decades and in many industries, but the construction industry has been particularly exposed of late. Massive increases in sustainable building programs, certifications, government incentives and consumer demand have led many companies to overstate the environmental impact of the way they do business. No one wants to be left behind, and many see it as a race to determine who will emerge as the market leaders.



The greatest challenge facing consumers is that there is very little oversight currently in place to monitor these practices. The Federal Trade Commission has set its "[Green Guides](#)" for the use of environmental marketing claims, and updates to the standards are expected later this year. However, many feel that enforcement of the guidelines is lacking - only about [45 complaints](#) have been filed by the FTC since the Green Guides first came out in 1992. Couple that record with the results of one [study](#) finding that 77% of Americans feel that they "can make a positive difference by purchasing products from socially or environmentally responsible companies," and the stage has been set for exaggerated claims. In one broad [study](#) of products in the U.S. and elsewhere, just 2% of those asserting green attributes were able to completely substantiate those claims. It is easy to see why the FTC is revisiting its guidelines, and the commission has indicated that the updated version will contain tougher restrictions and a more aggressive enforcement policy.

The most effective tool that environmentally-concerned consumers have at their disposal to evaluate company claims is third-party verification. LEED, Energy Star and UL Environment are three of the most common and respected programs, but there are hundreds of others, and they are all voluntary. It is up to the consumer to identify the certification and determine how meaningful it is, but without any third-party verification at all, environmental claims should at the very least be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Vague verbiage such as "eco-friendly", "green" and "sustainable" should be given particular attention, as there is very little in place to actually define those terms.

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