

In 2008, I decided for business reasons to move to Okeechobee, Florida. Over the next 6 months, we looked at more than 85 properties while I was down on business and we attempted one unsuccessful short sale. We decided in November of 2008 to look instead for a lot and interview builders.

We interviewed 5 builders and asked each of them to look at our lot and also at a particular house that came closest to what we were thinking. Only two looked at the lot and only one, Corey Penrod, came to our meeting with a blueprint of the house. In short he seemed to be the only one who cared about our project. Most seemed to be jaded from the boom years that preceded our build and were not really that interested in what we had in mind.

Corey recommended an architect and after several revisions based loosely on the original blueprint, we had our set of plans in less than a month. He attended all the meetings that required his input and the final result shows it. Corey was sensitive to our desires, but was not afraid to step up and say his piece if something we considered might cause a bad result that was not intended but that he anticipated. You don't want a yes man for your builder.

The plans included all the features that we wanted in a way that turned out to be very livable. Two examples come to mind. One is extending the bump out dining area to a full 6 feet to facilitate traffic flow from the kitchen area. The other is that the 3 sky lights are set and angled to stream light into the porch door and dining area windows not in summer, but during the winter when the house would otherwise be darker.

Our property had 22 live oaks which we wanted to preserve and we still have 22 trees two years later due in large part to Corey's role in managing the trades so as not to compact the roots of the trees. The only tree damage came from an inattentive lumber yard truck driver who ripped a 15 ft limb from a tree with such force that it damaged a tradesman's work truck. You can't fix stupid.

The build had an immaculate job site by any standard, again in large part from the management of the subs. We don't have buried treasure surfacing around the house as is often the case. I found fast food lunch bags strewn around during one particular week, but was shocked to find a resourceful crow recognized the white bags. Wrapping them in black trash bags after lunch solved the problem. I'm glad that I didn't yell at any human suspects. Dumpsters were always on site and emptied as they approached full capacity.

Corey spent more than adequate time explaining and offering selections of materials from tile to flooring to cabinets to fixtures. Less than 1 week was lost all told in not having the next sub on site when his particular trade was needed. Windows, doors, cabinets and such were almost always there when needed. This can be key to getting on with building a house that does not drag on for months. I'm sure that you've heard the stories.

Your builder can't be there every minute, but Corey was there when it counted and personally fashioned our tray ceiling in the master bedroom which really sets off that living space.

Corey was able to recommend an AV specialist who wired the surround sound during the rough in and who showed up in a timely manner to finish his part during construction including the porch speakers which tie into the house sound system adding again to livability of the house.

I brought granite from my former area for the fire place which turned out to be a focal point of the common area. Corey was able to find a sub who did a very artistic job with some coaching. It was a challenge I'm sure, but it turned out well and pretty much as we had imagined it during the planning phase.

Many people have commented on our knock down stucco finish on the exterior. Corey had a crew from the coast who did this uniquely excellent job. Another example of the right sub for the right job.

Many friends who had previously built warned me that I would end up never talking to my builder ever again after the house was finished. We did not find this to be the case. The slab was poured at the end of January 2010 and we moved into the nearly 4,000 sq. ft. house over the Memorial Day weekend just over 4 months later. Corey has a standing offer to have potential clients call or come and see the house as an example of his work. You might want to check out Penrod Construction.