



# CONSTRUCTING A MASTERPIECE

Reviving Old World Techniques to Sculpt Modern Homes. *By Shannon Francis*



**Among Aspen's home builders**, one team stands above the rest in their quest for excellence. Sallie Golden and Carlie Siemel are transforming the construction of luxury homes into an art form. Along with architect Don McDonald and select craftsmen, Golden and Siemel have formulated a winning balance between functionality and esthetic consciousness.

## The Vision

A master is a visionary capable of actualizing his or her own vision while expanding the consciousness of those around them. The master, in this case, is the collaborative effort Golden and Siemel use to effectively breathe life into their collective vision. While describing the creative process behind the development of their projects, Golden casually explains "I have a vision and Carlie brings it to fruition. I want my houses to blend in and at the same time elevate their environment."

## A Common Thread

Although each of Sallie and Carlie's houses is a one of a kind production, certain aspects of the construction remain consistent from one project to another, particularly the materials and sense of purposeful orientation. Golden and Siemel have chosen to apply an organic approach when deciding on the materials they use to shape their vision.

Golden and Siemel use reclaimed Longleaf Pine for most of the wood surfaces in their homes. Golden explains "we only use wood that was logged before 1915 because it needs to be first growth wood." By employing the reclamation process, Golden and Siemel are able to retain the coveted traits of first growth wood without further depleting an already waning natural resource.

*Below: Handcrafted arches, columns and full-length wood floors are signature to Golden/Siemel projects.*

“Golden and Siemel take their innovative designs one step further by using classical proportions to generate interiors that are welcoming, harmonious and esthetically pleasing to everyone.”



*Above: Free-standing staircase made on-site by craftsman Byron Bueche.*

*Above Right: Hand troweled plaster compliments custom windows, Pennsylvania slate and faceted ceiling.*

Freestanding staircases offer an air reminiscent of distinctively fine crafted furniture. Meticulously fitting each segment of the structure, Byron Beuche installs what might be considered the heart of the home, making sure the grain of the wood aligns seamlessly along each adjoining piece. “The staircases are really more like works of art.” Golden comments as she directs one’s attention to the flawless interweaving of each individual component. All the wood fixtures are designed to resemble fine handmade furniture.



In other areas of the home, Golden and Siemel have employed natural stone and brick to complement the organic feel. Many of the walls are finished with authentic plastering using a hard trowel finish which produces gentle differences in coloration impossible to replicate through any other technique.

Golden and Siemel take their innovative designs one step further by using classical proportions to generate interiors that are welcoming, harmonious and esthetically pleasing to everyone. Their homes follow ▷



*Left: Ben Weber adds his finishing touch to the red slate roof at 900 W. North Street.*

*Below: Each shingle is meticulously placed to create one of many architectural vignettes.*

an east/west axis in order to take full advantage of the southern exposure and increase the availability of natural light that is then directed into the house.

The capping feature to any residence is the roof and Sallie and Carlie's houses promote roofing to the highest level. As we enter one of their rooftop terraces, Golden is keen to point out the hand formed copper roofing and slate shingles. Even the copper gutters lining the slate roof are a unique invention by Golden and Siemel. Manufactured copper gutters are just not enough in this climate, so Carlie came up with the idea to fabricate them out of heavy copper tubing.

Bringing together experience, skill and the highest quality materials, Golden and Siemel push home building in a uniquely artistic direction.

### Visiting the Homes

On their current projects located at 900 and 910 W. North Street, Golden and Siemel have chosen to build two distinctively different houses. When first approached with the challenge of building on an oversized lot that could accommodate a duplex, Golden and Siemel conceived the idea to satisfy the restriction by connecting the two homes with a small shed located in the rear of the structures. This innovative concept not only satisfied the code for a duplex, but also allowed them the freedom to build their two home vision.



©Brent Moss

**“It’s commonly noted that once you’ve encountered a masterpiece, it stays with you for the rest of your life, and if this is true then these houses exemplify the undeniable qualities of this distinction.”**