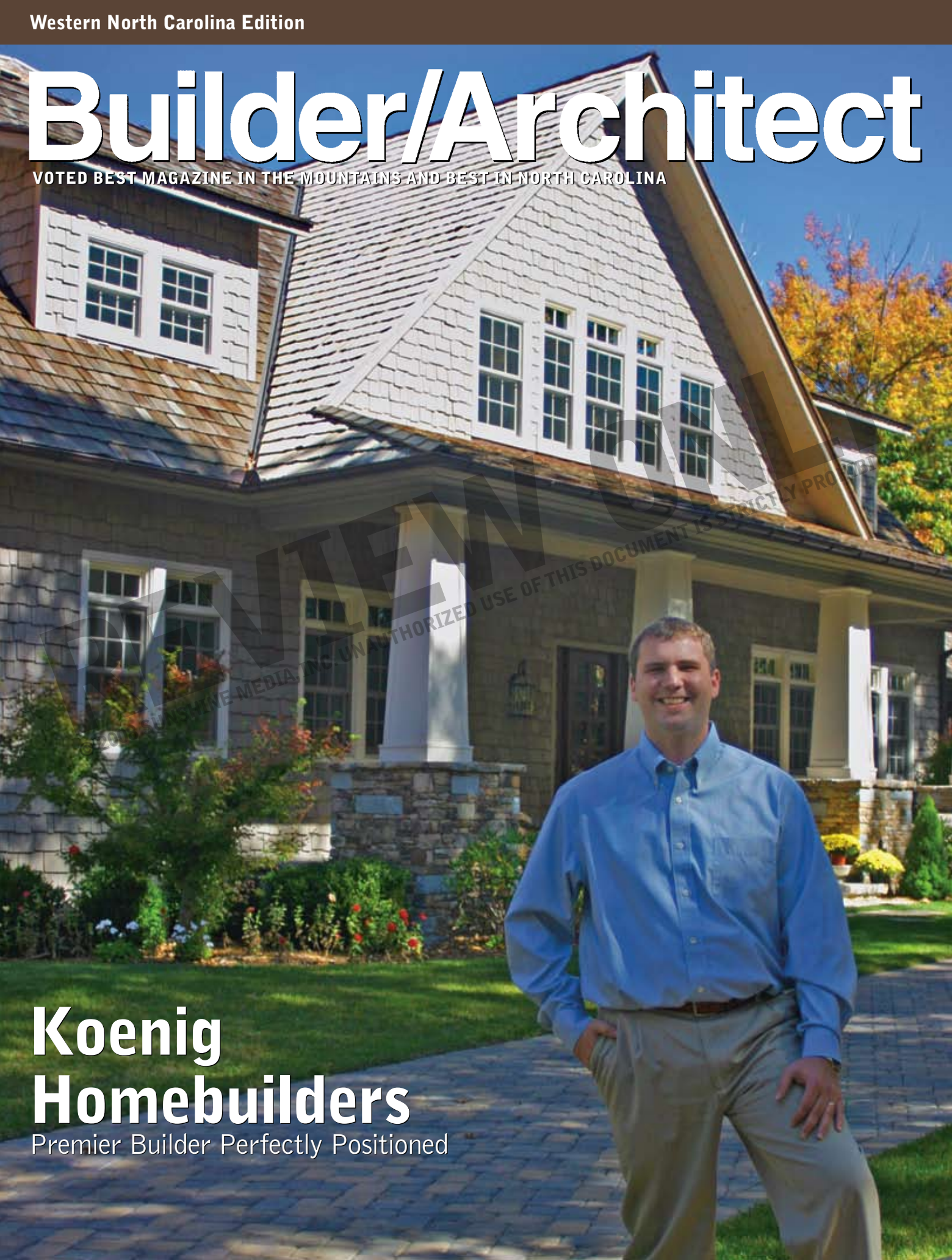


Western North Carolina Edition

# Builder/Architect

VOTED BEST MAGAZINE IN THE MOUNTAINS AND BEST IN NORTH CAROLINA



## Koenig Homebuilders

Premier Builder Perfectly Positioned

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## Premier Builder Perfectly Positioned

By Jessica Klarp

Koenig Homebuilders is in an enviable position. After spending almost 30 years building a reputation as one of the Highlands and Cashiers area's premier custom-home builders, the story of one of their clients is classic. The client's current Koenig home in Highlands Cove is gorgeous: more than 6,000 square feet under roof, plenty of porches and decks to take in the great view. And great views are good, but an unbelievable view is even better. So, when the client purchased a lot with the unobstructed, unbelievable sweeping view, they called Koenig Homebuilders to again build a house to match the lot.

"Everything in the house is in keeping with the quality of the view," said Zac Koenig, principal of the family firm that has built some of the most breathtaking luxury homes throughout

the region. "When you have this kind of a view, you want a house that goes along with it. And we are happy to build it for them." It's not uncommon for Koenig Homebuilders to build more than one home for a client. Over time, people's needs and desires change, and often that means they will want a new home. After living in a Koenig Homebuilders home, most people never consider calling another builder.

In keeping with their changing needs, the clients bumped up the size of their new house to more than 10,000 total square feet under roof, with ample porches and decks to take full advantage of the fabulous location. This home boasts an outdoor fireplace, permanent grill structure and a full exterior kitchen overlooking the surrounding mountains. The

**McDonald residence: Viking appliances, granite countertops and custom cabinetry are representative of a Koenig Homebuilders home.**



two-story home has five bedrooms and five-and-a-half baths. On the main living floor are palatial living spaces with reclaimed antique hardwood floors, a welcoming stone fireplace and timber framing as an armature for the expansive glass wall that frames the view in the living room. A dining room for the whole family to easily gather and a professional kitchen with custom cabinetry and stone counters complete the primary gathering space. The contemporary floor plan offers the owners a master suite and guest suite on the main level, while three additional bedroom suites grace the upper level, each with its own bath.

Although this expansive Highlands Cove home was designed by a very talented outside architect, most Koenig Homebuilders homes are designed by their in-house designer, who has been with the company almost since its inception, which gives Koenig Homebuilders an edge. “It is a great benefit for us and our customers to have such a talented designer with the company for that long,” Koenig said. “When we talk about value, efficiency is one of the biggest advantages of the design/build process. He knows how we typically build things, so it works very well.”

Just because most Koenig Homebuilders homes are high end in dimension, finishes and cost, doesn’t mean clients aren’t interested in getting the most for their money. Koenig

**E**fficiency means less waste, which is good not only for the cost of the home, but also for the environment. For years Koenig has been committed to offering clients green structures.



**McDonald home:** This great room features a wall of windows to not only let in plenty of light, but also to allow viewing of the spectacular surrounding mountains.

PHOTO BY HIGHLAND MEDIACORP

Homebuilders is committed to giving its clients the best value. One way that Koenig Homebuilders adds value and quality to a home is through the use of a caring in-house staff for timber frame production and most of the finish work. “For the areas of a job that must be subcontracted, we are careful to hire only those trade contractors and suppliers who understand our company’s depth of commitment to quality and value.” Koenig continued, “We expect everyone on the job to take pride in their work and feel like they are our partner in giving our clients their dream home.” By listening to clients’ needs and priorities — coupled with the company’s years of experience — the Koenig Homebuilders team continually surpasses expectations.



Whitaker home: Extensive outdoor living space allows the homeowners to take full advantage of their home's stunning views.

The native stone fireplace and elegant décor provide a peaceful setting.



After spending almost 30 years building a reputation as one of the Highlands and Cashiers area's premier custom-home builders, the story of one of their clients is classic.

Another service offered to their clients is the newly formed Koenig Home Improvement Division. Run by younger brother Josh Koenig, the focus here is to offer everything from basic handyman services like winterizing, to extensive renovations and additions. And while there have been some calls from former clients for the simple repairs, for the most part, the jobs rival a custom build in their scope.

One of the things that contributes to the success of this arm of the business is the ongoing good relationships the company has maintained with past clients. Referrals and repeat business are the principal ways the company markets itself. Though they have always been willing to come back in and make adjustments to homes when clients request it, in a difficult economic climate, renovation becomes an attractive



PHOTO BY HIGHLAND MEDIAWORKS

**Whitaker home: Paneled walls create a cozy, relaxing environment in the master bath.**

option for many homeowners. “It is important to me to keep a good relationship with past clients,” Koenig said. “My father established the business by making clients his first priority. We try to keep a client for life.”

One of the recent jobs they have tackled is a renovation and addition to a 30-year-old home (just down the road from a Koenig Homebuilders-built home, whose owners recommended the company). Originally a weekend summer home, the couple has retired and now wants to use the house as their principal summer residence. “There was nothing wrong with the house,” Koenig stated, “but over time, lifestyles shift and people want a change. We are here to offer them something different.” Koenig Homebuilders will tear out half the house, rework and expand the kitchen, add a master suite, enlarge all the bedrooms and add a bath. Due to the complexity of the job, it may take about nine months to complete the project. The seasonality of the Highlands/Cashiers region is ideal for the renovation business in that clients trust the builder enough that they can leave for the winter, knowing when they return, the home will be a seamless, efficient expansion of the original structure.

Efficiency means less waste, which is good not only for the cost of the home, but also for the environment. For years Koenig has been committed to offering clients green structures. “I try to make homes green by focusing on energy efficiency and sustainability,” he said. “But when you build on mountaintops, the difficulty of high elevations and wind zones and clients who desire high ceilings, big, open

**Whitaker home: This rustic timbered dining room offers space for the entire family.**



PHOTO BY RABAUT DESIGN

floor plans and expansive windows — well, that means that we focus instead on high-end HVAC units and insulation and any other energy-saving elements we can.” Right now, “green” is a malleable term that could easily devolve into a useless catchphrase were it not for the efforts of organizations committed to making “green” work. Koenig is a regional Vice President for the North Carolina Home Builders Association and helps the organization work to define, clarify and quantify what constitutes green building by creating industry standards.

Koenig took the reigns of the company from his father about four years ago. While John has semi-retired to a consulting capacity, the sons continue the legacy their father created by building on a foundation of integrity. During the market downturn, the company has trimmed excess and works efficiently with about 12 employees. They have put even more emphasis on customer service by creating the Home Improvement Division, and they keep in mind that building relationships is what makes a company strong.

“I live in this community,” Koenig said. “I love it here. We strive to be more than a builder; we want to make friends with our clients [and] build strong lifetime relationships. That is important anywhere you build, but in a small town it is even more so. I want to be able to hold my head high when I pass

**K**oenig took the reigns of the company from his father about four years ago. While John has semi-retired to a consulting capacity, the sons continue the legacy their father created by building on a foundation of integrity.



**Whitaker home:** This vacation home outside Highlands, NC, takes full advantage of its spectacular views.

my clients and friends on the street. We are fortunate to have kept our reputation and our good name all these years.” The lucky Koenig Homebuilders homeowners in the Highlands/Cashiers area agree. ■

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