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Darien builders win HOBI award for work

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Having recently garnered five “Best of Show” awards for residential building projects in Fairfield and Westchester (NY) counties, Jon Brindisi and Christopher Yaroscak have come a long way since launching their custom home building business from the basement of Yaroscak’s home.

Brindisi & Yaroscak Custom Builders won a fistful of prestigious HOBI (Home Building) award, including Project of the Year and Best Residential Remodel, \$2 million - \$4 million, for a house on Pratt Island in Darien’ Custom Home of the Year and Best Custom Home, 3,000 to 4,000 square fee, for an Old Greenwich house and Best Custom Bhome over 10,000 square feet for a house in Eastchester, NY. It was the first time a builder took Project of the Year and Best Custom Home in the same year.

“We were shocked,” said Brindisi, who along with Yaroscak, accepted the honors during a dinner held at the Aqua Turf Country Club in Southing-



AWARD-WINNING HOME—This house on Pratt Island in Darien, which has a 270 degree view of Long Island Sound, won the contractors, Brindisi & Yaroscak Custom Builders, a HOBI award for Project of the Year. Co-owners Jon Brindisi and Christopher Yaroscak also won four other HOBI awards for their work. At right are Brindisi and Yaroscak.

ton in October. “We knew we were going to get three of them, but the other two were surprises. I even told the guy at the ceremony that we were embarrassed to be going up there so many

times.”

Not that he or Yaroscak are strangers to the stage. The business partners have received a HJOBI award each year for the past three years for houses

they built in Darien and New Canaan. They attribute the recognition to the quality of their work and service.

Brindisi and Yaroscak do many of their projects on a construction-management, meaning they get a set fee to build the house but they are not given a predetermined budget to build within as is the case when using a general contractor.

“People still get exactly what’s on the drawings, but they have the ability to sit down with you and decide how they



want their house to turn out in the end, as well as how much they want to spend for it,” Brindisi said. “There’s no hidden agenda.”

Such a practice, however, can

result in a longer construction schedule (which owners have a say in). The house on Pratt Island, for example, took nearly 20 months to complete. During such a lengthy process, Brindisi and Yaroscak remain hands-on and visit each site, which is staffed with a project manager, an assistant project manager and a team of carpenters.

“We try to make the whole building process enjoyable for the homeowner,” said Brindisi, noting that he and Yaroscak buck the “got to get in, got to get out” mentality of other construction companies. “A lot of people think it’s a miserable experience. We try to keep them involved and in the end, they become our friends.”

Seeing the pride the men take in their work also makes for good relations with clients.

“We really do become attached to our projects,” Yaroscak said. “There’s an emotional connection.”

While the house on Pratt Island, which has a 270-degree view of the water, is one of his “personal favorites,” Brindisi said every house he and

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Yaroscak build is unique and offers something different to fall in love with.

“Working with top-notch architects means the difference between cookie cutter colonials and the interpretation of the site where the house fits the site like a glove.” Yaroscak said.

Enjoying the latter approach to building and needing it to support their overhead, the men usually focus on larger projects. Also, Brindisi and Yaroscak have been building multi-million dollar homes since found-

ing their own company in 1997. They worked together for four years before that – Brindisi as an architect and Yaroscak as a project manager – on a project in Greenwich.

“During that time we were working together I realized we complemented each other,” Yaroscak said. “So I asked Jon, who was always complaining he was bored working as an architect, if he wanted to go into business together? So we took a risk and hung out our own shingle.”

After a year spent work-

ing out of Yaroscak’s basement and a stint operating from job site trailers, the men, who were neighbors as kids growing up in Armonk, NY, set up shop in the space above the Darien chapter of the American Red Cross.

Currently, Brindisi and Yaroscak, who now live in New Canaan and Bedford, NY, respectively, are putting the finishing touches on a renovation of the former Bear Naked offices at 397 Post Road in Darien.

Since they do not advertise, Brindisi and Yaroscak rely heavily on what others think and say

about them. So far, this has allowed them to stay business and employ 15 people – both men and women, a few of whom they have sponsored for citizenship and now own their own homes. This growth and development, they like to point out, is in sharp contrast to the earliest days of the business, when they only had enough work for the two of them and a part-time bookkeeper.

“It has been a terrific journey,” Brindisi said. “We’ve never really worried about where we were going or if we’d have

a job, but in the last 10 years, we’ve found a way to grow.”

Although that can mean sometimes finding themselves buried under more paperwork and putting in longer hours, neither of the men are complaining.

“One of the lucky things is that we don’t look at work as work,” Yaroscak said. “It’s fun.”

Brindisi agreed, adding, “We actually like what we do. We look forward to coming in. Every day is a new adventure and we don’t have to worry about angry homeowners. It’s enjoyable. I hope it continues.”