

Marco Eagle



Roy Lansdown is building this house in Hideaway for a client who postponed the project for five years. The result is that the house is being built now for \$90,000 less than it would have cost back then.

Multi-tasking is the key for one prominent builder

SHOP TALK
Don Farmer & Chris Curle

This report is about a Premier Homebuilder on Marco Island, whose experiences during the construction/housing/real estate economic plunge have been and are getting him through the rough spots.

It's a challenge, even for the best in that business. And Roy Lansdown, owner of Panorama Custom Home Builders, is one of the best.

His firm's survival in the arid atmosphere of new home construction has included what Roy calls "fashionable remodel." And there's some irony that many of the remodels and renovations, additions and maintenance he's been doing lately are on upscale

homes he built since he became part of Panorama in 1988. "They were fine when we built them 5, 10, 15 years ago and the owners are just wanting to update or add on to existing homes we've built," Roy says. "Some are the original owners, some are new owners. As things change, styles change, lifestyles change, needs change."

"So yes, for the past couple of years we've been doing a lot more remodels than new construction, but for the past seven months we've been working on a new construction in Hideaway."

"Also, we've seen a tremendous reduction in the cost from the previous five years. People are getting a higher finished, upgraded house than they would have five years ago for the same money."

"We're meeting with some people who are in the pro-

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ROY LANSDOWN, Panorama Custom Home Builders

cess of purchasing a lot for \$150,000 in Key Marco that at one time was listed for more than a million and a half. Talk about a great savings."

Another trend Roy is experiencing is that clients are downsizing their expectations.

A trend: Spending less on the exterior, more luxury inside the home

"People are not building as large a house as they



CHRIS CURLE SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE (2)

Roy Lansdown came to Marco Island with multiple construction skills and parlayed them to a job with Panorama Custom Home Builders in 1988. He took sole ownership as president in 1999.

were five or so years ago. On Key Marco, houses are downsizing from what they were several years ago, but there are higher upgrades on the interior. So people are taking the money they are saving on the cost of the product itself and adding to the quality of the finishes."

Roy is an optimist about the future, but a realist as well.

"We'll have the same challenging market that we have now simply due to the amount of inventory out there. As you think of your interest rates that will creep

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up, you're going to see inflation creep up. If in nothing else but the fuel costs of all products.

"Whether it's land or the cost of building, it's just going to go up. One house we're building now, one subcontractor bid it five years ago and now we're doing it, with the same engineered structure, same footprint at \$90,000 less. That allows for a lot of upgraded interior finishes."

"So for someone who is really serious about wanting a retirement home, whether it's five years from now or next year, now is the time to jump into the market, because whether it's the stock market or the building market you always try to buy in at the bottom. I think we have hit the bottom and are turning around and coming back. There will just be higher interest rates and inflation in the future, so now is your best time to buy."

Owners of Panorama-build homes, as are we, know that once Roy builds a house, he'll return in existing years if asked to revisit the place for any changes, upgrades or renovations the owners might want.

One memorable Panorama moment for us was when Hurricane Wilma destroyed our screen enclosure and blew a lot of our tile roof shingles into Monroe County.

We phoned Roy. He came that same day and organized the repairs and replacements, scraping together experienced workers to do the job, when construction workers were in huge demand all over Southwest Florida.

The web site for Panorama Custom Home Builders is: www.panoramachb.com. Call (239) 394-6605.

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