

# Incredible Homes

Cornerstone changes with the times to meet clients' needs. **BY ALAN DORICH**



Cornerstone specializes in traditional and contemporary homes, pool houses, barns, compounds and city spaces throughout New York.

*When Cornerstone Contracting Corp. builds homes, it strives to “build incredible projects,”* owner and President George Pusser says. “What we try to accomplish is to build the homes that have never been built with materials that have never been used.”

Based in Cos Cob, Conn., the company specializes in traditional and contemporary homes, pool houses, barns, compounds and city spaces in its home state and New York City. “We do about five to seven large projects at a time,” Pusser says. “They range from upstate New York to Fairfield County, [Conn].”

He co-founded Cornerstone in 1992 with partner Bob Kolton. “We had a mission to build extraordinary custom homes,” Pusser recalls, noting that both

“We expect every project will be good, if not great.”

**GEORGE PUSSER, PRESIDENT  
AND OWNER**

## PROFILE

CORNERSTONE CONTRACTING CORP.

[www.cornerstone-builders.com](http://www.cornerstone-builders.com) / 2016 sales: \$24 million+ / Headquarters: Cos Cob, Conn. /



*Cornerstone expects the project team to remain on the same page to help clients understand and stay comfortable with the process.*



carried industry expertise. While Kolton had an architecture degree, Pusser previously worked in the business with his father and had owned a separate company. "I had probably been in it 15 years when Bob and I started the company," Pusser recalls.

Next year, Cornerstone will celebrate its 25th anniversary. "We've completed roughly 90 projects," he says, crediting its success to its staff. "[We've made] sure the team that's assembled works well together.

"You also have to be able change with the times," Pusser says. "When I started in the business 40 years ago, it was vastly different than it is today with green technology that allows us to build homes that are incredibly insulated and well run. Some of our most current homes tend to be modern, but we will always build traditional homes. The younger generations are building contemporary homes utilizing smart technology."

This is reflected in the company's current project: a home on Long Island Sound. "It has [a pool with] a cover that is hydraulic, which comes out of the bottom of the pool and flattens out," Pusser says.

The home will feature power shades and LED lighting

throughout. "It's all geothermal as well," he adds. "It's probably about two months from being completed."

### GETTING COMFORTABLE

Cornerstone strives to make sure that everyone on the project team, including the architect and owner, are on the same page. "[We] control expectations and make sure our clients understand and are really comfortable with the process," Pusser says.

However, the process can be taxing on clients, he admits. "It takes a lot from everyone on the team to pull together to do it," Pusser says. "Some of our homes can take years to build, so it's quite a commitment for our clients."

"There's a lot of different material selections that have to be [made]," he says, noting that Cornerstone's homes are large in size, ranging from 10,000 to 30,000 square feet. "It's an extensive process."

### KEEPING SAFE

Cornerstone makes safety one of its high priorities, Pusser says. "We're very good at keeping people safe because of that," he asserts.

As part of this commitment, the company has hired Insuperity, a human resources company based in Kingwood, Texas. "They have a lot of different programs, [including] the safety side of it," Pusser says.

"On a monthly basis, they visit our sites to review the safety protocols," he says. "Weekly, we have toolbox safety inspections."

### SEEKING STRENGTH

When Cornerstone recruits subcontractors, it often goes to a handful that it uses on a regular basis. However, "We're always wanting to introduce new subs with new technology," Pusser says, noting that the company carefully evaluates them.

"You're only as strong as your weakest sub, and we want our weakest sub to be really good," he says. "We want to find people that will round out the team. They'll have long term relationships with the clients long after we leave and the project is completely done."

### A TOP TEAM

Cornerstone operates with "a family culture," Pusser says. "Everybody works as a team. We do a lot of things as a company outside of work that build it. The culture is not so much competitive as it is about wanting to do the best job and work together."

The company also enjoys longevity in its staff. Among its staff of more than 50, "The average tenure is about 14 to 15 years," he says.

Pusser is proud of Cornerstone's work. "We've done very well at controlling our projects," he says. "We have projects with teams that can work together. We expect every project will be good, if not great."

### ALWAYS INVOLVED

*Cornerstone Contracting Corp. sets itself apart with its management team. "Starting at the top, one of the principals of Cornerstone is always involved in the project," the company says.*

*"Generally, a full-time project manager working on-site, a full-time site superintendent, and one or more (foremen) are included," the company says. "We also maintain our own experienced crew of carpenters and laborers, allowing us better control over quality, cost and schedule.*

*"As a team, we include the clients, designers, engineers and specialists in our weekly site-meetings, involving everyone in the problem-solving and decision-making process," Cornerstone says. "We see ourselves as a full-service company, as much as a construction company, dedicated to making the process transparent and enjoyable to our clients."*

Looking forward, Pusser predicts Cornerstone will have the capabilities to build homes that incorporate additional smart technology and green features.

"They will probably cost more to build, but will need less maintenance and be less expensive to operate," he says. ■



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