

# shoptalk

WHEN TALENTED  
PROFESSIONALS TALK,  
WE LISTEN.

WELCOME TO  
*WESTERN HOME JOURNAL'S*  
SHOPTALK.

Admit it, you have an inquiring mind, and you want to know about the team building your Park City dream home. We understand the inclination. So we decided to bring you ShopTalk, conversations with the talented pros designing, building, and outfitting your homes.



# GLENN JOHNSON ADAPTIVE DESIGN GROUP INC.

Adaptive Design Group Inc., founded and directed by Glenn Merlin Johnson, has been designing and engineering architectural lighting, lighting controls, and sub systems for the custom residential market for 35 years. Glenn Johnson has literally written the book on residential lighting. *The Art of Illumination: Residential Lighting Design*, published by McGraw-Hill in 1999, includes Johnson's insights on the art of lighting. Johnson's father developed the Merlin Light®, a leading illumination system for the country's finest art collections. Johnson has added his own innovations to the lighting world, having developed and trademarked The ADAPTIVE Method®, a process of layering lighting that has been embraced by lighting designers, architects, and discriminating homeowners nationwide.







**Do you specialize in residential, commercial, or a variety?**

ADG Inc. works primarily in the custom residential and resort arenas where a high level of art illumination and control function is required.

**At what stage of the project do you get involved and what services do you provide?**

It is best for ADG Inc. to be included in the design development of the project with the design team and owners. The most successful projects include the architect, the interior designer, the lighting and electronics designer, and the landscape architect. The owners obviously direct the team with their wants and wishes, and we execute a cohesive, biddable, and buildable set of documents for the general contractor and their sub-contractors to implement.

**How long have you been in the lighting business and how did you come to it?**

I started out in a family lighting design and electrical contracting business in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1978. I was mentored by my father Merlin E. Johnson, one of the pioneers in lighting and electrical design in primarily elite homes in San Francisco. At the time no college course work, textbooks, or training was available for lighting design. I learned by approaching the various lighting needs and applying the available lighting and dimming tools to perform the magic. In addition, I went through intense schooling and on-the-job training as an apprentice, journeyman, and ultimately a licensed electrical contractor in one of the toughest electrical code compliance areas—San Francisco.

**How has technology changed the way you and your company approach lighting?**

LED lighting of course has rocked all of our worlds these past few years. I personally shied away from specifying “point source” LED lamps until the first of this year. 25- to 40,000-hour lamp life is wonderful, but don’t forget you will have to live under potentially a poor color-rendering lamp for the rest of your and your children’s lives. LED is now ready and also can be dimmed successfully under certain conditions. By far, LED lighting and its controlling technologies (drivers and dimmers) have been the most significant paradigm shift in my 35-year career.

**What do you bring to your clients and how do you work with them?**

My trademarked lighting design process, called The ADAPTIVE Method®, is the best way to approach lighting and is widely used in the design field today.

**“BY FAR, LED LIGHTING AND ITS CONTROLLING TECHNOLOGIES (DRIVERS AND DIMMERS) HAVE BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PARADIGM SHIFT IN MY 35-YEAR CAREER.”**

**—GLENN JOHNSON, ADAPTIVE DESIGN GROUP**

The ADAPTIVE Method® articulates eight layers of lighting applied to the built environment. Each layer is separate yet combined through thoughtful control and dimming levels, which creates the magical environments.

Once we describe our methodology, our clients and design team open up to the possibilities, and we facilitate the process through detailed drawings and specifications.

**Great lighting projects always include...**

The ADAPTIVE Method® coupled with thoughtful controls.



**“TILE CHOICE CAN BE OVERWHELMING BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OPTIONS OUT THERE. WE WANT THAT TO BE EXCITING, NOT INTIMIDATING.”**

**-LEAH WYNN, INSIDE OUT ARCHITECTURAL**

**What geographic area(s) do you serve?**

We serve all of Utah and the Four Corners area.

**What do you specialize in?**

Decorative tile and tile design and layout.

**When did you know that you wanted to go into this field and what motivated you?**

LEAH: I fell in love with decorative tile while doing research for a project in college and found that Utah needed a source for such products. Over the years, I've been lucky to work with people who helped foster this desire.

Inside Out has been my way of helping people make their homes special—I love focusing on the details and the accents that make a home stand out from the crowd.

KATHY: I have been working in the tile industry for over 25 years. A friend of mine started working at a tile showroom in Portland, Oregon, and recommended the job to me. I've been passionate about tile ever since and I've seen so many exciting developments in the industry.

JENNY: I did an Internship with Leah while I was working on my Interior design degree. I liked focusing on tile and how tile can really impact a room or a home. With the developments in tile lately, the design possibilities are really limitless.

**What inspires you?**

We are inspired by people and their creativity. We enjoy the challenge of helping Individuals find the things they like and put these things together so that it brings them joy daily.

**How do you see your field changing in the next five to ten years?**

Design of intimate spaces is becoming more personalized again. People are not afraid to express themselves with their surroundings. And with the all the new products being created, this is an exciting time to be in our industry.

**Describe your process—how do you work with clients, contractors, designers, and architects?**

We begin each project by listening intently to our customers—hearing what they like, what they don't, how they live, and how they want to live—all of that information is vital to making recommendations and helping our customers make their selections. Tile choice can be overwhelming because there are so many options out there. We want that to be exciting, not intimidating.

**Do you have favorite products you prefer or are known for?**

We work with some amazing tile artisans. With over 50 product lines, it's hard to choose. Currently, New Ravenna is a very popular one among our clients. They do the most beautiful and intricate mosaics in both stone and glass. Their product is customizable.

**What do you enjoy most about living and working where you do?**

We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful state where we have so many options to do wonderful outdoor activities. We have several of the best ski resorts in the United States as well as wonderful and warm areas with unique things to see.

**You get weak in the knees over \_\_\_\_\_?**

Tile of course!





Inside Out Architectural is a tile showroom located in Salt Lake City specializing in unique decorative tile with product from over 50 artisan vendors, ranging from historical to contemporary products. Professionals in custom tile layout and design with decades of combined experience, owner Leah Wynn and her staff, including interior designers, are equipped to help tile novices and tile aficionados alike. Wynn has long been passionate about tile and the detail and character it can bring to any space. WHJ talked to Wynn and two tile specialists, Kathy Shumate and Jenny Dabrowski about their work in tile.

# INSIDE OUT ARCHITECT URAL





# TODD EVANS BLACKDOG BUILDERS

Blackdog Builders provides construction services and management for residential and commercial projects. Their team includes project managers, office staff, and carpenters who are all talented and passionate about their roles in the business. The Blackdog team has now grown to nearly 40 people. Todd Evans, owner of Blackdog Builders, says, "My role is to do whatever it takes to keep my team excited to show up to work and love their jobs. Their success and passion for their work ultimately leads to our customer's satisfaction with our work as a team."





#### How did you get your start?

I guess my interest in building things came very early in age, sparked by my father and grandfathers. At any given time they had some sort of project that they were tinkering with, and they would always include me. I found that it was a great outlet for my creativity. I eventually worked as a laborer for various builders growing up. By the time I entered high school and college I really didn't know what to pursue as a career. In my senior year of college I started working on small handyman projects, mostly for family and friends. I quickly realized how much I enjoyed the work and decided to dump the late-night restaurant shifts and just work on small projects. I was soon offered a position with a local developer, which offered me plenty of learning experiences that I am grateful for. After college two friends and I started a partnership that lasted

17 years before I sold my shares and started Blackdog Builders in 2005.

I love designing, taking advantage of aspects, harmonizing surroundings, and collaborating with the homeowner. I find that being a builder fulfills my desire to be creative while allowing me to work with people. I appreciate the opportunity to transform dated houses into homes that fit clients' needs and personalities.

#### What services do you offer?

Blackdog has always been a diverse company, working on custom homes, remodels, and commercial projects. We work on all levels of construction including custom homes, hotels, residences, and offices.

#### What geographic area(s) do you serve?

Our focus is Summit County with the majority of work in the Park City and Deer Valley areas.

#### What is your professional background?

I've worked 30 years in the industry. I started my first business my senior year in college.

#### How do you see construction changing in the next five to ten years?

I believe the trend to build in an environmentally-conscious way and to utilize simple ways to make a structure more efficient will become closer to the norm rather than something only some people do. The builders who resist, mostly large production tract home builders, will have their hands forced by the national energy code that will inevitably gravitate to a more efficient way of building.

#### What makes the difference between good construction and great construction?

What makes the difference is the process itself—good communication, which means being responsive and handling the process with good attitudes and being gracious.

**“I FIND THAT BEING A BUILDER FULFILLS MY DESIRE TO BE CREATIVE WHILE ALLOWING ME TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM DATED HOUSES INTO HOMES THAT FIT CLIENTS' NEEDS AND PERSONALITIES.”**

**—TODD EVANS, BLACKDOG BUILDERS**

#### Describe your process—how do you work with clients, designers, and architects?

It is always best to work as a team regardless of who is involved and pull that team together as early as possible. It seems that when the owners pull a builder, architect, and designer in from the beginning and work through the process with the end goal in mind, it all comes together much more efficiently.

#### What do you listen to while you work?

Voices, in my head! I also enjoy a good shuffle of classic rock, bluegrass, reggae.

#### What other specialties do you have in-house?

We have two sister companies. Blackdog Stone does stone exteriors, fireplaces, landscaping, patios, and stone walls. Blackdog Customer Care works with project managers, customers, and realtors on punch list items, home inspections, and also manages properties for out-of-town owners.

#### You get weak in the knees over \_\_\_\_\_?

Forgiveness. Understanding. Babies. True love. Great friends. Sacrifice. Or when my legs get really tired!



**“WE ARE BASED IN THREE LOCATIONS WITH OFFICES AND SHOWROOMS IN JACKSON, WYOMING, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, AND IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO, BUT WE WORK WITH CLIENTS ON THEIR PROJECTS ALL OVER THE WORLD.”**

**—PAT HARKER, HARKER DESIGN**

**What services do you offer?**

Architectural design and full-service interior design for resort, residential, and commercial projects from concept to installation of products.

**What geographic area(s) do you serve?**

We are based in three locations with offices and showrooms in Jackson, Wyoming, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Idaho Falls, Idaho, but we work with clients on their projects all over the world.

**Do you have any special certifications or specialties?**

Within our company we have team members who specialize in interior design, architecture, and kitchen design and planning. We also offer in-house production capability, including custom millwork and kitchens, custom lighting, rugs, and furniture designs.

**What is your professional and educational background?**

I have a BFA in interior design and I have served clients for over 30 years.

**When did you know that you wanted to be a designer and what motivated you?**

My second year in college, I changed my major from fashion design and merchandising to interior design. I realized I had a talent for it and was passionate about it. I worked for a design studio right out of school and then I started my own business.

**What inspires you?**

So many things—from spectacular European architecture and art to the subtle colors and textures of nature.

**How do you see design changing in the next five to ten years?**

Regrettably, in many ways, I see a quest for lower prices driving quality out of our industry. Enduring quality is the best value. Great timeless design is always in style.

**What project(s) are you most excited about right now?**

Always the ones we are currently working on. It is exciting to work with each new client because you start with a fresh approach to each project and bring something that is unique and creative whether it be a room or a whole house.

**Describe your process—how do you work with clients, contractors, and architects?**

We determine the expectations of the team we are going to work with, establish the scope, budgets, and timing for the proposed project, and then we get to work. We bring a team to every project to ensure that we deliver what our client wants.

**What projects(s) are you the most proud of?**

All of them. We delight in satisfying clients! Our working relationships have lasted for decades in multiple projects.

**What makes the difference between good design and great design?**

Talent, wide experience, attention to detail and scale, as well as a complete knowledge of resources.

**What word(s) do people use to describe your work?**

Complete in every detail, and of course beautiful! We often hear from our clients that we exceeded their greatest expectations.

**What do you enjoy most about living and working where you do?**

Low density, open spaces, and seasons. Most clients are inspired by these same environmental qualities and results are always rewarding.





Harker Design is a full-service interior design firm based in Idaho Falls, but serving mountain resort communities all over the West. With showrooms in Jackson Hole and Salt Lake City in addition to their home office in Idaho Falls, Harker specializes in mountain luxury. Founder and owner Pat Harker brings many years of experience and has put together a team of experts to help homeowners refine and realize their vision for their dream home. She says, "At Harker Design, we work closely with clients to understand the way they live and the way their space can enhance their lives. We believe a space should be cohesive and intuitive, beautiful and functional. And we love helping our clients make their dreams a reality."

**PAT  
HARKER  
HARKER  
DESIGN**