

Designer steals the show at annual Parade of Homes

By **Cynthia Fessel**
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Another year, another winner.

So continues the story of designer Larry Gilland, who for three consecutive years has created top-award-winning Parade of Homes entries.

Gilland has no trophy on his mantle as proof of his valiant efforts, however. The local home builders association does not have a "designer" category for the Parade awards.

"I think they need to have a category for the people who design the houses," Gilland said. "Certainly the builder deserves a lot of recognition, but it's a team effort."

This year, Gilland teamed with builder Dean Hilton and designed a no-maintenance exterior home at the high-end Broadmoor Bluffs Parade site. The home made a clean sweep of first-place People's Choice honors, and received numerous industry awards.

In the 12 years since he established his own firm, Larry Gilland Associates Inc., Gilland said, he has designed "eight or nine" award-winning Parade homes. The good-natured designer brushes aside the lack of recognition; he's too busy to dwell on it.

Gilland attended his first Parade of Homes as a sixth-grade student seeking inspiration for an assignment to draw a floor plan. The tour inspired more than was needed to complete the homework; it was the beginning of a career. Now, as a seasoned home designer, Gilland still tours other houses all over the country.

"Anytime I get the chance, I generally tour all the models in the area," Gilland said. "But I don't necessarily look at the floor plans."

Gilland has replaced floor-plan gazing with searching out tiny design details. Details such as drywall sculpturing, faux painting and interior plant ledges have made their way from Gilland's extensive "detail library" to his designs.

Gilland recently designed a model for Atwood Homes that he described as beginning with "a common box element." Through drywall sculpturing, Gilland turned the floor plan at angles on the inside of the home.

"The basic structure was very simple and very common,

William Sommer/Gazette Telegraph



Larry Gilland

but detailing adds a lot of character on the inside," Gilland said.

Part of Gilland's work with Atwood Homes is being done through computer-aided design. A model is not being constructed of every plan offered by Atwood, so clients can come to Gilland's office and view the other plans on a video monitor.

Interior and exterior CAD presentations with three-dimensional pictures are used often by Gilland to allow clients to customize their homes.

"We are trying to convey to buyers that it is safe to build this home that's never been built before," Gilland said. "And here are some ideas of what it may look like, and where some furniture might be, and how you'll feel with that."

The use of CAD design not only helps Gilland work with clients, it is technically accurate and helps him and his employees meet deadlines.

When CAD design is not available, Gilland uses other means to ensure the design supports the home's comfortable living function. At the Hilton parade home, Gilland stacked up lumber to simulate a couch to make sure an outer deck was not blocking a scenic view.

Gilland already has blocked out time from December through February to work on the 1994 Parade of Homes. Even though recognition of his Parade designs has been sparse, that one-line entry in Parade publicity publications keeps people talking.