

# Making His Dream a Reality

BY RUTH COYLE BRYANT

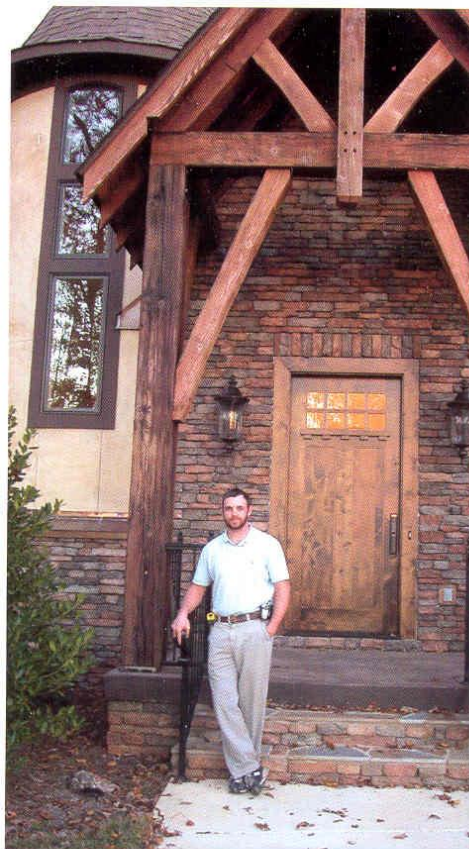
As an 18-year-old freshman at Auburn University in 2000, Brett Murphy had a clear vision for his future. Like many students in his building science major, he had a passion for building and a dream to one day own his own company. Little did he know he would make that dream a reality before his twentieth birthday.

Murphy, now 24, is the owner and president of Greenworks, LLC, a building and development company that he started in 2001. Through Greenworks, Murphy has built two houses in the fifth edition of Moores Mill subdivision in Auburn, Ala.

“Residential homes are my passion, so I hoped to start my own company building large, custom homes some day,” says Murphy. “As it turned out, I saw an opportunity right here in Auburn to invest some money and make that hope real, so I jumped on the chance.”

Murphy developed his passion from an early age. “It’s in my blood,” says Murphy. Born in Maryland, but raised primarily in Birmingham, Murphy’s family moved around a fair amount, living in 18 houses in four states. His father makes a hobby of buying and remodeling homes, so Murphy has an appreciation for quality craftsmanship and unique design touches.

The two homes he built in Auburn reflect this blood-born penchant for quality as well as his willingness to get his hands dirty to do a job right. Murphy is actively employed with Stewart Construction Company, the building contractor he works with on his homes. This allows him to play a hands-on role in seeing his vision materialize. “John Stewart has a great reputation in Auburn for quality home construction,”



says Murphy. “It’s a perfect partnership.”

Murphy began work with the company as a laborer, pouring concrete, while he was still in college. After graduation, Stewart offered Murphy a full-time job. “John gave me an amazing opportunity to learn more about the business of building large, high-quality, unique homes,” says Murphy. “Every second I

spend with him, I learn something new, and he is a great mentor for me.”

Murphy spent every day of construction working and overseeing progress at the houses, from pouring the foundations to setting custom tiles in the bathrooms. He calls the houses “opposites” in terms of their style, characterizing one as a rustic Old World home and the other a more formal French country home.

With special touches such as porch columns made from 200-year-old Douglas firs or a concrete bathroom countertop that Murphy designed and created himself, his houses are “the only ones of their kind” in East Alabama. “You would have to travel as far as Birmingham to find something comparable in terms of quality and uniqueness,” he says.

The challenge for Murphy in his building endeavors is staying within a budget that is comparable to other homes in the Auburn area. “These homes can simply not be compared to other homes of similar size. With this level of quality, we don’t even price by the square foot,” says Murphy. “You have to see them to appreciate why.”

But even with high price tags and the challenge of being compared to other homes, Murphy found buyers. A comparison is what made one of the sales. “Someone made a low offer on



one of our houses, which was turned down, so they went and bought another house they considered comparable. A month later, they put the house back on the market and made a better offer on our house,” says Murphy. “It was a nice compliment.”

Murphy says his biggest success isn't simply selling the houses, but is the knowledge that the buyers truly value what they are getting and appreciate what went into each home. “It's the best gift I could get,” says Murphy.

Like a seasoned professional, Murphy continues to look for good business opportunities, and will soon pursue success in North Carolina, starting his own construction and development company in Franklin next year.

*To reach Brett Murphy, call 334-319-0068 or email pranaboy@aol.com.*

*To reach Stewart Construction Company, call John Stewart at 334-319-1347.*