

New thinking brings organization and design to neglected space



Insiders say the new interior design philosophy developed by the Troy-based Educated Garage Systems could transform people's perception of the residential garage. Educated Garage Systems has taken the traditional design concepts of form and function and applied it to one of the most neglected interior spaces - the garage.

"Form and function certainly aren't new concepts when it comes to home design, however people don't typically consider form as it applies to the garage environment," says Educated Garage Systems owner Steve Bester. "At a minimum, the garage should have function. Unfortunately, most garages have neither."

In Bester's view, extending the concept is a natural result of the lifestyle changes families have experienced over the past few years.

"Many people haven't even been in their dining room since the last holiday, yet pass through their garage at least twice a day," he says. "Why shouldn't your garage look as good as the rest of your home?"

"Let's face it, most of us use the garage as the front door. Who wants to track into the house through a dirty garage?" he says. "We help people achieve the same pride of ownership in their garages as they have in their living rooms, kitchens and their landscaping."

With homes and garages increasing in size, Bester says many clients have come to recognize the potential of the garage as an expansion of living area, and are really making a statement with the space.

Educated Garage Systems offers custom-designed garage plans, helps in selecting storage, flooring and lighting

options, and installation to clients' exact specifications.

"We're a one-stop shop," he says. "I get to know my clients well. We talk about their lifestyle and we discuss their needs. Together, we turn chaos and clutter into organization and efficiency."

Before the firm's designers put pen to paper, Educated Garage Systems performs a comprehensive inventory of the items a customer needs, to stow, and designs an appropriate well-planned storage solution.

Educated Garage Systems has received kudos from customers who say the firm saved them time and effort by doing the homework for them. By serving as clients' "general contractor," Educated Garage Systems has sought out the best practices for all things garage - storage systems, epoxy flooring, lighting solutions, utility sinks, heating systems, ceiling fans, window treatments and just about anything individuals could want to accomplish in the space.

Bester's customers also say they received cutting-edge designs executed with the highest-quality materials at the lowest possible cost.

"We emphasize the importance of functional beauty," he says. "For instance, gardeners can install a utility sink to rinse their vegetables, attach slat walls to store all their shovels, rakes and tools, and add a workstation to plan next year's plantings."

Clients can choose from a wide selection of storage alternatives. They might select traditional wood or laminate cabinets that keep everything out of sight, the increasingly popular "slat-walls" that sweep bicycles and ladders off the floor, or loft storage for bulkier items.

Bester is also the only local installer of the Gladiator Garageworks® storage system, which is focused entirely in the garage environment. The system, manufactured by the Whirlpool® Corp. and shown here, consists of a variety of modular storage cabinets constructed of sturdy, powder-coated steel, with fully extendible drawers, adjustable shelves, and recessed handles. The system also includes tall locker cabinets, a 6-foot or 8-foot workbench and even a two refrigerators option. Floor units are mounted on solid rubber casters for maximum flexibility and mobility.

"If you're detailing your car, for instance, you can actually pull the cabinet out, to keep all your cleaning supplies or tools handy," he says. "It also makes cleaning up quick and easy."

The heavy-duty slat wall system allows customers to accessorize with baskets, hooks and storage fixtures.

Educated Garage System's mission is "complete customer satisfaction," says Bester. "Our customers have very high standards and expect the best in service and quality. Our aim is to increase the value of our clients' homes, utilize their existing space more efficiently, and add enjoyment and pleasure to their lives."

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