



William P. Draper

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Community Connections

Two Top DBS Dealers Sponsor Unique Home Tours to Benefit Local Charities

Cornerstone USA, Ltd. — Preserving Historical Sites By Brenda Lange

More than 100 years ago, when farmers in Moorestown, NJ, gathered, they met in the town's "Grange Hall." Debates over fertilizers, crops, and supplies mixed with discussions over how to best meet the needs of their growing community. Today that former meeting place has been preserved and renovated and is home to Cornerstone USA, Ltd. a high-end design studio.

Ken Strainic and Fernando Guerra formed Cornerstone in 1993, which now works with a focus on historical renovations. "We took a historic building and created a new use for it while maintaining the integrity of the original building," says Strainic of the former "Grange Hall." "When designing for a space, it's important to fit it into the building architecturally."

Finding just the right fit architecturally is what Cornerstone specializes in, both in their kitchen design work and through their efforts on behalf of the Moorestown Historical Society.

"The Historical Society in Moorestown has a strong interest in restoring and retaining historic structures in town that are integral to the architecture and character of this old Quaker town," says Strainic of the town founded in the 1600s.

Strainic and Cornerstone have helped raise funds for the society for the past five years, and he has served on the board for the past year. About \$40,000 has been

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William P. Draper is an outstanding Bucks County, Pennsylvania cabinetmaker, artisan, inventor, sculptor and artist of this time. Many recognize the signature of his artistry by the uniqueness of his finishes, patina, colorations and style. Through exploration and creation of new visions, his cabinet designs reinvent style. His work gives designers new, exciting opportunity to create important living spaces. Simply put, his purpose is to create and express an enlightened living experience that transcends the limits of time.

Masterwork Kitchens — Sampling Kitchens and Cuisines By Brenda Lange

After years of providing his clients with unique and beautiful kitchens, Joe Matta decided on a unique approach to marketing his business—Masterwork Kitchens of Goshen, New York. Bring potential clients together with past clients and let the finished products speak for themselves through an annual event he calls "Chef's Domain".

Matta and his wife, Theo, who manages the showroom and provides customer service, pick seven homes in which they have installed kitchens during the past year. Then they print up programs with each kitchen's floor plan, background, and maps. The program serves as a guidebook

for this self-guided tour. Tickets are sold, publicity goes out, and the Mattas get ready for 200 to 250 visitors—some who have turned the day into a permanent part of their annual calendar.

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Masterwork Kitchens

Illuminatus is published to provide information about the important work of DRAPER•DBS,™ Inc. and to give interested people a personal glimpse of the focus and mission of William Draper and his company. Illuminatus means "enlightenment."

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Ken Strainic (left) and friends

“With restoration work, you have to be realistic and find ways to fit the materials into today’s world.”
— Ken Strainic

raised to date through kitchen tours to help the society restore local historic properties. The Smith-Cadbury Mansion, the current home of the Historical Society, was its first beneficiary.

Careful planning of these events is key to their success. First, Strainic identifies several kitchens

around town in which Cornerstone has done work. A black tie affair is held on a Saturday night to kick off the event. The next day, the owners open their homes to the public. Cornerstone’s showroom is also open and serves as a central staging area.

A small, wood frame house on Main Street in Moorestown was one of the first homes featured on the Kitchen Tour. The 1680 Bondsmans House contains a kitchen created by DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. Antique materials were removed from other old homes slated for demolition and used to give this home authenticity.

“We pulled out floors, stairs, and windows and got hand-hewn timber and doors from other historic houses in Maryland,”

Strainic explains. The kitchen is rustic, with pots hanging from swinging arms in its huge fireplace. “With restoration work, you have to be realistic and find ways to fit the materials into today’s world.” That means that while the fireplace may be a beautiful conversation piece, one hardly expects today’s families to cook in it. So, space is created for a stove and oven.

The pine kitchen cabinets are finished in a combination of honey stain and dark green paint, both having standard Draper distressing which allows them to fit well with both the authentic materials and the modern need for convenience. The worktops are honed limestone and include a Belfast sink from England.

“There are a lot of ways to find uses for historic houses rather than raze them,” he adds. “I worked with a timber-framer from Vermont to put on a sympathetic addition that looks original.” (A sympathetic addition fits with the original structure and blends true to the original design of the house.)

Cornerstone is currently working with Laurel Construction, who is saving a significant residential structure in town. It was part of the Underground Railroad,

which helped slaves travel north to freedom. Known as The Tallman House, this important contributor to America’s heritage is being totally renovated and will be the Historical Society’s first show house. According to Strainic, HGTV will air a special in October featuring the house.

Strainic has carried products by DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. for the past eight years or so, and appreciates the product for its adaptability in historic homes. “DBS product works in a lot of older houses because of the craftsmanship; the hand-planing, the joinery, and the hand-scrubbed finishes. It is built in the tradition of American craftsmanship prior to 1840, when machines began manufacturing furniture. You get a different flavor when things are hand made; it just fits better into the older homes in the region.”

The Designer Show House is scheduled for October 2002 and the Kitchen Tour will be held again in the spring of 2003. For information, contact Ken Strainic at Cornerstone USA, Ltd. At 856/234-0066 or the Moorestown Historical Society by calling 856/335-0353. The society is located at 12 High Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057.

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Not only do people flock out to these show houses to see the kitchens, they come out to see what can be done in them. Matta lines up seven of the best chefs in the area, and stations them in the homes where they spend the day cooking up some wonderful dishes.

“We have five food houses and two dessert houses, a pretty diverse menu,” Matta explains. Chefs vie for the chance to be involved and some come with pretty impressive portfolios. “We have one who we’ve used from the beginning, who used to be the pastry chef at LaBernadin in New York City,” he says with pride.

Chef’s Domain has turned into a much-anticipated event in Goshen.

“A good portion of those who take the tour are planning kitchen projects, but we now have kind of a cult following of a group of women who always go because they want to see the differences from year to year,” he adds.

In the kitchen business for 20 years, Joe held the first Chef’s Domain event almost ten years ago. “It says a lot about what your clients think of you,” he says. “We ask people to open up their homes and we’ve found that they really get into it, including some who aren’t easily moved. We did a quarter million dollars worth of work in one house last year, and the owners just hung out and talked to everybody.”

Chef’s Domain brings in a lot of potential clients for Masterwork Kitchens, but it is not purely a marketing scheme. Early on Matta turned this event into a way to give something back to the community, besides, as he says, it takes a lot of hands to put on an event like this one. So he approached the Junior League—a well-organized group of community minded women—and the Mental Health Association of Orange County, and both agreed to help out.

These two organizations provide three to four people for each home to act as guides and ensure that nothing goes wrong. The proceeds from the event are split 50/50 between the two, with each agency realizing nearly \$10,000 annually.

Matta has added sponsorships to the mix as well. For \$1,000 local businesses, banks, vendors, and allied industries, such as a lighting manufacturer, get a full-page ad in the program book and signage at each home.

Chef’s Domain was formerly held in the spring, but was moved to the fall last year because the showroom at Masterwork Kitchens had undergone a major renovation, with 16 of its 24 displays re-done. “The building was finished in 1995 and it was just time to change. The industry has changed so much in six years.”

According to Theo something truly special is planned for this year’s 10th anniversary. About 25 miles from Goshen, Tuxedo Park, one of the country’s

original gated communities is full of magnificent homes, seven of which will open their doors to Chef’s Domain in a few short weeks.

As beautiful as the displays are in the showroom, viewing the cabinetry in a real home setting where they are then put to use, provides a different perspective to which clients and potential clients respond well.

Masterwork Kitchens employs a staff of eight and is situated in a 5,000 square foot building about 25 miles from West Point. Matta has worked with DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. for about 15 years. The main display at Masterwork Kitchens features the new Biedermeier door style. Another displays the Kiva design in white oak with mahogany trim. And yet another display includes a Country French kitchen island of heavily distressed pine surrounded by Avignon-Grande cabinetry, another of Draper’s new additions.

What initially began as a means to attract clients quickly turned into a community service project with a twist. “Chef’s Domain is definitely the best marketing we’ve ever done,” says Matta. “It has helped our business grow, enhanced our reputation for being a leader in the field locally, and parallels our philosophy while at the same time helping the community. Everyone, from the homeowner on down, enjoys the day.”