

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

New custom community offers yacht club, golf

Baltimore native talks about innovative home design and Maryland's housing market

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The Examiner took a virtual tour of some of the newest home products by Clark Turner Signature Homes, including the new community at Bulle Rock Golf Course. Turner expanded on why Maryland is a great state for homebuilders and homebuyers.

Q Examiner: What is your background in Maryland?

A Turner: I was born and raised in Baltimore, and I know the way the industry works here, and I know who I need to talk to and work with to get projects done.

And I think Maryland is an attractive state to developers. The fundamentals for housing that exist here are very strong, with job growth, with a higher proportion of people with advanced degrees from colleges, the future of BRAC ... If all these trends hold up, this region will continue to be very excellent for home building.

Q Examiner: What is the newest product in your offering?

A Turner: We are in the middle of our Bulle Rock project [The Residences at Bulle Rock, Harford County]. It's very unique to this region in that it offers a lot of amenities you just don't find elsewhere, a golf course, a yacht club and marina on the Susquehanna, four miles of walking trails, a community center with 38,000 square feet of pools, spas, computer rooms, card rooms.

This community overlooks the whole Chesapeake Bay, right off Interstate 95. It really has a lot of positive aspects. People are coming here for the lifestyle.



The kitchen/great room inside a Clark Turner Signature Homes model home at Bulle Rock Golf Course. - Courtesy photo.

Q Examiner: How are sales going so far for Bulle Rock's community?

A Turner: We have had probably over 400 sales so far, for a mix of product types from condos to townhomes to villa homes to single-family homes, at a variety of price points with a whole lot of options for people to choose from.

Q Examiner: What is the design process like for your signature home products?

A Turner: We work a little differently [than the national builders] because we are a much smaller company. We really kind of like to be on the front lines with our customers, so we get instant feedback and our designs have evolved from listening to our customers, in addition to doing market research.

We are continuing to add new things and refining our product

based on what we are hearing and we are willing to sit down with our architects and customers and modify the plan to suit their needs.

I always try to stay ahead of the trends and be early in trying new things and we consistently do that. In our model in Bulle Rock, we have really tried to expand on indoor/outdoor relationships, interior courtyards and creating a U-shaped house. Additionally we have added stone privacy walls outside, outdoor fireplaces, outdoor TVs.

This way, your living room or family room is wrapped around it, creating a wonderful indoor/outdoor relationship.

An additional uniqueness we do is that we are constantly putting new little products inside the home, like we have a TV that plays through the mirror in the master bedroom bath, and we're making closets to be more like wardrobes, with built-

in shelves and shoe racks. Again, we are always trying to be ahead of the marketplace with new design.

Q Examiner: What are some of the trends and styles that customers are asking you for?

A Turner: They always want the latest thing that I have a model of, and I always use model homes to display our designs.

We see the kitchen/family room combination as the core area where people spend their time. I think there is a de-emphasis on the living room. We are turning the master bedroom closets into huge wardrobes and the baths into luxurious spa baths, and we are creating private space with courtyards.

Q Examiner: Who is your demographic?

A Turner: Typically our buyer has been the empty-nester, and

typically they are local. But in Bulle Rock, I'm finding my demographic has broadened and there is a huge draw from Wilmington, Philadelphia, Washington, Anne Arundel ... because it is situated right off I-95, and therefore has more regional draw.

Q Examiner: Why did you select the Bulle Rock location?

A Turner: Initially it was planned to have a second golf course and convention center, but after 9/11, convention center business slowed and the original owner was looking to sell. I heard about it and thought it would be a great location for a world class community, with the charm of Havre de Grace, the Bay views and the wonderful rolling topography.

Q Examiner: Do you have to be a golf-lover to life here?

A Turner: Absolutely not, there are plenty of other things to do.

Q Examiner: What makes a Clark Turner Signature Home stand out?

A Turner: We try and make all of our products unique through the design features.

We are big on ceiling treatments, barrel coffered domes, open beam work. I believe the ceiling is the fifth wall and too often it's been ignored as a flat space, and I think it controls a huge amount of square footage of your house and you should try and accent that wherever you can.

We try and use very timeless elements like materials, great, great moldings, window features.

Q Examiner: How much time do you spend out in the field on building sites?

A Turner: It used to be that building the house was where I spent my time, but today I spend most of my time in the approval process, which has become much more complex. I try to get out in the field as often as my schedule can allow.