

CONTRACTORS & REMODELING

# At a Glance

With more than 20 years of experience, Josh Baker, president of **BOWA Builders, Inc.**, in McLean and Middleburg, Virginia, has supervised many custom home projects.

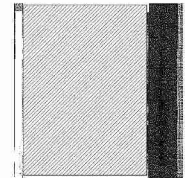
The key to success, whether you are remodeling or building a new home, Baker says, is “putting together the right team.” Building and remodeling should involve a collaboration between an architect, builder, landscape designer and interior designer. Many other specialists may also come into play such as arborists, security and home theater professionals, lighting designers and accessibility experts. The contractor is usually the coordinator on a project, acting as liaison between his workers, other specialists and the client. Like the home on the right, built by BOWA and designed by architects at Custom Design Concepts Architecture in McLean, some projects require knowledge and experience working with unusual materials such as specialized lumber, variegated slate or complex stonework.

“Almost all problems are the direct result of poor communication,” Baker says. “The most successful projects involve efficient and economic client and builder feedback.” The builder is the captain of a dynamic team; the client should engage the builder early in the planning process. “The earlier the better,” Baker adds.

—Alice Leccese Powers

## QUESTIONS to Ask Your Contractor

- Has your contractor or remodeler done similar projects in scale and budget to the one you propose?
- Have you spoken to the remodeler's former clients and inspected his or her previous work?
- Does the level of fine finish meet your expectations?
- Has the remodeler completed work in a timely manner and on budget?
- What is the level of on-site supervision provided by the remodeler?
- Will there always be a supervisor on the job?
- How many projects does the remodeler run at the same time?
- Does the contractor coordinate other trades: landscape teams, lighting designers, plumbers, electricians and others?
- How much supervision will the architect provide during construction?
- How will the remodeler communicate with the client and other contractors? Will there be a computer on the jobsite?
- How often will the remodeler meet with you?





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