

Lowe Construction

A Third-Generation Custom Home Builder on San Juan Island

By Kendall Hopwood

Viewed from above, this dramatic living area features a modern fireplace and exotic hardwood floors. Enjoy a good book by the fire. ... *Courtesy of Architects*

UNFLINCHING TRAILS **HOW** long-time employee Mike Coyne describes Dan Lowe, third-generation builder and owner of Lowe Construction on San Juan Island.

"We've been presented with some pretty big challenges, and Dan always maintains his calm. He has a well-developed ability to

At the water's edge near False Bay, this home uses reclaimed lumber and custom hardware and unique metalwork designed throughout the home. Cole Smith AIA of Smith-Ekblad & Assoc. Interior Design by Sherry Hayslip of Hayslip Design



look at project snafus with a fresh perspective and develop unique, cost-effective solutions," says Mike.

It's that combination of experience and an aptitude for innovation that has kept Lowe Construction's business booming for decades. Rooted in Friday Harbor on San Juan Island, Lowe Construction has been building homes on the island since 1967. Dan followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, both of whom had a reputation for being firm but fair — and for setting the precedent in quality construction.

Taking the helm of Lowe Construction in 2001, Dan has continued to build high-end custom residences and remodels on San Juan and, occasionally, the surrounding islands. Tapping into his deep family history and 20-plus years of building experience, Dan adeptly steers the ship through any squalls without losing sight of clients' goals.

Commenting on Dan's vision, Mike says, "He has a great ability to not be limited by conventional practices. He knows how and when to transcend the common method of doing something."

Take, for instance, a problematic roof insulation job. While other contractors suggested long, costly and convoluted processes to the homeowners, Dan characteristically thought outside the box, proposing a singular, consolidated solution that elegantly addressed the structural, energy, aesthetic and budget requirements. Examining situations from various vantage points empowers Lowe Construction



Located just outside Roche Harbor, this contemporary Northwest home uses a combination of materials including metal weathered clad siding, Western Red Cedar and architectural grade concrete. Demetriou Architects

An inviting seaside home with character, this breakfast nook overlooks the outdoor fireplace and deck areas. Cole Smith AIA of Smith-Ekblad & Assoc. Interior Design by Sherry Hayslip of Hayslip Design



to solve problems efficiently and cost effectively, leaving homeowners more time to enjoy the end result.

When it comes down to the final built product, Lowe Construction's portfolio eludes any singular style or definition, though high-end custom homes are where they have truly made their mark.

Dan says, "We've built everything from rustic log cabins to contemporary modern homes with all the latest home décor trappings and accoutrement."

Garnering attention from a range of prominent trade and consumer publications over the years, Lowe Construction's work has been featured in *Elle*, *Log Home Living*, *Sunset Magazine*, *Western Interiors*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Seattle Homes* and *Fine Homebuilding Kitchen and Bath*.

Though most commonly associated with large custom homes, it also builds smaller projects. "We still go out and change doorknobs

Near wind-swept Eagle Cove on the South end of San Juan Island, this modern custom home sits quiet and peaceful, the detached "bunker" features two beds, shower and large skylight. Suyama Peterson Deguchi Architects





COVER FEATURE

Glass and steel abound in this Waterfront home near Friday Harbor. Inside includes a climate controlled greenhouse for the owners indoor plants to flourish. 4d Architects with David Kinderfather AIA



Perched high above Hare Straight on the West side of San Juan Island, the owners desired a "modern barn look" home, reminiscent of the barns found in the Midwest. Sala Architects Inc



An open design with panoramic orca whale watching views, this modern gourmet kitchen and living space is perfect for entertaining throughout the year. A full outdoor kitchen with an automated glass windbreak is on the opposite end. Curtis Gelotte Architects

This home utilized the original solid timber walls. Lowe Construction then constructed a new roof line and extensive use of steel and glass rooms to create and maximize it's view, complete with an indoor pool. 4d Architects w/ David Kinderfather AIA



Another fine example of Lowe Construction's detailed craftsmanship found both inside and out of this Westside custom home. It features exquisite stonework matched with Western Red cedar. Curtis Gelotte Architect





Another room with a view, this master bath "wet room" features an overhead shower and automated blinds. 46 Architects with David Kinderfater AIA

and build decks. It's not all large projects," Dan says, adding "Our employees are skilled in all aspects of the building trade."

It's that skill and personable service that keeps clients coming back. "We continually get customers from 15 or even 20 years ago who are ready for a kitchen remodel or a new mailbox," Dan comments, and whether a new client or one from years ago, a large or a small project, Dan is personally available any day of the week, at any time. In fact, when a homeowner called from out of town, fearing she had left the espresso machine on, Dan immediately sent one of his guys — despite the hour drive — to make sure the machine was

The Friday harbor waterfront custom home was quite a challenge due to its steep hillside slope. Clad in Alaska Yellow cedar siding, it also features two large private docks to accommodate moorage. 4d Architects with David Kinderfater AIA



off, and the homeowner's fears were assuaged. "And no, she didn't receive a bill," Dan adds. For Lowe Construction, the workday goes well beyond nine to five.

While genuine, personal service is a hallmark of Lowe Construction, Dan credits his employees and subcontractors for their versatility and consistently sound product. Referring to them as the "backbone of the company," Dan also attributes much of his success to the exceptional architects he's worked with over the years.

While talking to Dan, it all seems so simple. There are no marketing ploys or traps, no sales speak or tap dances — just high-quality construction and superlative service backed by a solid history as deeply rooted in the San Juan's soil as the towering trees that dapple the island. Sharing those roots with his own family — including his wife Barnaby and two children, Jake and Coral — Dan continues to relish his life on the island, looking forward to the new technical and design challenges wrapped in each day as well as the new partnerships.

So if the past foretells the future, in all likelihood Lowe Construction will still be setting the bar in high-end custom home construction 20 years from now, maybe even 50, and coworkers and clients will probably still describe Dan Lowe as unflappable.

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