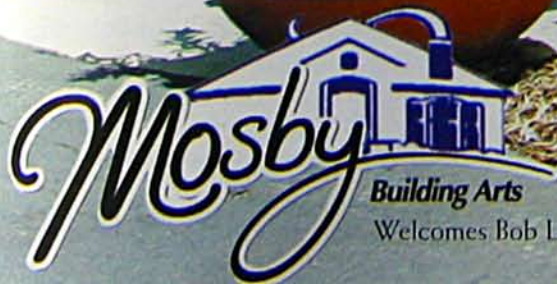


STYLE *at home*

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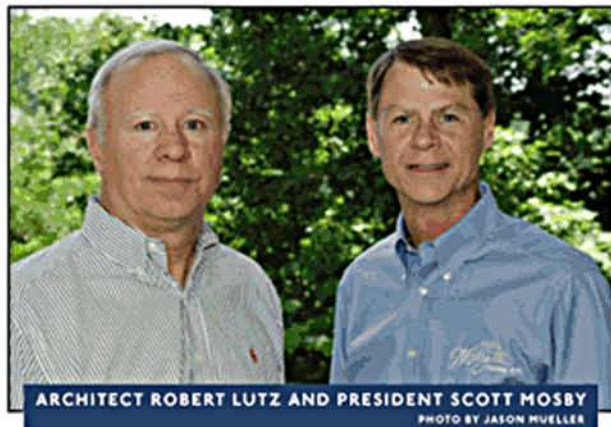


Welcomes Bob Lutz, Architect

Remove from center

AN EFFICIENT SOLUTION

MOSBY BUILDING ARTS
by trish MUYCO-TOBIN



ARCHITECT ROBERT LUTZ AND PRESIDENT SCOTT MOSBY
PHOTO BY JASON MUELLER

From fuel-efficient cars to recycled packaging, going green is 'in' again these days. But at Mosby Building Arts, thinking green never went out of style. "I've always believed that if I'm not part of the solution, I'm part of the problem," says president Scott Mosby. Now in its 60th year, Mosby says his design-build company remains committed to being part of the solution.

He says there is a right way to building and renovating green, energy-efficient and healthy homes. "Build it tight, vent it right," he says. In addition to his professional building credentials, Mosby co-founded the Green Builders Council of St. Louis in 1994 and served as chairman of the environmental affairs committee of the Home Builders Association of Greater St. Louis. Mosby says when the company, which was founded by his father Sam in 1947, moved its headquarters to downtown Kirkwood in the mid-'90s, even the location was well thought out. "We bought our building because it was just around the corner from Kirkwood Recycling. When I first started out, there was no place for recycling building waste," he says.

Understanding how energy efficiency and healthy living intersect is at the backbone of every Mosby Building Arts project, whether or not homeowners realize it, Mosby says. "For example, the color of the patio pavement matters. A white patio reflects the heat up; a dark one holds the heat. The soffit of the house and roof design become an energy benefit. Greenery—having less pavement and more natural environment like native plants around the house—absorbs heat and cleans the air," he explains. Indoors, healthy living is in the details, Mosby says. "When we do a kitchen, we suggest creating an herb garden—it cuts glare, cleans the air and you can eat it!"

He says the more homeowners know about how their home works, the better they understand the concept of energy conservation. Mosby, who also hosts the KMOX Home Improvement Show every Saturday morning, says a number of his radio listeners are looking for a quick fix, which usually doesn't end up solving the problem. "A caller asked me what she could do to seal her windows that continued to leak, even though she recently replaced them and spent a considerable amount of money doing so," he recalls. Mosby asked the woman about her furnace, A/C, water heater, clothes dryer, and bathroom and kitchen vent fans. "Turns out her inefficient, old furnace was creating a negative pressure in her house, forcing a vacuum and creating a suction, causing her windows to leak," he explains. "It wasn't really about her windows, it was more about the mechanical system in her house." And with this type of situation, Mosby says another problem is likely to occur. "If you're sucking moisture inside a wall cavity that can't dry itself, it becomes a health issue with mold, bugs and other pollutants," he says.

Mosby Building Arts has recently strengthened its roster of professionals with the addition of architect Robert Lutz. Before coming out of retirement this year to work for Mosby, Lutz's experience includes time with Ittner, HOK and Cohen architects before founding Robert Lutz Architects, which later became Lutz & Stratman. Lutz also taught at Washington University and served as president of the Missouri Solar Energy Association. Some of his solar and super-insulated home designs have won national awards. "Bob was a major energy advocate in St. Louis long before it was 'cool,' making him a perfect fit for us," says Mosby.

Because of his years of experience, Lutz considers himself lucky to be working as an architect. "Things

“...HEALTHY living IS IN THE details.”

evolve over time, and because we've been repeatedly doing these projects, we've refined the technique over the years," he says. Lutz adds he's a little skeptical about the newfound 'green' awareness and the gimmicks that come with it. "It's more of a republication of certain energy-related ideas, and it concerns me that some people are going to try to attempt projects without the proper knowledge and experience," he says.

Thankfully, Lutz says, consumers these days are better informed about what's available, and they want to improve the way they live. "They realize that not only can they save money, but also that their houses can be nicer and much more comfortable," he says. His job, he notes, is to transfer that vision into real life. And while there are many ways to convert an existing home into an energy-efficient home, Lutz says those building new construction can be helped as well. "There's so much we can do now, and it's not limited to any type of home or style," he says. Asked why he chose to work for Mosby Building Arts after coming out of retirement, Lutz says, "Scott Mosby and I are simply trying to do things properly." ❖