

# Santa Fe REAL ESTATE Guide

Artisan/craftsman/**builder**

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## It's best to define specifics at outset

by Kurt Faust

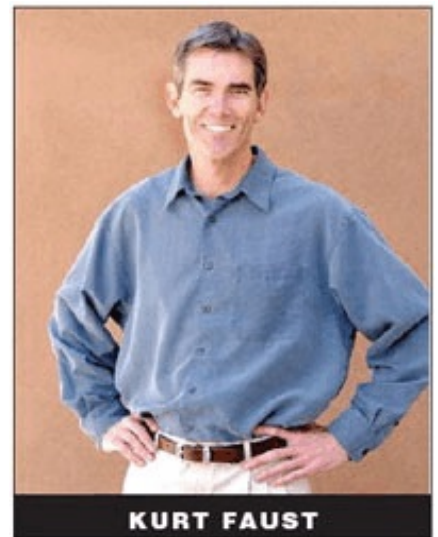
When it comes to building a new house, the “devil” truly is in the “details”. Most people don't spend enough time beforehand addressing and coordinating all the parts of a home. Often, this will mean a frantic rush, at the last minute, to make final decisions on how all the details will come together.

In today's world we have more choices than ever before. Just think of how many surfaces there are to choose from for countertops in the kitchen. In virtually every category it is the same: there are hundreds of choices. Sink faucets, undercounter lights, tile trim, appliances, and flooring materials, all the way down to light-switch coverplates - all of these items must work together to form an aesthetic and functioning whole.

Coordinating the specifications starts from the very beginning and everything is connected in an intricate web. Even the foundation must consider the thickness of the various flooring materials and things like the locations of drains and electricity in the kitchen island. When the walls are going up, it is nice to know where the towel bars and TP holders are located so as to install the proper blocking. Nothing is worse than having these items work loose and fall off the wall. Each separate light fixture has its own requirements: the height above the floor, the type of outlet box it attaches to, and the location of the transformer if it is low-voltage, and so on.

Tile trim, for instance, is something that takes particular attention. After selecting the field tile and some kind of simple or complex decorative motif, the trim must be considered. Any place there is a 90-degree turn in the surface of the material will have an exposed edge of raw tile that will show. This is accentuated at corners and with bancos and nichos. Deciding on the details at the time of selecting the field tile means knowing what trim tiles are available and knowing how that will affect the overall look.

In a custom home the combination of parts is unique, with many of them coming together in this exact combination for the first time. Having all of these details selected and making sure that they are all compatible before breaking ground ensures that you will enjoy the building part of the process more. It helps prevent stressful and very irritating last-minute decisions. Having to decide last-minute makes, sometimes, for inferior choices: having to make



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selections from what is available or what is “in stock” at the time.

It is important to make sure that you have it all well-specified prior to the start of construction and, as important, to make sure you have it all written down and it is part of the construction contract. This is another one of those details that often gets overlooked in the rush to get started “right away”. When the contract specifications lists, in great detail, all of the decisions, the construction process is streamlined and runs efficiently. This one simple thing can go a long way to give confidence and build up trust. It also relieves a major portion of the stress of building a home.

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