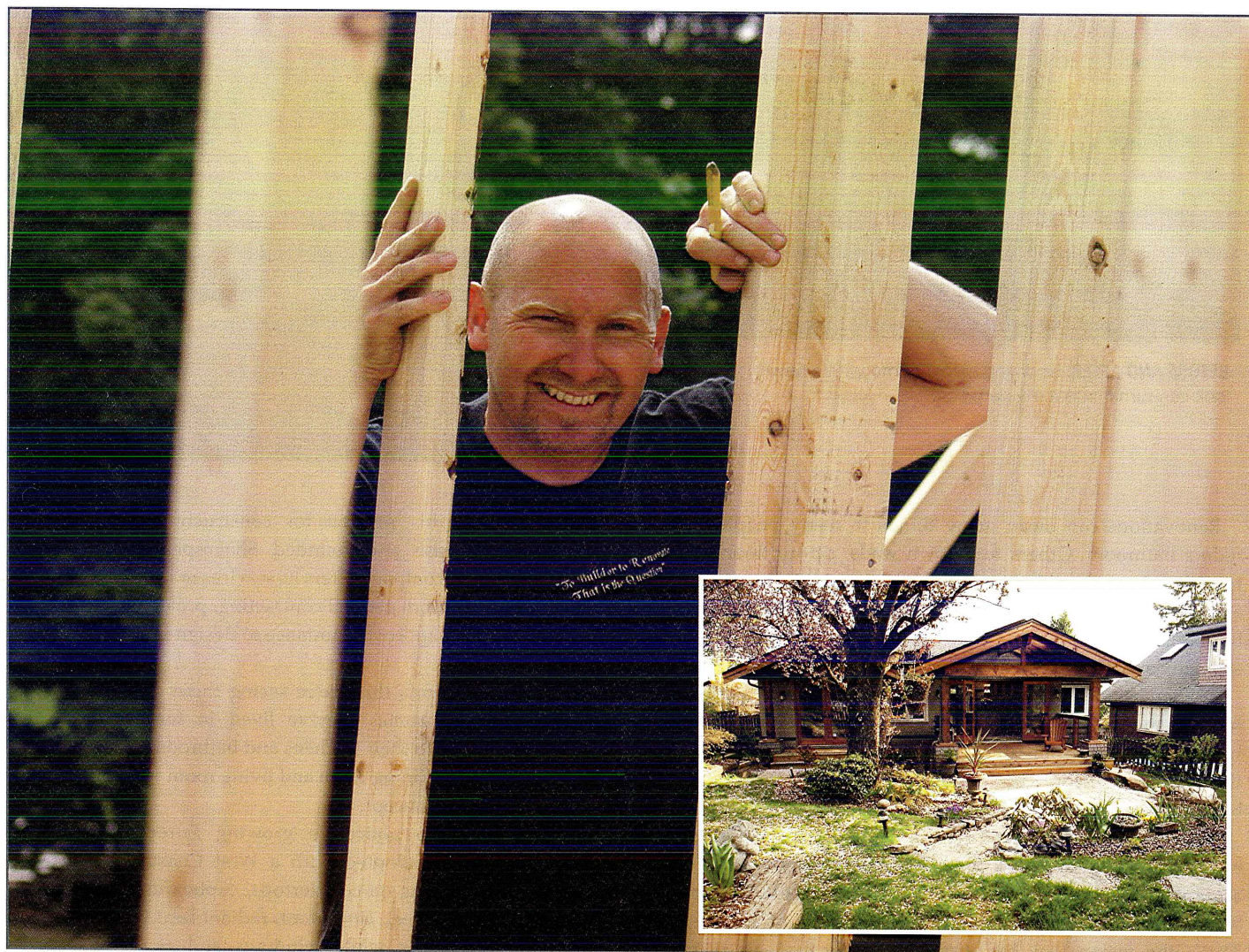


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**DRAMATIC RENOS:** For Mark Cooper of Shakespeare Homes and Renovations, updating an older property is not only a good investment for homeowners, but also a source of creative inspiration.

## profile

# Renos take the stage

**Shakespeare Homes and Renovations puts the 'art' in artisans**

BY INGRID DE JONG

**Y**ou get up on a Sunday morning and during a leisurely breakfast, notice the kitchen walls seem to be closing in, the cabinets a little worse for wear. Next you think about how you've raised a family in your home and the memories it holds. Then you consider the high price of real estate and rising interest rates. You wonder, "Do I want to move ... or improve?"

As Shakespeare Homes and Renovations puts it, "To build or renovate. That is the question."

These days, many homeowners are weighing the pros and cons of buying new or renovating. According to Mark Cooper, owner of Shakespeare Homes in North Vancouver, "If you like your home, your neighbourhood, the schools in your area, then you should consider renovating what you have."





**BEFORE AND AFTER:** Updating an old home with a new look can turn it into a masterpiece.



Renovations can mean many things to many people. Some redo a bathroom. Others tear down walls, rip up flooring and turn their homes inside out. Whatever your goals, renovating is a great investment that not only makes your home more liveable, but adds value and builds equity. Just in case you do decide to sell one day.

Cooper has been on the frontlines of home renovations and has seen many changes over the years. At its peak five years ago, he says big renovations in the range of \$350,000-700,000 were the average, as people built additions onto their homes. Today budgets are smaller as clients focus on the space they're in.

No matter the size of the renovation, Cooper takes pride in each job as if it were a work of art. It's in his blood. "My dad is an artist who also ran a sign painting company called Shakespeare Signs. The name inspires quality and the skills of an artisan." That's the vision that has inspired Cooper and his team of construction experts since he founded the construction and renovation company in 1999.

Cooper's interest in carpentry began in high school before he carved a career in the IT industry for many years. Eventually

Cooper merged his passion for construction with Fortune 500 business sense and founded Shakespeare Homes and Renovations. His company offers its services mainly in North and West Vancouver, from general contracting, project management, carpentry, permit approval guidance to design and construction consultation.

"The typical trends that we're seeing these days are people renovating older homes they've lived in for awhile," says Cooper. Clients redo their kitchens and bathrooms or pull down walls to open up a dining room and living room with the kitchen for an open space concept.

Cooper has also noticed a growing European trend of minimalism being adopted with a West Coast twist. Darker colours are appearing on countertops, cupboards, flooring and more for a timeless feel. Underfoot, radiant heat warms kitchen and bathroom floors while windows and skylights expose natural light for more energy efficiency.

Whatever your budget and your goal, you can turn your four walls into a stage to showcase the fine art of quality craftsmanship. **BCHM**

## up or down?

Urban housing starts in 2011 are up and down so far.

February 2010	February 2011	January 2010	January 2011	December 2009	December 2010
1,925	1,852	1,501	2,176	1,481	1,604

Source: CMHC