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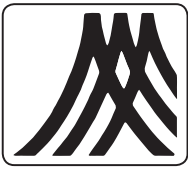


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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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*Feature Builder Story*

**04** Morrison's to Revamp  
Wynnwood Store into  
Expressions Home Gallery  
By Kathy Bowen Stolz

**06** Builder Confidence Closes Year on a High Note

**08** Dialogue with a Designer -  
Marie Flanigan

**14** Inside Story- Scholl Family Continues Lumber Yard  
Legacy  
By Kathy Bowen Stolz

**18** Houston Housing Picture  
Bohlke Consulting Group, LLC

**19** Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet News Release



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Giselle Bernard**  
*Publisher*

Happy New Year Houston! Can you believe it? Another year has come and gone. For me, 2016 was a little challenging but still outstanding and I'm looking forward to another amazing year. I know you are as well.

We incorporated a few changes last year and will see more changes this year. Yes, it's been an excited beginning of the year and we are just getting started. Stay tuned and look for more electrifying opportunities in which to take advantage.

Starting this month, hard copies of the magazine will be received by all advertising vendors as well as all of the builders and interior designers that can be identified in the market. The digital copy of the magazine will be received by all including non-advertising vendors, suppliers and subcontractors. If you wish to receive a

hard copy of the magazine, please contact me personally.

Also, before the year's end, I'm looking to create a networking opportunity for the builders, vendors and interior designers in which will put them in touch with the consumer looking to build, remodel or purchase a new home.

As most know, The Metropolitan Builder is much more than just a trade publication. It's an entire marketing system created to assist those participating grow business. I can't do this without feedback from you and therefore it is highly encouraged. What do you want? What do you need? Let's talk!

**Giselle Bernard**- Publisher



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# Morrison's to Revamp Wynnwood Store into Expressions Home Gallery

By Kathy Bowen Stolz | Photography courtesy of Morrison

**N**ew! Improved! We've seen these words so often that we've become jaded to their meaning. But "new" and "improved" is the best way to describe the upcoming renovation and rebranding of the Morrison's Supply store on Wynnwood Lane in Houston.

Morrison's parent company MORSCO will renovate and rebrand the store into an Expressions Home Gallery during the first quarter of 2017 to improve consistency in the marketplace. "The changes are exciting to us in the company, and we expect our customers to find them exciting, too," said Jayme Adams, MORSCO's manager of showroom development.

The current plumbing counter will remain, but the showroom will be remodeled to enhance its customers' experience, according to Adams. The store will maintain its 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekday hours during remodeling.

(Customers may set an appointment for evenings or Saturdays.)

Although the renovation will be guided by market considerations, the improved Wynnwood Lane showroom will share some similar features with the showroom at the other Expressions Home Gallery in Houston, located at 7071 Southwest Freeway.

The Expressions Home Gallery concept is to give the customer a real feel for how the appliances, lighting and plumbing fixtures would look in the customers' homes, Adams said. "As you can see from the photographs accompanying this story, our displays show how various bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances would look in different settings," she added.

The change in showroom design and layout is designed to appeal to the customers, whether they are architects/designers, builders or homeowners, she noted. Adams and her team tailor the showrooms to these three core customer groups, using concepts from the book "Why She Buys," as well as interviews with their customers, which identified their most important needs in shopping for home fixtures.

Some of the needs of the three core segments of customers overlap, Adams said, but the two most common are uncluttered spaces and price transparency. Price transparency includes having all appliances and fixtures clearly labeled so customers won't be "blind" to pricing when they walk into an Expressions Home Gallery showroom, Adams said. "The concept of pricing a showroom is relatively new to this industry; in many markets, we are the first showrooms to have pricing listed for our customers to see," she added.

The store will continue to offer hardware, lighting, plumbing and appliances, although the lighting area will be expanded, according to Adams. The company will update its displays, following a template that MORSCO uses at its 15 other Expressions Home Gallery locations in California, Arizona and Texas. Furnishings and finishes are unique to each store. The paint colors and finishes are unique to each store, as defined by the local market, Adams noted.

To help rebrand the Wynnwood Lane store, MORSCO will change the signage to Expressions Home Gallery, of course. In addition to a marketing and advertising rebranding campaign, the company will also hold events

*Continued on page 10*



# Builder Confidence Closes Year on a High Note



Builder confidence in the market for newly-built single-family homes jumped seven points to a level of 70 on the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI). This is the highest reading since July 2005.

“This notable rise in builder sentiment is largely attributable to a post-election bounce, as builders are hopeful that President-elect Trump will follow through on his pledge to cut burdensome regulations that are harming small businesses and housing affordability,” said NAHB Chairman Ed Brady, a home builder and developer from Bloomington, Ill. “This is particularly important, given that a recent NAHB study shows that regulatory costs for home building have increased 29 percent in the past five years.”

“Though this significant increase in builder confidence could be considered an outlier, the fact remains that the economic fundamentals continue to look good for housing,” said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. “The rise in the HMI is consistent with recent gains for the stock market and consumer confidence. At the same time, builders remain sensitive to rising mortgage rates and continue to deal with shortages of lots and labor.”

Derived from a monthly survey that NAHB has been conducting for 30 years, the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index gauges builder perceptions of current single-family home sales and sales expectations for the next six months as “good,” “fair” or “poor.” The survey also asks builders to rate traffic of prospective buyers as “high to very high,” “average” or “low to very low.”

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The advertisement shows a construction site with a concrete pump truck and workers. The background is a light blue sky with some trees.



Scores for each component are then used to calculate a seasonally adjusted index where any number over 50 indicates that more builders view conditions as good than poor.

All three HMI components posted healthy gains in December. The component gauging current sales conditions increased seven points to 76 while the index charting sales expectations in the next six months jumped nine points to 78. Meanwhile, the component measuring buyer traffic rose six points to 53, marking the first time this gauge has topped 50 since October 2005.

Looking at the three-month moving averages for regional HMI scores, the Northeast rose six points to 51, the Midwest posted a three-point gain to 61, the South rose one point to 67 and the West registered a two-point gain to 79.



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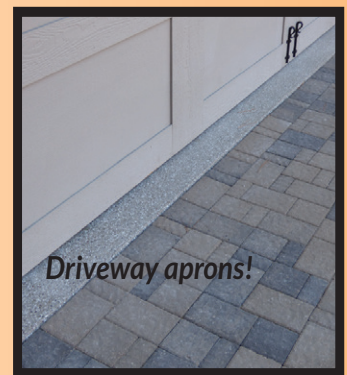
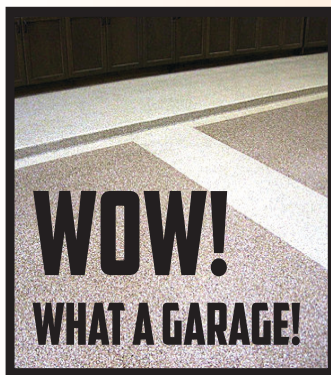
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2014 Pinnacle Award Winner



# DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

MARIE FLANIGAN

*Morrison knows that dreams, reality and inspiration make a house a home. They also know that an interior designer or interior design firm often become an intricate part of this process. Design professionals should be committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. Morrison Showrooms work to inspire these ideas and is conveniently located in the heart of Houston. Morrison offers many brands and designs, all exhibited in unique settings with interactive displays. Whether it's appliances, plumbing, hardware, or lighting, they have brand to fit every budget and a style to fit every design. Contact the Showroom Manager for more details. 713-861-2343.*

*This month Morrison speaks with Marie Flanigan, Principal at Marie Flanigan Interiors, an award winning interior designer whose passion and achievements in design have positioned her as one of the nation's best. Her trademark style is evident through the sophisticated use of texture, color, and light, creating environments that celebrate innovative simplicity while reflecting the lives of those who live, love, and grow within. Trained as an architect, she expertly unites structure with style, creating sophisticated spaces that*

*have been featured on the pages of premier publications, including Traditional Home, Elegant Homes, Southern Home, and Luxe.*

**Morrison:** *What sets you apart from other designers?*

**Marie Flanigan:** My education is rooted in architecture and that influences my approach to every project. I believe that an extraordinary home is less about the furnishings and décor, and more about how well the architecture and those interior elements speak to one another.

**Morrison:** *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

**Marie Flanigan:** Builders and contractors are an extension of our own team and vice versa. Together, we are stronger at identifying client needs and determining how our various skills can bring their dream home to life. When a builder-designer relationship is built on steady communication, decisions can be made faster, less mistakes are made, and the construction process will ultimately be more peaceful for the homeowner.

**Morrison:** *What fascinates you and how have you*



*incorporated that into your designs.*

**Marie Flanigan:** I am continually inspired by people, art, and travel, and, with design in particular, I am always fascinated by my clients' life stories. The details of those stories help me create spaces that have a powerful sense of meaning. A special piece of art or a rug that has been handed down for generations can serve as an exciting starting point in the development of a design; your past doesn't have to dictate the present, but it does help create a steady foundation.

**Morrison:** *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

**Marie Flanigan:** We host an inspiration session and look through images of homes they love and some they don't. Feedback, both good and bad, helps our team outline a strong vision for each space with detailed notes about the materials they prefer and those they don't, making it easier for us to build out a tailored design that suits their lifestyle.

**Morrison:** *What is your favorite design style?*

**Marie Flanigan:** A timeless style that feels collected and layered over time with distinctive combinations of antique and contemporary elements. Style should be rooted in simplicity, boasting soothing hues and the bold use of texture.

*Continued on page 13*



Continued from page 5

to introduce existing and potential customers to the “updated and improved” store. Look for their Grand Opening in the spring.

MORSCO is a leading U.S. distributor of commercial and residential plumbing, HVAC, and PVF, with showrooms across the country, according to the company website, [www.morscousa.com](http://www.morscousa.com). Since its inception in November 2011, it has grown rapidly through a series of acquisitions and store openings.

Adams, who works in the MORSCO corporate office

Scottsdale, Ariz., during the first quarter of 2017. We remodeled or opened seven locations in the last 24 months from Texas to California. It does keep me busy!” she admitted.

Adams said the most important thing that sets Morrison’s and Expressions Home Gallery apart from its competition is its focus on the customer experience. “It’s all about the details. That customer piece, which others may overlook, is the most important thing to us. It includes all aspects from walking in the door to shipping and installation in the home. Each customer – whether trade or retail – has a sales consultant whose goal is to help the customers



in Fort Worth, has been with the company for seven years, originally serving as a branch manager. After MORSCO purchased Morrison Supply Co. five years ago, Jayme became the inaugural manager of showroom development and initiated the showroom structure for the company. She works closely with the director of builder business and the chief executive officer to determine which stores will become Expressions Home Gallery showrooms.

“We continue to expand and grow. We will also be rebranding and renovating stores in San Antonio and





realize their dreams. We want them to have the best experience possible,” said Adams.

As the website [www.expressionshomegallery.com](http://www.expressionshomegallery.com) states, “Expressions provides the perfect environment to cultivate your client’s living space. Our experts are always ready to help find exactly what serves your client’s needs best, from high-end brands you know and trust.”

The Wynnwood Lane store will feature miniature showrooms within the larger space to showcase its major brands of Kohler, Wolf/Sub-Zero, and Thermador, to name a few.

“We base our success on the number of referrals we get from satisfied customers, as well as the lack of complaints we receive. Customers are usually quite vocal if it doesn’t go right!” she noted.

Communication is the basis of customers’ satisfaction, Adams said. “Our sales consultants stay in close contact with the customer. Most of our locations offer a direct line to the sales consultants so customers may get their questions answered directly. However, we cross-train everyone to answer questions so customers don’t have to wait for an individual sales consultant to come to the phone.”

She added that the telephone isn’t the only way that sales consultants keep in touch with their clients. “The onus is on us to understand how the customers prefer to be communicated with. We strive to understand each and everyone’s needs, so we offer texting and emailing too.

“We cater to the customers’ needs. I think that does make us unique as a company.”



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*For more information, visit  
[www.expressionshomegallery.com](http://www.expressionshomegallery.com)  
or stop in to one of the local stores at  
6867 Wynnwood Lane, Houston, TX 77008,  
or 7071 Southwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77074  
or by calling 877-634-3422 or  
713-781-2222 respectively.*

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Continued from page 9

**Morrison:** *How would you characterize your personal style?*

**Marie Flanigan:** Refined elegance and innovative simplicity. I love the integration of interior and structure through the sophisticated use of texture, color, and light, creating environments in which people love to live.

**Morrison:** *How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

**Marie Flanigan:** In the past, designers were much more hung up on defining and fitting clients into a particular style, whereas today's leaders are less concerned with those titles and the boundaries they put in place. We are creating new and ever-evolving hybrid genres that are deeply rooted in our clients' lifestyle needs and desires.

**Morrison:** *What would you recommend builders and/or homeowners do first in a home design project?*

**Marie Flanigan:** That would depend on the size of the project but I always like to start with an open and honest brainstorming session held between the homeowner, builder, and our team. It's important to sketch out the big picture so that everyone understands the general look and feel the homeowner is looking for. This is also a good time to determine whether that vision is realistic for the style and structure of their current home, and what kind of architectural changes might need to take place to bring that vision to life. Detailed concepts and timelines can be drafted from there.

**Morrison:** *How to you keep yourself up to date with current design trends in the market?*

**Marie Flanigan:** I shy away from overly trendy elements because I strive to create spaces that will feel relevant for years to come, but I don't mind their well-edited use in an otherwise timeless space. I love visiting annual furniture markets in High Point and Las Vegas for an inside look at how industry leaders are approaching new technologies, finishes, and materials; I always leave feeling inspired!

**Marie Flanigan**

2525 Driscoll Street

Houston TX 77019

mflanigan@marieflanigan.com





# Scholl Family Continues Lumber Yard Legacy

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Ward Scholl is proud of his family-owned lumber yard, Scholl Lumber. Never mind that he followed in the footsteps of generations of Scholls who have made furniture or supplied lumber to builders in southeastern Texas. He finds that being the managing partner of the business that bears his family’s name sets his lumber yard apart from the competition.

“The buck pretty much stops with me. I have the ability to make decisions to make customers happy without having to go up a chain of command. There’s no one between me and the dispatcher or between me and the salesmen. If we need to react, it’s done in a matter of seconds.

“Consequently, we can provide better customer service than the big nation-wide chain suppliers, especially in our faster delivery,” Scholl noted. If a customer calls in a fill-in order before 9 a.m., the company will deliver the order the same day. Larger orders always get next-day delivery, if not same day, the sixth generation owner said.

He said that the company’s target customers are custom home builders in the Houston market area. “We like

dealing with other family-owned businesses rather than large corporations. Everything we do is one-on-one with the customer. Builders are constantly calling with unusual requests. The unusual becomes usual.”

A lot of builders have not heard of Scholl Lumber because it’s a small company, Ward said. “We have a team of five outside salespeople who call on builders. It takes time and persistence to find the builder who’s a good fit for us. Once they give us a try and see how good our service is, how good our products are and how much we strive to accommodate our customer’s needs, they usually stay with us. Our service and price are our selling points. Our office and sales staff average 24 years of experience in the lumber business – a total of 285 years combined. We know how to take care of business.”

The lumber yard is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., although staff arrives at 5 a.m. to prepare for the day. The drivers try to get deliveries made before the afternoon rush hour begins to avoid travel delays. “We carry all the high-end building materials and custom floor trusses that custom home builders need.



We try to have the best product on the ground that compares to what anyone else has, but we also special order products for our customers every day. We have access to high-end brands of doors and windows as well – thanks to our LMC Co-op membership.”

Participating in the co-op gives family-owned lumber yards buying power of more than \$3 billion, exceeding the buying power of the company’s nation-wide chain competition. It’s a pricing advantage equivalent of buying one truckload of plywood compared to 400-500 truckloads of plywood, he said. “We’ve been in the co-op for four years. I bought directly from the manufacturers before that. Being a member of LMC is very beneficial for us and our customers.”

Scholl Lumber also has a multi-family division that brokers building materials to apartments, hotels and assisted living facilities nation-wide. These project are multi-million dollar projects that provide lumber, OSB, gypsum and siding shipped from the manufacturer directly to the projects. “My dad, Jack W. Scholl, pioneered that business model in the 1960s when he worked for my grandfather.”

Most of the Scholl customers take advantage of the in-house charge account option the company offers, according to Scholl. The home page of the website prominently displays a place to download a credit

application.

During the next five years the company may relocate. “We’re looking for a better facility to call home, but there aren’t too many places that don’t need a lot of modifications.” The company will expand on its window and door business, he said.

Also during the next five years another generation of Scholls may join the company, following in the footsteps of their ancestors. (The oldest of the seventh generation is a sophomore in college.)

They may follow the example of Ward himself, who started working at Scholl Forest as a college student





in the summer of 1985 when he worked as an order puller, truck driver and dispatcher. After graduating from Southwest Texas State University with a degree in marketing and management, Ward joined the company full-time. He didn't really consider anything else, he said. The business was in his blood.

The lumber business has flowed through the blood of many family members. In 2001, Ward and his sisters Kim White and Cindy Segrest purchased the company from their father, Jack W. Scholl, just as he had purchased the company from his father, Jackson H. Scholl in 1976, who had purchased the company from his father, Henry F. Scholl, who was the son of Heinrich F. Scholl, who was the son of Heinrich Scholl, Sr., an immigrant from Germany.

Not quite a biblical lineage, but certainly a lineage of resilient businessmen who have weathered economic downturns in almost every generation. (See the company website, [www.SchollLumber.com](http://www.SchollLumber.com), for more details.)

When Ward's father Jack W. owned the company, he focused the local business on providing materials mostly for tract home builders. But Ward completely changed the local customer base to custom builders after the 2008 recession forced the company to sell off assets, including its Scholl Truss & Component Company business, and close briefly in the winter of 2009-10.

Rather than end the family-owned business, he said they made some hard decisions, relocating to their former truss manufacturing facility and establishing the offices in a double-wide trailer. "We're all smarter as a result of the Great Recession. We now are debt free, have very low overhead and are focused on great companies to do business with."

Of the 30 employees, many returned to Scholl after the brief shutdown. "We're a good company to work for. As a small, family-owned business, we take care of our people like we take care of our customers," Ward said.

---

*For more information, contact Scholl Lumber at 6202 North Houston Rosslyn Road, Houston, TX 77091 or call 713-329-5300 or visit [www.schollforest.com](http://www.schollforest.com) or email [sales@schollforest.com](mailto:sales@schollforest.com).*



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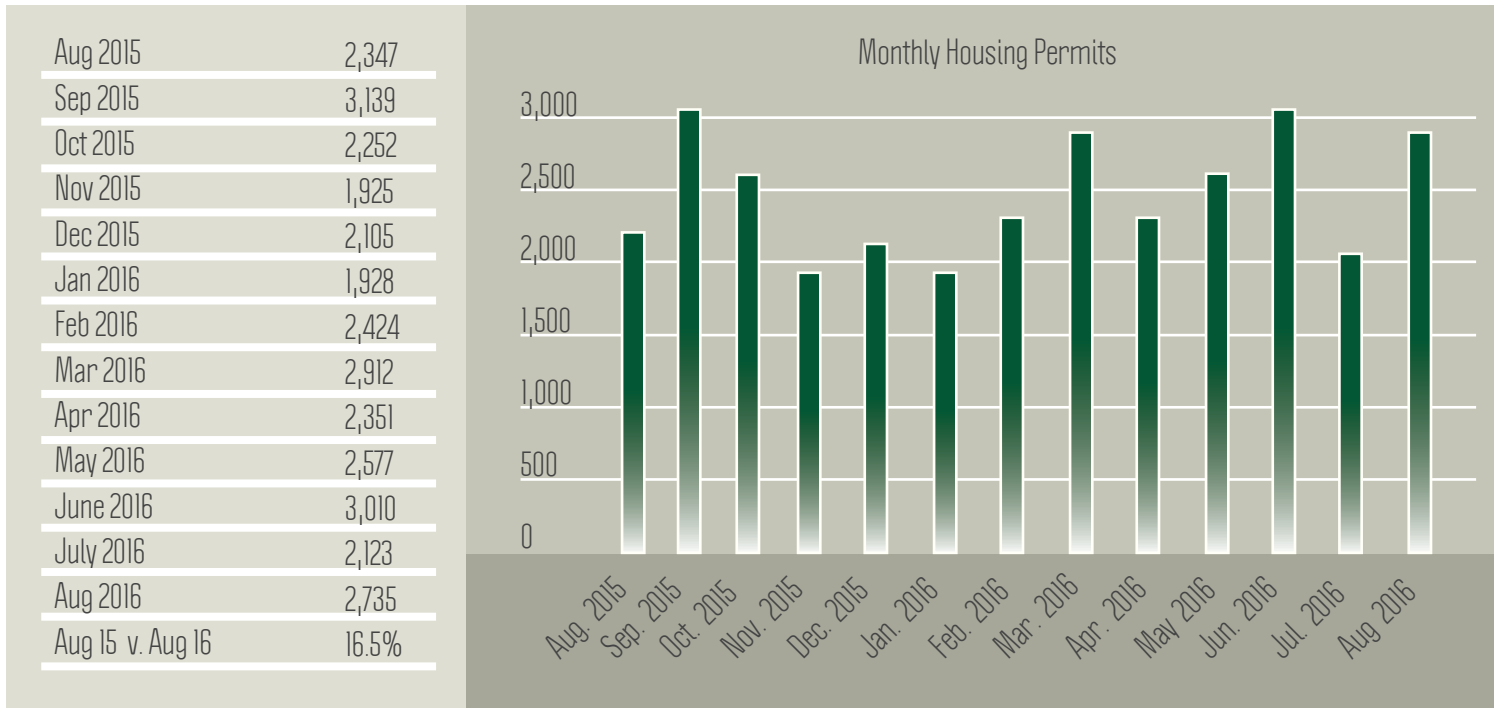
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# Houston Housing Picture

Bohlke Consulting Group, LLC

Monthly housing permits filed by builders in the Houston Area.



MARKET	Sep 14-Sep 15	Sep 15 - Aug 16	ANNUAL % CHANGE	-	-
Grand Total	33,151	29,481	-11.1%	-	-
Lennar Homes	1,838	1,660	-9.7%	-	-
DR Horton Homes	1,655	1,591	-3.9%	-	-
Perry Homes	1,443	1,309	-9.3%	-	-
Postwood/Long Lk	1,229	1,187	-3.4%	-	-
KB Homes	1,019	924	-9.3%	-	-
Express Homes	741	827	11.6%	-	-
Meritage Homes	925	785	-15.1%	-	-
Beazer Homes	830	766	-7.7%	-	-
Taylor Morrison	828	763	-7.9%	-	-
David Weekley	650	703	8.2%	-	-
	-	-		-	-

Monthly permit activity shows a 16.5% increase between August 2015 and August 2016, while annual permit numbers continue to soften, reporting a 11.1% decrease for the Houston market area for the twelve month period ending August, 2016. The top ten builders account for 35.67% of permit activity in the Houston market area, issuing 10,515 permits for the twelve month permit ending August, 2016.



# Kalamazoo oven reinvents outdoor pizza baking at home

The countertop Artisan Fire Pizza Oven (AFPO-C) by Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet brings pizzeria oven heat to the backyard. Power, control and a timeless design aesthetic are hallmarks of Kalamazoo's original pizza oven. Its ability to bake a Neapolitan-style pie in fewer than three minutes remains unmatched.

Powered by natural gas or liquid propane, the Artisan Fire Pizza Oven's two burners make it possible to attain the heat needed to authentically bake New York-, Chicago- or Neapolitan-style pies. The oven is versatile enough to also bake breads or roast vegetables, meat and fish.

A tandem of independently controlled burners generate 42,000 BTUs\* of cooking power, resulting in a short preheat time of just 20 minutes. A bottom burner system

blasts heat into the oven's hollow-core baking deck for perfectly crisp pizza crusts. The second burner, at the back of the oven, features an open flame that heats its ceramic ceiling stone and interior.



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“We made this oven with two stones and two burners for an authentic and versatile cooking experience,” said Russ Faulk, chief designer and head of product for Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet. “The stone on the baking deck is hollow to heat and cool quickly, the one in the ceiling is there to radiate heat back down to pizza toppings, which help create the blistered and leopard-spotted crusts so key to Neapolitan-style pizza flavor.”

Designed to sit on an outdoor countertop, it is compact, measuring 30 inches wide by 30 inches deep by 20 inches high and 120 pounds. That size and weight also make it portable. The oven can be taken to the big game for the ultimate tailgate, to a friend’s house, or even to the beach.

Hand built in the Kalamazoo area of Michigan, the oven is available through [kalamazoogourmet.com](http://kalamazoogourmet.com), select dealerships and certified design professionals. It’s also currently available in a built-in version (AFPO-B). The new freestanding model (AFPO-T) will begin shipping in spring 2016.



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