

HIGH ACHIEVER: Martin Dobbe, co-owner Urbo Homes

Outstanding homes on any budget

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CONSISTENTLY winning regional and national awards provides Urbo Homes with credibility and its clients with greater confidence.

Business co-owner Martin Dobbe says the addition of another two Registered Master Builder gold awards and a regional category win in 2011 add to Urbo's record of six Gold Reserve titles — among the top 100 homes in New Zealand — and the top New Zealand home in 2006 and 2007.

"The fact that we have consistently won these awards gives the clients the peace of mind and confidence that they will get quality advice and a high standard of construction when working with Urbo Homes."

Urbo won the New Homes under \$250,000 category and received gold awards in this section of the Registered Master Builders Rotorua, Whakatane and Tauranga regional awards and also picked up gold in the New Homes \$600,000-\$1 million section.

Gold awards put construction companies through to the national competition.

Martin says the awards also act as a benchmark for the firm to compare their work to other top New Zealand builders.

"This reassures us that we are doing things right, and that we are delivering a product that is consistently above the industry standard."

Having completed his building apprenticeship in Rotorua, Martin has worked around New Zealand and in the United Kingdom and United States.

He set up a building franchise in the Rotorua and Taupo region before teaming up with Urbo co-owner Jeremy Maling.

"We saw the opportunity to create a locally-owned design and build company."

And the pair have developed and adapted the company to keep it busy, even when building consent numbers were down.

The recession has had a significant impact on the industry and Registered Master Builders

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Do you know a High Achiever who might be suitable for a Post Business profile? We are looking for people who:

- Are leaders in their industry or the local business community
 - Have recently received an award or qualification
 - Have been promoted within the company or taken on a new post at national or regional level
 - Are celebrating a significant milestone
 - Have made a particular contribution to their industry or wider business community
- Contact business editor Julie Taylor on (07) 348 6199 ext 57015 or at business@dailypost.co.nz

Federation chief executive Warwick Quinn predicts new house consents for 2011 could be 25 per cent down on last year.

"It is important businesses make changes and are flexible. At Urbo Homes we have a good amount of upcoming work, because we made changes to the services we offered."

Business has traditionally been focused on architectural new homes, but has expanded to include construction of new homes of a lower value, alteration and renovation work and light commercial projects.

Martin's determination to create lower-value homes, without compromising on quality, paid off with the company's win in the under \$250,000 category, while still attaining gold status in the \$650,000 to \$1 million section.

But he says the key to success is the people he deals with. "Our customers are all different and have different needs, so we enjoy working with them to deliver a home they are very proud of and can share with friends and family for many years to come."

Martin says the many regulatory and technology changes in the building sector are the greatest challenge.



AWARD WINNER: Urbo Homes' gold award winner in the Registered Master Builders' \$650,000-\$1 million new home category.

PHOTO/SUPPLIED 250811XX

In his own words

What was your first job and what did you learn from it?

My first job, prior to becoming a building apprentice, was as a fitter for dairy sheds.

I was also a rafting guide while I did my apprenticeship. Guiding is no different to building houses for people, but instead of guiding them down the river, we are guiding them through the design and build process. People are all different and have different requirements, so it is important to listen to what they want.

What three factors are most important for people to think about when building a new home to ensure it works for them?

1. Know how much you can spend and what you want
2. Engage an expert you can trust to deliver expert advice, produce quality design and construction, work with you at every stage of the design and building process and provide a hassle-free building experience.
3. Buy the right section — they are all different

Regardless of the price, building a new home or doing an alteration is a big financial commitment and it is important it is done right.

If you could change anything about the Rotorua business environment, what would it be and why?

Rotorua is a great place to live and provides a fantastic lifestyle for families. It would be great to have a bigger population and more industry to support the region's economic growth.

How much of a problem are skills shortages in your sector?

If they are an issue, what would you like to see done to address them?

Skilled labour is always a problem in every industry. It is critical new entrants to the industry are passionate and have the right attitude and a willingness to be the best they can. It is important to have a first-class apprenticeship platform from which these people can be given the right training and support.

If you could offer one piece of advice for somebody looking to set up their own business, what would it be?

It is important that you are passionate about what you do, know your product, your market, and get the best people around you.



QUALITY FIRST: Urbo Homes' Martin Dobbe says building cheaper homes is no excuse for cutting back on quality.

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