



# Rebuilding History

B&D Builders uses time-honored methods to construct beautiful structures with historic appeal

by SHARON A. SHAW

**C**hester County is one of the original three counties designated by William Penn in 1682. As such, it is the site of many historic homes and even today its residents carry on the traditions of its origin with a thriving equestrian community. It is in this beautiful setting that the work of B&D Builders is most at home.

Ben Esh and his business partner Daniel Glick began the company nearly 15 years ago by constructing outbuildings—garages and agricultural structures—using the time-honored methods of timber-frame construction. Today the company is renowned for its equestrian facilities—including several well-known stables and indoor riding arenas—bank barns, garages and the occasionally high-end custom home. “I love the look of it, first of all,” Esh says of timber framing. “It is a strong construction method. It is also the way old barns were built, so it carries historic appeal.”

Timber-frame construction is most often recognized for its use of heavy timber trusses, pegged attachments and beautiful joinery. “A lot of the Chester County area has bank barns constructed with stone, and timber frame goes really well with the architecture,” he adds. “You see it mostly with traditional styles but it also goes well with French Country and English Tudor type homes.”



B&D Builders is a full-service design-build company, providing all aspects of construction for its clients. The process often begins with Esh or Glick meeting the client at their home or the site of their construction. They will review any images the client has looked to for inspiration and brainstorm ideas for personalizing the structure. “We consult with them to determine what best fits their needs and their property,” Esh says. “The goal is for their new structure to blend in and complement any existing architecture.”

These ideas are then taken back to B&D Builders’ office, where its own draftsmen—and, in some complex cases, outside engineering firms—draw up full plans for the building’s construction. “Where we are strong in house is in three-dimensional design,” Esh says. “It helps people visualize what the buildings will look like. ... Then they can almost do a virtual walk through the space on the computer.”

This is not the only area where B&D Builders uses modern technology to perfect an age-old method. The company also relies on computer numerical control (CNC) milling machines to cut the timbers for all of its structures. “This method allows us to do things more efficiently and precisely,” says Esh. “The machine allows us to do cer-



B&D Builders offers everything from design and permitting to site preparation and construction. Shown here is a rendering of a traditional bank barn, along with a photograph (left) of the completed structure.



tain joinery, such as dovetail connections, which are hard to do by hand. It offers a big advantage.” By establishing its own milling division, Mid-Atlantic Timber Frames, to fabricate all of its components, B&D Builders can



assure the highest degree of quality control.

Either Esh or Glick works with the client through the entire process, from design to permitting to site preparation to management of all construction. “From the start, we stay in touch with our clients,” Esh says. “Whoever they began the process with remains their go-to person throughout the project.” Additionally, each project has a project manager on site every day to answer the questions any subcontractor might have and to oversee the work of its own team, including framing, roofing and masonry, as well as window and door installation. B&D Builders works with specialty contractors it knows and trusts in order to be able to offer all aspects of the project to its clients, including excavation, painting, mechanical, plumbing and electrical.

“Where we as a small company work best is that we stay in touch with our clients from start to end,” Esh says. “We don’t just make the sale and hand off the project and say, ‘You will deal with them.’ We are their contact from day one, and they remain with us to the end.” B&D Builders even goes so far as to make sure that when they receive a referral, that customer is assigned to the same team that completed their friend or family member’s work. “People like to work with people they have established relationships with,” Esh adds.

Local residents may recognize the work of B&D Builders at the Unionville Equine Associates facility in Oxford or the Thorncroft



Above: Ben Esh and Daniel Glick began B&D Builders nearly 15 years ago by constructing garages and agricultural structures. Today the company is well known for its equestrian facilities, bank barns, garages and high-end custom homes.

Equestrian Center in Malvern, while members of the equestrian community are likely to be familiar with Riveredge, the home of Hassler Dressage. This campus-like setting, which is located on a 600-acre property in Chesapeake City, Md., offers facilities for training, breeding and sport, much like those found at the great European centers.

**“The goal is for [the client's] new structure to blend in and complement any existing architecture.”**

Here, B&D Builders worked with dressage expert Leslie Malone to create a world-class facility, including the renovation of one of the existing barns into a 28-stall training center, which has an indoor arena and a clubhouse. From the well-appointed clubhouse to the spacious riding arena and the very functional stall barns, each area of the facility has a rustic, Old World charm that transports visitors to a distant time and place. Also, each building was designed with an ecologically friendly focus.

Whether a project is large or small, an equestrian facility or a custom home, B&D Builders devotes the same skilled craftsmanship, attention to detail and personal commitment to each and every one of its beautiful buildings. ■



## → B&D Builders

14 N. Ronks Road, Ronks, PA 17572  
717-687-0292  
www.custombarnbuilding.com