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A Passion for Timeless Architecture

# Legacy Custom Homes, LLC

## A Passion for Timeless Architecture

By Tonya Poole

Along the picturesque, tree-lined streets of Chicagoland's North Shore exists a spectrum of architectural style and grace reminiscent of old Europe. Majestic estate homes, breathtaking gardens and dramatic gables and dormer windows overlook the shores of Lake Michigan, where famed architects like David Adler and Harrie Lindeberg made their mark in the early part of the 20th century.

Today, the area retains the same distinctive flavor of Adler and Lindeberg's time, and the history and affluence of the North Shore is still evident in its architecture—thanks, in part, to the expert help of luxury custom builder and historic restoration specialist Rocco DeFilippis of Lake Bluff's Legacy Custom Homes.

Born in Italy, DeFilippis and his family came to the United States when he was two years old. His father started a construction company in Highland Park. "I've been around and involved in construction for most of my life," he says. "After I spent some time in Chicago, I came back to the North Shore. I love this area; I love its traditional architecture."

Despite his exposure to construction, DeFilippis first practiced as an attorney for several years before an interest in real estate investing, and later, design/build work became too strong to ignore. By the mid-'90s, Legacy Custom Homes was born.

DeFilippis brings together a team of the best of the best in each field together on all of his projects, and it means that his clients are getting far more than a builder when they select Legacy Custom Homes. The result? An uncommonly efficient, well-organized, multitalented approach to home design, building and restoration like no other in the greater Chicago area.

Clients meet with Legacy to review in detail their vision for the home, to elicit and flesh out any unspoken needs and to get a good grasp on the functional and aesthetic elements that are important to them. The team then puts together presentations representing several options, and the seed of a home's design, or redesign, begins to take shape. Working carefully on each nuance of the floor plan and paying close attention to the exterior style and elevations, they create a home that's a true reflection of the owner's lifestyle. "The goal for us is always, when

we stand back and look at the finished product, to be able to say that we translated our client's dreams on paper into something meaningful and lasting for them to enjoy," he says.

Among Legacy's favorite projects are a handful of David Adler restorations they've worked on, and continue to work on in the North Shore. Adler, the darling of the North Shore elite, was well known for his modern interpretations of classic design. One of the early 20th century's most acclaimed architects, Adler injected a grand style and scale into upper Midwestern architectural design, and his love affair with Europe and European art played a large and very visible role in his work.

The team at Legacy has developed a marked interest in, and an impressive eye for, Adler's elegant style and detail, and is now working on their fifth Adler residential restoration in the area. "Working with Adler designs has really increased our depth of knowledge and understanding about what makes really good design," says DeFilippis. "It's propelled us into a new class of architecture."

The team shares and upholds David Adler's love for symmetry, proportion and fine detailing. Perhaps their most notable work with Adler design can be found in the historic "Two Gables" home in the Green Bay Road Historic District of Lake Forest. Originally designed by architect Harrie Lindeberg and later updated by David Adler, Two Gables is a classic English country estate of 15,000 square feet on 7.5 acres, well-known as one of the finest architectural works of its time in Lake Forest. In the 1980s, television personality "Mr. T" purchased the estate and summarily deconstructed its original Jens Jensen landscaping. The home is now under the care of Legacy Preservation Partners, an affiliate of Legacy Custom Homes, and the team has restored and reinvented the home—drawing out its original magnificence, while updating it with care to feel and function beautifully in the 21st century.

### AN UNCOMMON APPROACH

Passionate about the smallest details that make a home spectacular, DeFilippis says he and his team spend an incredible amount of time scrutinizing design con-

cepts, plans and details during the intense design period of any project to ensure that the finished product flawlessly reflects the vision of both the homeowner and the design team. A firm believer that time spent at the design table is the most critical time that will carry itself

## Legacy Custom Homes Testimonial I

“We chose Rocco and his team at Legacy Custom Homes to renovate our home in Lake Bluff about three years ago. We loved the five-acre lot on Lake Michigan; it was unusual, and while the size of the home that was there was adequate – it was also very contemporary and needed to be seriously reworked.

The quality and budget, the way Legacy was able to meet the challenges of our changes, their commitment to being upfront about the process – all made it a very enjoyable time for us. We’ve built before and I can tell you – it’s not always enjoyable. I was amazed, I’m still amazed, at how well this home came out.”

— Mike Winn, Lake Bluff

throughout the project, DeFilippis believes Legacy’s approach has given them a strong edge and reputation that makes them well-equipped to take on large-scale estates and notable restoration projects. The sophistication and authenticity they’re able to achieve through the team’s multiple talents and expertise has earned them the respect and appreciation of colleagues, clients and historic preservation officials alike, and the firm has gained notoriety as one of the best high-end design/build firms in Northern Illinois.

“We strive for a level of excellence and elegance in our work that elevates us here as the firm to turn to for both very high-quality new construction and remarkable historic restorations,” says DeFilippis. “We work to make even our new homes feel as though they’ve been on the site for several generations, that they appear to be grounded in the landscape. That’s important to maintaining the rich, Old-World flavor of architecture in this area.”

Many of Legacy’s projects stand themselves as a testament to their talents, philosophies, and commitment to the area’s architectural history. Another exquisite example can be found along East Lake Forest’s historic Mayflower Road. Three outstanding lots— two vacant and ready for building and another with one of the area’s most exciting home restorations— lay side by side in an incredible trio that borders Mayflower Road on one end, and Lake Michigan on the other. The lakefront lot is home to a full 3.6 acres and offers views, privacy and incredible natural surroundings with its own private beach. The interior lot boasts 1.6 acres and a collection of majestic, old-growth trees, glimpses of the lake, and a ravine that offers sepa-

ration and privacy. The home, located at 275 Mayflower Road, is situated in one of the North Shore’s most desirable locations and stands as a magnificent tribute to the power and beauty of historic restoration. Built in the late 1800s, the 9,000 square-foot home has been extensively renovated and expanded over the last decade, and through masterful craftsmanship and design, has restored its status as one of the area’s true architectural treasures.

At 460 South Green Bay Road in Lake Forest, the new Legacy-built classic French Manor home combines the very best of the new ideas and innovations with a stunning, Old-World provenance to create a home that really is the best of both worlds. A luxurious enclave minutes from downtown Lake Forest, the home sits among dramatic landscaping and natural beauty. DeFilippis and the team at Legacy have worked their magic again to bring together the delights of modern convenience with the mood, setting and stature of classic European architecture.

## Legacy Custom Homes Testimonial II

Dear Rocco,

“It is difficult to put into words how grateful we are for the incredibly beautiful home you’ve built for us. Every day, we walk around and seem to find beauty and surprises in every corner that we are thankful to you for. Beautiful craftsmanship, appliances...everything!”

— The Cherrys

Other notable projects on the drawing table include a new 15,000 square-foot French Manor home in Highland Park on four beautiful acres, as well as several other new homes and restoration projects.

“I think our clients would universally agree that we delivered on our promises,” says DeFilippis, “and that we worked to make sure they enjoyed the experience and when the last nail was in, they walked into the home they’d always dreamt about.”

Well on their way to leaving behind a rich architectural legacy, the firm continues to make its mark on Chicago’s North Shore and to strike the important and delicate balance between old and new that makes a home superb— and timeless. Rocco DeFilippis has taken a love of architecture, passion for Old-World flavor and an impressive building and team-building acumen, and created his own enduring legacy at Legacy Custom Homes.

For more information about Legacy Custom Homes, call (847) 283-9595, or visit [www.legacych.com](http://www.legacych.com).