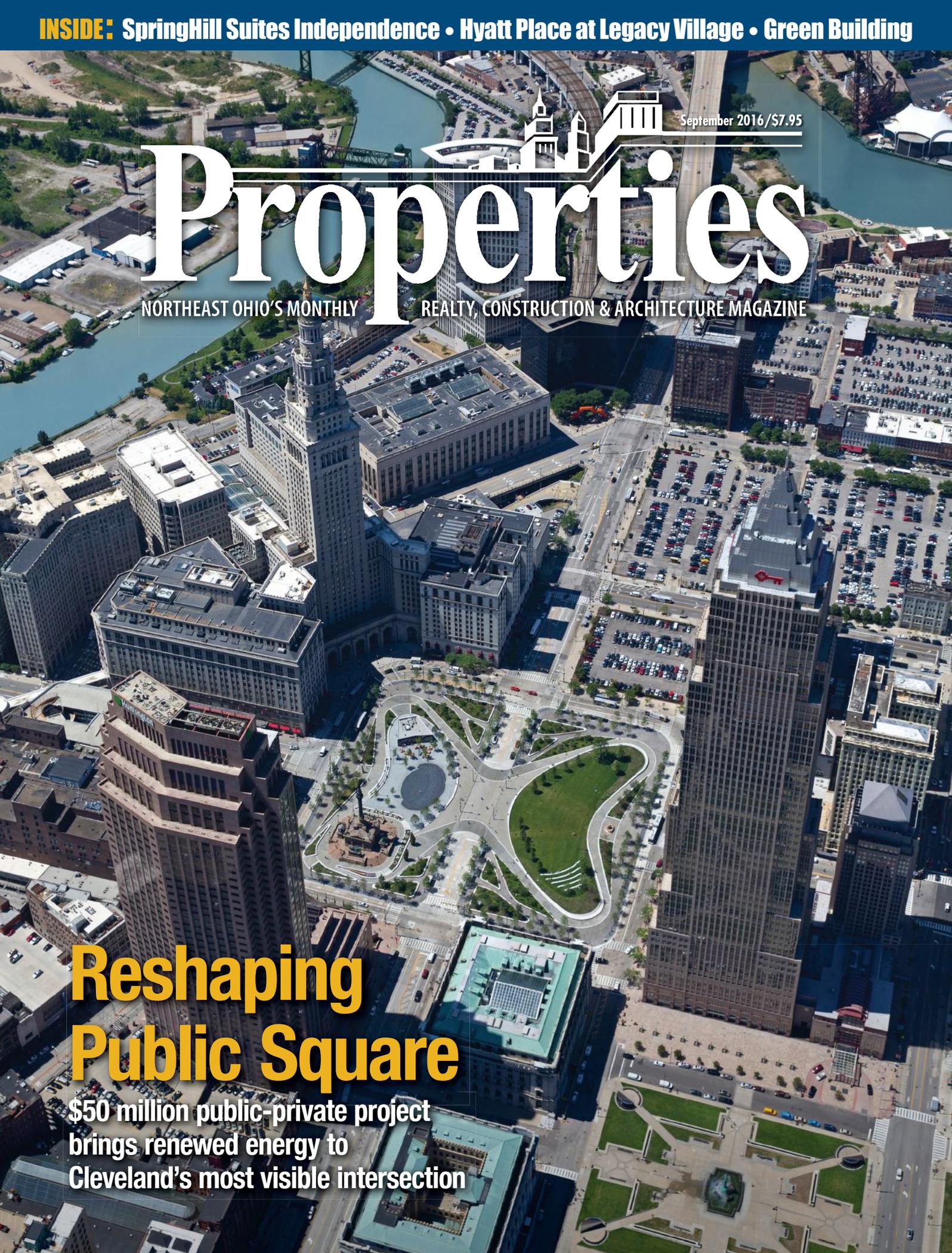


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NORTHEAST OHIO'S MONTHLY REALTY, CONSTRUCTION & ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

## Reshaping Public Square

\$50 million public-private project  
brings renewed energy to  
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**CLEVELAND**  
3826 W. 158th St.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44111

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P.O. Box 9  
Munroe Falls, Ohio 44262

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Cover photo: Public Square,  
by Multivista

Properties (ISSN 033-1287) is published monthly for architects, engineers, building owners and managers, general contractors, home builders, mortgage bankers, savings and loans, real estate agents, appraisers, servicers and suppliers in Northern Ohio by Properties, Inc., 3826 W. 158th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44111. Copyright © 2016 by Properties, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use, without written permission, of editorial or pictorial content is strictly prohibited. Periodicals postage paid in Cleveland, Ohio and additional offices. Subscription rates: one year \$24.95, single copy \$7.95, back issues \$10 when available. Postmaster: send change of address notices to Properties, P.O. Box 112127, Cleveland, Ohio 44111.

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Photo courtesy of Otero Signature Homes

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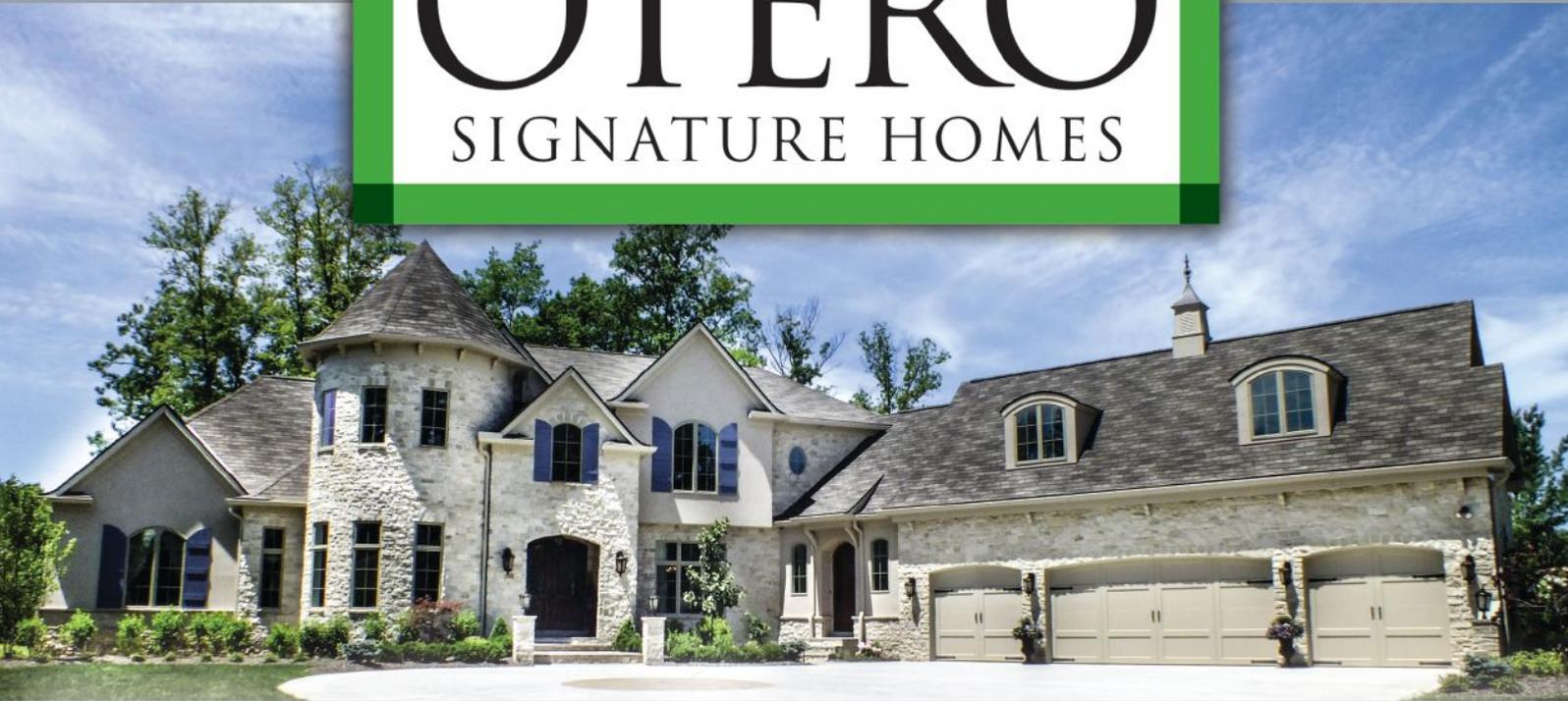
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# Luxury is the Custom in Otero Signature Homes

## Local builder specializes in one-of-a-kind homes that reflect clients' unique style, needs

By Jeanne Bluffstone | Photos courtesy of Otero Signature Homes

There are many builders out there, but when it comes to a custom builder, Otero Signature Homes is leading the way in Northeast Ohio. Recently awarded two prestigious Cleveland Choice awards for the best custom home between \$500,000-\$1,000,000 and the best custom home over \$1,000,000, they create beautiful homes that reflect the vision and personal style of each of their customers.

Each Otero home building experience is tailored to fit the client's individual needs. Their focus is to help customers clarify their ideas, then they transform those dreams into luxury living at its finest. To help simplify the process, Otero Signature Homes brings the architect, builder and interior designer all together in one place.

When Otero says they are custom builders, they really are serious.

"The sky's the limit when it comes to unique home characteristics," says Ted Otero the company's president and owner. They do not shy away from any unique requests. Indoor basketball courts, indoor pools, amazing outdoor living environments? No problem. Automatic screens that bring the outdoors in? No problem. Indoor trampolines, indoor golf simulators or amazing theater rooms are no problem for the professional team at Otero.

### Luxury interior design

Design is always evolving and every year there is something new and exciting that captures the fancy of homeowners.

"Barn doors, barn siding and reclaimed materials are popular finishes," says Kelly Otero, the company's co-owner and design coordinator. Wall-mount faucets that have water spilling out of the wall are hot items, as are freestanding tubs and custom oversized showers – the bigger, the better.

Edison bulbs, backlit millwork features and LED lighting play a big role in setting the mood for clients' entertaining areas. Home technology is also an ever increasingly important role of design in an Otero custom build. Families need multiple access points throughout the home, as well as one-touch settings for items such as lighting, temperature and security. While Ted still believes in wiring a home properly, he is slowly



**TEAM OTERO** The company's team members include (seated) Gwendolyn Lanstrum, Kaleigh Cody, Ted Otero, Kelly Otero, Lyn Bullock, Michelle Jaworski, (standing) Jeff Nemet, Matt Gilbert, Mike Yopko and Corey Hamilton.

seeing home move towards less wires and becoming more dependent on Wi-Fi.

When customers come in for a consultation with Otero Signature Homes, most have one or two specific characteristics that they want to include in their

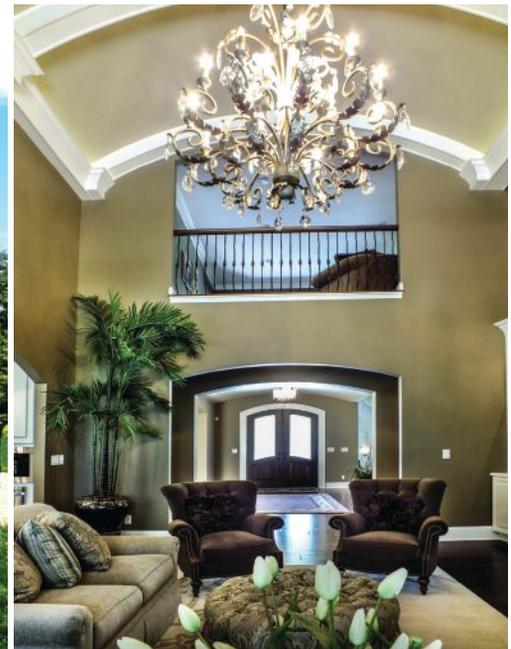
new home, or they bring in pictures, but they rarely have an overall concept for the design.

"We help clients incorporate their ideas into a workable plan for the entire home," Ted says. "They may not have a

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**CONCEPT TO COMPLETION** When customers come in for a consultation with Otero Signature Homes, most have one or two specific characteristics that they want to include in their new home, but they rarely have an overall concept for the design. “We help clients incorporate their ideas into a workable plan for the entire home,” says Ted Otero, president/owner.

clear idea of what they want, but they often show it to us in the pictures.”

“Houzz.com is a popular Internet site that has changed the marketplace dramatically since the housing downturn,” Kelly says. Homeowners go to Houzz.com to get fresh ideas and they choose pictures of different houses and room designs. They pick out what they like and then they bring in those pictures and want to incorporate them into their own custom home design. “The pictures

they bring in are often those of our houses,” Kelly says.

“As we work on designing the house, we ask questions,” Kelly says. “We talk about how you work, how you live. We ask, how you operate in the kitchen, does he cook and you do the dishes? How much storage do you need? Are you an appliance person? We really talk through how customers use all facets of their house in order to make it comfortable and workable for their family. This is custom building and that’s what we do.”

“Customers trust us,” Ted says. “We can paint the picture and show them what their one-of-a-kind house is going to look like.”

In 2004, when Otero Signature Homes was created, Mediterranean styling was popular and that was their niche market. No one else was doing it. Later, they added a craftsman façade to one of their models, because people liked the floor plan. “These things are constantly evolving,” Ted says.

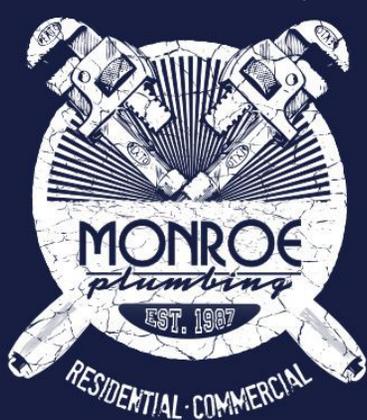
What’s popular now? People’s tastes are shifting and they want their homes to be a design that is timeless, not too trendy, but transitional. They want something they can see themselves in 25 years from now. An increasing number of customers are asking for a contemporary design with very clean lines, big square windows and minimalistic details.

Building a custom home is a very personal experience. Customers may have a specific picture in mind, or perhaps they saw a master bedroom or a kitchen that they like. They may want an outdoor kitchen, or a covered veranda, but they don’t have any idea how it all comes together. That’s where the design and build expertise of Otero Signature Homes is key.

### Cutting-edge design & construction

Energy efficiency is standard in Otero’s luxury homes, and today there are a variety of materials that were not

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**GREEN GOALS** An early proponent of green home design, Otero Signature Homes incorporates energy efficient features into all of its projects. Highlighting the company's ability to meet clients' specific goals for sustainable living, a custom Otero smart home was recognized with a Cleveland Choice Award from the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Cleveland earlier this year.

available to builders seven or eight years ago. "We were on the cutting edge of green certification and we were building green homes very early," Ted says. "That reinforced our uniqueness and separated us from our competitors."

Now, with gas prices as low as they are, energy efficiency is not as critical to homeowners, but to Otero Signature Homes, energy efficient construction is the norm. All homes built by Otero have 2x6 walls, high-density insulation and closed cell foam insulation.

"We are doing a lot of things that were looked at in the past as green items but now have become standard, because that's just what we do," Ted

says. "We build a high-quality, high-efficiency home."

All Otero homes also have high-efficiency furnaces with multiple zones that enable homeowners to have a more controllable and comfortable living space while increasing energy efficiency. Geothermal is less popular than it has been in the past, but if a homeowner wants to be off the grid and they plan to be in the house for 15 or 20 years, then they may want that luxury as it often makes financial sense.

Otero's relationships with architects and sub-contractors ensures high quality craftsmanship and their focus on customer service results in a smooth process

with outstanding results. Otero gives back in many ways to their loyal trade partners, one being an annual Trade Partner Appreciation BBQ, usually held at a nearly completed project. This gives the trade partners at all stages of the process an opportunity to see the final product and to appreciate the bigger picture that they play a role in.

At the end of each project, Otero Signature Homes gives the customer a very detailed binder of all the product manuals, a DVD of rough framing and a detailed subcontractor list. They want to ensure that the client has all the tools necessary to care for their home properly now and in the future. If the client has

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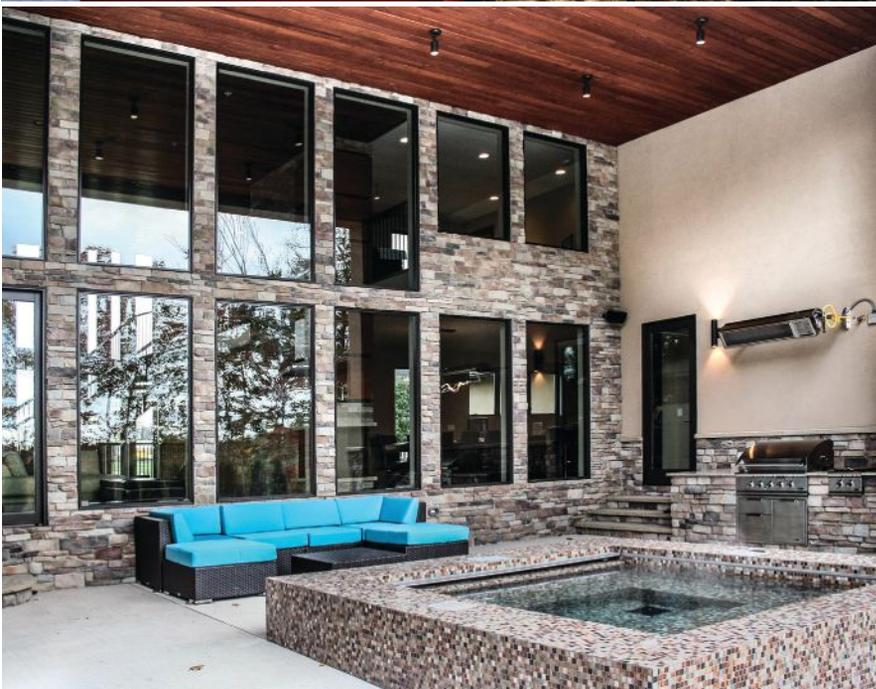
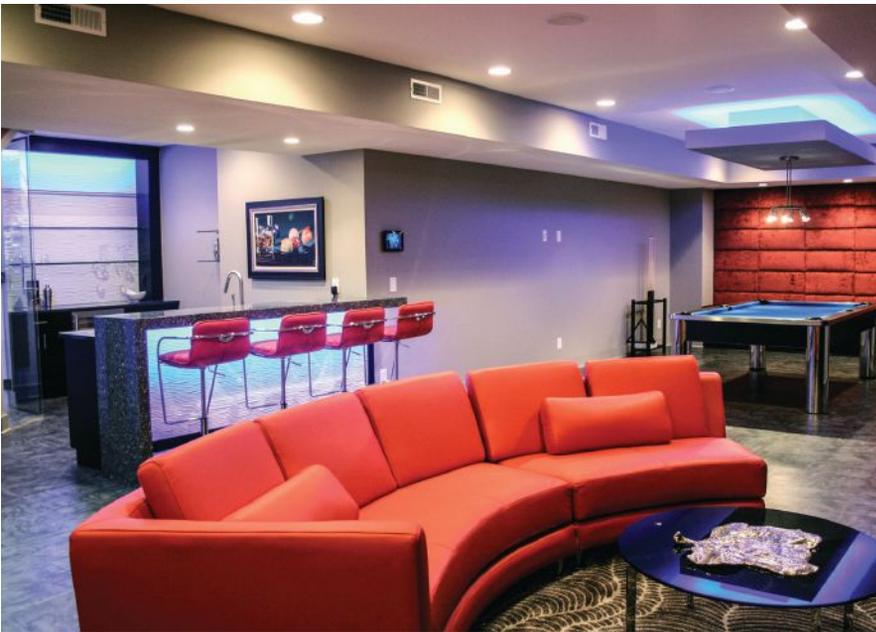
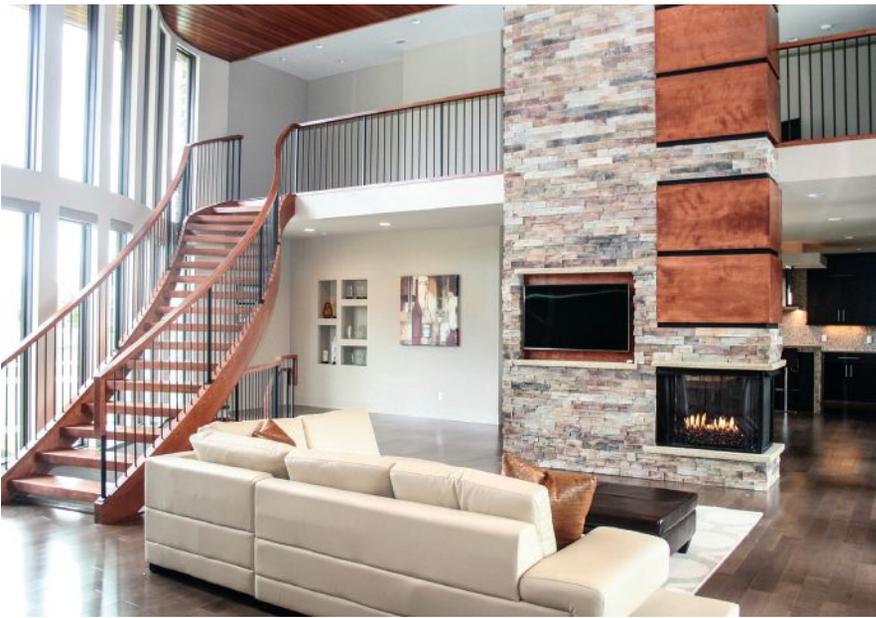
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**CONTEMPORARY COMFORTS** An increasing number of Otero Signature Homes' customers are asking for a contemporary design with very clean lines, big square windows and minimalist details.

issues outside the warranty period or if they are making renovations in the distant future, they will know where to get matching products or be able to use the same subcontractor.

Otero builds 12 to 15 homes a year and construction takes about six to eight months after the plans are approved and permitted. Otero Signature Homes' average home size is between 3,500 and 4,000 square feet and carry price tags of between \$650,000 and \$850,000, although the company has built homes in a wide range between \$300,000 to \$3 million.

In addition to leading his company, Ted is the current vice president of the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Cleveland and is a past treasurer. On

*"Customers trust us. We can paint the picture and show them what their one-of-a-kind house is going to look like."*

**Ted Otero**  
Otero Signature Homes

December 2, 2016, he will be inducted as president of the HBA, at the association's Annual Induction Ceremony, to be held at the Metro at The 9. As part of his 2017 goals, Ted is proud to see the Homearama come back to Cleveland. The last Homearama was held in 2008 before the housing downturn, which Otero Signature Homes also participated in. The 2017 Homearama will be held at the prestigious Barrington Estates in Aurora and will open in June 2017.

"We have a lot of exciting plans for the consumer and the entire family at the 2017 Homearama," Ted says. "We are so happy that we will be building a house in the show. This is one home show that you will not want to miss."

In addition to many other awards, Ted was named in 2014 as one of the country's 40 under 40 Builders of the Year by *Professional Builder Magazine*, a national industry specific publication. "This award is truly a company award, because without my great team none of this would be possible," he says. **P**

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