

ALL ELEMENTS

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Winner of 2014 Tommie Gold Award for Home of the Year, All Elements Design. Manage. Build. makes the impossible, possible. Inspired by the compelling complexities of peoples' lives, the Okanagan Valley-based custom home builder is the brain child of a forward thinking duo who set out on a journey and vowed to do things differently.

For All Elements Director Kim Larson, construction is more than just a business. It is a passion that dates back to the days when her father, a real estate agent, would take her through local houses to admire the architecture and internal workings of the raw floor plans. Those tours would be the beginning of a long, globe-trotting quest that would stretch from California to Australia before settling back into the vast Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.



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After completing her education, she began working in architecture firms in Penticton and Kelowna. Larson was then hired by a construction company for a construction project manager position. Already obsessed with design and architecture, this role was the beginning of a venture that would lead to creating some of the most structurally difficult yet stunning homes that the custom home building industry in BC had ever seen. Fueled by their experiences in the industry, Larson, and co-founder Stephan Ams, a journeyman carpenter for 18 years, decided to get out on their own in 2009.

“It was a passion of mine since I was very

long that I wanted to have a business of my own,” Larson said. “So meeting Stephan was the excitement on the other side that I needed for it.”

“The reason we started this company is because we wanted to give our clients more one on one attention,” Larson continued. “This is why we’ve stayed a small company. Stephan and I are able to be the contact people for all of our clients.”

Handling all aspects of the home building process – from design build, architecture, project management and construction in house, All Elements creates amazing proj-



ects, with no middlemen or barriers to communication inside the design, construction and client realm. But dealing with challenges is something both Larson and Ams covet. Even if those challenges come in the form of impossible sites and structural parameters. If you ask Larson, she wouldn't want it any other way.

“We'd never – and we have been asked - build cookie-cutter subdivisions,” she said. “But we've turned down these opportunities because this was not our goal. We've always been custom, custom, custom. This has always been our interest and our passion, so we want to be able to focus on that niche market.”



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“The Okanagan is a very diverse landscape,” Larson continued. “A lot of the properties that are left to be built upon are cliffhangers and challenging sites, so a lot of our clients seek us out because we have the ability to create something on a lot that other people would shy away from.”

ODE TO OKANAGAN

As a personal owner, on-site company, All Elements’ emotional investment is a testament to the job, their clients, and staying local. Having been approached to work in California, West Vancouver and Mexico, the small Okanagan builder wants to keep things in perspective before going global.

“Part of the equation for Stephan and I is



that we wanted to create jobs in the Okanagan,” Larson said. “Because it’s very common for people to go work up north in Alberta and northern BC, we wanted to give people a lifestyle where they can life in the Okanagan and secure a good, long-term career.”

“That’s why we build everything in house, so that we can create those job opportunities, manage our crews, and be on site daily,” she continued. “We want to be able to teach them from day one and mold them in the way we want our homes to be built. That’s very important to us.”

Focusing more on long-term bonds and working with the same suppliers and sub trades since day one, All Elements and Larson

value quality of workmanship and attention to detail. This is part of the reason why they don’t hire outside framers – whose main goal is to finish as fast as possible and move onto the next one. The impetus on quality care is something that Larson hopes and wants to nurture for the future.

“I would love to be more involved with our community and the local chapter of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association for working liaison with the city of Kelowna,” she said.

“I want to grow our apprenticeship program and take on more kids from colleges so we can teach and give them better jobs,” she continued. By keeping the support local



and fresh, young talent will thrive here in the Okanagan.”

HOME OF THE YEAR: SIN-CERAS

One look at All Elements’ portfolio and you can see why they’re considered trendsetters in custom home building. As a luxury construction company, there is a streak of wildness to them; an urge to take on high caliber projects such as the Sin-Ceras project, a show home at Sheerwater Developments.

“Sin-ceras was a four year undertaking with the client,” Larson said. “The clients took a huge risk by hiring us. We were brand new and relative unknown in the industry and

we had met these clients six months in and it came from a recommendation.”

“They could have hired anyone in the Okanagan,” she continued.”But they took a chance on us because of our passions and abilities, because we wanted nothing more than to prove that we can do this and do it well.”

Gallery style contemporary, the 12,000 square foot home incorporates glass, aluminum and concrete with stand-alone architectural features. A concept designed by Carl Scholl and brought to fruition by Larson and Ams, the Sheerwater lakefront property boasts five bedrooms-plus guest suite, seven and two half bathrooms, six outdoor living spaces, a Zen garden, infinity edge pool, and



a wine cellar custom crafted by Stephan Ams.

“All of the homes in the Sheerwater Developments are to a very high standard and the people that live in there are affluent and we were the small and new company with the ‘do they even deserve to be in here?’ mentality,” Larson said.

A massive undertaking, a project of this magnitude tested All Elements’ ability to remain proactive during stressful situations – including all the eyes watching them.

“From day one we were always scrutinized and watched over with a magnifying glass,” Larson said. “There were a lot of challenges from that standpoint, but we found it fun

and fascinating. We were up for the challenge and didn’t care when we had people watching us on a daily basis. There were a lot of interesting personality dynamics that occurred during this project.”

Apart from the glory and glamour that winning a top prize gets you, for Larson the vindication of a job well done extends deeper than that.

“Being a general contractor is very thankless in some ways,” she said. “It’s a huge honor to be recognized,” Larson continued. “We didn’t go through the building process thinking we were going to win, but it means a lot to us because of all the challenges we went through emotionally with our clients.





And to be able to prove to the people that doubted us was also a great feeling.”

THE FUTURE

Larson’s and Ams’ mission when they started All Elements was to build homes that make people talk and think. They’ve succeeded – in spades. Diligent and disciplined, All Elements has been put on the map for not just they’re stunning work, but for their humility, emotional availability and ability to make the impossible, possible.

Blessed with a collective purpose that seamlessly blends beauty and functionality, All Elements remains loyal to the cause.

“We could grow if we wanted to,” Larson said. “We have tons of opportunities to be builders in certain subdivisions, but again the entire purpose for us starting this company was to keep it small so that we can be one-on-one.”

“This was our goal and I’m not going to change our mission statement to say that we do high caliber projects but we’ll also do 100 homes a year, they don’t go hand in hand,” she continued. “It’s not what we set out to do. I have to enjoy the process of going to work every day and feeling like I’m actually achieving something and changing the landscape of the Okanagan instead of just slapping them up.”

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