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Direct results

Hillsborough kitchen company doing remodels for more than 35 years

BY PAMELA SROKA-HOLZMANN • STAFF WRITER • MARCH 11, 2009

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HILLSBOROUGH — From small bathrooms to large additions, no job seems to be too big or too small for Ron Tobia's family-owned and operated company.

ADVERTISEMENT Tobia is the founder of Kitchens Direct, 739 Route 206 in Hillsborough. The business, which has been in existence since 1971, has specialized in kitchen and bath remodeling for the past 17 years. Tobia also works with top cabinet makers in the industry to ensure clients receive a custom kitchen within their budget and plans.

The company is made up of Tobia and his wife, Dorothy, who live in Montgomery; daughter Regina Perry of Montgomery; son Ronnie Tobia of New York; and nephew Floyd Holmes of Easton, Pa., as well as employee Ed Wheeler of Readington. Tobia said the company is in its third generation of family members and hopes his two young grandchildren someday will take the reins.

"It's like a relay race," Tobia said. "Hopefully, I can hand off the baton and they can continue to service the people of the past and future."

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Kitchens Direct Inc. of Hillsborough won the Residential Kitchen Remodel Award for work they did on a home in Jamesburg.

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In recognition of its efforts, the company recently was awarded a Contractor of the Year award by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry's Central Jersey chapter. Kitchens Direct won in the Residential [Kitchen Remodel](#) category for projects priced between \$60,000 and \$100,000. The award-winning kitchen is in a two-story colonial home in Jamesburg.

"Winning this award is especially meaningful to us, since our goal is to deliver innovative designs and quality craftsmanship while exceeding our clients' expectations," Tobia said. "This is certainly an affirmation that we are achieving that goal."

The company was judged on aesthetic appeal, construction techniques, financial value of the project, functionality of space, meeting the client's needs and overall impressions of the project.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Tobia's father and grandfather were housing builders and recruited him into the trade immediately after he graduated in 1971 from Union County College with a [business degree](#). But by the 1990s, Tobia wanted a new career path and put construction aside for kitchen and bath design.



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Ron Tobia is the owner of Kitchens Direct Inc. in Hillsborough.

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Some of the stone samples offered by Kitchens Direct Inc. of Hillsborough.

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"The small builder seemed to become a dinosaur in the area," Tobia said.

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Tobia now enjoys connecting with the more than 70 clients a year and putting visions of their projects into reality. Projects can range anywhere from \$6,000 to \$8,000 for a small condominium bathroom or kitchen, to \$80,000 to \$100,000 for a larger kitchen and \$75,000 and up for a master bathroom.

Popular trends run the gamut from [granite countertops](#) and stainless-steel appliances to classic white kitchens, which never will go out of style, according to Tobia. In the 1960s, the trends were pink-and-blue colored bathrooms and in the 1970s, avocado- and copper-toned appliances, he said with a laugh.

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STEP BY STEP

The designing process includes an initial consultation between Tobia and the client, where the client is encouraged to bring in a rough, dimensioned plan of their kitchen or bathroom, as well as digital photographs. Next, the client reviews samples of cabinets and materials displayed throughout the showroom.

"The rough draft is by no means what the final project will look like, but it's intended to be a starting point for the design and provides clients with some basic design ideas," Tobia said.

The next step is refining basic ideas, developing a budget and creating a timeline. There also is a design agreement — ranging in cost from \$500 and up and later credited toward the final cost of the project — where the client approves renderings and a general outline of the project.

The company then develops plans and elevations to create a detailed visual package for the client to review.

During construction, Tobia said he understands a house, family and lifestyle can be disrupted. To help ease stress, Tobia constantly keeps his clients informed and encourages them to [phone call](#) or e-mail regularly with feedback.

Tobia said most often the budget he discusses with a client prior to work being performed is right on target.

"Our prices might look higher," he said, "but it's going to be pretty close to being right."

FUTURE PLANS

Despite a dwindling economy, Tobia said remodeling a house now could help sell that same house in the future. After his own daughter recently remodeled her kitchen, she had two offers on the table and quickly sold her house.

He said not only did remodeling help with the [sale](#), but his daughter enjoyed the new kitchen up until the time she moved.

"Any time we have had a recession, then came inflation," Tobia said. "If you want to do a project, now is the time — because the price could go up tomorrow."

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Ron Tobia is the owner of Kitchens Direct Inc. in Hillsborough.

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Some of the stone samples offered by Kitchens Direct Inc. of Hillsborough.

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HappyNewKitchen wrote:

What a surprize to see the kitchen designers/builders I used in the paper today. I, too, had a wonderful experience on my remodel of a 30 year old kitchen using Kitchens Direct. We had strong opinions about a contemporary, clean lines look and had found that other places wanted to impose their styles on us. Ron and his crew worked with us to create our kitchen in the style we wanted and came up with great ideas and a design that was within our budget. We were pleased with their timeliness each day and in completion of the over all job. Plus, we really could trust them. Knowing that they had built entire houses, they could help us work out the plumbing or electrical changes that would be needed to make our design work.

3/16/2009 1:28:56 PM

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JillQ wrote:

I was very surprised to see my kitchen in this article today!!!.....I just wanted to add that Ron Tobia and his family run a first class business. And the men he had working to do remodel my kitchen were the best.

I just wanted to make a correction that my home is in Monroe Township, NJ. It's not in Jamesburg as stated.

Thanks,

Jill Quaglietta

3/12/2009 8:05:21 PM

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