



1st Choice Builders:  
Brad and Cindy Thompson

# Single-Story SOLUTIONS

If the mere mention of single-story homes conjures visions of rectangular ranches of the seventies, think again. Today, one-story living means architectural interest, intuitive floor plans, and energy efficient construction. According the National Association of

Home Builders, home trends are favoring one-story construction. One factor is an aging baby boomer population looking to build custom homes. But another trend is at play. Books like Sarah Susanka's *Not So Big House* have ignited a cultural movement towards redefining the space in which we really live. Whether you prefer a more spacious design or one that is cozy and comfortable, today's one-story floor plans provide flexibility, functionality and luxury.

Brad and Cindy Thompson, co-owners of First Choice Custom Homes in Greenville, South Carolina have found single-story construction to be a wonderful answer for families seeking more efficient, lower maintenance living spaces. The boom in one-story living began with market demand for a master bedroom on the main floor. As home design expanded outward rather than upward, builders explored innovative ways to envision this larger footprint. The market response has been quite positive, embracing both large and small one-story design. "We want to build homes that bring families together," says Brad. "We begin each home project by really getting to know our clients and their lifestyle needs. We also show them interior and exterior elements of existing homes that we feel may add value to the home we will ultimately build. Once we understand what type of home they desire, we carefully consider the site, pick a plan and start to design a space that will work in concert with the way they live."

**How we live**  
Brad and Cindy work with pre-designed home plans — and have built several Frank Betz and Donald Gardner designed homes. They favor designs that combine historic designs with new styles and materials to create homes of classic appeal and a highly efficient use of space. "We are fortunate in that through experience, a strong design team and builder partners, we can offer unique and interesting

design choices and space solutions for smaller homes," says Brad. "Our goal is to build homes that work efficiently and effectively."

This philosophy is gaining greater attention as our world looks to be more purposeful and thoughtful in the ways we choose to live. For builders, this presents a greater opportunity to use creativity, state-of-the-art technology and unique building processes to create homes that reflect a homeowner's values and lifestyle.

This way of thinking is a guiding principle for First Choice Custom Homes. For the Thompsons, knowing the homeowner is the most critical factor in building homes that consistently exceed their clients' expectations. "Our homes are about relationships," says Brad. "We understand our clients' needs, and this relationship is as important as the one between the homeowner and the rooms they will live in."

Designing homes in the context of how someone lives often means being flexible. Particularly for smaller floor plans, this can mean anything from creating multi-use rooms to varying ceiling heights to define living space. Other issues unique to single-story living such as traffic flow and designation of private and public spaces are just the beginning of an ever-evolving process in balancing the home's aesthetic with functionality.

**Design**  
Designing into a single-story home presents an exciting challenge to Cindy Thompson

who works diligently with the builder team to marry the design of the home to its construction. The challenge often faced is how to define the space of an open floor plan while providing continuity. "In a single-story home color and texture are very important," says Cindy. "These elements can make or break a space."

Focusing on principles of scale, proportion, continuity and contrast and with the help of innovative products, paints and processes, Cindy is able to harmonize space and design. "Layering techniques are a great way to vary the perception of space, particularly for one-story and smaller floor plans," says Cindy. "Color and texture can add weight, create light or visually define a space." Cindy works closely with her clients to understand their personal style, then uses her knowledge to incorporate this style inside and outside the home. "A home should be an expression of who we are," she says.

**Craftsmanship and Technology**  
Constructing a one-story living space is no less challenging. It often requires more creativity, skill and forethought to ensure that the space is functional and will meet the lifestyle needs of the homeowner. This is true for both large and small plans.

"Through attention to craftsmanship, we can incorporate behind-the-scenes features such as organization, room flow and integrated technology and products. For example, drawers

in window seats and benches not only provides storage options but create the illusion of more space," says Brad. "Stairways can offer wall space for bookshelves which provide organization and visual interest."

It is this passion for detail that motivates Brad and Cindy. Stair railings, well-crafted moldings and finely tailored built-ins add texture, warmth and interest.

Craftsmanship combined with advancing home technologies make today's home life more efficient and more livable than ever. "We can offer technologies such as tankless water heaters, air purification systems, folding doors, and energy-efficient home wraps. Even the latest in audio / visual equipment so the home will better work for you," says Brad. "With today's technologies, we are always finding new ways to build unique homes that incorporate quality building materials and interesting architectural details. What is exciting to us is that the custom segment of homebuilding enables us to do that."

First Choice Custom Homes has made it their mission to create beautifully planned, well-crafted and thoughtfully designed homes. By understanding their clients' needs, paying close attention to details, and meticulously choosing innovative and high-quality materials, Brad and Cindy Thompson are ultimately able to build distinctive homes that work for everyday living.

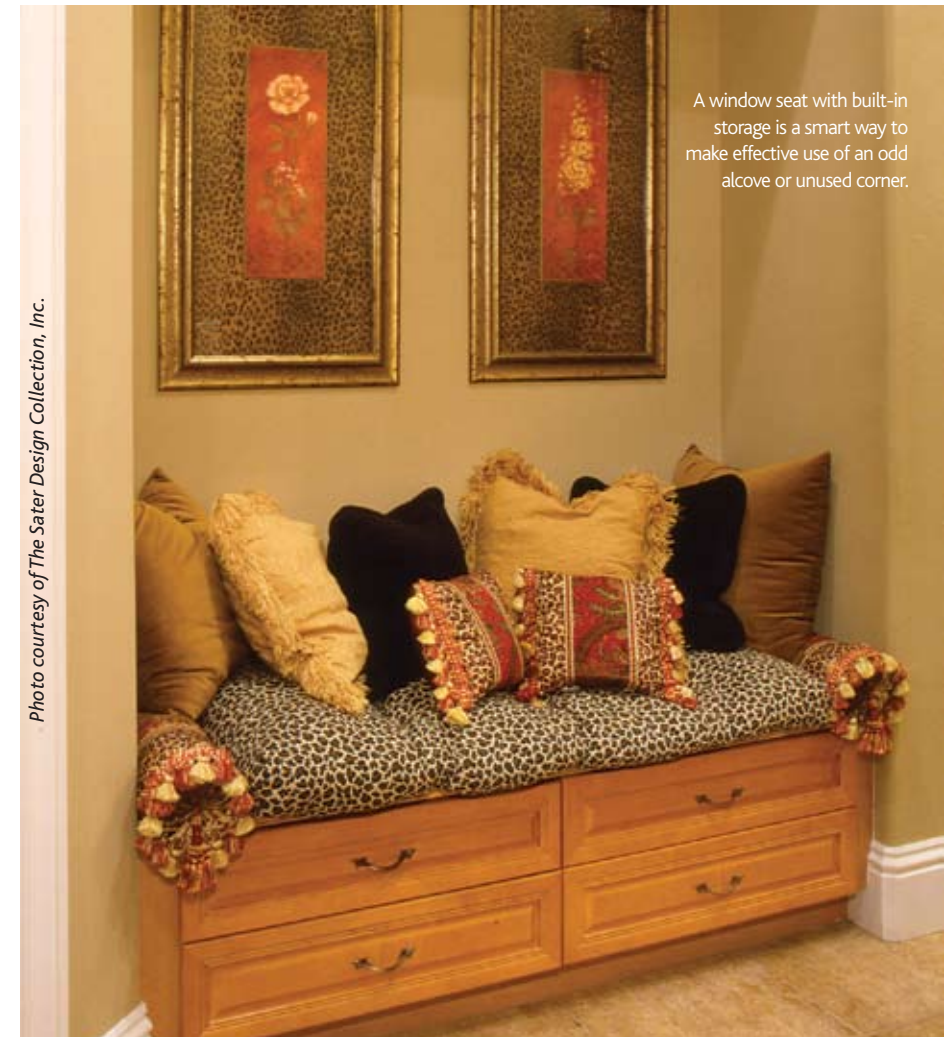


Photo courtesy of The Sater Design Collection, Inc.

A window seat with built-in storage is a smart way to make effective use of an odd alcove or unused corner.



Photo courtesy of Frank Betz Associates, Inc.

Varying the ceiling height from room to room is an easy way to distinguish space without enclosing it with walls.



Photo courtesy of Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.

The addition of a desk tucked into a corner of the kitchen creates a multi-use space.