

Peter Livingston & Livingston Construction: Variety dictates his projects

His clients keep him busy with custom homes & commercial work

By Irene Jones

People who have lived on both the East Coast and the West Coast report that the work ethic existing on either coast is very different. Peter Livingston, a native of Massachusetts and now a resident of the South Coast in California, insists that he grew up watching people all around him living to work. When he moved to California in his early 20s, he found a lifestyle that promoted the concept of working to live.

Trained as a carpenter from his early youth, Peter has been living in the area for more than 25 years but still finds himself living to work while he pursues his career as a respected general contractor, custom home builder, and owner of Livingston Construction, based in Ventura. "I grew up thinking work should be the focus for every day of your life and that's been the way I've approached my own business," he explains. "At first I rarely took a day off and finally my physician advised me to take up some hobbies. He wasn't too happy when he learned the hobby I decided to take up is flying." Peter adds with a smile that while construction and flying are both intense occupations, he finds the contrast "just what the doctor

Left, the cabinetry, appliance covers and hardwood flooring in the kitchen of this Ventura beach home, built by Livingston Construction, Ventura, were especially made to match and have an added bonus: all require little maintenance. (Photos by Stillmeadow Productions.)



ordered," and has been able to allow himself time off once in a while for a day or two to fly away to quiet getaway places.

Peter's workaholic attitude is evident in all his finished projects. In fact, he never considers a project finished, even though the homeowner or tenant has moved in. "I tell them that anytime they need anything at all, just let me know and we'll take care of it," he insists. "Even if it's something new – it's all part of being my client and keeping their home or

"I have a good rapport with architects in the area," says Peter Livingston, owner of Livingston Construction, Ventura. "They know what my clients want and what I expect. And the same is true when they have projects. They arrange for me to meet their clients, often while projects are still in the discussion stage, so that my expertise is available from the beginning. It makes the finished project just that much better when the team can start together from the beginning."

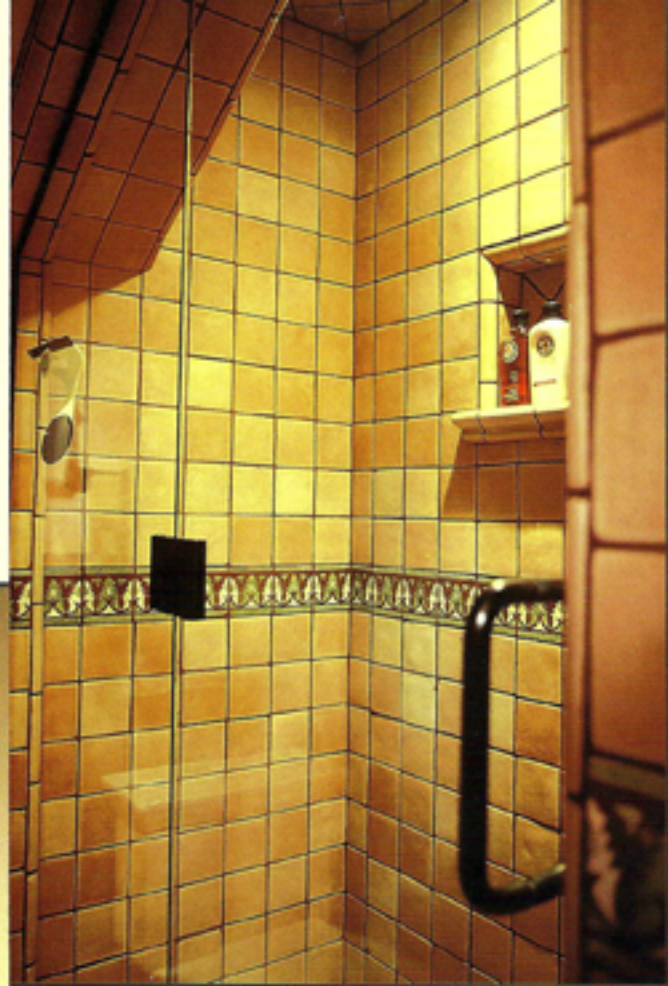
office or retail space right for their family or business. That's just the way I've always run my projects and I intend to keep it that way as long as I'm running the business."

Peter has four finish carpenters working with him full-time and also credits his team of subcontractors



Top right, the wide-open family room on the top level of this Ventura vacation home built by Livingston Construction, Ventura, features custom lighting, view windows of the beach, and a bar. (Photos by Stillmeadow Productions.)



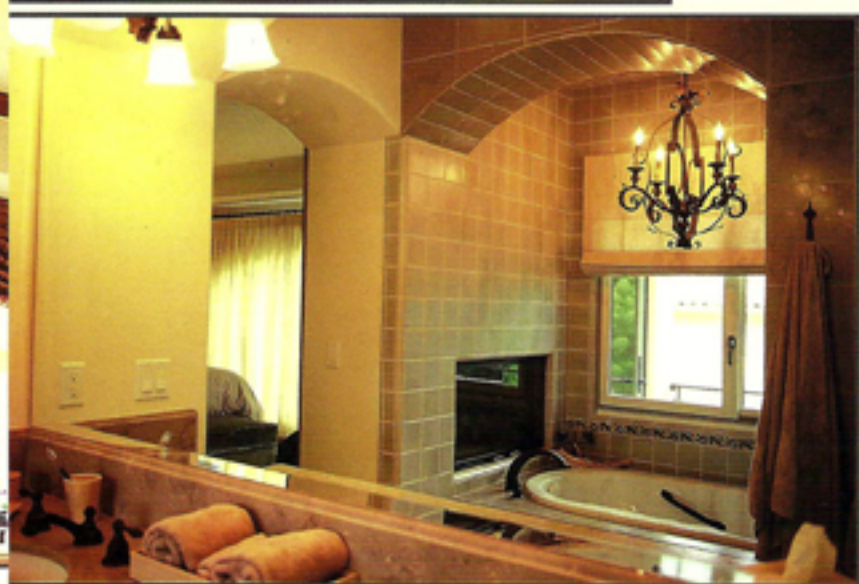


as some of the best in the region. He keeps busy with commercial and residential projects, including custom homes and remodeling. When clients come to him with ideas for an office project or a custom home or remodel job, he sits down and works out the basic project then interviews architects for the job. "I have a good rapport with architects in the area," he states. "They know what my clients want and what I expect. And the same is true when they have projects. They arrange for me to meet their clients, often while projects are still in the discussion stage, so that my expertise is avail-

able from the beginning. It makes the finished project just that much better when the team can start together from the beginning."

Peter sees his work continuing on a steady basis because of the variety he is able to handle and because of his various clients. "I've been busy ever since I decided to go out on my own and always have had more work than I

"My clients and my subcontractors are all like one big happy family. We work together and also enjoy spending recreational time together," says Peter Livingston, owner, Livingston Construction, Ventura.



Above and center, custom tile work and luxurious bath settings, just off the master bedroom, lower left, including arches and a fireplace that can be enjoyed from both rooms, are just some of the many features in a Ventura vacation home built by Livingston Construction, based in Ventura. (Photos by Stillmeadow Productions.)



could do alone," he explains. "I don't want to get so big that I can't keep a good handle on all the jobs we're working on. I expect to keep my business stable over the next few years, letting the variety of the work we do dictate how busy we will be."

The variety of the work in the near future includes a redevelopment project in downtown Ventura, restoring an older building with contemporary electrical and plumbing, and other smaller commercial upgrades and projects. He also is in the planning stages for several custom homes, as well as completing numerous remodeling projects in the county.

A general contractor since 1982, Peter usually has five to eight projects underway at any one time, such as storage units, offices, tenant improvements, and retail sales spaces, and while commercial work has been the staple for his company, the custom homes and remodeling that he has com-

pleted have given him a serious sense of satisfaction. In fact, much of the residential work he acquired came after completing a commercial project and then having the owner/developer discuss home building or remodeling as their next assignment.

"I have numerous clients that are developers and not only do I build their commercial projects, but I also build their vacation homes, remodel their main residences, and even do a project once in a while for their neighbors and friends," he explains. "My clients and my subcontractors are all like one big happy family. We work together and also enjoy spending recreational time together." Peter is a golfer and sometimes finds himself on the golf course talking shop and networking with a client while they work out all the details on an upcoming project. "Golf was more what my doctor had in mind when he said, 'take up a hobby,'" Peter adds, laughing.

Peter's work and family overlap as his wife, Kelly, helps him as business manager. She also enjoys the times when they are able to get together with friends who are clients and business associates. Peter and Kelly have five children – three daughters and two sons, ages 25 to 7 – who sometimes help with the family business, but mostly spend time going to school and participating in school and community events. Besides golfing with family and friends, Peter owns his own plane, a 1947 Navion, and received his



Above, this custom vacation getaway near the beach in Ventura, built by Livingston Construction, Ventura, features view windows, balconies, a large parking area and garage, and fenced, private yard. Below, storage facilities near Ventura Boulevard in Ventura, built by Livingston Construction, are typical of commercial projects the company builds throughout Ventura and Los Angeles counties. (Photos by Stillmeadow Productions.)



pilot's license in 1998 after a cabinetmaker friend, also into the sport, encouraged him to take lessons. "It's a very gratifying feeling," he explains. "When you're up there in the air, high over everyone, all the pressures of the day seem to just fly away, too. My family thinks it's a great hobby."

Raised as one of 13 children, Peter recalls knowing from a very young age that he would work in construction and how he often would spend time with his father who worked year round in the construction industry. He has a brother who is now in the electrical trade, but most of his family remains on the East Coast. In addition to finish carpentry, over the years he has also worked for years as a contractor for painting, masonry and framing.

When he initially came to California with friends in 1980, it was just for a vacation. "We all decided to get jobs here, but over the years, most of my friends that came with me have returned to live on the East Coast. I guess that's why I have to smile and shake my head when the doctor says I need to not work so hard. For me, the past 25 years has been a vacation that never ended."

For many on the South Coast, it has been an interesting dichotomy to have Peter Livingston see his business and construction work as an extended vacation. While he views himself as one who lives to work, he's the first to admit that his work ethic has spilled over into his "extended California vacation." This unique fact has allowed those who work with him the opportunity to see, on a daily basis, an excellent builder who enjoys his work and profession, who takes pride in every project, large and small, and who looks forward to another day on the job. It's this attitude that continues to make him among the referred and admired general contractors on the South Coast.

ACP



Above, Peter Livingston, owner of Livingston Construction, pauses at a fountain he built as part of a custom home in Ventura near the beach. Lower right, the dining area in the same home shows a spacious kitchen, detailed cabinetry and hardwood floors. (Photos by Stillmeadow Productions.)



Livingston Construction
Peter Livingston
General Contractor
805-644-9390

Fax: 805-644-9391 • License #481651
4250 Monterey Road, Ventura, CA 93003