

# BUILDING

## BUSINESS & APARTMENT MANAGEMENT



Official Publication Of  
**THE BUILDING AND THE  
MULTIFAMILY HOUSING INDUSTRY**



May 1996

\$2.95



***New Materials  
Put Floors on Top***



***Why Be a  
Remodeler?***



***Builder Profile:  
Antonio Benivegna  
of Benivegna  
Building***



***Associate Profile:  
Jerry Zyren of Modern  
Builders Supply, Inc.***

***Builder Alert:  
Environmental  
Protection***

## BUILDER PROFILE

# Antonio Benivegna of Benivegna Building Co., Inc.

Written by Ellen Joyce

**A**ntonio Benivegna has seen a lot of changes in the 40-plus years he's been a professional builder: financing methods, home construction techniques and increased consumer sophistication—to name a few. "When I started building, there was no such thing as insulation," he says. He remembers when you could close a deal with some sketches and a handshake.

But a couple of things haven't



*Satisfying the customer is only part of Antonio Benivegna's philosophy of success.*

changed: his passion for the trade and a commitment to do it right. "I always tried to carry a good reputation and treat people like you would like to be treated. I build a home like I would like to have a home. I put myself into every spec house I've built. Of course, if I build a home for a customer, I try to put them in the home."

Satisfying the customer is only part of  
————— *Continued on page 4*



Continued from page 3

Benivegna's philosophy of success. He says you have to change with the times. "I've always tried to stay with the market. Nothing stands still, and you got to keep up with it."

You have to have the big picture of the market, but Benivegna, general manager and founder of Benivegna Building Company, Inc., in West Bloomfield, says it's also important to sweat the details. He prides himself on his creativity and innovation as ways to make the homes he builds distinctive. "I put a lot of detailing into the homes. I like crown moldings. I like high ceilings, open stairwells."

It was that dramatic flair, contemporary architecture and attention to detail that helped earn Benivegna Building a blue ribbon in the \$300,000-plus category of the 1995 Showcase of Distinctive Homes. The winning model, in the Southwyck subdivision in West Bloomfield, actually has a second-level bridge that spans the length of the

house, connecting a children's activity area and adult work space to some bedrooms. There is also a first-floor master bedroom.

Benivegna, who was born and raised on Detroit's east side, started building homes in the mid-1940s, "as a guy just



The Regent

trying to make a living." He says he operated on "instinct" and skills picked up from his father, a Sicilian immigrant. He founded his business, Benivegna Building, in 1952 and got his license in 1953. Benivegna's commercial and residential buildings can be found across the metropolitan Detroit area,

from Redford to Fraser and from Eastpointe to West Bloomfield. Benivegna Building currently has about a half-dozen subdivisions under construction, with homes ranging in price from \$120,000 to \$500,000.

Benivegna Building is definitely a family affair. Wife Alberta does the bookkeeping. Granddaughter Gina Straub does real estate and runs the office. Benivegna thinks a family-run business is a better run business, because everyone works together and has a stake in what happens. Even Benivegna's younger grandchildren help on their school breaks.

Benivegna says the biggest joy for him in this business was when his son, Ron, joined him in the company 10 years ago. "I took him from a nice clean desk and put him in the mud," jokes Benivegna. The respect and affection between father and son are obvious, as they banter about things like the quality of the framing on old-versus new-homes. You can just guess who took which side. Benivegna is proud of what he's accomplished, having the business grow to what it is today. As he says, he's been at this "oh, a couple days." But, at age 77, he is thinking about slowing down and eventually handing the company over to Ron.

Even though he intends to phase himself out of the everyday running of the business, Benivegna plans to stay active, "just enough to stay out of trouble." In his limited leisure time, he likes to play a little golf and go to Arizona to get away from the cold winter weather.

Benivegna has been active in the Building Industry Association (BIA) for many years and is a firm believer in what the Association has to offer members. He sat on the board for a term that ended in 1995. He is a member of the West Bloomfield Task Force. "If there's anyone who doesn't belong that's in the industry, they're fools, because there are too many things going on in the government. We need a watchdog" to represent the interests of the industry, he says.

**We're meeting all your appliance needs**

**JENN-AIR**  
THE SIGN OF A GREAT COOK.

**... while adding distinction to the homes you build.**

**TREVARROW INC.**  
CONTACT YOUR TREVARROW REPRESENTATIVE  
1295 N. Opdyke Rd. • Auburn Hills, MI 48326 • 800/482-1948