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BECKER ARCHITECTS

595 Elm Pl., Highland Park
(847) 433-6600
www.beckerarchitects.com

Since husband and wife Richard and Nancy Becker relocated from New York to Highland Park (Nancy's hometown) ten years ago, their prolific firm has completed many residential remodeling/addition projects, both for outside clients and for their own speculative development of high-priced single-family rehabs. Richard says accessibility to clients is a company specialty. "We're not prima donnas," he says. "Our clients feel they can talk to us and not feel they're being judged."

DARCY BONNER AND ASSOCIATES

205 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago
(312) 853-3470

Darcy Bonner is best known for interiors he has done in vintage Chicago apartment buildings, but he has remodeled a number of large suburban houses, as well. Bonner also manufactures the high-modern Mattaliano line of custom furniture, and his architectural designs reflect a similar polish and sophistication.

DIAN KEEHAN ARCHITECT

518 Davis St., #205, Evanston
(847) 869-4005

Dian Keehan says that her background in developing retail and restaurant prototypes gives her a certain edge in the residential work she does now. "Residential architects aren't trained in the theming research and narrative studies that go into restaurant design," she says, adding that her approach allows her to see each project uniquely rather than as an application of a pat formula.

EIFLER & ASSOCIATES

223 W. Jackson Blvd., #1000, Chicago
(312) 362-0180

John Eifler has established himself as a specialist in remodeling the houses of Frank Lloyd Wright. But he's hardly an imitator of other architects; his years of working at Skidmore Owings & Merrill taught him about many periods and styles, and his eye is evident in every project he undertakes.

FOSTER DALE ARCHITECTS

4401 N. Ravenswood Ave., #307B
Chicago
(773) 275-2233

"We try to understand the house and then try to apply what the client says and what the house says to us with our own philosophy about making a relatively seamless addition," Foster Dale says. In home remodeling, he sees "a wide spectrum of literal reproduction and extreme juxtaposition of the modern and the historical." He considers himself an unabashed historicist but not a slave to history. "The literal doesn't excite me, but something that feels new but says, 'Maybe this was always here' can be good."

FRAERMAN ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTURE

508 Central Ave., Highland Park
(847) 266-0648

Yale-educated James Fraerman worked for Booth Hansen before establishing his own practice in 1995. His firm's remodeling portfolio reflects skill with older houses, though he also has completed several new ones. He has earned awards for historic preservation projects on the North Shore, but he doesn't like being pigeonholed and says his approach to remodeling is consistent regardless of the house's roots. "Whether we're doing contemporary or traditional, our work always has a sense of space and flow and a quality of light."

GAROFALO ARCHITECTS

3752 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago
(773) 975-2069

www.garofalo.a-node.net

Although his unconventional approach might not immediately appeal to everyone, Douglas Garofalo is one of the country's most innovative architects. His free-form work stands out from the crowd in the metropolitan area. More engulfments than mere additions, his projects have transformed prosaic suburban split-levels and modest urban two-flats into astonishing exercises in cutting-edge architecture.

GARRETT MICHAEL EAKIN

1000 Woodbine Ave., Oak Park
(708) 660-0315

"My work is based on invention within tradition," Eakin says. "There's comfort

in tradition, but we try to incorporate it into modern lifestyles—to understand history and interpret it within the language of the house." His portfolio shows an affinity for lavish finishes and abundant detail.

GIBBONS, FORTMAN & WEBER

900 N. Franklin St., Chicago
(312) 482-8040

www.gfwarchitects.com

The firm's portfolio shows its strengths in the elegant and formal interiors it has completed in many city apartments and houses, all of which display skill at employing traditional decorative elements, but the principals also do stylish minimalist work when the context dictates or to reflect the owner's tastes.

JAFFE ARCHITECTURAL GROUP

811 W. Evergreen Ave., #400A, Chicago
(312) 475-1800

Lisa Jaffe seems as comfortable applying classical and traditional detailing within modernist exteriors as she is producing precise geometric interiors in older residences.

JOHN BANKS ARCHITECTS

410 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago
(312) 922-2410

Banks is highly skilled in working with modest houses of a certain age, helping transform them by maximizing space while respecting design integrity.

JOHN HAGENAH ARCHITECT

512 Green Bay Rd., Kenilworth
(847) 256-5575

"Clients come to me because I work within the architecture of the building they already have," Hagenah says. "We want an addition to look as if it has always been there." Although he acknowledges that some designers strive to make the distinction between the old and new obvious, he objects to that approach. "I would never do a glass box on the back of a Colonial," he says.

JOHN RONAN ARCHITECT

320 W. Ohio St., #4E, Chicago
(312) 951-6600

www.jrarch.com

Ronan, who began his practice in 1997 after stints with Krueck & Sexton and Lohan Associates, is probably the most