

Copperwood Builders

Keeping it simple goes a long way



Photo provided by Ryan McLellan

Ryan McLellan, owner of Copperwood Builders, has built homes in Fairview, Buffalo Mountain, Alpine Mountain, The Village of Cheshire and the Settings. Much of his current work and focus is at Cheshire, where he is working on both custom homes and mixed-use commercial buildings.

By Gretchen Howard
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One look at a home built by Copperwood Builders and the company's mission is apparent - to build unique, custom homes that blend beautifully with the mountain environment.

This is something owner Ryan McLellan has wanted to do all of his life, and it's inspiring to see the results of his endeavors. To McLellan, his work is much more than a "job," - it is the joy of building a home that is as individual as its owner, it is building relationships, and it is giving to the community.

For as long as McLellan can remember, he knew he wanted to be a builder. His interest in the field was sparked at a young age as he worked alongside his father.

"My father was a teacher by profession but built homes for our family in his free time," McLellan said. "We'd live in a house for a couple of years and

build another."

McLellan began his college studies in architecture but found it was "too theoretical."

"I just wanted to get out there and start building," he said. He switched gears from architecture to construction and graduated from University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in construction management.

McLellan spent his summers during college working for a small contractor in Milton, Fla., who completed most of the building process in-house.

Here McLellan garnered hands-on experience digging footers, framing, and all the other steps involved with home building. After graduating, he took a job as project manager for a custom home builder in Pensacola Beach, where he dealt with million dollar, elaborate homes.

"The bright colors and big houses just didn't fit in with the sugar white sand beaches to me. I realized I wanted to create homes that enhance the existing natural landscapes," McLellan

said.

McLellan and his family later moved to Black Mountain to pursue his passion for creating handcrafted mountain homes. "Copperwood Builders" was incorporated in 1998, and McLellan has since built homes in Fairview, Buffalo Mountain, Alpine Mountain, The Village of Cheshire, and the Settings. Much of his current work and focus is at Cheshire where he is working on both custom homes and mixed-use commercial buildings.

"My family and I also live in Cheshire, so many of Copperwood's clients are also neighbors and friends."

The close-knit community provides Copperwood with accountability. "We always do the best job we can possibly do," McLellan said. "We run into our clients in the neighborhood long after their homes are complete."

One of his key work philosophies is building relationships and working with local businesses and subcontractors.

"I partner with the same architects and subcontractors over and over. This has allowed all parties involved to know what to expect from each other - we really have the scheduling and timing down. We know and use each other's talents and are able to work together to create a wonderful end result."

Copperwood Builders also makes it a priority to use local people from Black Mountain and the Swannanoa Valley. It is important to McLellan that the money the business pays its subcontractors goes back into this community and helps build up the local economy.

So what sets Copperwood Builders apart from the others? McLellan and his small team strive to keep it simple and make it a point not to get too big, even turning down work to keep the workload relative to the workforce.

The result is a one-of-a-kind product with close attention to detail—and more than likely a few more waves and hellos in the neighborhood.