



then I will say something. I try to give a different perspective. I am careful not to interject when a client has a strong opinion about something. I'm generally reluctant to give an opinion if I don't like something. Instead, I try to make it work in the overall. With an architect or owner, until you've gained their trust, the last thing they want to hear is their contractor's opinion."

Apparently that has worked out well. All of DTC's work is through referral. He prefers to work on no more than four projects at a time, as that is all he can manage while maintaining his level of care and supervision. Once an architect has worked with him they keep working together. That level of trust becomes a shorthand communication his clients expect.

Don has developed a reputation for specializing in contemporary projects although that is not necessarily what he originally sought. "That comes out of the interaction with the architects that are coming up with something fresh. I don't go after modern projects, but there is a correlation between the past work and what comes to me."

Don thinks the ever-changing quality of light of the Northwest is one of the more inter-

esting details he deals with. Another factor that is critical to consider when building in our climate is weatherproofing since the effects of rain and water require special attention. One of his favorite elements on a home are overhangs because he likes anything that keeps water away from the house and creates an area that provides a dry space as you transition from outside to inside. An architect whose work he admires is John Yeon. Yeon was known for creating a northwest regional style of architecture in the 1930s, with an innovative use of simple building materials and the overhangs that Don loves so well.

I asked him how he would advise a homeowner to keep things in line. "Assemble a good team. Hire people who have gone through these types of projects and who can foresee the problems. You have to have trust. I often say to clients - 'You've hired a good architect, don't make him do something bad.' The single thing you can do is to know what you want. If you're figuring it out as you go along, the project and budget will follow that path. You have to have everything lined up before you start. It's a frustrating feeling when someone is spending your money so have the architect and designer decide everything before your start. Specifying makes all the difference."

Don took me on a tour of a warehouse space in Northwest Portland that is being converted to a private residence. All the rooms in the 5,000 square foot single level home are oriented toward an enormous atrium. Additionally, there are 10 foot sliding glass doors with a view toward a private courtyard that will be part of the next phase of the construction. As we walked the space he pointed out details and items that the owner will likely never think about such as radiant heat flooring, the insulation and a 50 foot uninterrupted expanse of dividing wall. He pointed out waterproofing details that are paramount in our rainy region. The natural wood window frames were receiving a finish coat prior to being set in place to insure a water tight seal, and the roofing material used was a new product that is not only one of the best in the industry, it is a work of art. The architect's drawings of the space are absolutely stunning, and as I stood there admiring the space and daydreaming again, he listed off the numbers for construction costs that sadly brought me back to reality.

Don summed up his work very simply. "I build art you can live in." I couldn't have said it any better. \$