

# High-end home builders bullish on metro Detroit market; Tour a model home with a dog shower, indoor gym

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DETROIT, MI - If anyone needed a physical sign that high-end home building is picking back up, it could be found in the form of a shovels wielded by Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and members of the construction community on Wednesday at the future site of Pinnacle in Oakland Township.

There, million-dollar-plus homes will be built as part of a \$137 million development just off Silverbell Road in an area also known as the "billion dollar mile."

The development is being led by Mocerri Companies, but will feature the building and landscaping prowess of several Southeast Michigan companies. Builders include Cranbrook Homes, MJC Companies and Arteva Homes, along with Mocerri.

The first eight homes will be open to the public for viewing as part of Homearama 2014 Aug. 29 to Sept. 21.

On Wednesday, local officials and high-end builders hailed the groundbreaking moment as proof that the premium residential construction market is back on track, after the national housing collapse in 2008 and 2009 brought new home construction of all kinds to a near-halt.

Home building permits for single-family residences in Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair and Wayne counties totaled 423 permits in June, after 520 permits were issued in May, marking the first time there have been more than 400 permits issued for two consecutive months since November 2006.

Construction firms did not simply roll over in the off years, though. Vito Terraciano, CEO of Arteva Homes, said his company went to Macomb County in 2009 when most new homes were being priced at \$90 per square foot, and started building luxury abodes at a \$200 per square foot and upwards. "When everybody was saying 'cheap, cheap, cheap,' we trended higher," he said.

The high-end home market in Macomb County has since picked up pace, Terraciano said. Homes that were selling at about \$290,000 when the company began building there are now selling for \$450,000 and above, he said.

Most of the homes Arteva is selling are now in the million-dollar-plus range, though. A majority of the company's homes can be found around the Rochester area. We got a glimpse inside their "Idea House," a beautiful piece of construction that includes everything from an indoor basketball court to a shower room made especially for dogs (see photos above).

"We were fighting a downward trend at the time," Artevas Homes Chief Operating Officer Brian Szliter said of the market's basement in 2009. "But buyers still want nice features."

What is encouraging about the premium market's recovery, said Stephen McKay of Cranbrook Custom Homes, is that "it's across the board."

"Buyers are professionals from every walk of business," said McKay, the company's vice president and architect, adding that buyers are "not just auto guys anymore."

Cranbrook builds homes in five Southeast Michigan counties, priced as low as \$300,000 and as high as \$10 million. McKay said residential sales started to pick back up in 2011.

The median selling price for Metro Detroit homes in September jumped by a strong 48 percent over September 2012 to \$130,000, according to Realcomp, the Farmington Hills-based Multiple Listing Service for Southeast Michigan. The large, double-digit, year-over-year increase in the median selling prices has been a monthly occurrence since March.



Wanna hoop it up? Arteva Homes' Idea House suggests you may want an indoor basketball court for your abode.