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Homeowners turn to **B&D Builders** to enhance their properties with stunning "party barns" designed to host special events, enjoy casual gatherings, and otherwise improve life at home. page 30

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Raising the Barn

Homeowners turn to B&D Builders to enhance their properties with stunning “party barns” designed to host special events, enjoy casual gatherings, and otherwise improve life at home.



Timeless and romantic, the barn has become an enduring symbol of the region's deep agricultural roots. Even as the number of working farms between Philadelphia and Lancaster has dwindled and been recast as residential space, many of the barns still stand. In fact, a growing number of homeowners are transforming these structures into beautiful extensions of the home.

“A lot of these structures were once used as equine or dairy barns and all things to do with farming, but the area has changed,” says Michael Duffy, an account executive with B&D Builders, a sought-after construction firm based in Paradise, Pennsylvania, an hour west of Philadelphia. “A lot of properties with barns are no longer working farms, so people are looking at these structures and saying, ‘Now what do we do with this?’”

Duffy suggests more and more homeowners are transforming strictly agricultural structures into “party barns.” Often gorgeously designed, party barns may be used for hosting weddings and special events, serving as casual gathering spaces, and much more. B&D's customers have opted for multipurpose party barns with room carved out for showcasing prized car collections, hosting family movie-

and-pizza nights, or providing comfortable places for family members to overnight during extended visits.

The party-barn trend has grown far beyond the renovation of existing structures. Many homeowners are building new party barns on parts of the property that had been underused, according to Duffy.

“We have one client in Malvern who had a very nice house but wanted a place where they could entertain and have somewhere for their adult children and grandchildren to stay when they came home,” he recalls. “It's a new structure, and it has everything you might need: two beautiful bedrooms, a terrific kitchen with a pizza oven, a nice sunroom with southeast exposure, a great room with a huge stone staircase, and it's connected to the main residence by a breezeway. Those are indicative of the things people are looking for in a party barn.”

Party barns represent only one aspect of B&D's ever-growing portfolio of residential, commercial, and agricultural projects. After establishing itself as a leader in the construction of complex equestrian facilities, B&D extended its expertise into large single-family homes, historic renovations, and commercial facilities,

including ornately designed office buildings.

B&D, which is now celebrating its 23rd year in business, has evolved considerably since first opening its doors. To complement the construction side of the business, B&D has made several strategic investments to become a single-source custom builder. The additions of four specialty brands—Mid-Atlantic Timberframes, Mid-Atlantic Steel Fabrication, Vintage Millwork & Restoration, and Vintage Wood & Forged Iron—enable the firm to ensure the quality and exert more control over the lead time associated with each project.

“All of these businesses dovetail together,” Duffy says. “We can draw from all four companies to serve the needs of one client. Our owners and the vast majority of our craftsmen bring three or four generations of building to the table. We've married that timeless tradition and skillset with the most modern building and manufacturing methods. As a result, we can replicate the same results over and over again with a fraction of an inch of variance.”

Whereas some businesses have struggled since March 2020, B&D has thrived. Duffy believes changes in the way people live and work have helped to spur the company's business, particularly from its residential clients.

“The one good thing about [the events of the past few years] is that it has reestablished the importance of family,” he says. “People are trying to do things as a family that don't involve going to a destination—and they're dreaming big. The party-barn trend is an extension of that.” ■



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