

suburban life



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A photograph of two men in a modern, open-plan living room. One man is sitting on a white armchair, and the other is standing next to it. The room features a large, colorful geometric rug, a white coffee table with a stack of books, and a large window. A staircase with a black metal railing is visible in the background.

The principals of **AF1 Ltd.** bring
modernity in home design and
construction to the historic Main Line.

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The Main Line Redefined

by Leigh Stuart | photos by Nina Lea Photography

The principals of AF1 Ltd. bring modernity in home design and construction to the historic Main Line.

The mansions of the Main Line are known far and wide for their Old World charm and traditional design, which dates back to the expansion of the Pennsylvania Railroad nearly 200 ago. A luxury homebuilder called AF1 Ltd. is looking to shake things up, bringing a touch of modernity to a part of the world with so much storied history.

“What we’re creating in my mind is something very unique—something that allows us to be very different in the market by offering innovative services and products in custom home building,” says Andre Fonarov, CEO and co-founder of AF1. “You don’t need to be following everyone’s cookie-cutter design; you can design [a home] to fit your life.”

This fresh approach to building along the historic Main Line is embodied in the show home AF1 has erected on Paoli Pike in Malvern. Featuring a façade crafted from a revolutionary material called Dekton, the home features abundant natural light, floor-to-ceiling glass walls, and Brazilian teak throughout.

“The concept here is that from the moment you walk into the house, the open space and natural light immerse you, you feel seamless con-

nection with the outdoors, and the place looks like it was designed for a quiet family time and loud entertainment at the same time,” Fonarov says. “There is a custom staircase with a bridge that connects the two levels, an office with its own balcony, and smart-home technology that powers lights and sound throughout the house. We wanted the Malvern house to show a different approach to designing and building a custom house.”

A former corporate executive, Fonarov traveled the world before settling in this region with the dream of bringing sustainable, human-centered design to the Main Line. This passion for global travel is reflected in the building materials curated by Fonarov and business partner Rob King.

“I’ve been to over 30 countries in places like Europe, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America, and it always amazes me how dif-

ferent and sometimes quite advanced construction technologies and materials are,” Fonarov says. “With this house in Malvern, we searched and experimented with innovative building technologies, and this is where we came into some things I don’t think anyone else does.”

Dekton, an ultracompact and highly durable composite surface developed and manufactured in Spain by Cosentino, is at the top of the list of cutting-edge materials. Fonarov says the applications for Dekton are limitless.



AF1 Ltd. principals Andre Fonarov (right) and Rob King, having a little fun at the show home



Inside the Malvern show home



“You can apply this material to any surface, either horizontal or vertical,” Fonarov shares. “We started with the exterior and spent a lot of time thinking about how to bring this product to the U.S. residential market. Last year we found a way when we combined technologies from three countries—rainscreen from Germany, adhesive from Italy, and then this Spanish stone—to create a one-of-a-kind exterior façade.”

Nearly 10,000 square feet of Dekton grace the façade of AF1’s Malvern show home. AF1 also used Dekton for as much as 70 percent of the Malvern interior surfaces. In addition to being durable and sustainable, it is resistant to stains and scratches, fireproof, and soundproof—something that cannot be said of more traditional exterior materials, such as vinyl.

“It’s a huge product in terms of countertops, but you rarely see it used in other applications,” Fonarov adds. “You don’t see it used for flooring or bathrooms, but we implemented the material throughout the house and even built a custom coffee table.

“This product is carbon neutral, highly sustainable, and is good in terms of wellness because no chemicals are involved in the production of Dekton,” he continues. “It also comes with a warranty of at least 25 years, and the company [that manufactures it] is constantly innovating and introducing new luxury collections.”

Dekton slabs arrive in five-foot-by-11-foot slabs, which can be fabricated onsite to whatever dimensions the application demands. In other words, a floor-to-ceiling look can be achieved without the unsightly grout lines that are omnipresent with traditional tiles.

“It’s really enjoyable to offer something new to the market that isn’t in the area,” adds King, who has been a construction professional for more than 20 years. “I’d never done tile as a façade—it was totally new on my end—but hopefully we can use what we’ve learned to bring new façades to the area.”

Personal relationships with manufacturers have been key to the company’s success in acquiring such revolutionary materials. For example, a manufacturer in Spain designed 23 custom wooden doors for the home’s interior. AF1’s principals take the time to meet with each of its suppliers so they can test each product it offers homeowners, as well as see the production facility where the product is manufactured.

Fonarov says AF1’s quest to find the most innovative materials is ongoing.

“What really makes us different is that we encourage customers to think outside the box,” he adds. “Whether they are redesigning a space, building an addition, new kitchen, or new closet, we have ways to show people opportunities to do things that maybe they wouldn’t have known about before.”

Of course, no modern home is complete without the latest technology. The Malvern show home does not disappoint in that regard, either. Not only does the house come equipped with technology to facilitate a homeowner’s lifestyle, but it was built using next-generation technology designed to streamline the process from design to construction.

For example, a 3D camera at the start of the build captures images to create a “digital twin” of the home. As King explains, “You can actually see behind the walls before the drywall goes up, including the plumbing and the wiring.” This data is invaluable in terms of avoiding unnecessary delays or complications in the building process.

“Our underlying strength is our team,” Fonarov says. “We never stop being curious and we’re always learning new things. We’re very excited to get people working with us who are enthusiastic about the process.

“As a homeowner, I know how painful [designing and building a home] can be,” he continues. “Probably no issue related to construction would surprise us now. We had solutions before, and now we have even better solutions. We are here to provide exceptional and bespoke service to our clients, either in the construction of their dream home, or renovation of existing spaces, or addition of new spaces. We’re expert home builders, ambitious, and embrace new technologies and innovations. We look forward to working with clients who have big dreams about their bespoke homes.” ■



Photos courtesy of Cosentino



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