

## ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT Interior Wood Products



pictured left: l-r: Steve Weinsz, Alix Brucken. above: IWP creates custom millwork in their specialty manufacturing area.



Manufacturing and Distribution of  
Architectural Millwork & Select Building Products

## Team Expertise

Supplying a coffered ceiling that adds depth and character to a living room. Managing the logistics of a complicated mouldings delivery. Brainstorming with a client to plan a total millwork renovation complete with standout doors — Interior Wood Products (IWP) brings exceptional products and five-star service to every millwork project.

The company's tagline, '225 years of industry experience. Established in 2010.', sums up their unique depth of knowledge, innovation, precision and skills. "Our experience means we know what we're doing," explains Alix Brucken, owner of IWP. "It goes all the way to our drivers, who know how to carry a door into a house and how to stack products properly at a job site. We are hyper-focused on millwork and we know what we're talking about when we're standing in front of a customer."

IWP staff draw on their multiple years of experience when they offer expert advice to clients on everything from wood species to wine room design. "We really have the experience to give customers as much support as they want," says IWP owner, Steve Weinsz.

The IWP team makes accuracy and responsive service top priorities. "We feel we hit it on all cylinders — from the first time we step into a new build to the time we're shipping the hardware at the end of a job — to make sure we've done everything on that project correctly," says Brucken. "A lot of times it can be as simple as answering your phone and returning your emails and text messages, taking those Sunday calls and Saturday calls."

IWP works flexibly with customers, adapting to their product requirements and delivery preferences. Weinsz says, for example, IWP will even adjust their billing to meet an individual builder's needs.

Although IWP works most often on custom new build projects, builders and designers use the company's products for a wide range of homes, including multi-families.

### DEPTH OF PRODUCTS

One of central Ohio's most comprehensive sources for architectural millwork, IWP distributes and manufactures products that include trim, interior and exterior doors, built-ins, mantels, wine cellars, cabinetry, bar and table tops, stair parts and architectural hardware. The company's door offerings are especially broad; they cover both interior and exterior doors, and include glass and barn doors.

IWP stocks hundreds of moulding profiles in standards like poplar, red oak and pine. They also have a wide custom selection of more than 2,500 non-stock profiles. IWP offers a full range of wood species, including non-standards like cherry, white oak, maple and walnut. And they even provide a unique circle cut, kiln-dried product that looks just like barn wood. The IWP team can also work with you to find cost-effective options for your project.

An IWP strength: The company has a specialty manufacturing area where they create custom millwork — everything from barn doors to custom cabinet doors — each built to achieve a client's vision. "If it's in your head, we can make it," says Brucken.

IWP partners with leading industry millworks so they can obtain a wide range of products for their customers. "It all goes back to our experience. We have relationships with manufacturers that can help people get the products they want," Brucken says.

The company has three trucks on the road every day, transporting orders that are loaded and delivered in a timely way, according to a highly-organized process. IWP also ships products across the country, carefully packing them so they arrive in perfect condition.



Interior Wood Products' staff all have exceptional experience in the millwork industry, and they bring a unique depth of knowledge, innovation, precision and skills to every job.

### TRUST, RESPECT AND AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Brucken and Weinsz were both longtime employees of Columbus Wood Products, a company that Brucken refers to as a former juggernaut in Columbus's millwork industry. Columbus Wood Products went out of business seven years ago during the recession. But today most of IWP's staff, including Amanda Huff, a key member of the IWP sales team and the daughter of Paul Huff, Columbus Wood Products' founder, once worked at Columbus Wood Products.

"Columbus Wood Products is really the root of our business," says Weinsz. "We took a lot of pride in that business, and we like to think that what we learned and the people we met and the experiences we gained, helped us grow."

IWP grew out of the ashes of Columbus Wood Products: Columbus Wood Products closed its doors June 10, 2010 — and IWP officially opened just a few weeks later, on July 1.

Brucken was one of a handful of Columbus Wood Products' employees present on the company's last day, when they put the chains on the door. He called a builder from the parking lot of the shuttered business to explain that he couldn't do a trim package takeoff scheduled for that afternoon. "I told the builder, 'I don't have a job, can I find you somebody else to do the takeoff?' and he said, 'No, Alix, just go over there and do it, just get the products for me.'" Brucken stared in disbelief at his cell phone — and then he drove to the job site and did the customer's takeoff.

Suddenly, Brucken was in his own millwork business, and two days later he bought his first forklift.

Brucken teamed up with a colleague, Dennis O'Brien, to form IWP and the two began working out of a 1,000 square foot garage space. They handled their first delivery of materials by meeting a semi

truck in a Kohl's parking lot and unloading its contents by hand into a pickup truck. Experiences like these established the strong work ethic and can-do spirit that continue to resonate throughout the company.

Today IWP has a loyal staff of 16, and they all share strong bonds of commitment to each other and their customers. "We employ people we respect and trust like family," says Weinsz. "It's a cool environment, it's fun to come to work."

Says Brucken: "I truly feel like our staff culture is: how to get that customer happy. And it's proactive — if you say something is going to happen, make sure it does."

### MILLWORK IN THEIR DNA

Brucken grew up in Upper Arlington with Huff as a close neighbor and family friend. With Huff's encouragement, Brucken started working at Columbus Wood Products as an after school job when he was 13. After studying at The Ohio State University, Brucken joined Columbus Wood Products full-time in 1995 just a few months before Weinsz joined the team. Brucken did inside sales, and then moved to outside sales. Today he oversees IWP's sales and marketing.

Weinsz, who is from Canton, earned a geology degree from Kent State University and took a job in the oil and gas industry. After his wife got a job in Columbus, Huff, a family friend, suggested that Weinsz could work part-time at Columbus Wood Products while he job hunted.

"My very first day I was literally sweeping floors and moving wood back and forth," Weinsz remembers. What Weinsz thought would be a three month job turned into a 15-year career. He moved steadily up from mill helper to logistics, inside sales, department supervisor, production management and operations management. "It really became a



labor of love to me," he says. A few months after Brucken founded IWP, Weinsz joined him to handle operations.

Since it was founded seven years ago, IWP has grown rapidly, moving four times before settling into its current location in Plain City. The company has an attractive showroom that features an abundance of millwork samples and an eye-catching conference tabletop made out of contrasting species pieces. "We feel like our showroom is really interactive and well-designed," says Weinsz. "It's really a symbol of the continued growth of our business."

Some clients spend hours in the showroom working on their selections or design — and IWP staff enjoy every step of helping them. Says Brucken: "People are building their dream house and they're excited about picking out everything for it. IWP realizes that and we share the excitement with them because we love doing this so much."

Weinsz notes that the company has stayed true to its original business model: low overhead and carefully-thought-out purchasing decisions.

"Being a business owner is great, but coming to work and seeing people we know and care about — I think it's terrific," says Weinsz.

Sums up Brucken: "This is what I do and it makes me happy. I love coming to work." ●

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