



'CLEAN GENE' SLINGS MUD
DAVE WILMOT FINDS LIFE AFTER BARRY
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HE'S BACK

THREE-DIMENSIONAL THINKING

*I*f the world were flat, ordinary two-dimensional drawings would probably be enough to allow a homeowner to visualize a renovation project or a new house. But houses in the real world occupy three-dimensional space; they have corners, windows and doors, stairs, and usually a lot of furniture. To picture a house accurately from floor plans and elevation drawings requires a leap of the imagination.

Computers are helping to bridge the gap between two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional reality. For years, architects have been using computers to design large-scale residential and commercial projects. But now computers are being used by a few architects to design new homes and even to map out house renovations. In such projects, computers reduce the element of surprise and allow homeowners to weigh alternatives and to make changes during the design phase rather than after the work has been completed.

Robert Wilkoff of Archaeon, an architecture firm in Cabin John, Maryland, is pioneering the use of computer-aided design. He uses a computer for nearly all his projects, regardless of size. In one instance, his client looked at six computer-generated designs for a master bedroom, then picked elements from each design before settling on a final plan.

With the help of a computer, Wilkoff can also show a client a bird's-eye view of the space. He can even draw in furniture. And by creating a series of drawings that show three-dimensions, he can virtually walk a homeowner through his new or redesigned home.

"With this system, we do the original work in three dimensions," Wilkoff says. "That's the way architects think. They think in spatial relations, not in floor plans."

—Gail Braccidiferno

