

Bringing the Outside In



PHOTO BY DAVID REHOR

Helping clients make a grand entrance

Jackie Browning, owner of the Marvin Window & Door Planning Centre, invites you into her showroom to discover the ultimate window and door shopping and design experience.

Q. What was your profession before you opened the Marvin Window & Door Planning Centre?

A. I graduated from the University of Baltimore with an accounting degree and had taken real estate as an elective. I went on to get my real estate license and sold houses for about ten years. Ultimately, I ended up as a CFO for a small bank in which I got plenty of experience with the financial side of balancing a business.

Q. How then did you decide to get into the window and door business with a real estate and accounting background?

A. At the time, my husband had a home improvement business, and I had been balancing his books. A Marvin distributor realized that there was a need in the market, and both of us believed in the product due to its versatility and quality. Marvin's products may be designed to fit any project you can imagine, whether it's commercial, residential, or historical.

Q. As a woman and a minority business owner, what obstacles did you run into?

A. It was difficult for me to break into the predominantly male industry and required a lot of work to be seen as an equal. There were many clients who were intrigued and gave me a chance to prove myself; I went out of my way to provide exceptional support. They saw that I was not only passionate about my product, but also about my reputation within the industry. My hard work paid off,

and business began to build based on word-of-mouth.

Q. I've heard that you have the biggest Marvin showroom in Maryland.

A. Yes, our showroom is 6,000 square feet and houses various hands-on displays with which to interact. Having this available makes it easier for the consumer to visualize our products in their homes and experience the great quality of the product for themselves. Our showroom has been so successful that it's been emulated by Marvin as a prototype for future dealers.

Q. What types of services do you provide in-house?

A. I have a very tight-knit group that has worked with me for a long time, some even

since the inception of the business in 1989. We pride ourselves as a team that will work with you from a simple idea to completion, including navigating through the architectural details. When you work with us, you get the whole package, including factory-trained installation specialists and our own in-house service, and a warranty and parts department.

Q. What types of projects can you handle?

A. Literally, if you can dream it, we can design it. We can handle any project from one window to thousands. The products that we offer have the capability to fit into any project. In addition to standard sizes, we can create a product for the consumer that may be irregularly sized or shaped as well; we regularly work on projects for custom homes. A great example of this would be a rapid prototype that was created for American Brewery. The clad-aluminum trim pieces had to be custom colors and profiles that had never been created before and were done only for that particular project to meet Maryland historical requirements. They turned out looking absolutely beautiful and authentic.

Q. With consumers starting to become more green-savvy, how do your products fit into that movement?

A. All of Marvin's products are Energy Star-rated, and the government has extended the Energy Star tax rebate. So if you purchase windows or doors that meet the requirements, you may be eligible for a refund on your taxes. In addition, Marvin, as a corporate entity, focuses on meeting green requirements by making all of the major components of its windows recyclable, as well as the packaging in which they are shipped. Marvin also primarily uses pine to manufacture wood windows and patio doors (which is a resource not associated with rainforests) and purchases from suppliers that are members of the Sustainable Forest Initiative and those who support the Tropical Forest Foundation, in addition to participating in forest management education programs. And on a more personal note, we here at the center also recycle!

Q. Jackie, what is your favorite part of your job?

A. There are many facets of my job that I love. I love watching ideas on paper come to life and seeing how happy customers are when their project is completed and exceeds their expectations. I love managing a fantastic team, from the installers, to the office staff, the service department, and, of course, our salesmen. Each one of the people working here was hand-picked and is a member of our staff because of their devotion to excellence. We really are like a family here, and that keeps me going.

Q. What would you want to say to a consumer who feels like your products are too overpriced in this economy?

A. Marvin is competitively priced. I understand that many people, organizations, and industries are on a severe budget crunch, including us. However, the Marvin product is not only an investment in windows and doors, but also is an investment in your future. These products will save the consumer

money by being Energy Star-rated, perform for a lifetime, and have a great warranty.

Q. So aside from being a full-time entrepreneur, what do you do for fun?

A. I love ten-pin bowling! I also enjoy riding my bike, and I'm an avid gardener. I'm the mother of two children, Erik, 23, a corporal in the Marines, and Amber, 28, who works for me as our marketing director, as well as a blind Jack Russell Terrier named Gidget. I also have one adorable grandchild, Rebekah, who is 2½ and lives in San Diego with my son.

The Marvin Window & Door Planning Centre is located at 1601 Knecht Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21227, which is convenient from Baltimore City, I-83, I-95, I-97, or I-695. Our showroom is open to the public 9 to 5 during the week and 9 to 2 on Saturdays. We also offer free in-home estimates and will happily accommodate your busy schedule! Please call 410-242-3000 to speak to either Jackie or an experienced sales representative. We look forward to doing business with you.

MARVIN 
Windows and Doors

Find Marvin in your neighborhood:

Baltimore City
Baltimore City Hall
Patterson Park Public Charter School
The American Brewery Building

Ellicott City
Shipley's Grant shopping center

Fells Point
H&S Bakery headquarters
The Black Olive

Fort Meade
Fort Meade housing

Havre de Grace
Father Martin's Ashley

Owings Mills
Garrison Forest middle and high schools
Greenspring Valley Hunt clubhouse

Roland Park
Grace United Methodist Church
Zamoiski Alumni Hall, Friends School of Baltimore

Towson
Blakehurst retirement community
Sheppard Pratt hospital