



HONORING His ROOTS

Minnesota contractor closely connected to the neighborhoods where he paints

Anders Christensen is often stopped on the street by the people whose homes he's painted in the last 30 years.

"They always tell me how well the work is holding up, but more than the painting report, we have a reunion on the sidewalk," he says. "I've often spent entire seasons with these families and we have a lot to catch up on."

Christensen's core market has always been in the sprawling older houses that populate the upscale Lakes area of Minneapolis. He says that growing his business while staying connected to this niche has been his greatest challenge – and his most satisfying achievement.

"After years of getting by and moving job to job, I did some real long-term thinking on what should come

next for the business," he says. "I realized it was important to me that I take it to the next level while also staying close to the neighborhoods where I've made a name for myself. This is where we can find the wonderful, turn-of-the-century homes we love and that really showcase our skills."

Getting meticulous

Getting to that next level has been accomplished through slow, steady growth, a new focus on marketing, and strategic staffing decisions based on a family-centered business model. In the last 10 years, he's invested in the company by bringing the next generation of Christensens into the fold. In 2001, it was established as an LLC under the name TigerOx Painting, and is positioned as a family-owned small business with a true passion for color and attention to detail. "Meticulous workmanship" is the company motto.

"Of course it's not just workman-

**TigerOx
Painting**

Minneapolis, Minn.

Founded 2001

10 employees

BUSINESS MIX:

100% residential repaint



PREFERRED PRODUCTS

Exteriors:

Duration Exterior
Coating and 950A
Interior/Exterior Caulk

Interior Woodwork:

ProClassic Enamel

ship anymore,” Christensen jokes, referring to the addition of two female partners into the company leadership. His daughter Ceridwen has a design background and has expanded the business to offer color consulting and design advice. Rachel Reksten, a long-time friend of the family with a bookkeeping and business management background, and Jeremy Wikre, who has the unlikely but highly useful blend of carpentry skills and master’s degree in chemistry, round out the management team.

“We each bring something essential to the table, and not one of us is duplicating the others’ goals and skills,” says Ceridwen Christensen.

A solid foundation

“This has really created the magic formula for the business,” says her father. Though he was widely known for decades as a “painting guy” throughout the area, business really began to boom with the addition of these new partners and a new emphasis on marketing.

“We’re booked solid these days,” he reports. “We’ve hired a small, talented group of employees – enough hands to get the work done but not such a large crew that we lose the ability to know that each crewmember is handling each door frame and each faux finish are carefully as we partners would.” Bet-



Painter To Painter

How do you help your clients choose colors for the historic homes in your market?

While many paint companies seem to base their historical colors on older, East coast palettes, such as colonial Williamsburg, the Sherwin-Williams Historical Colors reflect a broader range of time periods, from Victorian to mid-century Modern. The parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul that we tend to paint in are made up of houses built during these periods, so the materials developed by Sherwin-Williams are great assets to homeowners when they are making what can be very difficult exterior color choices.

Any other new color innovations that help your business?

We love that latex floor paints now come in all colors, instead of just the traditional four or five. We also love that that our preferred caulk, ProSelect 950A, comes in such a variety of colors. It is full-bodied, and doesn't drip.

On an old house, we've used as much as three cases of caulk to seal the house from drafts and rain. Asian beetles had plagued one house we painted last summer, but after we caulked and painted the entire exterior, the beetles stopped coming in.

damaged, bleeding or new wood, we love that Duration is self-priming," says Ceridwen Christensen. "It sands as well as oil primer, without having to use solvents or switch products. Its durability, coverage and low-temperature ratings all are assets in the short exterior painting season and variable weather here in the Twin Cities."

Colorful paint jobs have helped define the area's lakeside neighborhoods, and everyone at TigerOx Painting takes great pride in the fact that the community in which they work has become a tourist destination.

"People love to stroll the lake walk, look at the gorgeous old houses and take in the history," says Anders Christensen. "I like to think we have played a part in the unique appeal of each house and the overall draw of the area." **PPC**

ter Business Bureau certification and a strong showing on Angie's List help solidify the TigerOx Painting foundation. So has Christensen's insistence on using premium Sherwin-Williams products on every job.

"We think of the client relationship as a triangle," says Wikre. "At the top is the customer, supported by our company on one side and by the Sherwin-Williams folks on the other. We really depend on their good service and fantastic products."

Duration Exterior Coating, for example, has been a great product in the harsh Minnesota climate.

"Although we still use A-100 Exterior Primer over