

NEWS RELEASE



Rheem Water Heating • 101 Bell Road • Montgomery, AL 36117-4305 • www.rheem.com

For more information, please contact:

Laura Butler, Communications Manager
Rheem Manufacturing Company
laura.butler@rheem.com

John O'Reilly, President
LNC Communications
815.469.9100, ext. 302
John@LNCmail.com

DESIGNER INVOLVEMENT IN BEHIND-THE-WALLS SYSTEMS MUST DEEPEN, AS GREEN DEMAND GROWS

Winner of NKBA's first-ever Smartest Hot Water Award, sponsored by Rheem Water Heating, sees expertise in hot water systems, collaboration with installers, and energy efficiency as the keys to a successful bath project.

TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA (AUGUST 1, 2008) — Kitchen and bath designer Marcio Decker says the industry is at an environmental turning point, and designers must get on board. "We are moving more and more into what is hidden behind the walls," he explains, saying that designers who want to be successful must embrace that turning point and become educated about mechanical systems – including water heating – in addition to fixtures and finish materials.

"As designers, we have a long list of criteria that we must meet for a project to be successful," he says. "For example, there are aesthetics and client needs; and now, more than ever, there is the need to create environments that are eco-friendly. Water use in the bath and water heating specifically are very important. We designers should collaborate with other professionals to make sure that energy efficiency is part of every project."



Marcio Decker of the Home Concepts Design Resource Center: "Water use in the bath and water heating specifically are very important. Designers should collaborate with other professionals to make sure that energy efficiency is part of every project."

Comfortable and responsible: Decker, a designer with Home Concepts in Truckee, Calif., drew on this guiding principle in his recent design of a sprawling vacation home in the Lake Tahoe-area ski resort Squaw Valley in California.

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“In the master bath, we needed to make sure we had enough hot water for a dual-head shower with two hand-held showers and a large whirlpool tub, as well as two sinks,” he explains. “And we had to take into consideration that the home has four additional bathrooms. So if everyone comes back from skiing at once, we must be able to provide water efficiently.”

To achieve that goal, Decker selected a high-efficiency, 75-gallon, tank-type water heater, made by Rheem Manufacturing Co., to supply the high-volume hot-water demand for the master bath exclusively. This gas-fired, power-vent unit ensures the client’s comfort, and it also achieves the need for environmental responsibility, says Decker.



Decker’s innovative Squaw Valley master-bath design was selected for the 2008 National Kitchen and Bath Association Design Competition’s “Smartest Hot Water Award,” a new category that was sponsored by Rheem Water Heating.

“Natural gas is more efficient than electricity, and the energy factor and first-hour rating for the Rheem model we chose were great. When you’re shopping for plumbing, you have to ask what is most efficient solution that still fits the look for the specific bath.”

Decker’s innovative Squaw Valley master-bath design was selected for the 2008 National Kitchen and Bath Association Design Competition’s “Smartest Hot Water Award,” a new category that was sponsored by Rheem. He was recognized for his ability to incorporate a highly efficient water heater into a unique design that reflects the rustic beauty of the surrounding landscape.

“We determined the right size of tank needed for the project by calculating the consumption of water in a busy hour and making sure its FHR [first-hour rating] was larger than the demand by a few gallons,” Decker wrote in his “Design Statement” for the competition. “Use of the proper hot water heater, coupled with high-efficiency [low-flow] plumbing fixtures, and a thermostat with a vacation-mode setting, succeeds in creating a spa environment while promoting energy efficiency and water conservation.”

SmarterHotWater.com: Research and education are the keys to any home-design success, Decker says. “Education is a process. You need a good source, so you have the vocabulary and know how to make suggestions to other professionals working on the project. I use the Website, SmarterHotWater.com, as part of my research. It’s a great way to prepare a designer for the idea exchange with an installer and then the meetings with the client.”

When it comes to environmental concerns, the design challenges are multiplying, says Decker. "Collaboration with plumbing professionals is what is needed. The designer translates the needs of the client. We don't have to specialize in water heating systems, but we should know what's available, be able to make suggestions and work with the plumber."

Actively participating in the selection of water heating systems or other mechanical aspects of a project may not appeal to, or be comfortable for, all bath designers. But Decker sees the embrace of this role as an emerging trend that increases a designer's value to his or her clients.

"I think you have to get involved," he advises. "You have to be on-site and get involved in the meetings with installers and other contractors. When decisions are being made, you need to be there to express your ideas and maybe lead the group toward the vision that you have."

Decker believes a good professional is one who is willing to take a challenge. "That is the only way something innovative can be done," he says. "If you only work in your comfort zone, everything will look the same. That's not what we are here for."

"I just loved being recognized in this way," Decker says of receiving the Smartest Hot Water Award. "It's wonderful. This is definitely an environmental changing point, and it's great to be part of it."

About Rheem Manufacturing Company

Rheem Manufacturing Company (www.rheem.com) is a privately held company with headquarters in Atlanta, Ga. In its 81st year of operation, the company manufactures a full-line of high-quality residential and commercial heating and cooling systems, water heaters, swimming pool heaters and commercial boilers throughout North America and world markets. The premium brands of Rheem Manufacturing Company include Ruud, Raypak and Rheem. Rheem Manufacturing Company is the major associate sponsor of Richard Childress Racing and the No. 29 team driven by Kevin Harvick, 2007 Daytona 500 Champion, 2007 Craftsman Truck Series Champion and 2006 Busch Series Champion. Rheem is also the primary sponsor of Kevin Harvick Inc.'s No. 33 and No. 77 car for four high-profile Nationwide Series races in 2008.

NOTE 1: Publication-quality photograph of the image shown in this press release can be downloaded at the following location on the web:

<http://www.LNCmail.com/pr08/rh0777/marcio.html>

NOTE 2: Marcio Decker can be reached at Home Concepts Design Resource Center, 10198 Church Street, Truckee, CA 96161; tel.: 530-582-2148; e-mail: marciod@ttlco.com

NOTE 3: The National Kitchen and Bath Association recently announced that the "Smartest Hot Water Award" has been renamed the "Best Sustainable Bath Award" for the 2009 Design Competition. For more information, visit NKBA.org.

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