

STEVEN F. HARWIN, M.D., F.A.C.S.

910 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10075

Telephone: (212) 861-9800 Facsimile: (212) 861-5276

*Chief of Adult Reconstructive Surgery
Beth Israel Medical Center*

*Director of Bloodless Surgery
Adult Reconstructive Service*

*Associate Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery
Albert Einstein College of Medicine*

*Director of the Center for
Reconstructive Joint Surgery*

There are contractors...and then there are contractors!

How many times have we been in a social situation like a holiday or cocktail party or a festive dinner when the topic turns to our experiences with renovating an existing house or building a new one. It seems that so many people have had to deal with the “the nightmare contractor,” the “disappearing contractor,” or the “absentee contractor,” also known as the “contractor from hell”. Unfortunately, there are too many stories like that that are true. Building and renovating a house can be one of the most stressful and trying times both emotionally and financially. It affects one’s entire family and when things go wrong or don’t get done, it can be incredibly frustrating, demoralizing and costly.

And then... there is Michael Forst and his team at Forst Construction, Inc. They are at the opposite end of that spectrum. Michael’s father Jack built my house in Sagaponack on a 1.6 acre flag lot on Hedges Lane in 1984. Thirty years later, my fiancée Phyllis and I needed to either build new or renovate our existing house to accommodate our new combined families. When I inquired, I learned that Jack was not doing renovations and he referred me to his son Michael who established his own firm, Forst Construction, Inc. We met with Michael at the end of the summer of 2013 and we knew we found the right man. He was extremely knowledgeable in his assessment of what needed to be done and very practical in his suggestions. After looking at our property, we decided we shouldn’t tear it down but rather give it a complete renovation and facelift. We laid out a plan working with our decorator and landscape architect to coordinate the work. We told them we wanted to be “in the house” by Memorial Day. Sagaponack, a hotbed of construction, is now an incorporated village. It has its own building and architectural codes...and only *one* building inspector. I know you’re saying to yourself now...“lotsa luck, fuggeddaboutit”.

Suffice it to say, we have never met a more personable, honest, caring, and dedicated professional than Michael. He is greatly concerned about the environmental impact of the job, as well as to provide maximum safety. He was always available and always returned phone calls, never was evasive, and always had a cheerful and uplifting attitude. His constant expression was “it’s all good” and indeed it was. Michael put together an efficient and professional group of subcontractors and vendors who all worked well together to get our job done.

There is an old expression about renovation that when you are given an estimate of the cost and the duration of the work you should “double the time and double the cost.” This could not be further from the truth working with Michael and his team. We laid out a budget, made amendments and additions to the initial plan, but we came in on time and on budget. Every extra or change had to be reviewed and accepted by us so there was never a financial ‘surprise’. Michael said he would do his best to get us in the house for Memorial Day 2014 and that is exactly what he did. We are so grateful for the beautiful home that he gave us. We would recommend Michael and his team absolutely and unequivocally.

Steven Harwin and Phyllis Liptack
Hedges Lane, Sagaponack, NY
November 4, 2014