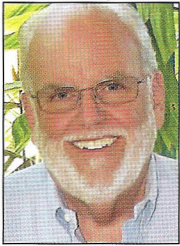


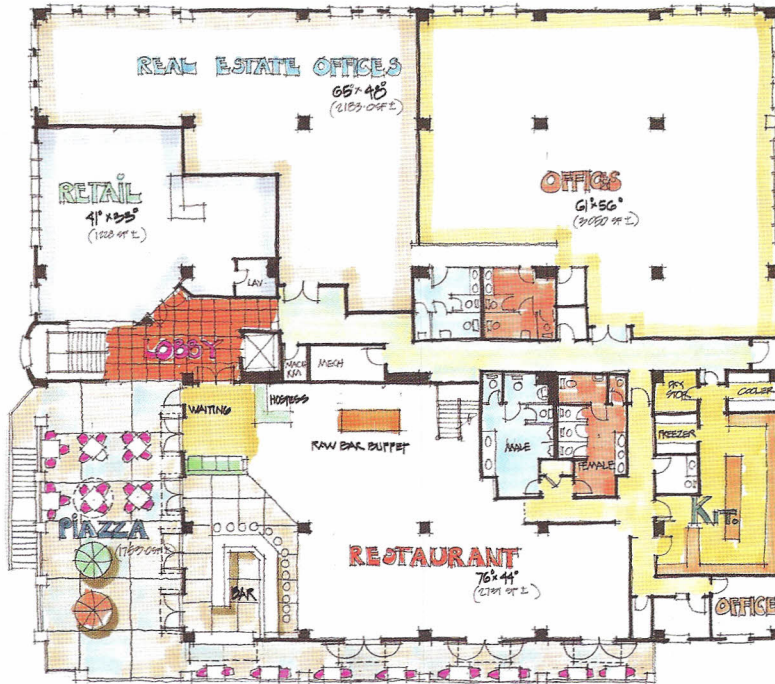
Create Your Own Opportunities

# Small Scale Mixed-Use



Donald F. Evans, AIA, is the founder of The Evans Group, award-winning architects and planners headquartered in Orlando.

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Ground Floor



Second Floor

BY DONALD F. EVANS, AIA

**M**any homebuilders are finding themselves with a lot of extra time with nothing to do in this economy, as are many architects. Sometimes it's best to step back from the trees and brush the bark off your nose, and see the opportunities that *do* exist. As always, getting creative is the answer! What is the adage, "don't keep doing the same thing and expect different results"? To expect and therefore achieve different results, we must begin to think outside the box; creating our own opportunities.

This month's feature is a small-scale, personal, mixed-use project on Long Boat Key, Florida. A custom homebuilder in Sarasota that builds in all of Sarasota's top communities wanted to enjoy an evening out so he went to Long Boat Key to his favorite Italian restaurant.

He sat watching the sunset, drinking his favorite Italian red wine, and dreaming about living on the gulf and enjoying this life every night. The only problem with this picture is the road that runs down the middle of Long Boat Key obstructing the perfect views of the Gulf with cars.

The solution is to build up for many reasons, including the obvious – views! But then there are the practical reasons for building up, the flood plain and uninhabitable space on the ground floor and the size of the site and the need for parking, which would be best served as covered parking on the ground floor.



## Design

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So for the builder turning the dream into reality of having a beach front home with amazing views and an income property – all in one – became the task for us as the architect. In addition to the restaurant, this was a prime location for a Gift and Sundries Shop, as well as prime office space that would include a view, convenient parking, and a restaurant for entertaining.

This is the kind of deal that we have to look for today. If the banks are going to lend on anything, it is a project like this, 100% pre-leased commercial and a private residence. The pre-leased commercial came from the group sitting around drinking wine that evening – the realtor, the builder, the mortgage banker, the restaurateur, etc.

Sometimes you have to think bigger and outside the box – what a waste to have just a home or just a restaurant on this prime piece of real estate – that is why they call it highest and best use.

Taking a closer look at the floor plan, the ground floor is parking, the second floor houses two leasable office spaces, a retail space, and a great



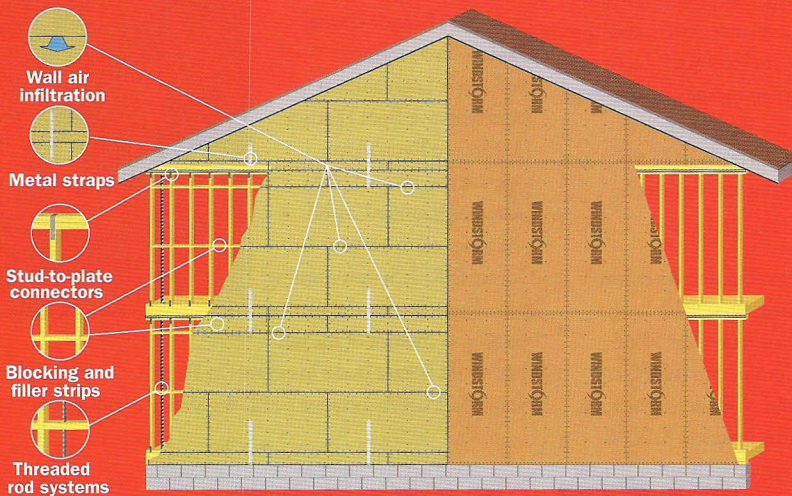
restaurant with indoor/outdoor seating and a large bar. The custom home on the third floor boasts amazing panoramic views with numerous outdoor areas, three bedrooms, three and a half baths, as well as the informal and formal entertaining areas.

The curb appeal of the project is very welcoming with an appropriate style and color palette, extensive detailing, the signage on the

artistic sail element, and the trellised patio. Doesn't this wet your appetite and get you thinking about all of those projects that may be right in front of you, but you are too close to the forest to see the trees?

Take a step back, think outside the box, and get creative – it's the only way to survive in this market for many of us! ▀

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