

expert advice

10 Questions for...

HOBBS CARE

Managing director Drew Timson tells us what it takes to keep your house beautiful



above: Hobbs Care Managing Director Drew Timson; two of the team's many stunning projects.

1 **When and why was Hobbs Care started?**
Hobbs Care came about in 2003 to help solve our client's home-related issues. Hobbs, Incorporated, a sixty-year-old family business, was known for its success in building exquisite custom homes in the Fairfield/Westchester County area. We found that even after projects were completed, many of our clients quickly realized that there were a lot of things they wanted to do for their homes to keep them looking new and beautiful. The idea for this department was born out of this need, and has grown in popularity to the point that we have developed a substantial demand from homeowners of homes that we did not build or renovate. Hobbs Care uses a separate staff from Hobbs, Inc., to perform this work, and handles a large volume of clients.

2 **What does Hobbs Care do?**
Hobbs Care uses a team approach to develop a relationship in which we integrate into the homeowner's life. We manage all kinds of service work, from sending a carpenter for a day to take care of small, annoying things that have broken around the house, to scheduling and supervising a series of proactive maintenance tasks, to diagnostic problem-solving for a challenging issue around the property. I want to mention that we currently have six project managers and ten construction supervisors dedicated to this process. Our staff has an amazing amount of construction experience.

3 What types of homes do you work on?

We focus on helping clients who value expertise, professionalism, and craftsmanship, regardless of the size of their home. We leverage all of the buying power of the company with the resources used to build and renovate our projects, and our many specialized subcontractors allow us to respond quickly to emergencies and problems. We have the resources to support even large, complex homes, but no home is too small, either.

4 Who should use Hobbs Care?

We would like to think that anyone with a home that needs service or maintenance would find our business model and list of capabilities to be of value. We pride ourselves on doing things right the first time and we stand behind our work. We are very flexible with scheduling and many clients employ us to perform seasonal work every spring and fall with a predetermined list of maintenance and seasonal prep items.

5 In regards to maintenance, what should homeowners consider when building a house?

This is a topic that I could speak about for a long time. Size, style, materials, etc., all have an influence on the frequency and magnitude of service and maintenance items. Since we are working with the professionals who install and repair all of the features of these homes, we are also constantly performing tasks to maintain and beautify the finishes and structure of the home. While it is cliché, I like to say that some of the best money a homeowner can spend is on preventative and regular maintenance of critical parts of their house. The cost to repair a neglected problem dwarfs what it would cost to set up a program to monitor and address small issues on an annual basis. I think a homeowner should have a realistic sense of the size and complexity of their home and property, so they can maintain an appropriate expectation of what kind of maintenance budget is required.

6 What's a typical day at work like for you?

We are extremely busy, and our typical day seems to focus on operational issues required to provide the right resources when needed



above: An exquisite home can't stay that way without the proper care and maintenance. Indoors or outdoors, the Hobbs Care crew has all the tools, knowledge, and solutions to keep your home in excellent condition.

to our clients. We have over 1,000 clients with approximately 100 of them active at any time. I would like to think that we have gotten pretty good at managing those resources, so that we meet all planned commitments, but still remain flexible enough to help out new clients or deal with construction emergencies. I have a background in operations management and we have developed an internal process that strives to make service and timely response a major focus. The other area that I spend a good portion of my day at is meeting with new and existing clients to discuss and assess new work and challenges for Hobbs Care.

7 What features of a house require the most maintenance?

This is a great question. Most homeowners notice and react to maintenance that affects the aesthetics of their homes first. Natural materials, such as wood for siding and trim, must be maintained for paint, and it is recommended that small areas that are affected by moisture be repaired before the problem gets worse. Additionally, the mechanical systems of the house should have a proper schedule of proactive maintenance. Heating and air-conditioning systems have the best chance of functioning when needed if they receive scheduled maintenance from fully qualified professionals. Generators are critical when the power goes out and they should be maintained in a similar fashion. Regular cleaning of roof gutters and leaders as well as yard drainage is critical. We find that when water isn't going where it was designed to go within the drainage systems of the house, leaks and other problems arise. Hobbs Care has worked with many of our clients to

develop a plan to have these tasks performed at the proper times.

8 Do you have a favorite project that you're working on right now?

We have a lot going on, but I am really excited about projects that will restore structures damaged by the recent storm activity, primarily Sandy and Irene. We are currently rebuilding two old barns that came down, with one being a faithful restoration and the other being a modern version with some exciting contemporary architecture. We also raised a house down by the water to the recommended elevations, and have a number of other inquiries for the same process. We work with a lot of creative design people and I am thrilled whenever we are asked to implement their visions.

9 What's your longest-running project/client?

As a sixty-year-old company, we have some very long-term relationships. We enjoy some clients that go back to the beginning, but I am most proud of the fact that we are still working with a large number of clients from at least twenty years ago. We have built and renovated for many clients when their kids were just born, and now we are remodeling for the same clients as empty nesters or for retirement (and even working for some of the kids!). We take pride in being part of the long-term preservation of many homes in the area.

10 What can homeowners expect when they call you?

The answer is simple: A quick and professional response, and that we will immediately set up a convenient appointment to come out and start to diagnose the issues. We have worked hard to create a culture that is different from the usual construction experience. We value our customers and want to provide the kind of experience that sets us apart from everyone else. Quality and value in our work is the goal. I think that our list of loyal clients speaks to our approach. Anyone thinking of calling is someone we want to make a client for life.

Hobbs Care

27 Grove Street, New Canaan
203-966-0726
www.hobbs-care.com