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flip to changing hands every month in the real estate and finance section... Read it.



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Dila Construction Home Renovation on the Hill

BY PATTIE CINELLI

I first met Utku Aslanturk two summers ago when several neighbors and I looked at a house on Walter Street that had recently been gutted and renovated by Dila Construction. The company is owned by Utku and his brother Haluk. Utku invited us in and took us on a tour. I was particularly impressed with the color of paint he chose for an upstairs bedroom and casually mentioned the color might look good in my office. Utku picked up a gallon of paint and said, "You like it? Why don't you take this extra gallon we have."

Since that time Dila Construction has redone several kitchens and bathrooms in my neighborhood, as well as repaired pipes, painted rooms, fixed fences, restored floors, installed windows and built or repaired garages. Their bright yellow van or steel gray pickup can often be found at one end or the other of Walter Street. Just last month I asked Utku if his

plumber could replace my kitchen faucet. Since I had my kitchen renovated five years ago the water pressure has been minimal. I had two different plumbers tell me I needed a new faucet. Within 10 minutes Utku's plumber had my faucet gushing water as if it were new.

"The great thing about us is that I live on the Hill and am available for emergencies," said Utku. "We pride ourselves on our quality workmanship and our ability to work within people's budgets."

Utku, 30, and Haluk, 26, started the company three years ago and named it after their niece in Ankara, Turkey, where their father has owned a construction company for 27 years. Utku and Haluk's two older brothers work with him, building condos and large commercial buildings. "My father visits every year and he laughs when he sees how small our projects are here."

But their father's teasing does not bother Utku and Haluk. They created their company to have a personal touch. They like to get to know their customers, are happy when their work is appreciated and enjoy being part of the neighborhood.

Utku, who studied business administration, and Haluk, who studied economics, both came to America to attend college in northern Virginia. Utku began coming to the Hill to spend time at his friend's new restaurant Meyhane, formerly on Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. It was there he met his wife Erin who lived on the Hill.

Dila started out rehabbing homes on the Hill (about five or six a year) and turning them into livable residences. I asked if when they demolished old Capitol Hill houses did they find any old "treasures" hidden under the floorboards. Utku laughed. "Not treasures ex-

actly, but finds nonetheless. Last year we found about 30 large old American flags hidden behind a wall in a house on Kentucky Avenue." The "treasures" are nothing compared to the discoveries made when his father renovates buildings in Turkey. "Those buildings can be 500 to 600 years old. He finds gold, old books, old money and all kinds of real old treasures." Utku remembers that on one particular construction site his father hit concrete as he was excavating. So he got a bigger machine to dig. Six feet down he found an ancient refrigeration system that was used by the Armenians several centuries ago.

In 2008 Dila Construction took off in a different direction. "We doubled our crew in one year." Dila grew into a full service "design and build" company.

Utku takes care of meeting customers, takes estimates and presents floor, cabinet and countertop samples to customers. Through their network of suppliers he can recommend and source a wide range of materials from natural stone to tile to hardwood and environmentally preferred materials.

He works seven days a week. "On Sunday I shop for materials for the jobs in preparation for the coming week." Haluk is in charge of supervising project sites and employees.

Utku describes their company as one that is small but that is doing big projects. He keeps costs down and passes cost savings on to his customers. "We control the number of our projects which allows us to do quality work at affordable prices."

To learn more about the company log onto: www.dilaconstruction.com. To contact Utku call: 202-460-4003 or email: dilahome@gmail.com. ★



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