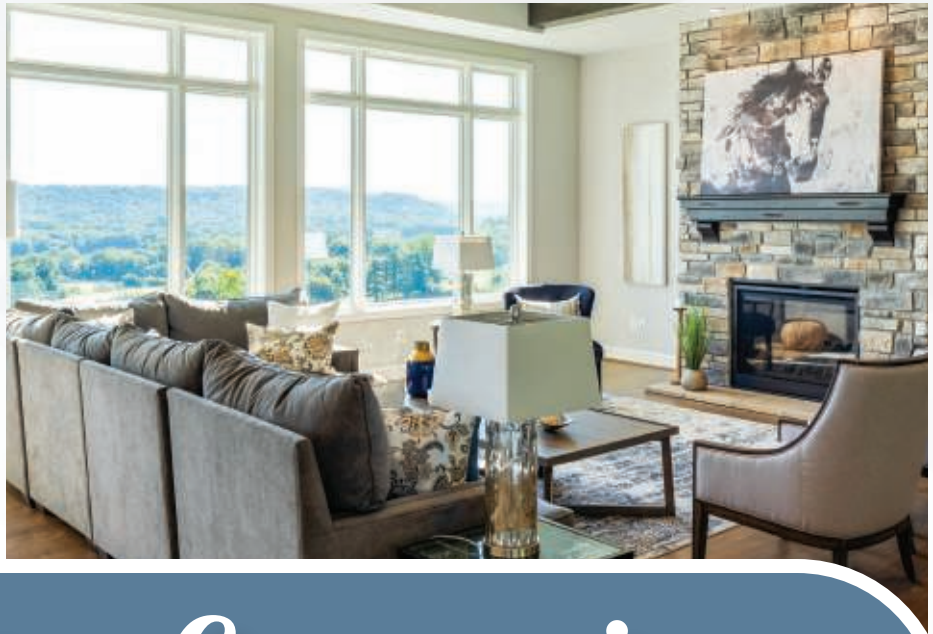




John Toebben



# *Toebben Companies*

John Toebben | Crescent Springs, KY



## Q. Tell us about the Toeppen family business history.

Toeppen Companies is made up of three entities: Toeppen Builders and Developers, Matth Toeppen Construction, and Toeppen Ltd., all owned and operated by our family. My father, Matth, was born and raised in Lorup, Germany. He was one of 11 children. When he was 14, he left his family's farm and moved to Borger, Germany where he studied woodworking, handcrafting doors, cabinets and windows. It was an art that became his trademark and is instilled in our work yet today. When he was 20, after six years of studying to be an apprentice carpenter, he was ready to start his own business. But per the laws in Germany at that time, Dad was too young to take his master certification exam to become a full-fledged carpenter, so he decided to go to America.

His first carpenter job was with George Kruetzjans, a Fort Wright, Kentucky home builder, making \$60 a week. He later worked nights as a freelance carpenter, and after two years of hard work and saving money, he started his own business, Toeppen Builders and Developers. The company started specializing in custom homes in the Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area.

Today we also build everything from 10-story office buildings, restaurants and churches to industrial warehouses, so that gives us a lot of diversity and exposure. This division is headed by my son, Jacob. It's the third generation of Toeppens. My brother Bill handles all retail and office leasing operations.

## Q. Do you build only in your neighborhoods, or do you go wherever customers need you?

We develop everything from small communities where we are the only builders to exceptionally large communities.

We developed the Country Squire Estates in Villa Hills, Kentucky, and its maintenance-free living section of Squire Valley, as well as the brand-new communities of Rivers Pointe Estates and The Reserve at Rivers Pointe Estates in Hebron, Kentucky. We have always made sure that our custom-designed homes harmonize with the surrounding woods, trails, lakes and streams. About 20% of our homes are built off-site.

## Q. How many houses do you build a year? Do you try to keep your builds close to each other?

That varies. We generally are building 7 to 10 houses, but that can change due to the proximity between builds. It's not that crucial to us. We pride ourselves on our excellent communication between our contractors in the field and the people in the office.

## Q. Do customers come to you with plans in hand, or do you start from nothing?

We're true custom builders. No two homes we build are the same. There are not too many builders who can say that. We

consider ourselves master craftsmen. We do everything from extreme contemporary to historic restoration and everything in between. We're very versatile.

We ask our customers to tell us how they live; tell us about their families, children and pets. Understanding a customer's lifestyle gives us essential information when designing a custom home. They're investing their life's savings, and we are committed to getting it right.

We don't just send our customers to one of our preferred architects without making sure we are steering them in the right direction. We talk to them about the size and complexity of the house they want to build, what their budget is, and how that all matches up. We help them prioritize.

That works really well. If you send customers to a designer without that guidance, things tend to go into disarray pretty quickly.

## Q. Do you have a dedicated design center?

No. We send our customers to our vendors. Our customers often want products from Honduras or elsewhere, and we have all the resources and technology to get those items for them. Customers ask us about new products all the time. There are no limitations.

## Q. What is your typical timeframe, from start to finish?

There is no typical timeframe for the magnitude and quality we put into our homes. But it's never been more than a year. We are extremely efficient. Our diligent planning and expert execution pay off, evidenced by repeat customers.

## Q. What is your favorite part of the custom home building process?

It's when we get to the end. We see the customers' excitement, room by room, inside and out. To see their excitement is really rewarding. I feel so fortunate to do what I do every day.

