

# AMERICAN PAINTING CONTRACTOR

OUR 85<sup>th</sup> YEAR

Vol. 85, No. 2 • March 2008

[www.paintmag.com](http://www.paintmag.com)

## 2007 **TOP JOB** Awards

**Painting in Partnership, Inc.  
Second Year in a Row**

# 2007 **TOPJOB** Awards

by Karen Gaspers

After more than 10 years, the TOP JOB Awards continue to grow in popularity, and the judging is more rigorous than ever. But the most interesting aspect of our TOP JOB Awards is how they reflect the breadth of work done every day by painting contractors across the country. Our winning jobs may be spectacularly difficult or the finished product may be exceptionally beautiful. The work may be bizarre or the process especially tedious.

But as always, while the TOP JOB Awards recognize the best work of painting contractors, they also demonstrate something spe-

cial about the painting trade — from the mundane to the majestic, you all achieve top results with your top-quality work.

This year, Crown Services of Kiel, WI, is our grand prize winner. Its job on a 135-year-old house-turned-museum is a true testament to the honor of the painting trade. Jim Vorpahl and his son Doug, pulled out all the stops as the job called for exterior and interior painting, paperhanging and graining, and much more. “We emptied the shop on this job,” Doug said.

Our first prize winners offer a fascinating look at the variety of work achieved by con-

tractors. Gordon MacFarlane’s striped room is fascinating to watch unfold. Henri Menendez’s creation of Dr. Frankenstein’s Laboratory is a work of art. And Mario Guertin’s savvy approach to an Arts and Crafts-style home is worth replicating. Take some time to enjoy their work on the following pages.

So to everyone who entered the TOP JOB Awards for 2007, thank you and congratulations. And to all of you working hard on your own TOP JOBS now... take note and take pictures. Don’t be modest — enter your hard work, and perhaps next March you’ll win the TOP JOB Awards! **APC**

## **Grand Prize Winner**

Crown Services Inc.,  
Jim Vorpahl, Kiel, WI

## **First Place Winners**

MacFarlane, Gordon MacFarlane,  
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY  
DeHuelbes Designs Inc.,  
Henri Menendez, Suwanee, GA  
Painting in Partnership,  
Mario Guertin, Palatine, IL

## **Honorable Mentions**

Cory Showalter Home Improvements,  
Cory Showalter, Reinholds, PA  
Belinda Comboy Paperhangers,  
Belinda Comboy & Cyndi Green,  
New Orleans, LA  
Professional Painters,  
Tony Severino, LaGrange, IL  
Lee Decorating, David Edelman,  
Plainview, NY  
Gary Lord Wall Options, Gary Lord,  
Cincinnati, OH  
Paint Masters, Dan Lyons,  
Thomasville, GA  
Ecclesiastical Studios,  
Don Wendt, Greenwood, MO



## TOP JOB Awards — Winner

*Painting in Partnership, Mario Guertin, Palatine, IL*

# Picture It First

Clever use of watercolors enables homeowner/contractor partnership.



Every contractor is well aware of the value of repeat business and establishing a relationship with customers. In this case, Mario Guertin of Palatine, IL-based Painting in Partnership had done a previous interior job for the homeowners. “I knew we were dealing with people who were committed to preserving their Arts and Crafts-style home,” he said. So Guertin actually approached the couple with the idea of painting the exterior...or as he described it, “dressing up their house with period colors.”

The homeowners liked the idea and agreed to the job. But the first challenge was settling on a color scheme. The husband and wife had very different color tastes. “She likes lighter, less intense colors, and he likes bold colors,” said Guertin. So husband, wife and contractor each researched period-specific color schemes. Over a period of three weeks and multiple meetings, the group honed its choices. But to complete the selection process, Guertin chose a unique route: He enlisted his company’s muralist to paint two watercolor

sketches of the house, using the two color schemes. Then, incorporating further input, the muralist created a third sketch of a new scheme — a marriage of their preferences and a consensus both husband and wife agreed to.

Once work began, the design of the house provided some safety challenges. “Wide eaves and roof access were of particular concern,” said Guertin. Workers used roof boots, pivots, ladder jacks, automatic leg levelers and ladder bump outs to address these issues.

# TOPJOB Awards



Using the same colors from the house scheme – and some very detailed taping techniques – the contractor created this motif to tie together the garage and house.

The garage presented another challenge to the contractor. “We did not want the garage to make too strong a statement with color,” said Guertin. “We wanted the house to have more punch, yet we wanted to tie the two buildings together.” So he created a stylized motif around the lights on the front of the garage. They cut stencils and used taping techniques to produce the two decorative elements.

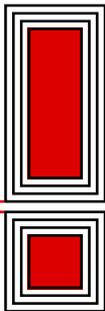
The homeowners also asked Guertin if he could “fix” one of the windows on the house. The window in question did not have the wide trim boards that surrounded all the other windows. So Guertin’s crew painted a frame around the window.

Another challenge was sequencing. “Because of the color breaks and the number of coats, each side of the house required six to 10 passes,” said Guertin. So the sequence of painting was critical to allow adequate dry time without jeopardizing job efficiency.

In all, Painting in Partnership incorporated five colors on the project. More important, it required nine hours of consultation prior to beginning work...and then required 400 man hours to complete. They used Zinsser Cover Stain for spot priming ([www.zinsser.com](http://www.zinsser.com)), Sherwin-Williams Duration ([www.sherwin-williams.com](http://www.sherwin-williams.com)), Benjamin Moore Gloss Oil Porch Enamel ([www.benjaminmoore.com](http://www.benjaminmoore.com)) and Advanced Repair Technology Flex-TEX epoxy ([www.advancedrepair.com](http://www.advancedrepair.com)).



Mario Guertin went the extra mile to allow his clients to visualize the finished project. The top two watercolors depict the husband's and wife's personal preferences, while the bottom sketch shows a combination of the two (and the final selection).



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