

Les T's Owner Builder Project (Part 3): Final Building Costs

Tuesday, 06 April 2010

Last Updated Thursday, 08 April 2010

Les T is an owner builder who has very kindly kept us up to date on his latest owner building project with extremely detailed spreadsheets which should greatly assist the owner builders among us and help to plot out our own owner building projects in the future. He has also commented on areas where you could save on your owner building project costs.

The house is finally completed and Les's comments are as follows:

If I look at my original budget costs (14 April 2009), we are quite a bit over, however, the original was based on the previous build and a big thumb suck in some cases and we also selected sash windows and wider door jambs (R550) a pop and a closed combustion fire place amongst other things. House area: 200m²

Veranda area: 40m²

Garage area: 34m²

Total: 274m²

The cost per sq/m is R4050. The costs per sq/m may be a bit distorted as Garage & Veranda and obviously the Pool are included, but the spreadsheet will give you a good idea what's going down.

Around 50% is spent getting the basic structure in place and the remaining costs are basically how much to you want to spend on finishes. We spent R100K on windows and doors but this can be significantly reduced. We also had to build around 51 running meters of boundary wall at a cost of around R35K - a factor that is often overlooked.

My costs' savings tips I guess would be:

- bag-wash the exterior (having said this it used a lot more paint)
- bare concrete floors
- no tiles in bathroom except shower floors
- large open plan areas
- exposed trusses in lounge dining room
- not having a remote controlled driveway gate (cost typically R18K)
- using down lights
- selecting paint that is pre-mixed by the supplier (we bought from Universal Paints and our primary colours were Franchhoek exterior and Ou Klip for the interior) and looking for those bargains.

One also tends to overlook costs near the end as you just want to finish and spend a bit more in some areas than one should. Keep track of that money!

My spreadsheet is quite a bit more detailed for this exact reason.

Further to give the impression of more space we went for higher ceilings in bedrooms (3m) and large volume in Lounge/Dining room. The cost of the extra brick work is worth it, also break up with exposed brick walls in areas.

Remember less is more!

Additional note from Les: Just a note, we used in the region of 835 bags of cement - this appears to be excessive. My neighbour next door has started to build and I spoke to his builder and they reckon on using 450 odd bags for a double story of 320m². I would love to know what a QS would come up with. (I must say my screeds were very thick in places - up to 75mm in areas.) If you have any questions for Les, you can send them via e-mail to me at:

info@allaboutbuilding.co.za and I will pass them on to Les who will be happy to advise you where possible. Here is Les's Final Owner Building Costs' Schedule .

Thanks a million for this Les, I am sure it is going to be hugely helpful to many owner builders.

To follow this project you can refer to: Les's Owner Building Project - Part 1. Les's Owner Building Project - Part 2.

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