

Catch Bryan on the web:
www.hgtv.ca/disasterdiy

● DID YOU KNOW?

Bryan earned a degree in political science before starting Baeumler Quality Construction. And he has won a Gemini Award for hosting Disaster DIY.

Cover Story

By Adam Freill

Saving homeowners from themselves

Reno talk with Disaster DIY rescue guru Bryan Baeumler

Bryan Baeumler

President & CEO, Baeumler Quality Construction

Television host of Disaster DIY and House of Bryan

Age: 36

Family: Wife, Sarah, children Quintyn and Charlotte, and a baby boy due any day now.

Shows:

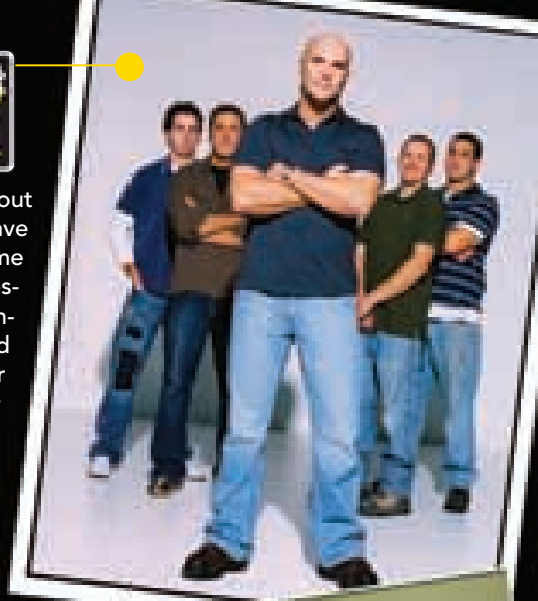
Disaster DIY: Thursdays at 9 p.m. ET on HGTV

House of Bryan: In syndication on HGTV



As a kid, Bryan Baeumler was forever taking things apart to see how they worked. Sometimes he even figured out how to put the items back together. "I learned early on that if you don't know how to do something, you can learn through research, trial and error," he says.

It's a lesson that stuck with the young man from Oakville, Ont., and it helped him forge his own business, Baeumler Quality Construction, a company that uses the motto: Design, Destroy, Rebuild. The lesson also gets put to good use on his television show, Disaster DIY, where he helps homeowners whose renovation projects have gotten the better of them.



A television show about Do-It-Yourselfers who have failed at their own home renovations and are in desperate need of some on-the-job training. Host and contractor Bryan Baessler shows the DIY-er his or her mistakes, and then teaches the safe and proper way to fix them. Catch it Thursday nights at 9 p.m. (ET) on HGTV.

Q. So, what made a kid from Oakville, who went to a private school, want to take on the construction trades?

A. I was always the kid that ditched the penny loafers and tie the minute I got home, and it was tough to get me inside. My Dad owned his own company at the airport modifying private, commercial and military aircraft, and was very technical and hands on. When it came to working around the house, he was the ultimate DIY'er. Going to private school was a great experience, but who doesn't like to play with machinery and tools when the tie comes off?

Q. When did you get your start in contracting?

A. I started a small handyman company when I was 14 with a friend of mine at the cottage, and it just grew from there every summer. After taking courses on renovation technology and the building code at George Brown College, and getting my renovation licence, there was no looking back.

Q. What are a few of the mechanical Disaster DIY projects that stand out for you?

A. I've seen a bit of everything – plumbing without vents or p-traps, pot lights wired with speaker wire, lights hardwired and buried behind walls, basements finished with no heat runs or air returns, even leaking gas lines installed by a homeowner.

Q. On the mechanicals side, where do homeowners tend to bite off more than they can chew?

A. Plumbing and electrical are the big ones. For some reason, most people avoid – or totally ignore – HVAC, but they're more than willing to play with electricity or water. We once tore apart a basement after finding out that 14-2 was improperly run through steel studs, leaving every wall in the basement live.

Q. Does it amaze you how far some people will go before they admit defeat and call in a professional?

A. It's unbelievable. If a trade did half as much damage to a home as some of the homeowners I've met, there would be riots in the streets.

Q. Any HVAC disasters that you can let us in on?

A. We've seen a few hardwood floors laid over air registers, and basements drywalled and primed before vents and returns were cut out. In most cases, we've been able to turn on the furnace and locate them with the FLIR camera – although there have been a few cases where it turned into quite a search with lots of patching to do.

Bryan's House

BY THE NUMBERS

- 4,000 sq. ft.
- 9-foot ceilings in the basement and on the main floor
- 4 bedrooms
- 5 bathrooms
- And a master walk-in closet designed to be easily converted to a 5th bedroom if needed in the future
- Build time: 6 months, 3 weeks

THE HOUSE THAT BRYAN BUILT

Q. Tell me about your personal renovation project.

A. Our old house was a 900 sq. ft. double-brick bungalow built in 1952. There was no insulation in the walls, and R12 in the attic if we were lucky. We replaced it with close to 4,000 sq. ft. And the attic is at R50.

Q. I understand that there are a ton of mechanical "toys" in the home. What are a few of the highlights?

A. All five bathrooms have in-floor electric heating, including the soapstone steam shower in the basement. And I put a Kohler waterless urinal in "The Mancave."

Q. How happy was your wife with that inclusion?

A. Sarah doesn't love it...but it is in the mancave, so she doesn't have to!

Q. Are there any aspects of the home that you'd change, now that you are living in it?

A. Believe it or not, there's very little we would change in this house. Of course being a builder, I'm always thinking of what's next...

Q. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself as a customer?

A. I'd have to say 10. I never withheld a payment; I made decisions on the spot; and I let my trades do their job. I even cleaned up at the end of every day.



HVAC Check

On the heating, air conditioning and ventilation fronts, Bryan's new home is equipped with a gas-fired forced-air furnace, a three-ton air conditioning unit, three power-vented skylights in the vaulted ceiling of the master en suite, an HRV, and an air filtration unit designed to keep particulate to a minimum.

Plumbing the Plumbing

From marble and glass tile to granite countertops, and even a soapstone shower in the mancave, the home is a kitchen and bath designer's dream.

The powder room features a comfort height toilet and a widespread faucet, while the master en suite has a free-standing bath, vessel sinks and tall faucets. In the shower of the en suite, a rain head shower-head is augmented with both water tile body sprays and a contemporary handshower kit.