

## BUSINESS Q&amp;A

## Home inspector has safety in mind

## Closer look helps buyers avoid making costly errors

By ALLISON PRIES  
STAFF WRITER

You think you found your dream home.

But before you plunk down a year's salary and sign your life away, someone like Michael Del Greco, owner of Accurate Inspections, can tell you whether the house you're looking at is really a nightmare in disguise.

"I get a sense of satisfaction in honestly disclosing to clients what problems there are with a home and finding hazards that maybe could injure someone," he said.

Del Greco conducts an average of 10 pre-purchase home inspections per week through his 10-year-old home-based business, generating about \$300,000 in sales per year.

Accurate Inspections was established by Del Greco in 1993. Previously, he spent seven years working for a Clifton-based construction company where he was a project manager on residential and commercial renovations.

"I would get called in to repair things the home inspectors had found," Del Greco said. "Usually they'd fix the minor things and miss the major ones."

The 42-year-old West Paterson resident, dressed in khaki slacks and a red golf shirt, crawls, prods, and feels his way through a home looking for major problems with its structure, basement, kitchen, roof, exterior, and



THOMAS E. FRANKLIN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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electrical, heating, and plumbing systems. "Then the buyer attempts to negotiate corrective actions for the seller to take, a reduction in the price, or they can accept a home as is," he said.

Home inspections are not required by law, but "a lot of attorneys require it so the homeowner knows what they're getting into ahead of time," Del Greco says.

**Q. Who are your clients?**

My clients are home buyers. Not Realtors and not home sellers.

**Q. How do you attract clients?**

Most clients are referred from other clients or through their attorney. And I do some advertising.

**Q. What types of buildings do you inspect?**

Almost all of it is residential. I do a little commercial, but I'm very picky. I won't do anything with potential environmental problems.

**Q. What areas do you serve?**

I cover all of Bergen and Passaic counties and areas in Essex and Morris counties. What I try to do

is basically a half-hour radius from West Paterson.

**Q. What are some of the more common problems you run into?**

One of the most common is an electrical hazard or problem. It's simple things like running a wire without a connector, the wrong size circuit breaker, or evidence of water in the electrical box. All of these things can electrocute someone or cause a fire.

**Q. How much do your inspections cost?**

A standard home inspection with radon measurements, a termite inspection, and a measurement for carbon monoxide is about \$550 to \$600, for an average-size home. Some people also need a well test, which is \$500, and an open pit septic inspection, which can run from \$300 to \$500.

**Q. Do home inspectors have to be licensed?**

As of May 29, 2003 – yes. The State Department of Consumer Affairs implemented a licensing process based on complaints about unqualified, uninsured amateurs. I think

licensing will create a new breed of honest home inspectors, because in order to have a license you have to have insurance. In order to get insurance, you can't have a lot of claims against you.

**Q. What are the requirements for licensing?**

If you don't meet the experience required, you have to take a 300-hour class and pass a national home inspectors' exam. Then you have to obtain \$500,000 in errors and omissions insurance, [and] perform 50 inspections under the supervision of a licensed home inspector and 250 inspections as an employee of a state-licensed home inspector.

**Q. Is the business seasonal?**

When I first started it was slow from November to February, and that's pretty much still the case. I'm busiest between March and September, and Saturday and Sunday are the busier days of the week.

**Q. Do homeowners try to disguise problems?**

Yes. I've seen freshly painted basements where they're trying to cover water damage.

One person applied "non-asbestos" stickers to their pipes – but the stickers had no dirt on them and the pipes were filthy.

**Q. Is the business competitive?**

There are probably 400 full-time home inspectors in the state and only so many houses in the state that get sold.

**Q. Does the economy affect the business?**

I've had 10 good years. But there might be some economic impact from price shopping.

**Q. What are your future plans?**

To keep making clients happy.

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- All inspections are performed under the direct supervision of Michael Del Greco – founder and president of Accurate Inspections – by highly trained, experienced and qualified professionals – dedicated to providing the most accurate and comprehensive home inspection in the industry.
- Over the past decade Accurate Inspections has been the choice of home buyers throughout Northern New Jersey – performing thousands of home inspections – with Accurate Inspections the Client is the top priority.
- Every inspection is customized to meet the needs and concerns of each individual homeowner, while delivering the highest quality service, technical knowledge and communication skills.

- As a member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), I am committed to upholding the strictest of standards, plus participation in a program of continuing education.
- Our knowledgeable and friendly staff maintains office hours designed for customer convenience, 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week – so you will never need to leave a voicemail.



- We provide a detailed and customized inspection report and key sheets at the conclusion of every inspection. A typed copy of all handwritten comments and notations are mailed, e-mailed or faxed directly to the Client, their attorney – and if requested, to the Realtor – at no charge to the Client, the very next day. No waiting for your report!
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- Our services include home inspection, radon measurement, private well testing, and the scheduling of lead paint, asbestos and septic testing, and wood destroying insect inspections.

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*Michael Del Greco, President  
Accurate Inspections, Inc.  
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*“We have put our Clients first since 1993.”*

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