

The Real Devil is in the Design Drawings

The following letter was written in response to Ron Yeager's article, "The Devil is in the Details," which appeared in the February 2005 issue of MSC.

I am a detailer and a checker—I detail and then I check. Preferably my own work.

I have been doing this for the last 41 years. I've had only one backcharge from a fabricator. That was in the summer of 1977 for \$378.

I find it cheaper and more accurate to make my detailers check their own work.

These are of course just my own observations and experiences regarding detailing in mostly the twentieth century, but I think it stills applies today. I hate for someone else to check my work and I hate checking someone else's.

With those few words out of the way let me get to the real reason I am writing: design drawings.

If you were to go out and ask any experienced detailer today what his biggest problem is, I guarantee he or she

would tell you it is the sorry condition of the design drawings with which we are presented. At first I thought it was confined to here in the South, but over time I've found that this "disease" is widespread all across the good old USA and around the world.

Out of all the problems Mr. Yeager listed in his article (by the way, I thought the article was excellent), no doubt the fact that we are expected to detail or model buildings from incomplete design documents is the one which causes me the most trouble.

Day after day it's RFI, RFI, RFI. And more RFIs.

The quality of today's design drawings is the biggest hindrance we have in the detailing business, and I suffer the consequences daily.

When I receive a complete set of engineering design drawings—and I do every few years—I am ecstatic. I simply breeze through the job and enjoy every minute.

When I receive the usual slop it's dredge, dredge, dredge!

I wonder if Mr. Yeager or MSC could do all of us detailers a big favor and do an article called "The Real Devil is in the Design Drawings." I know it would be a good one!

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