

October 1998

Tulsa

People

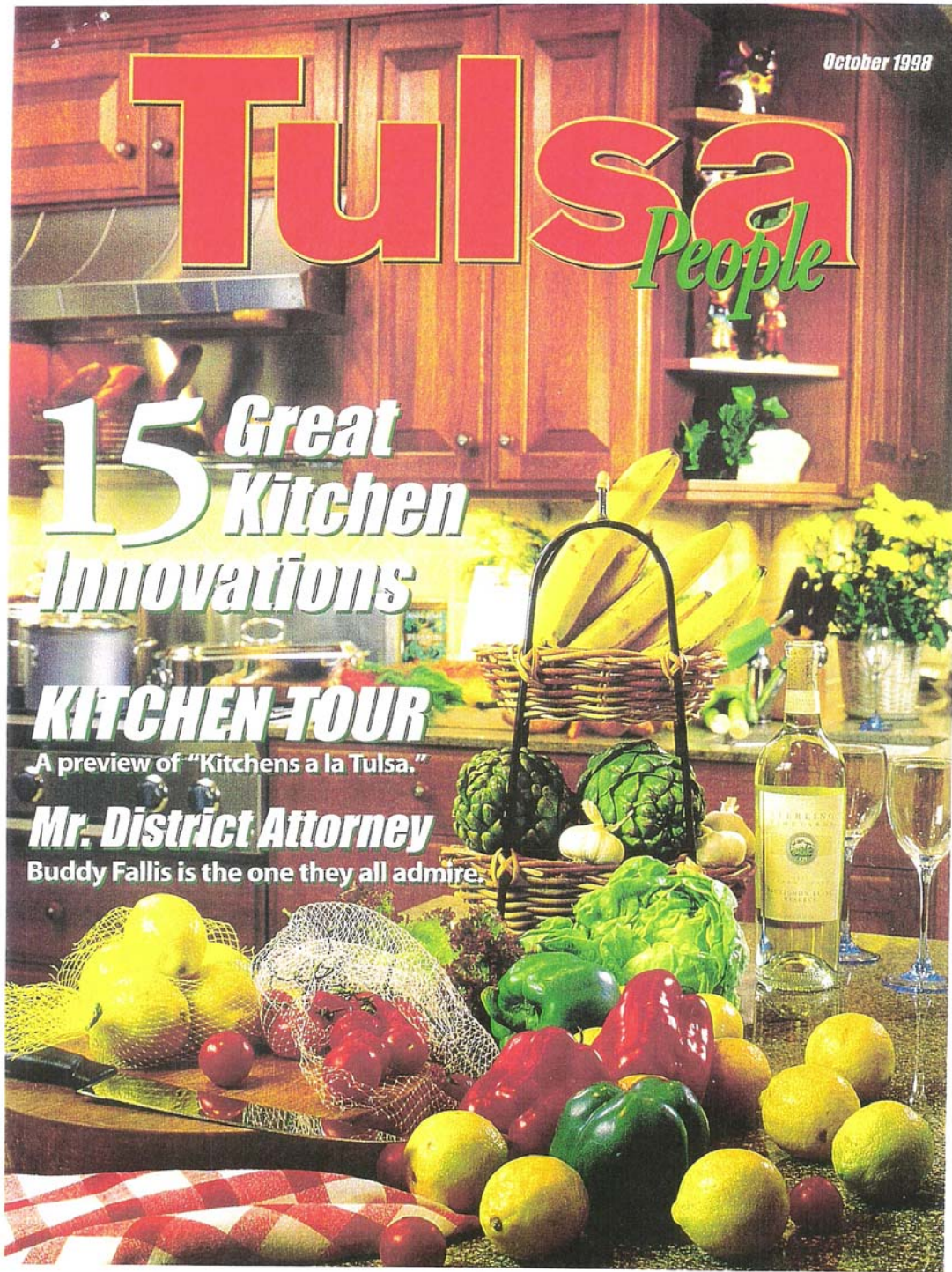
15 Great Kitchen Innovations

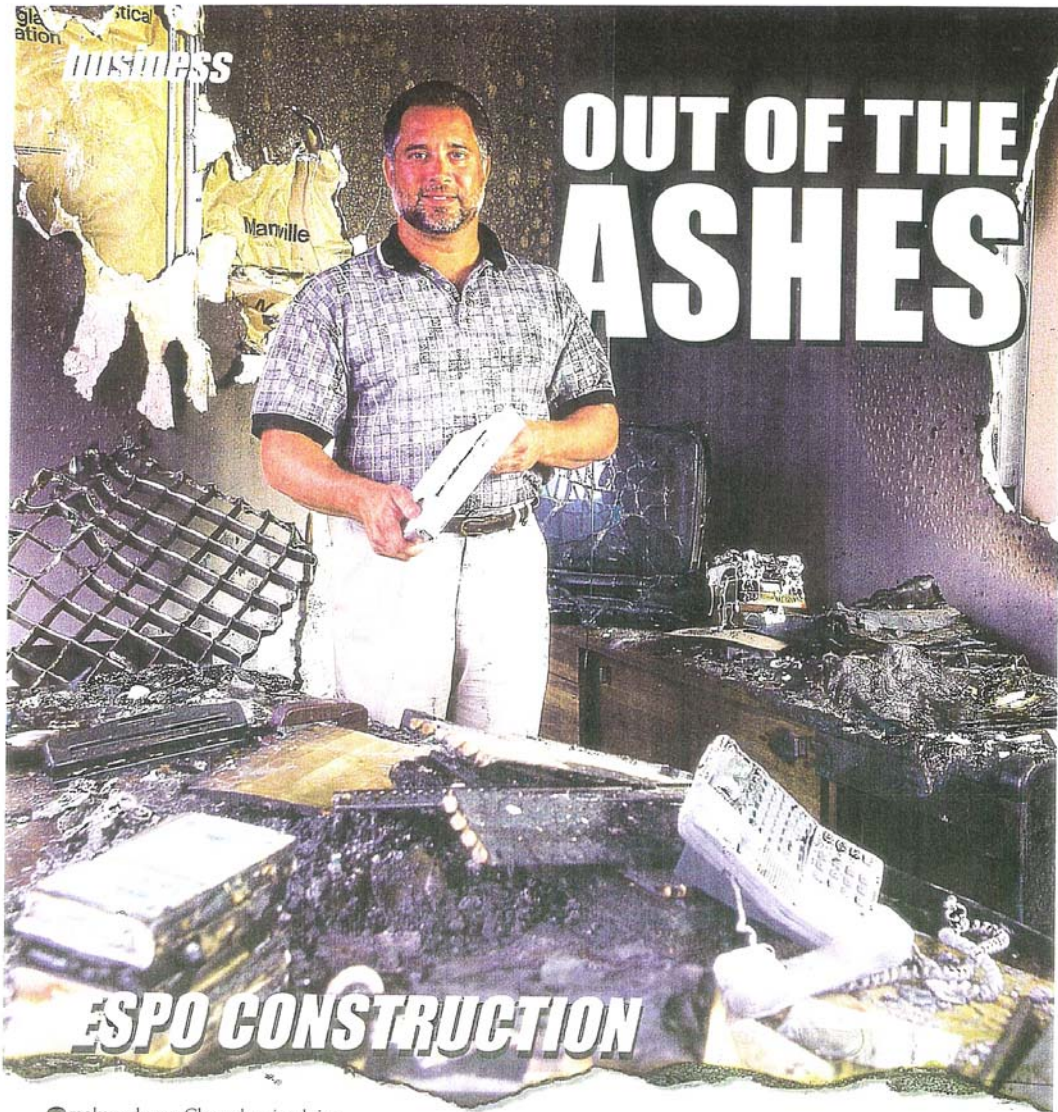
KITCHEN TOUR

A preview of "Kitchens a la Tulsa."

Mr. District Attorney

Buddy Fallis is the one they all admire.





Smoke and soot. Charred, twisted timbers. When fire races through a building, it destroys everything in its path—including the dreams and livelihood of the owners.

Those whose lives have been devastated by such a disaster are suddenly faced with a thousand stressful decisions. ESPO Construction Company, a Tulsa construction firm, specializes in taking away the stress so the restoration process can begin—on homes and businesses as well as people's lives.

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The firm specializes in insurance restoration work for every kind of disaster, from floods and tornadoes to hate crimes. But the overwhelming majority of ESPO Construction's jobs are fire-related, from minor repairs for kitchen smoke damage all the way to complete reconstruction of homes burned to the ground.

When you talk to John Esposito, the company's founder and president, you find someone who understands what people in this situation go through—and

someone who is determined to turn a disaster into a positive experience.

"Life can be tough, and to have a catastrophe like this thrown in can stress people to the breaking point. When we meet with a family after a fire, we're really their first step toward rebuilding their lives," says Esposito. "We try to do everything we can to help them."

ESPO is prepared to go in the same day of a fire to identify what parts of the damaged home or business are salvageable.

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Then they can begin coordinating the many other steps in the restoration process, from demolition of the damaged building to coming up with new construction ideas using three-dimensional computer programs.

Esposito found his way to the industry in a roundabout way. The Tulsa native worked several years as a commercial pilot but eventually grew tired of all the travel. When the son of a business associate invited Esposito to join him in the construction business in San Antonio, it seemed like the perfect solution—Esposito had spent his summers during college working for many Tulsa construction companies. He spent a year in Texas, but the pull of home proved too strong and Esposito moved back to Tulsa in 1983 and started ESPO Construction.

Over the last 15 years ESPO has restored thousands of damaged area homes, and is responsible for commercial restoration projects ranging from the Atlas Life building and Sand Springs Central Junior High to Sheffield Steel and Charles Schwab in the Philtower Building.

Esposito and his construction crews stay busy, working on approximately 100 projects each year. But there's more than just a lucrative business driving Esposito to succeed in this specialized area of the construction industry. He's the first to admit that he just likes to help people. He holds regular CPR classes in his warehouse for staff members and clients. His advertising promotes the use of smoke detectors and a "safe outside meeting place" for families during a fire. The construction firm recently joined together with the Tulsa-Area chapter of the American Red Cross to promote its "Save the Day" campaign by distributing safety packets in neighborhoods where there has been a house fire.

"We know disasters like this put people in a difficult situation," he says. "That's why our people are true professionals. They are courteous and understanding in everything they do. Our customers say that by the time we're done with a project, we're more than just a construction company—we're their counselors and friends."

Article by Barrett Waller.
 Photograph by Jon Petersen.