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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

Dear Readers:

As some of you already know, this magazine is a boutique publication and just a tiny part of an all-encompassing business model created specifically to serve both the builder and their vendors – my advertisers. I interview at least three builders per month before choosing the builder I'll feature in the upcoming issue. Each featured builder is given a \$4,000 packet of beautiful marketing material, compliments of International Flooring, our Cover Story Sponsor. In addition, I choose an interior designer to interview for the publication. They too are given a packet of marketing material, compliments of The Palm Restaurant.

In receiving feedback from both the builders and the

NEW Social Media Marketing Services
NEW Networking Group
NEW Website

vendors that I represent and have represented, the business model along with the publication evolves. I try to make it a point to ask and receive feedback from my customers throughout the year, so that I can add something new in the line of product and services each year.

Last year, I launched a category exclusive, monthly networking group meeting for my advertising customers. This has become a tremendous success! Today, I am excited to announce that we are working on a brand new website in which we will offer new social media marketing services. We will roll out this new site within the next few months. I am already gearing up for the changes that will be made in 2020. I can't wait to map it out and let you know. If you have suggestions or feedback, please feel free to contact me. I am here to serve.

Giselle Bernard, Owner/Publisher

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Creativity Marks Stonehenge Classic Homes

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Every builder seems to have niche, something that sets a particular builder apart from others. For David Crow, president of Stonehenge Classic Homes, it's his creativity and problem solving.

"I get referred because of my creative visions and ability to solve issues that arise in the industry. Creativity and problem solving are definitely key aspects that have built my business and why people hire me."

He noted that he does a lot of design work during the building process, complementing the work of architects, designers and decorators who may also be working on the home he's building.

"Some clients may have built a custom home before and are using designers and decorators that they're comfortable with. Other clients don't understand how to pull it all together. I assist them in finding other professionals to assist, and I'm also the creative guy who helps clients make decisions. I offer help by providing conceptual sketches, product demonstrations and even on-site mock-ups to help

clients visualize the finished product. Clients call me to ask, 'Can you meet me and talk it through?' I fill the void of what customers need."

David said he likes to incorporate something with a historical aspect in every house he builds, which is no surprise for a company with the motto "building things that stand the test of time" and a primary reason for his using Stonehenge in the company name. He noted that he has gone to Round Top, Texas, with clients to locate interesting antique pieces. He said he likes to repurpose those pieces to give the house a special component that may become a conversation piece.

Along with his creative ability, David ranks his focus on producing high quality, long-lasting projects as a reason he is able to rely on referrals instead of advertising. He noted that many of his clients are friends or friends of friends. "Most of my clients know past clients. We tend to travel in the same social circle."

Crow said a majority of his business is concentrated in the



West University neighborhood, which makes his operations more efficient. It's also where he and his family live.

Crow said that his philosophy is to ensure that his custom homes and remodeling/addition projects are done right the first time. "I'm not the Maytag repair man, but I have no need for a full-time customer service guy because most of my houses have few problems. We do take care of our clients if any problems arise"

As president, Crow is involved in all aspects of the business, although he has assembled a good team to insure things run smoothly. He gets assistance on estimating from his two construction supervisors, Rick Crawford and Mark Hall, who also manage the on-site operations. Rick and Mark have a combined experience of over 40 years. Vanessa Eubank, the office manager, handles billing, customer assistance and overall organization, among other duties.

Debbie Crow, David's wife, also helps with the business in addition to her own real estate sales position with Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty. Debbie assists with business needs, land acquisitions for any speculative homes that Stonehenge Classic Homes builds, as well as marketing and selling the houses.

He builds in all styles but gravitates to architecture and interiors with a timeless appeal. He personally prefers a European flavor in his spec homes, although he doesn't like to build the same spec house over and over again. "I feel I owe it to my clients to make each home 'special' so they know they are not buying a cookie-cutter spec home. It makes things harder than repeating great houses that work, but I like the challenge."

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Dialogue with a Designer

Yesely Love with Canaima Design

An Interior Designer or Interior Design Firm should be committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. They should exemplify an unwavering dedication to open communication, reliable service, and to building a collaborative design partnership with all of their clients. This month The Metropolitan Builder is proud to dialog with Yesely Love with Canaima Design, established in 2016 by The Love & Labrador families to transform spaces into objects d'art in a broad sweep of decorative influence that embraces minimalism and innovation to surprise for its ingenuity.

TMB: What motivated you to go into the interior design field?

Yesely Love: I'm coming from a family that has been always in the design and build business, besides Oil & Gas in the country that I'm from, my roots were always stablished in designing since I was a kid, I was the "crafting girl" that always help grandma to do her sewing, floral, scrapbook, décor and any handmade item that she wants to create!

TMB: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Yesely Love: Since the beginning of the 2000s we have witnessed technology take over more of our lives than ever

before but the interesting thing is that classic furniture designs have made a huge comeback into the home but since I graduated in 2008 I consider that we are seeing more and more people embracing classical or mixing contemporary and traditional together.

TMB: How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?

Yesely Love: An interior designer listens to the needs and tries to understand the lifestyle of their clients, paying attention to details such as "Who will be staying in the house?", "Will that be safe for the children?", to even questions like "Where can I place the onions and potatoes?". They also tend to work systematically, from sketching to rendering and then to the final build-up. Interior designers are nothing but 'design consultants'.

TMB: What sets you apart from other designers?

Yesely Love: I am a great believer in teamwork that multiplies the skills of every member of the team; I'm very enthusiastic about what I do because this is something that it's been in my life for a very long time since I was young and I like to bring to life my clients dreams. I also think that it doesn't matter how big or small is the scope of a project, I dedicate 100% without thinking that is a business,

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Five to Follow: Emerging Kitchen Trends

By Scott Kaminski

Ever since we humans began playing with fire, food and the place where we cook it—the kitchen—has been a common gathering place. The midnight snack. The weekly family meal. That bowl of cereal before you rush off to work in the morning. All of this and more happens every day in kitchens all over Houston whether it be a single family home, multi-housing building or someplace entirely different.

Since we all spend so much time there (yes, even those who don't actually do any cooking), the kitchen—and the trends that guide and update it—are constantly evolving. Here are five of the latest:



in its place in these drawers are organizational systems such as Häfele's Finition and Finition Move which offer fully customizable pegboards, plate holders or bins with handles to give all of your beloved kitchen things a fancy home of their own.

All the Cool Kids Are Doing It

Many of us care greatly for the earth and the environment. After all, it's where all of our loved ones live and where we keep all our belongings. To that end, recycling has



LED Lighting. Everywhere.

LED lighting systems such as Häfele's Loox line have truly changed the game when it comes to light in the kitchen. Before it was fixtures over tables, islands and sinks. And maybe one over the countertop. LED light, whether it's in the form of flexible strips, flexible silicone or pucks, can go wherever you may need light including: over the counter, in cabinets, in drawers, above cabinets to add ambience and more. Switches for LED lights have similarly come a long way from the simple door operated switch. Loox offers motion detection switches, inline touch switches which turn on and dim with a tap or even capacitive switches which cleverly hide in casework and turn on, off or dim with the wave of a hand.

Drawers Instead of Doors

Base cabinet doors will soon be something you'll only see in movies and dated television sitcoms. Most are being replaced by deep drawers which offer easy access to kitchen appliances, pots and pans, plates and that one gravy boat everyone seems to own. Ensuring that everything stays



been integrated into kitchens with great fervor in the form of double bin base cabinet pullouts. Beyond the double bin option, some even go so far as to include built-in compost bins for those with a green thumb.

Give Yourself an Outlet

Let's be honest: we're all a little power hungry — at least when it comes to managing the juice in our cell phones and other favorite devices. While once only considered for offices, pop-up charging stations with USB ports have been making their way into kitchen countertops and islands in a big way to meet the demand. Another option which further reduces clutter is Docking Drawer which allows you to dedicate a drawer for charging your items, leaving your countertops free for baking and kitchen prep work.



Not Your Grandmother's Pantry

Having all of your food, spices and other pantry staples in one easily accessible, centralized location just makes good sense. Stylish pantry pullouts that are able to give you multiple access points to your pasta, oregano and grandma's treasured recipes are replacing closets which have been pressed into food storage duties and cabinets above the stove which have been replaced with beautifully ornate range hoods. Pantry pull outs are now slickly opening, soft- or self-closing feats of engineering that leave your guests jealous. And isn't that what it's all about?



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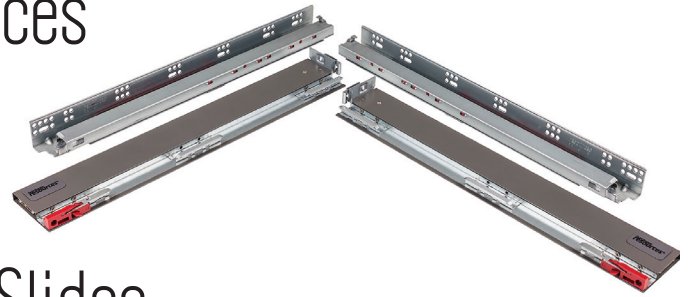
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Hardware Resources Introduces Dura-Close® Metal Drawer Box System With Soft-Close Undermount Slides



Hardware Resources, a leading manufacturer of kitchen and bath cabinet components (both decorative and functional) presents its newest cabinet-drawer system. Thin, double-wall steel drawer boxes are built onto Dura-Close® full extension, soft-close 100 lb. undermount slides. The system's reduced ½-inch wall profile yields more usable drawer space than a traditional A-frame metal-drawer box system.

These versatile drawer boxes (which can be used with frameless or face-frame cabinetry) are constructed of solid steel with a slate-gray powder-coat finish that lends itself to a myriad of interior design styles. Customers can mix or match cabinetry materials with the drawers and add customized wood drawer fronts that bring their personal style to the forefront.

This Dura-Close® Metal Drawer Box System's combination of long-lasting functionality and effortless style provides the ease of use customers have grown to expect from Hardware Resources' products, according to Travis McElveen,

the company's Product Manager for Functional and Commercial Hardware.

"Our new metal drawer system allows cabinet makers to add a higher-end, stylish drawer to freshen up any residential kitchen or office environment," McElveen says. "These drawer systems install almost as easily as standard wooden drawer boxes. Full extension slides combined with effortless opening and silent, soft closing features give the end user a premium experience."

Dura-Close® Metal Drawer Box System Product Details

- Thin double-wall metal drawer boxes are built onto full extension Dura-Close® soft-close 100 lb. slides that provide continuous synchronized movement.
- The slides' rack-and-pinion operation stabilizes the drawer and prevents sag.
- The drawers include front cams for vertical and horizontal drawer-front adjustment.



- Solid-steel drawer construction with a slate-gray powder-coat finish suits a variety of design styles—especially after adding the end-user’s choice of wooden drawer fronts (not included).
- A front-release cam accommodates easy drawer-front removal.
- This drawer-system can be used with frameless (European) or face-frame cabinetry. (Rear mounting brackets are sold separately.)
- Choose between two drawer heights (89 mm, or about 3 ½ inches, and 185 mm or about 7 ¼ inches) and among three lengths (15, 18, and 21 inches).



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Hardware Resources was founded in 1990 and is headquartered in Bossier City, Louisiana, with strategically located warehouses across North America. Their diverse product lines include: decorative cabinet hardware, decorative carved wood products, doors and drawers, functional cabinet hardware, kitchen islands, bath vanities, organizers, lighting and power solutions. For more than 25 years, the focus of Hardware Resources has been the customer. They believe in quality, integrity and reliability—upholding the highest standards of service and responsibility in the industry.

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Currently Crow has two spec homes underway, along with three custom homes and five renovation or addition projects. He prefers to have about 10 projects in process at any one time; he's learned that's a comfortable number for him and his staff to manage and give the appropriate level of personal attention to their clients. "There's only so much I can handle. Bigger is not better for me."

That number of projects also enables David to make sure his subcontractors have enough work to keep them fed and loyal to Stonehenge Classic Homes. He finds that sharing some of the subcontractors with just a few other builders works well for scheduling. He noted that he has employed some of his subs since starting his company back in 1995, but he makes sure that the subs stay up on the latest techniques, use the best equipment and keep improving their skills. "I am very loyal, but they too need to be loyal and keep getting better."

His custom home projects typically range from 3,500 to 7,500 square feet and from \$1.5 million to \$5 million+. He also does remodeling and additions ranging from \$250,000 to well over \$1 million. Currently, many of his clients in the West University market are obtaining adjacent lots and expanding an existing house across property lines, a new concept that is growing.

Crow started in the building industry after graduating from Louisiana State University in 1989. He had studied both architecture and engineering before settling on a business degree with a concentration in finance. He moved to Houston from Baton Rouge without a job and found his calling as a builder by answering a want ad in the Houston Chronicle.

He worked for General Homes, Houston's largest production builder, as a customer service representative, construction manager and project manager for three years as the company went through Chapter 11 bankruptcy restructuring. According to Crow, he learned a lot because the company shed employees, and those who were left had to pick up the slack.



He then worked for a start-up production builder for several more years before going out on his own in 1995. He got tired of building production homes where the homebuyers had no chance to make any decisions. "It was kind of boring to me that the buyer couldn't customize at all." His first few years being involved in starting a business were tough, but once the list of satisfied clients starting growing, so did the business.

"I always knew that I wanted to have my own business, to be an entrepreneur. I watched my dad get forced into early retirement after 35 years in sales with one company in Ohio. I wanted to have control over my life."



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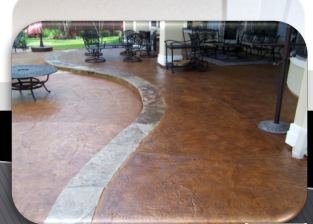
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TMB: What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?

Yesely Love:

- GC: Do not act as your own general contractor. You have probably heard that all houses are basically the same and all you need to do is hire a plumber and a roofer yourself and you will save 10% or more on the cost of your house... After many headaches, waste of time and sometimes you not even end gaining that 10%
- Space: Make sure that you are building the right house for your lot, space planning is key, if the sq ft is not measure accurately and comfortably the complete project will fall apart.
- Codes: We need to follow the building codes, many builders doesn't follow. It's important to protect health, safety and general welfare as they relate to the construction and occupancy of buildings and structures

TMB: How to you keep yourself up to date with current design trends in the market?

Yesely Love: I follow many design companies and designers, I disconnect from networks to interact more with what happens around me (you can find a lot junk in network that can confuse you too...) I participate in many forums, conferences and markets that keep us up to date (Salone Di Milano, Las Vegas Market, High Point Market, etc). Also, in every trip that I have going on, I always stop by to check some vendors to see what's in!

TMB: Any last thoughts, comments?

Yesely Love: Interior Design is still improving in Houston. It's still a lot more to do. Thank you for help us to make a more stunning city.

Continued from page 7

I don't stop until make sure that the site is absolutely perfect and everybody is satisfied.

TMB: What has been your most challenging project and why?

Yesely Love: Each project comes with a challenge and this is where you get to test your creativity and technical skills. You get to tackle various projects right from office spaces to homes to restaurants. In this way you not only meet the requirements of the client but also develop a bond. I believe that the most challenging (and I have been discussing this with another designer colleagues) is to know your client, to understand their life, their needs, the "psychology sense is key". If you don't know your client, you will never, never be able to meet their requirements, needs and make them satisfied. Our first step is interviewing our client in the most natural way possible, and I'm not referring to what is their favorite color, design, finish, etc... No.. We need to picture the best possible how they think every day and what they really like, we know what is their favorite sport, what is their favorite travel destinations, what food they like, their priorities in life, their career, what they like to read, if they have kids, pets, etc... And of course, not only what they like, also what they don't like too.

TMB: How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?

Yesely Love: We have a full package that create ourselves for the builders, it's with the hand of technology and needs of Texas standards. The finishes selection packages is very



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Statement from NAHB First Vice Chairman Greg Ugalde on President Trump's State of the Union Address



Greg Ugalde, first vice chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a builder and developer from Torrington, Conn., attended tonight's State

of the Union address and issued the following statement regarding President Trump's remarks:

"NAHB commends President Trump for highlighting the need for large-scale nationwide investment in infrastructure that is vital to build strong communities and a thriving housing market. Homeownership and housing are essential to a strong and prosperous nation. Yet, new research by Freddie Mac shows that America's home builders are

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Continued from page 11

constructing 370,000 fewer units annually than needed to satisfy demand.

“The biggest impediment to this shortfall is due to the growing housing affordability crisis. The administration and Congress must make this issue a top national priority.

Policymakers can start by taking the following steps:

Eliminate unnecessary regulations that raise housing costs; enact housing finance reform that enables creditworthy borrowers to obtain home loans; and promote job training programs in home building to help address the severe labor shortage that is putting upward pressure on home prices.”

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Network in Action & The Metropolitan Builder bring together a coalition of like-minded individuals who understand the power of building business. All professionals are known personally and professionally and valued for their integrity and outstanding work ethic. They will help you realize your own professional success as you grow your business.

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