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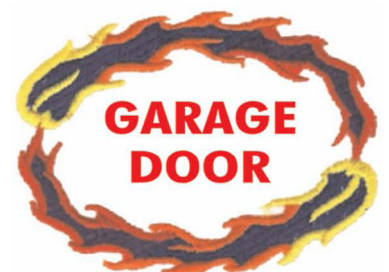
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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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For Local Information Contact:  
themetropolitanbuilder@yahoo.com  
832-317-4505  
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

5161 San Felipe St. #320  
Houston, Texas 77056  
832-317-4505

Owner/Publisher  
Giselle Bernard

Editor  
Kathy Stolz

Magazine Layout & Design  
Pamela Larson

Website  
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Giselle Bernard**  
*Publisher*



Trivial things that cause anguish and control our mindset are just not worth the time and effort. And the ensuing stress impacts our lives tremendously. Instead, we should put effort into making wonderful memories.

Let's enjoy all of life's blessings: our family, our friends, our good mental and physical health, all of the beautiful things in life that we may notice but take for granted. When we close our eyes and focus on the wonderful memories of yesteryear, what do we see? What will our children see? What will our family and friends remember? What will we remember in our later years?

Life happens with or without us. It's important that we find a balance in life and enjoy it. Make wonderful memories. After all, the memories we make and the lives we touch will be our legacy.

*Giselle Bernard, Owner/Publisher*

Dear Readers:

Throughout the years, I've realized that Life is fragile and very unpredictable. Within a bat of an eye, one's life can change. One's health, the loss of a job, the loss of a loved one ... there are no guarantees in life. We are only guaranteed the moment in which we are living – nothing more.

That unpredictability is why it is so important for all of us to relish the present. We can't do anything to change the past, so let it go. We can't predict the future, so focus on today. Tell the ones you love "I love you" on a daily basis. Learn how to shrug off the things that really don't matter.



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# Herzog Doesn't Negotiate Quality in His Homes

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

“Quality is not a negotiation” according to builder David Herzog, owner of Herzog Homes Texas.

And to ensure quality, David himself sweeps every one of his houses before the drywall is installed because sweeping allows him to see every imperfection, including that individual nail that wasn't set. He uses green spray paint to mark those spots so the subcontractors can correct the imperfections before they're hidden.

“We are going to get it right. We're all on the same side of the table when it comes to customer service. Customer service is something we provide to all the team members.

“Certainly, our homeowners are customers, but it's even more than that. Everyone along the supply chain is a customer. Making sure the material on the job is of high quality and available to the trade partners when we say it will be there. Keeping our schedule, communicating clearly and paying on time strengthens our ability to ensure we get the best from everyone throughout the entire process. That

is one of the reasons we believe we get the best results. Accordingly, we're not afraid of tough home inspectors,” Herzog continued.

David has spent his entire professional career in the real estate business. He has built approximately 2,000 homes in the states of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and now Texas after relocating to Houston four years ago when he married his wife Heidi, a native Texan and Houston resident.

“Everything is better in Texas. Having built in 16 counties in four states, this is the best. From the permitting process to the final inspections, everyone is helpful,” he stated.

He added, “I love this ‘Texan thing.’ There's a swagger about this state and a friendliness that's unique. Everywhere and everyone in every corner of the globe knows about Texas. I went into a Texas BBQ restaurant in Moscow and told the staff I was from Texas. I showed them my driver's license to prove it. The food was terrible, but they got so excited to meet a real Texan that the meal was free, and the



manager even snapped a selfie with me.”

Herzog Homes Texas focuses on building speculative and custom homes in Houston neighborhoods where gentrification has been enormously successful – Garden Oaks, Oak Forest, Spring Branch, Briar Grove and Bellaire. Herzog specializes in tearing down the original homes, some built in the 1940s, in these neighborhoods and replacing them with 3,000 to 5,500 sq. ft. modern homes in the \$800,000 to \$1.3 million price range.

“Gentrification allows residents to choose their neighborhood and the school districts that they prefer while getting a great home more suited to their families,” according to Herzog.

“Our focus with our customers is that you can do anything you want. Tell me what you want, and we’ll do it. Pinterest has been a huge help to us. People bring in pictures of what they saw on Pinterest or HGTV. Everything can be done. And most times, your kitchen idea doesn’t cost any more

than my kitchen idea, so let’s do it.”

He admitted that using the team’s creativity is his favorite part of building. “I love the ‘dreaming’ process. We come up with something exciting, execute it, then I get to marvel at it, and our customer gets to enjoy it.”

Not surprising for someone with two master’s degree dealing with numbers, David admitted, “I’m a systems guy, a process guy. For us, the home-buying experience is so much more user-friendly for our customers because of our processes. And we firmly believe you get more value from us than almost anyone.”

Herzog has been in the building business since he was 15 when he joined a construction crew building houses in Annapolis, Md. He went on to build his first home in 1994. That first house turned into a career that he has been passionate about for almost 30 years. And after decades in the residential building industry, David anticipates that he will always build houses.

*Continued on page 12*



# Dialogue with a Designer

## Sandra Smith Designs

*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 Sandra Smith of SANDRA SMITH DESIGNS or SANDRA KAY STUDIO*

*With over a decade of experience in interior design and the arts, Sandra Kay has built and shaped her business into the award-winning, innovative design company it is today. From interior design to custom, commissioned art pieces, Sandra Kay is ever-evolving and constantly creating evocative works and aesthetically entrancing designs that have defined her distinct style and ushered her name around the city of Houston and state of Texas. Published in Southern Home, Perspectives on Design Southwest and a winner of the Robert Allen Design Vision Color Competition, Sandra's essence can be experienced in both her designs and art that adorns residential and commercial properties across Houston and the state at large.*

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

**SS:** The love of how things are made. For as long as I can

remember, I just loved how homes, workplaces, and rooms came together with their own distinct themes and the way décor really conveyed the personality and values of both people and businesses.

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

**SS:** When I graduated in 2002, we did not have the internet as we know it today. The endless choices and digital storefronts can sometimes be overwhelming for clients. So, as a designer, part of my job is staying current with trends while also noting where to source high-quality décor for my clients. Of course, as with anything in life, key to excelling in any field is providing the best customer service possible so that the design experience is enjoyable and has the necessary human element you need when designing a space to reflect that client's personality and soul. Naturally, the benefit of the digital age as we know it is that trade professionals have so much information on installation requirements for new products, as well as what trends are on the rise, fading out, and what products have not lived up to their reputation.

The access to global information, fellow designers across the world and connectivity with clients is truly amazing. Since I originally entered, the field I've stepped into offering





digital consultations, and I couldn't have imagined that as a truly useful resource for myself and clients when I initially began.

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

**SS:** It's always a good idea to hire the interior designer at the beginning stages of the project. It will save the homeowner money by staying within budget, and it helps the builder or remodeler stay on schedule. In my work, I can guide them to showrooms that the builder prefers to work with or my own sources so that in the end the client gets the dream home they've longed for.

Along with this, as a designer I can keep up to date with the construction schedule so that items get ordered and delivered to the job site on time, minimizing work for the homeowner and contractors. Of course, things will get backordered and re-selections do occur, but as a designer, we stay a step ahead, so the builder or remodeler does not get surprised at the last minute and have to delay the process. Team work!

**TMB:** *What sets you apart from other designers?*

*Continued on page 14*

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# Don't Miss the Biggest Show in Texas!

The Sunbelt Builders Show™ prides itself on severing a large amount of people on a personal level.

The Show is designed to help builders, remodelers and associated suppliers get to know each other and grow their businesses – one by one. We all do business with people we know. And though the Show is the largest in Texas and draws in homebuilding professionals from around the United States, Canada and Mexico, the attendees feel like it was created for their individual needs.



The Show floor will sport more than 200 of the top manufacturers and suppliers showcasing the best new products and technologies in the homebuilding industry to thousands of the nation's elite residential construction industry experts.

Every year, we look forward to bringing the community together to create meaningful customer experiences and relationships. Meeting like-minded people inspires us, gets our creative juices flowing and gives us the opportunity to build partnerships. Being among our peers energizes us and gives us a forum in which to be or find industry mentors. We discover new ideas to make our companies stronger and find solutions to our everyday challenges. At Sunbelt, you can reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

In addition to the dynamic trade show floor, Sunbelt offers informative education and demo sessions on the

Show floor. After hours, you will have the opportunity to engage in lively social events that will expand your personal and professional network. Throughout the week, members of the Texas Association of Builders (TAB) will be participating in their summer committee and Board of Directors meetings. Make your summer plans now to spend August 6 – 9, 2019 with the residential construction community. The Show will be held at one of the top destination resorts in Texas, the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine. The Gaylord Texan sits on the shores of Lake Grapevine with 4.5 acres of indoor gardens, 10 restaurants, a seasonal water park and two pools.

Online Sunbelt registration and hotel reservation is available at [SunbeltBuildersShow.com](http://SunbeltBuildersShow.com). Sunbelt registration is FREE to builders, remodelers and developers for a limited time, so registered soon, and a limited number of hotel rooms are available for Sunbelt attendees, exhibitors and TAB members. The Gaylord Texan is offering a special room rate of \$249 per night. You may also call the Gaylord Texan Reservation Line at (817) 778-1000 and mention the room block for the Texas Association of Builders and Sunbelt Builders Show™ to secure your room.

This year's Show offers you the opportunity to come and connect with industry professionals on a personal level. We look forward to hosting you, your family and your team in August!



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# Kichler® Makes Old New Again with 2019 Bath Introductions

Kichler Lighting LLC, a leader in innovative lighting and ceiling fans, introduces vintage inspirations and unique glass applications in its new decorative bath collections. Its interpretation of refined vintage makes these collections appropriate for a variety of settings, including traditional, mid-century modern, transitional and modern farmhouse.

“Incorporating vintage materials soften the lines and textures found in today’s popular décor styles,” says Tia Bahr, senior product manager, Kichler Lighting. “With this year’s bath introductions, we’re providing consumers with approachable solutions that add to the visual impact of the room, while helping to balance the overall design.”

2019 Kichler decorative bath collections include:

- Vintage telegraph and electrical insulator glass found through the early and mid-1900s serve as the inspiration



for Kichler’s Talland bath collection. The refined vintage glass and Chrome minimalist mounting add a touch of feminine to an otherwise industrial style. Talland is complete with a sconce, and two-, three-, and four-light bath options.

- A classic glasswork technique from the 1940s is reimagined in Karmarie™. The unique “hobnail” pattern on each shade mimics a raised bubble pattern found often in retro drinking glasses, vases and bowls. Combined with modern styling, the look works beautifully in modern farmhouse or Victorian settings. Karmarie is finished in Olde Bronze™ and Polished Nickel. The complete collection includes a sconce, two-, three-, and four-light options, and mini pendant.



High-resolution images of the full 2019 decorative bath product line are available upon request.

Kichler Lighting’s decorative lighting adds a high element of style to a variety of interior settings. The January introductions incorporate unique glass elements and inspiration from vintage sources, reinforcing Kichler Lighting as a leader in design.

*To view the collections firsthand,  
visit the Kichler Lighting booth #N1763 at  
The International Builders’ Show.*

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Today Herzog is content to build 20 houses a year rather than the 300 he produced as a production builder. “I missed being in houses every day. I now know every one of my customers. Being completely involved makes me love my business even more. I’m much happier today than when I ran a \$200 million business.”

His wife Heidi, who also holds an MBA degree, helps David with color palettes, kitchen and bath designs and

more. “She has a discriminating eye; she will notice a thumb print on a surface. She is the most encouraging person I know, and she loves the home business as much as I do. I’m a lucky guy.”

Herzog continued, “Our goal is to earn raving fan referrals. We want our customers who are standing in line at the grocery store to say something cool about our homes rather than talk about some disappointment.”

He cites his mother’s influence as a key to his success. “My



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mother gave me hope. My mother gave me confidence. My mother told me to be kind, always be kind first.”

Being kind is one of the philosophies he’s used in his businesses. “For us, it is all a ‘we-thing.’ Nobody along the supply chain, from demolition crew to the settlement company is permitted to be a less than helpful. We want to make sure our customers ‘love where they live.’”

*To contact David Herzog of Herzog Homes call 832-314-9000 or email david@herzoghomes.com*



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**SS:** For me, the client always comes first. I believe customer service and communication are critical to design experience and progress. In my view, the client is building or remodeling their dream home, and I want them to trust that I will be there to guide them through the details and have their best interest at heart. I do not pre-emptively create a specific “style,” or “Designer Look.” I love and work to create something that truly represents the client’s authentic style and needs.

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

**SS:** I think all projects are challenging, and I mean in a good way. It’s like putting a puzzle together. I learn something new especially with custom designed pieces that are specific to the project.

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

**SS:** I actually like to work in strategic steps to streamline the process for both the builders and homeowners. Before I begin, I like to:

1) Have a meeting to discuss the budget

- 2) Get the schedule of when the materials are due on the job site
- 3) Review the construction drawings and understand the appropriate materials
- 4) Analyze and review the design concept “style” of the project
- 5) Understand who the preferred vendors are, if they’re already selected, or propose a list of vendors
- 6) Know who will be paying for the materials.

As with everything, each job is different and sometimes requires a different approach. Some clients prefer that I search on my own and bring back 3 schemes for them to choose from, and other clients prefer to go shopping with me which is always fantastic because you really get to understand and know them on a personal level.

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

**SS:** I think one of the most common, and detrimental, mistakes to the experience is decision-making and actions that occur in a vacuum. Whether it’s personal or professional, communication is key for success and it helps facilitate understanding so that everyone can efficiently work as a team for the same desired outcome—a great

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**TMB:** *Speaking about staying current, how to you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?*

**SS:** Truth be told, it can sometimes be difficult even in the information age, but thankfully there are so many resources and communities to rely on and pull from. As an Allied Member of ASID (American Society of Interior Designers),

I am required to fulfill continuing education requirements which are incredibly helpful in kickstarting yourself to stay abreast of everything developing. Along with that, I'm a member of the Houston and San Antonio Builders Associations, so thankfully I have access to a broad resource base. Naturally, I regularly attend trade events, and I'm currently taking art classes on an ongoing basis at The Glassell School of Art as I pursue my passion for painting!

**TMB:** *What is your favorite design style?*

**SS:** At the moment, I'm embracing anything with color! Though style, as I see it, has a cycle and always comes back around. That said, I prefer a classic Georgian-style and mid-century buildings that allow us to stay true to the past, while adding fresh ideas and inspirations!

**TMB:** *What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs.*

**SS:** I am incredibly excited about the bustling art scene in Houston and around the world right now! As a painter and art lover, I believe everyone should have the opportunity to afford original art of some kind, even if you begin with a few small pieces. Original art is a treasure that you can take with you throughout your lifetime!

**TMB:** *How would you characterize your personal style?*

**SS:** I think my personal style could best be described as a classic casual, a kind of refined leisure.

**TMB:** *What would be your recommendation for "what to do first" in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

**SS:** My absolute first recommendation is for homeowners



and builders to really develop a concept and space layout first. From there, we can experiment however the homeowner likes!

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

*Continued on page 16*



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Continued from page 15

**SS:** Aside from the organizations I'm a part of, I regularly read interior design newsletters and magazines like interiors + sources. Along with that, I research color forecasts and fashion runway looks for the upcoming seasons to note all the coming trends.

**TMB:** Any last thoughts, comments?

**SS:** Enjoy Life and Give Back.

Website [Sandrakaystudio.com](http://Sandrakaystudio.com)

Instagram @sandrakaystudio

email: [ssd.designstudio@gmail.com](mailto:ssd.designstudio@gmail.com)

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## BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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