

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

INSIDE STORY



Calidad Means Quality
Literally and Figuratively

Calidad Builders | Houston, Texas



Calidad Means Quality – Literally and Figuratively

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

When Sergio Salazar was starting his building business as a fresh-faced college graduate, he asked himself, “What do I want to do?” His answer? “Build quality homes.” And so he named his company Calidad, or “quality” in Spanish.

Now, 16 years later, the name Calidad continues to be a good fit for this custom builder who currently concentrates on the Oak Forest, The Heights and Richmond areas of greater Houston.

“If you’re going to do something, do it well” is Salazar’s motto. “My goal is always to create a quality product, one that people will value.” He said he is always focused on improving as he strives to be among the most elite of Houston-area builders.

“I am always accepting new challenges, always looking to grow while learning new processes.” In fact, he just completed his last class to become certified as a Graduate Master Builder by the Greater Houston Builders Association.

Although his company also does interior and exterior remodeling, additions, damage restoration and commercial projects, he noted that he loves new construction. “My greatest reward is creating something from nothing. I like seeing a project come to life from the ground up. In two months you can see the foundation, then the framing and the structure taking life.”

“I love driving around Houston, saying, I built that; I built that; I built that. New construction leaves something behind that carries your name with it.”

About 50 percent of Calidad Builders’ business comes from the custom home building, about 25 percent from remodeling and about 25 percent from commercial projects.

Calidad builds on the “low end of the high end,” according to Salazar. Its custom homes are in the \$600,000-\$900,000 range with square footage ranging between 4,000 and 8,000. The company usually builds 10 custom homes a year.



Sergio said he relies on word-of-mouth advertising to generate most of his business. He noted, “We don’t do a lot of marketing. Most of my clients – people building custom homes – tend to be business owners. The commercial side of my business – offices, nail salons – comes from the home-building side. When we work in offices, then the employees notice our work, and we end up doing a lot of work for those employees.”

As the president of Calidad Builders, Salazar supervises all elements of building, does estimates and meets with clients. Juan Ortiz, who is a project manager, and Luis Briagas who is a field supervisor, oversee the construction itself.

Although Sergio toyed with the idea of being an architect, he realized early on that he didn’t have the creativity to pursue architecture as a career. Because he was always good at math and science, he chose civil engineering instead, graduating from Texas A & M in 2003. He said having a degree in civil engineering helped him to establish credibility with subcontractors and inspectors when he was getting started in building.

However, he confesses to making changes to an architect’s carefully crafted designs after he walks through a framed house with clients, even though he knows those changes may make the architect crazy. Salazar said he values function over aesthetics because clients need to be happy





with their homes for many years.

Family is important to Sergio. He learned a lot about family commitments during his own childhood when his father worked as a drywall contractor for large apartment construction companies, a job which took him out of town much of the time. He marvels at the sacrifices that both his father and mother made for the sake of their family.

Nowadays he works daily with his wife, Angela Varela Salazar, the company office manager, whom he met when he built a house for her. When he's away from work, Sergio focuses on his three children, ages 3, 4 and 20, acknowledging that if he doesn't spend time with his children when they are young, they won't want to spend

time with him when they are older.

After all, he wants his children to say proudly, "Dad built that" when they drive around Houston in the future.

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