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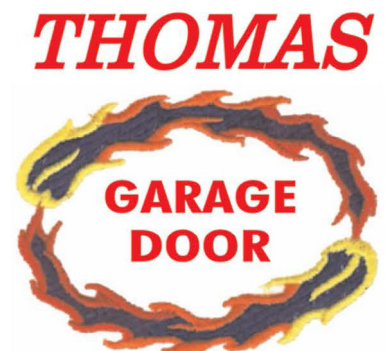
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher/Owner



GHBA Remodelers Council Charity Garage Sale set for March 21, 22

Each year the Remodelers Council holds a Charity Garage Sale in which it invites all Houstonians who are renovating their homes to shop for items they need at “garage sale prices.” This year the 12th Annual GHBA Remodelers Council Charity Garage Sale takes place at the Cy-Fair Home and Garden Show on March 21 and 22 at the Berry Center.

Items that are donated and sold at deeply discounted prices include flooring, tile and granite, windows, doors, light fixtures, plumbing fixtures, trim material, cabinets, sinks and more.

Those who would like to donate items or their time for the garage sale should contact either Linda Ingalls at 713-409-8978 or shr@shrremodeling.com or Donna Bueni at dbuenik@ghba.org.

Note that all proceeds from this event help support local GHBA charity projects, such as Lydia’s Place, Crossroads, Wellsprings Village, Casa de Esperanza, SIRE Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Family Time Crisis Center and Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services.

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Knowledge, Love, Adversity Lead to Zander Homes' Inception

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

It was a knowledge of building, the love of a woman and the downturn of an economy that led to Justin Henry starting Zander Homes™, a custom builder in Houston.

First, the knowledge of building started when Justin was just a kid working on his dad's construction crews back in their home state of Ohio. His dad Rick headed his own framing crews as well as later being a supervisor for Ryland Homes, one of the nation's largest builders. Justin began by picking up trash on job sites, stacking material and driving an occasional nail into some piece of lumber at age 12 on his father's jobsites. "If I wanted any type of money to buy clothes, I could help him," Justin stated.

"At that time working for my dad just seemed to be a way to earn some extra cash, but I was learning invaluable lessons in commitment, integrity and hard work. My understanding and responsibilities of construction grew over time as I continued to develop my homebuilding skills even during the summers of my college years at Austin Peay in Tennessee."

He returned home after college and began working in the

building industry, but the economy in southwestern/central Ohio was not very strong or stable at the time.

About then was when he met his future wife Gaby, who was a native Houstonian.

Justin relocated to Houston and joined some of the largest and most reputable homebuilders in Texas as well as a small boutique custom builder in Houston's inner-loop. Although he envisioned working his way up through the ranks of the company, he lost his job during the economic downturn, which ultimately changed his trajectory.

Justin then began to work for a local cabinet company as a territory manager while also starting Zander Homes & Remodeling in 2010. He started out primarily doing remodeling because he saw it as his only way into the ultra-competitive building industry.

"Homebuilding demands are very capital-intensive, which I didn't have at that time. Remodeling not only helped us to create a name brand, but aided in building up capital to invest into our first new build," he stated.



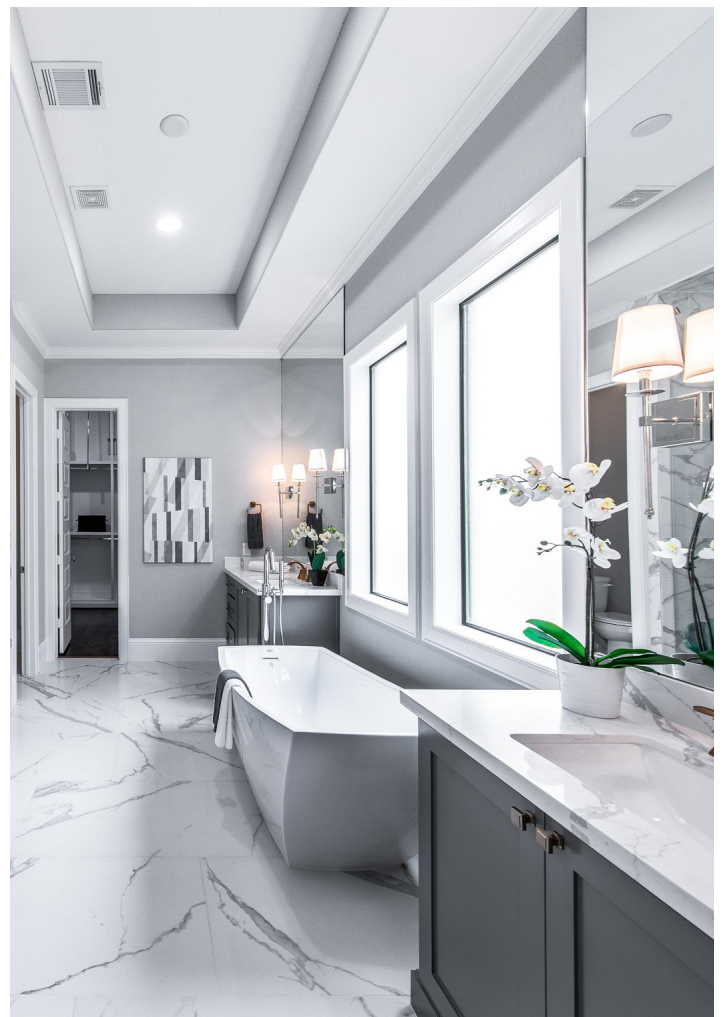
He chose the name Zander because “the company and my first-born son, Alexander, came about the same time. The name Zander was a perfect fit for us personally and professionally, considering that the name Alexander means ‘defender of man/helper,’ and our goal was to provide a great service to people and to help them build their dream homes.”

Two years later, when building his first home for sale, he changed the company name to Zander Homes™, and, after four years of juggling both jobs, he was able to become a full-time builder, paying himself for the first time. Seven years later, he even talked his dad into moving to Houston and joining the company – just before Hurricane Harvey hit!

These days Henry said his award-winning company build 8-10 homes a year, primarily with Build on Your Lot custom homes, with their trademarked slogan “We Build Where You Live™.” As well as developing their own land and constructing townhome projects inside of Houston’s inner-loop, the company’s “sweet spot” is a single-family home of 3,000-3,500 sq. ft. in the \$155/sq. ft. price range.

Zander Homes’™ clients are typically price-conscious professionals who also expect quality and good service, Justin stated. “While we’re rarely anybody’s first choice, which we’re okay with, we do strive to make them feel like

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we were their best choice when their home is completed.”

Henry said that pricing transparency, which is part of the company’s blog “Build on Your Lot Houston” (see www.zanderhomes.net), has helped drive most of his business to Zander Homes™.

He added, “Zander Homes™ tries to build the highest quality custom homes at a very competitive price. We’re offering a better, tangible value” than many builders.

“It takes a lot of money and faith to build a custom home. I don’t care who you are. I understand that people are relying on us to not only save them money, but to guide them throughout the entire building process. We try to educate our buyers on what drives the cost of a house and what changes can affect cost. We’re here to do a good job. We care. We truly, truly do care about educating our buyers about quality while striving to do a good job ourselves.”

The Greater Houston Builders Association, the Texas Association of Builders, Houzz and others have recognized the quality of Zander Homes™ with various awards since 2014 (see company website for a list).

Justin finds his personal background in construction to be “super advantageous” for a custom homebuilder. “We rarely build the same plan twice. We’re always trying to figure out something new on a plan, design change or even land constraints. Sometimes it gets really crazy and convoluted. Our customers rely on us to be the expert at a



hundred different things, which – while challenging – is very rewarding and fun!”

Justin added that transparent communication and learning to choose the right clients are other key components to being a successful builder. “Building a house is in most ways, like a marriage. The buyer and the builder interact every day or at least every other day. As the builder you must understand what the buyer is trying to communicate. “We are striving to understand our clients’ “why” for doing something. If we can better understand this part, then we can accomplish making their dreams a reality!”

Justin also expressed the importance of having the right team of employees. His team includes Alfred Young, vice president of construction; Reid Wiggins and Rick Henry (his dad) as construction managers; and Tanessia Hamilton as the team’s construction administrator.

“Hiring really good individuals early was important. As an entrepreneur, you’re always asking yourself ‘if I can afford him.’ But hiring good people has helped us grow the company to what it is today. One really good person can make all the difference. I now see my role as owner is to support them, versus them helping me,” Justin said.

*To contact Zander Homes™
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Designer/Remodeler Susan Fruit Focuses on One Client at a Time

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Few interior designers approach their work the way Susan Fruit does, for she is not only a designer but also is a remodeling contractor who focuses on only one major client project at a time.

Notably, she is the only registered ASID interior designer in Houston who is also a GMR (a nationally certified master remodeling contractor) and a CAPS (certified aging-in-place) specialist. Her clients hire her because they like the benefits she brings to their projects in her dual role and the professional certifications she has achieved, she confided.

No doubt they also hire her because of her extraordinary attention to detail, for which she is known. As the owner of Susan Fruit Interiors, Susan's philosophy is that each home renovation project is deeply personal and important to its homeowners and therefore "requires my complete attention and focus."

She explained that one of the major complaints she hears from homeowners about remodelers is that they are

"seldom on site throughout the process." That's certainly not a complaint that clients of Susan Fruit Interiors can make.

"I set up shop at the worksite and am there every day, constantly supervising." Relying on her highly skilled tradesmen, "if there's a problem, I'm right there with a solution. If a change order is needed, I'm ready at a moment's notice to create the order and then act on it immediately. That way we can keep making progress without any delays.

"Because I am on the jobsite every day, my clients' comfort level goes 'way up. They appreciate having a designer who is also their remodeling contractor so things don't fall between the cracks. This enables the intention of the design to be followed all the way through the project. The client gets a much better outcome."

Another complaint that many homeowners have with their

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remodelers is that their job site isn't kept clean, cited Susan from information obtained from the National Association of Home Builders. She readily identifies with this homeowner compliant and feels that it's extremely important to keep a job site be swept clean at the end of each day and all tools and equipment be stored away in order, not only for safety reasons but as a matter of respect for homeowners because they are typically living in their homes during the remodeling process. "It builds mutual respect when they see their home being taken care of in this manner each day."

Fruit freely admits that her method of focusing on one major project at a time and being constantly available each day for that one homeowner is not for everyone, but it works well for her, and she has more than four decades of experience in the Houston market to prove it.

"For me, this is a problem-free way to operate. I have virtually no callbacks at the end, and I typically finish ahead of schedule. Clients are so grateful and happy. Some even go on vacation during their remodeling project because they know they can trust me to run their project seamlessly while they are gone."



One of the benefits of having Susan Fruit as the contractor on a remodeling job is that after that portion of the project is complete, the homeowners often call upon her in her designer/decorator role to finish the home by creating fresh new window treatments or selecting a few new furniture pieces while reupholstering others. Her clients also know they can trust her to select just the right artwork and accessories because, at this point, she knows their home so well. "They trust me not to make a mistake."

It's not unusual for her clients to continue to use her services over the years as they first expand and then later downsize their homes or buy vacation property. Some of them even have adult married children who are now using her services. Susan remarked, "That brings me such joy, to have such wonderful continued loyalty."

While the majority of her work is based in Houston and the surrounding areas, Susan has designed, decorated and remodeled homes in Florida, California and South America.



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Marian H. Williams' Love Affair with Clay

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Marian H. Williams has played in dirt most of her life. How do I know this? I've known her since she was a baby. Both us were raised in the Texas Panhandle and made mud pies together. Her father was my father's best friend for more than 50 years. Both farmed and ranched.

It was Marian's memory of the family farm's furrowed crop fields in the Panhandle that would come, years later, to influence her pottery and style.

"Pottery is the ability to take dirt, mold it into clay, and create something beautiful from it," Williams said.

Marian began making pottery in a class at Baylor University. She fell in love with the craft and thinks it is a primeval need. People have been potting for centuries out of necessity and as an art form. It's a therapeutic kind of art, very mesmerizing. A potter can sit at wheel, and soon all the tribulations of a busy lifestyle melt away with the being on the spinning of the wheel and the movement of the clay.

Marian honed her craft taking classes and workshops from many well-known ceramic artists, such as David Leach, the son of the famous Bernard Leach, who started studio pottery in Britain after the industrial revolution. Notable ceramic artists who have contributed to Marian's style are the famous American ceramicist Gary Huntoon, along with Malcomb Greenwood, the most successful potter in Australia.

Sometimes, Marian has a design in mind, and sometimes the clay has a mind of its own. It turns into something completely out of the box, an artistic challenge.

Her pieces are functional. The look, appealing from a layman's point of view, is also used as kitchenware and serving pieces.

Marian works in high-fire clay, terracotta, ceramics and Raku. Her favorites are the very beautiful cobalt blue pieces that she has become so well known for creating and Raku because it so much fun to make. Raku, which involves

newspaper and sawdust, results in a showy, metallic-looking piece that can have streaks of iridescent blue and purple. "Either you love it or you think it's gross," she said.

Fifteen years ago, Marian and her husband Ron had the opportunity to make a transatlantic move to Australia, where Marian became a professor at Bond University in the Master of Educational Practice Degree Program for five years.

They acquired a property in the Australian bush near Queensland. It had an enormous barn with very large snakes that loved to hang out in the rafters. It was the perfect studio, and, as fate would have it, gave Marian an opportunity to create pottery full time. She acquired two gas kilns and focused on working with glazes in a reduction/gas atmosphere. The outcome was rich with magical results.

Being recognized as a well-known potter in Australia is like being a rock star artist or sculptor in the United States. Marian has that distinction.

In 2019, the couple moved to the Austin, Texas, area to be near their daughter, Elizabeth. Marian's work is shown at the Marta Stafford Gallery in Marble Falls, Perissos Winery in Kingland and the Llano Estacado Winery in Lubbock. Since her return to the states, she has created a body of work entitled, "Tell Me You Love Me" and "Bring Me a Drink."

She is a master of her craft, a supremely talented artist. Most recently, commissioned work has found its way to her doorstep, particularly whimsical interpretations of animals, dogs in particular. Her work never ceases to amaze me.

You can follow Marian or contact her on Instagram or Facebook under Farm Girl Pottery and Marian H. Williams Pottery.

About the Author

Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID, is an interior designer with 25 years of expertise. She may be contacted at 713-203-4047 or at www.MaryLynnInteriorDesign.com.





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For AIG Mirror & Glass, Smaller Is Better

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Sometimes smaller is better.

Adrian Castaneda, owner of AIG Mirror & Glass, a residential and commercial installer, certainly believes so.

From his perspective, customers have a real advantage dealing with a small, family-owned company, such as his. They receive personal service, they deal directly with the owner, and they get issues resolved quickly.

“I treat each of my customers as if they are the only one, and there are fewer people to blame and less confusion when issues come up,” he said. “And we’re also very competitive on price.”

“We stand by our work because we depend on our reputation and word-of-mouth referrals. We love for our name to be spread throughout the community.” After 10 years of operating, “More than half of our business comes from repeat customers,” Castaneda noted. He is always looking for referrals from one builder to another.

Much of AIG’s business comes from frameless glass

shower doors and mirrors, but the company also replaces and repairs windows and broken glass in residences. On the commercial side of the business, AIG creates and installs store-front glass entrances and interior glass.

Based in Bellville, AIG serves custom and semi-custom builders in greater Houston in addition to Austin and Washington counties. He works closely with builders and staff of design centers to ensure homeowners get their preferred style of glass and door hardware.

Expert installation is a key factor in AIG’s success. “Dealing with glass is a skilled trade, a mastery. Not anyone can do it. It takes craftsmanship. It takes attention to detail. It can definitely be something of beauty. When you’re done, you can stand back and look at it.”

With about 20 years of experience in the glass industry, Adrian prefers to train his own installers. He said the best installers are ones that have not been in the glass industry so he can “train them up” with his preferred methods and not have to break them of bad habits learned at other companies. Integrity and quality are two characteristics he



insists his installers have.

AIG currently employs installers after having more crew members in the past. “We have been to a high point [of many employees] and then brought it back down. We thought we were doing well, but when we looked at the cost of employees, we realized we weren’t making as much money as we thought,” he admitted.

He keeps in touch with trends by observing what his competitors offer and through reading his industry’s national publications. Farmhouse style décor continues to be popular, of course. He said that black hardware is popular, but chrome hardware is making a comeback. He’s framing more mirrors in wood, and the mirrors are getting smaller and more decorative.

After high school Adrian worked at a small glass shop, which was bought out by a bigger company. He stayed on, seeing opportunities in the business. He learned fabrication, installation and sales but eventually wanted to strike out on his own and build a future for his family.

Knowing the origin of the company name proves that AIG Mirror & Glass is a family business. Castaneda named the company after his three children’s first initials: A for Adrian, Jr., I for Isabelle and G for Gabrielle. While Adrian’s role in the business is to serve as the sales representative and lead installer on large projects, his wife Michelle helps with the bookkeeping.

He appreciates the symmetry in his business. Just as he is working to build a future for his family, Adrian Castaneda is creating beautiful spaces for other families to enjoy in their homes.

To contact AIG Mirror & Glass

***call Adrian Castaneda at
281-995-3819***

or email ac.aigproductions@gmail.com.

***The company’s shop and warehouse is located at
5943 Hwy. 159 West, Bellville, TX 77418.***

Trends In Bath Faucets

By Linda Jennings

When it comes to creating timeless, elegant designs its all about the finishes. Marine grade stainless steel, dramatic brass and unexpected use of wood and concrete are key themes for bath faucets and shower systems. These new products will take your bath to the next level of style and performance.

GAME CHANGING STAINLESS

Danish plumbing manufacturer QTOO's impressive new line of sleek shower systems are crafted from marine grade stainless steel, making them durable enough to withstand rigorous water and environmental challenges. This material features a high abrasion resistance and is so durable it can easily withstand outdoor elements so imagine how long it will last in your interior bath. QTOO's marine grade stainless steel showers are expertly engineered for impressive performance with an innovative volume control diverter that serves a two-way function for precise control over water flow and temperature. And there's even a built-in anti-scald protection, which is great for families with young children. The system includes a head shower and baton hand sprayer and comes in a brushed or polished finish.

BRILLIANTLY BRITISH BRASS

Bring a sense of grace and elegance to the bath with the stunning new Brigade faucet by renowned British manufacturer Barber Wilsons & Co. The Brigade Collection is notable for its gracefully arched swan neck spout and knurled detailing on the handles. Available with a 6" or 8" spout as a lavatory fixture, the Brigade line also includes a wall-mounted design, Roman tub fixtures and a thermostatic shower valve. The collection is offered in all of Barber Wilsons' standard finishes as well as their lovely new Brushed Brass finish. With its classic silhouette and distinctive style, this exceptional faucet compliments a variety of decors, from vintage to transitional and even brings a new twist to contemporary settings.

UNEXPECTED HANDLE MATERIALS

The Serie 240 from Isenberg was designed in their state-of-the-art DesignLab in Dallas, Texas. Inspired by the metronome and Panerai watch, the collection has luxurious lines and a sophisticated vibe featuring graphic cross handles that are available in traditional finishes as well as intriguing concrete and wood options. This beautifully cohesive bath ensemble offers 15 coordinating plumbing fixtures including wall- or deck-mounted sink faucets, a freestanding tub filler, thermostatic shower valves and components to complete the look of your bath space. The collection is crafted in solid brass and available in polished nickel, chrome and matte black finishes, with the addition of distinctive walnut and concrete handle options.



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