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Butler Brothers Bond over Building

Butler Brothers | Houston, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz



Some siblings squabble. Many brothers bicker. But Bo and Scott Butler of Butler Brothers find their mutual respect and compatible skill sets make them ideal business partners in their Houston custom

design-build firm with its strong client focus.

“We’re pretty much on the same page most of the time,” Bo, the older brother by two years, said. Scott agreed. “We both look at things slightly differently. I think we bounce off each other well.”

Bo added, “When we do disagree, we eventually see a better path. We always come together.” “We’re better together than separate,” Scott confirmed.

Both Butlers, who are Houston natives, have similar educations, earning undergraduate degrees in environmental design from Texas A&M and graduate

degrees in architecture from the University of Houston. They also have similar work experiences, both joining large, local architectural firms after college.

But working in a large firm where the work is very specialized didn’t satisfy Bo’s desire to be a holistic architect. After renovating his own home, he realized anew that he loved doing things he could get his hands on. “I needed a little more fulfillment, a little more hands-on.”

Scott discovered that he really enjoyed working directly with clients when he worked for a residential architectural firm while in graduate school.

So, in 2003, when Bo said, “Hey, let’s do something together,” Scott was immediately interested. “We both wanted to be entrepreneurs and to own our own business,” Scott said.

In reality, they are partners in three integrated but separate companies: Butler Brothers Development, Ltd.; Butler Brothers Architecture, LLC; and Butler Brothers Construction Corp. They have done more than \$100 million in projects, primarily inside or just outside the loop and on



the west/northwest sides of Houston.

“Early on, we decided we wanted to develop projects in the Houston area,” Scott stated. Their original model was to develop, design and build projects. “When we started this business, we didn’t think we’d be building houses,” Bo noted.

At first, their focus was on custom remodeling and custom design, but market and client demands changed their focus. “We hired two other construction companies, but we decided we needed to do it ourselves to get it right,” Scott said.

Now construction generates the majority of Butler Brothers’ revenue. To help them accomplish their projects, they employ two site managers, an interior designer, a part-time bookkeeper and occasionally the youngest of their four sisters.

Having an architecture practice and while being builders is unusual in the Houston market. “Not many firms have owners that have an architectural background,” Bo noted. “Because of our background we understand all aspects of building a home from the first line drawn to the last nail hammered. As an architect you’re good at listening to clients and figuring out what their needs are and providing solutions.”

He added, “We’re especially good at spatial relationships” and interpreting things to their clients. Scott agreed. “We find that a lot of people can’t see things in 3-D.”



They've trained their site managers and subcontractors to recognize their expectations, Bo said. Scott added, "It's as simple as knowing where to locate a switch on a wall so it's not where you might want to put a piece of art."

While Scott handles 99 percent of the design work, Bo focuses primarily on construction, doing estimating, figuring budgets and working with subcontractors. Their work intermingles when they do development site plans and create spreadsheets. "We both can handle all components of the business. We're interchangeable," according to Bo.

They said they are happy to build homes designed by other architects. As architects, they said they understand what other architects are trying to get across and can explain those ideas to clients.

They both find satisfaction from being builders. "I really love starting from scratch on a project and seeing it through to the end. It's really gratifying to create something that makes your client happy at the end of the day," Scott said." Bo said he finds building really rewarding. "Even if it's someone else's idea, it's our creation."

They agreed that trying to determine the future of the housing market is the most challenging part of their work. "There are so many winds blowing. It's hard to manage speculative projects, to get in front of where the market's going to go," Bo confessed. "The market moves faster than a construction project." Scott likened it to a roller coaster.

"You have to have patience. You get excited when starting something new, but the market has demands. You have to be ready to downsize or expand. You can't turn on and turn off demand," Bo stated.

They currently have two patio home projects underway. Audubon Hollow is a 22-unit, \$50 million, high-end home development near the River Oaks neighborhood. The other is Maravilla Court, a 28-unit home development with prices starting at \$670,000 near Spring Branch.

Buyers have eight floor plans to choose from with options to modify slightly the floor plans. Buyers can also help select finishes to make their homes unique.

They also have four single-family speculative houses either under construction or on the market. On average they complete about 10 projects a year.

Despite their preference for classic, timeless architecture style, the Butler brothers will build in any style, depending on the client's preference, the context, the location and the perception of how the client wants to live. "We help give people what they want and need," Bo stated.

The Butlers agree that they want to continue in the custom home building and renovation market while increasing their client base. Custom building is the heart of their business





and always will be, they said.

There's no doubt these brothers will stay in step on their path to building Houston's premier housing!

For more information, visit www.butler-brothers.com or call 713-621-7221. You may contact Bo Butler at bbutler@butler-brothers.com and Scott Butler at sbutler@butler-brothers.com. Their office is located at 4605 Post Oak Place Dr., Suite 107, Houston, TX 77027.

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