

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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## IF Expands Again with Cabinetry and Schluter® Shower System Waterproofing

TRENDS IN TUBS

WINE CELLARING:  
GENERAL PRINCIPLES



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An Industry Trade Publication | *January 2021*



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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 Bowen Stolz

Magazine Layout & Design  
Pamela Larson

Website  
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

Printed in the USA  
by Seaway Printing

The Metropolitan Builder is a local trade publication published monthly in an informative and positive manner. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to building professionals throughout the greater Houston area. The opinions and facts expressed in The Metropolitan Builder magazine are those of the authors or columnist and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, nor do they constitute an endorsement of products or services herein. The Metropolitan Builder strives to ensure the accuracy of the magazine's contents. However, should inaccuracies or omissions occur, we do not assume responsibility. The Metropolitan Builder reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the expressed prior written permission of the publisher.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Giselle Bernard**  
*Publisher/Owner*

Let's face it. Being in business, whether as a sales professional or a business owner, requires making sales.

Builders sell to prospective home buyers. Remodelers sell to homeowners wanting to change their homes. Vendors and subcontractors, on the other hand, sell their products and services to the builders and remodelers.

All are salespersons, and all are customers.

You would think that since builders, remodelers, vendors and subcontractors go through the same sales process, they would be a little more courteous and considerate of each other's time.

Unfortunately, that's not necessarily true.

Selling is a process, a process that is often time consuming and sometimes frustrating. People on the



receiving end of the sales pitch feel that if they engage in conversation with the salesperson, then the salesperson will attempt to win them over and seal the deal against their will. They therefore avoid conversation all together to avoid "the confrontation."

It's exasperating when a prospective customer won't give the salesperson the common courtesy of just saying "No, I'm not interested," or "I'm still giving it some consideration," showing consideration of each other's time.

Wouldn't it be great if everyone involved in the sales process could just get on with business? After all, time is money.



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# IF Expands Again with Cabinetry and Schluter® Shower System Waterproofing

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

Houston's International Flooring (IF) isn't about just floors any more. After 18 years in business, IF now offers more than 500 pieces of cabinetry with immediate availability and a cabinet designer on staff to customize any kitchen's look. It's also adopting the Schluter® Shower System for waterproofing its bathroom tile installations.

"We're getting a good response from builders. There's a need for a full-service cabinet supplier that does design and installation for the builder," Richard Arnold, president and co-owner of International Flooring, stated. "Not only do we provide fast quotes – two days for cabinets and the same day for flooring – but we also offer a turnkey operation with installation." To handle its workload, IF employs two cabinet installers in addition to its office and back-shop workers. Arnold co-owns the company with Luis Hernandez.

IF can deliver pre-fabricated cabinets in standard sizes to builders in any style and size they want the day after

they're ordered, thanks to the huge warehouses of its suppliers.

Arnold continued, "There are so many sizes, we can do anything the builder wants. We supply cabinets from the very budget-oriented to the high-end custom," noting that in addition to the most popular frameless boxes and Shaker-style doors, IF will also supply made-to-order cabinets in specified woods and finishes if one of its 10 door styles and 20 colors does not meet the buyers' needs. Currently, 90 percent of the cabinets I.F. sells are white with Shaker doors.

International Flooring will display its new product line to homeowners as well as builders in an expanded showroom, adding 500 sq. ft. to the 3,500-sq.-ft. showroom space in its office and warehouse facility in Houston. It will "open grandly" at the beginning of the year.

He noted that the cabinet detail that architects provide in a home's rendering is a place to start for cabinet design, but





what really makes the difference is the design expertise that Paula Calderon offers IF's clients based on their budget and functionality needs.

A cabinet designer, Calderon joined IF's staff in fall 2020 to serve both builders and homeowners with cabinet design and hardware selection. "Paula can make kitchen and bath cabinetry look so much better with a little bit of design, such as where to place cabinet lighting and glass doors – things that will wow the homeowner," Arnold noted.

Popular features are hidden garbage containers and appliances, such as mixers and blenders, that can "disappear" into cabinets rather than cluttering countertops when not in use.

Calderon works with the clients through the whole selection process, which leads to high customer satisfaction, Arnold said. Builders receive the cabinet design service at no charge, he added.

IF's prefabricated cabinets have advantages to both the homeowner and the builder, Arnold declared. Homeowners get exactly what they want in cabinetry, with the design and quality that Calderon and IF provides. Builders can continue construction while top-quality cabinets are built in a shop rather than on the worksite. No longer does construction have to stop for almost a month while a trim carpenter builds cabinets and then a painter customizes them. "It all takes time and there's a lot of room for mistakes. These pre-fab cabinets are much more precise and much tighter," Arnold stated, than cabinets built on site.

Expanding its services to cabinetry just a few months ago, Arnold said International Flooring is already getting a good

*Continued on page 6*







*Continued from page 5*

response from builders. “Clients are very familiar with our service. They assume our service will be just as good for cabinets as it is with flooring. They tell me we just have to be competitive on the price side to get their business.” Arnold said his goal is to sell a million dollars of cabinetry and its hardware in 2021, and he expects to add a cabinet salesperson in the middle of the year.

Because most builders love the idea of getting multiple products from one source, they now can turn to International Flooring for wood floors, carpet, luxury vinyl tile (LVT), large-format tile, moisture shields, and slab preparation in addition to reclaimed antique beams, solid wood, engineered wood and laminate flooring. Wood

flooring comprises about 70 percent of IF’s sales.

Before adding cabinetry and its hardware in the fall of 2020, the company had about 500 different products in its showroom.

In 2021 International Flooring will expand into the tile business by offering the Schluter® Shower System, “a family of products that together forms a fully bonded, watertight assembly for tiled showers,” according to the company website, [www.schluter.com](http://www.schluter.com). It is used before tile is set.

It’s a waterproofing system for showers and steam that gives the builder a 10-year warranty, Arnold said. Waterproofing usually falls in the hands of the tile installer, who may not have the necessary additional training.

“We are focused on product knowledge. Every product I have, I understand it. I trust it. I can explain and put everything in context,” he noted. Arnold and one of his installers went to classes presented by Schluter to learn the system, and the installer’s work was inspected by the Schluter representative to ensure the company’s standards were followed.

With housing in the Houston market becoming vertical as land availability shrinks, shower leaks can create major damage in a two- or three-story house, Arnold stated. “Waterproofing is more important than ever.”

Builders look for vendors who can support their products, Arnold added. “Builders want a new product to fit in





their system or to save money. The builder needs to feel comfortable the product will perform. I help the builder keep looking forward.”

And it’s obvious that Richard Arnold also keeps International Flooring itself looking forward!

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# Trends In Tubs

## *Virtual Controls, Luxurious Woods and Stylish Small Space Solutions*

By Linda Jennings

Now that home has become the ultimate destination it's never been more important to have spaces for renewal. Builders and consumers are working to find bathing stations for all members of the family by reinventing existing spaces. And leading manufacturers have stood up to the challenge by offering innovative product solutions. From a small tub able to convert an existing shower alcove to a luxury spa, to a wooden tub able to create an outdoor retreat, to one that offers a virtual control app for the ultimate in pampering!



### **STYLISH SOLUTION FOR SECONDARY BATHS**

Today's families are spending more time at home and often have multiple generations sharing a household, so the demand for an enhanced second bathroom is growing. MTI Baths answers that movement with their new Adel 2, a tub designed to bring impressive style into smaller spaces with an infusion of spa-inspired luxuries. Available as a soaker or air bath, The Adel 2 is a chic freestanding tub with clean, organic lines, an integrated faucet deck and options such as chromatherapy, audio therapy and thermal therapy. Measuring 57" x 31" x 22", the Adel 2 fits an existing 60" alcove, making the tub a smart choice for remodeling projects.

### **SMART TECH - VIRTUAL CONTROL BATH APP**

BainUltra has made it even easier to enjoy a relaxing soak with their new BU-Touch app. This new app allows



users to control all the settings on their ThermoMassuer tub with a simple touch. Getting ready to take a bath has never been so much fun. Select colors for chromatherapy, set preferences for the

heated backrest and headrest, and program the drying cycle. Activate the Hydro-thermo Massage and enjoy instant bliss! Custom bathing preferences can be programmed in advance from anywhere in the house or bathers can use the app to make adjustments while in the tub. The BU-Touch app is compatible with any BainUltra tub, requires a router for operation, and may be installed after purchase



### **PURE SPA LUXURY**

The exquisite Shell Bathtub from Nina Mair is carved from a solid block of aromatic walnut using precision milling then refined, polished and oiled by hand. The elaborate production process includes precise positioning of every corner and curve for ergonomic optimization. Ideal for one or two bathers, the natural wood produces a warm and exceptionally comfortable bathing experience. The sophisticated drain and overflow lie flush with the surface of the bathtub making it virtually invisible. The tub measures 74" long and makes a bold impression in the bath long before it is filled with water and relaxing oils to spoil its owner with a luxury spa experience.

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# Wine Cellaring: General Principles

Simply put, a wine cellar can be any place designated to store a collection of wine. Be it an elaborate state-of-the-art 8000 bottle custom enclosure featured in a design magazine, to a dugout in a damp and dingy underground cave, to a set of modular wooden racks in the corner of an unfinished basement. Traditionally a wine cellar was thought to be anything situated below ground, but today with modern construction materials and techniques, that distinction is less applicable. While the ultimate purpose will always be to store wine (ideally under proper conditions), a cellar can also be a place to entertain guests, a beautiful object of desire to show off, a protective sanctum for a valuable investment, or any combination thereof.

Whatever use you may intend for your cellar; it is important to keep in mind that wine is a perishable product, and its protection should always be paramount. Designing an aesthetically pleasing room with wine racks is one thing,

making a stunning cellar that is also fully functional is another.

You will likely be investing as much in wine as you are on your cellar, so it makes good economic sense to take efforts to protect both investments. When stored properly, age-worthy wine not only maintains its quality longer (by extending its drinking window), but as it matures, its aroma, flavor, and complexity as continue to improve.

Proper wine cellaring principles all follow the same logic: shield the wine from harmful influences.

## Here Are the Major Dangers to Guard Against:

### 1. Temperature

Wine can become damaged when subject to extreme temperatures. If a cellar becomes too warm (in excess of 25 °C (77 °F)) for long periods of time, it may spoil or





“cook” the wine. Restaurants with limited storage space are often guilty of this crime, stowing their wine in over-heated kitchens. For the same reason, a home cellar should never be built next to a fireplace or furnace.

If the cellar becomes too cold, a wine can freeze, which can play havoc with the cork and introduce oxygen into the wine, a result that can be terminal if the exposure is too great.

But what is the perfect temperature to store wine? While this is a subject of debate among wine professionals, it is safe to say that a wine can be stored satisfactorily between 7–18 °C (45–64 °F). Some argue that the absolute perfect temperature for storing and aging wine is 13 °C (55 °F), which is approximately the same temperature found in many cellaring caves in France, but ultimately, whether or not you achieve the perfect temperature is not as important as maintaining consistency. In other words, it is better to be a little warmer (or colder) than optimal as long as your cellar is maintaining that temperature within one to three degrees. If temperature fluctuations are too drastic, you run into cork issues again and run the risk of oxidizing bottles in your collection.

Finally, a wine has a greater potential to develop complexity and a more aromatic bouquet if it is allowed to age slowly. Lower temperatures slow the aging cycle of wine, so it stands to reason that a cellar is better on the cooler side than warmer, especially if you enjoy all the wonderful tertiary characteristics that aged wine can provide.

**2. Humidity**

Humidity becomes an issue for wine when conditions are excessively dry or wet, or when the relative humidity fluctuates too greatly. Under dry conditions, a cork can

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become susceptible to damage. This is why you should not age wine in a normal refrigerator (the lack of moisture will dry out the cork, which can increase the risk of oxidization) and why you should always position your bottles horizontally (or at an appropriate angle) to ensure that the wine is always in contact with the cork. Anything too damp and labels could be damaged, which can affect the value of investment wines.

Regulating the ambient humidity of a wine cellar is often the most challenging environmental consideration to manage, especially if the cellar is situated in a dry climate. 75% Relative Humidity is often cited as best, but anything between 50% and 75% RH is more than adequate.

Maintaining good airflow and ventilation is also important, not only to keep the cellar a pleasant place to visit, but also to keep it free from persistent smells that could affect the wine.

**NOTE:** *If you happen to own a damp basement cellar in London or a dank cave in France, you can build what is called a passive wine cellar (i.e., you do not have to mechanically regulate the temperature or humidity since the natural environment does all the work for you). If you happen to live in a less ideal climate, you will need to build what is called an active wine cellar, which is to say you will need to take steps to actively regulate the ambient temperature and humidity (this applies to most wine cellars). This can be as simple as covering your cellar floor with an inch of gravel and periodically sprinkling it with water, or as sophisticated as enclosing your space and employing a state-of-the-art climate control system. A good active wine cellar should be insulated, with thermal and vapor barriers, and employ a specialized cooling and conditioning system to maintain the desired temperature and humidity.*

### 3. Light

Wine is photo sensitive. Light causes pigments to fade in red wines and darken in white wines. To that end, a cellar should be situated in a dark location, away from sunlight. If your cellar employs a lighting system, ensure that it is UV-free. Retail wine stores are notoriously bad for neglecting this aspect of proper cellar care, so always be sure to ask when you are purchasing a bottle (especially Champagne) whether or not it has been laid down under UV-free conditions.

### 4. Vibration

There is a respected line of thought that says a maturing wine should be kept free from all vibration. The idea is that sediment may be disturbed, which could upset the aging process. Therefore, you will not typically find a wine cellar built underneath a staircase. It is worth noting that one of the key differences between an entry-level wine fridge and a higher-end model is the quality of motor. Entry-level wine-fridge motors often exhibit a higher degree of vibration.

### 5. Freedom from Persistent Smells

Wine subjected to persistent smells can become tainted. Offending odors can come from the off-gassing of certain wood species, from the odor of certain finishing materials and stains, or from any other source that produces a persistent scent in the cellar (e.g., a nearby septic tank, chemical bath, etc.). Besides ruining the wine, a persistent off-putting smell can make visiting a wine cellar unpleasant at best, to uninhabitable at worst. All of Genuwine's cellars employ wood species sourced specifically for their ideal wine cellaring properties and the same holds true for all of our finishing materials, stains and lacquers.

### 6. Security

Finally, there is the issue of security, which is especially relevant for collectors interested in the world of investment wines, and even more pressing if a teenager resides in the





house. From simple door locks to fingerprint recognition technology to full-scale surveillance systems, security solutions of every magnitude exist to protect a wine cellar.



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# Awash In Color!

By Linda Jennings

Kitchen and bath design kicks-off the new year with an array of products that bring a beam of optimism! From bold primary color kitchen faucets to colored stainless farm sinks to vanities with a pop of color. Check out these great new products ideal for renovation and new home builds.

## ON THE SPOT



**The Dot shower drain from Easy Drain**

This unique shower drain from Easy Drain is characterized by its circular shape and extraordinary size. The Dot is perfect for renovations thanks to the innovative

and patented Multi drainage technology. The included shower board can be easily adjusted in height and shortened to any desired length and width. The Dot can be tiled directly on the stainless steel rough and works with nearly any substrate, so the design possibilities are infinite!

## BRASS ACCENTS



**Satin Brass Collection from Viaggio Hardware**

The new Viaggio Hardware draws inspiration from the modern architecture of northern Italy and the iconic fashion capital of Milan. Each piece is forged from solid brass and equipped with the company's Concealed Screw

Mechanism (CSM) for a streamlined look without exposed screws. The products are precision polished and coated with a protective lacquer for lasting good looks. They are available in a selection of five stunning finishes including bright chrome, satin black, satin brass (shown), satin nickel and titanium gray. Beautiful textures like hammered, linen and leather are also offered.

## POP OF CRIMSON

The Caso kitchen faucet from Isenberg offers that professional kitchen style with a chic color accent. Crafted from marine-grade 316 stainless steel, Caso tackles tough kitchen



**Caso kitchen faucet from Isenberg Faucets**

tasks with a dual function pull-down sprayer. In addition to traditional metallic finishes, Isenberg offers 20 ceramic-based color finishes that include glossy white and black as well as soft shades of gray, brown, and green plus bolder options such as crimson (shown here) and navy blue. Isenberg Faucets is unique in the industry as their products are designed and prototyped in the company's Texas-based Design Lab.

## BRILLIANT BLUE

The Furniture Guild brings a rainbow of colors to the bathroom with an amazing palette of finish options on their heirloom-quality vanities. The Lydia is a new transitional design, complete with minimalist lines and decorative



**The Furniture Guild's Lydia Vanity**

metallic trim that highlights three vertical drawer fronts. As with all the brand's designs, the Lydia can be customized in size and all manner of finishes, including exotic woods and even custom paint colors. From brilliant blues to striking reds, this vanity celebrates the idea of injecting color into traditional all-white bathrooms.



## STUNNING COPPER



**Ruvati's Terraza farmhouse sink in Copper Tone Matte Bronze**

Metallic tones are one of today's hottest design trends, and the unique colors offered by Ruvati's Terraza Collection of modern farmhouse kitchen sinks are exactly on point.

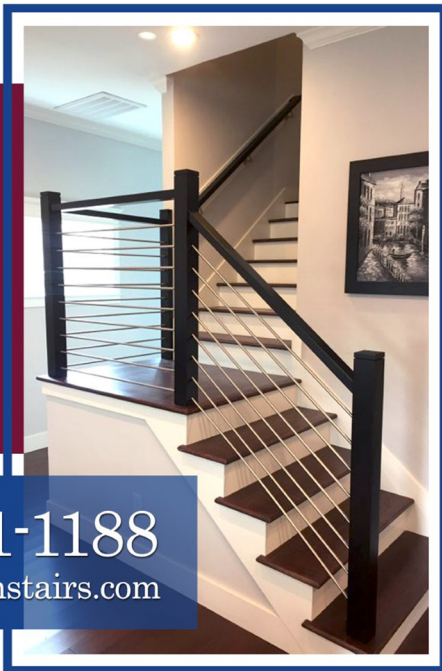
Choose from Brass Tone Matte Gold finish, a stunning Copper Tone Matte Bronze or a sophisticated Matte Black Gunmetal. Using a nano-PVD finish, the 16-gauge T-304 grade stainless-steel sink is overlaid with a colored finish that is amazingly durable and stain-resistant. Available in 30", 33" and 36" sizes, the collection allows homeowners to coordinate their sink color with their fixtures, cabinetry hardware or colored stainless-steel appliances for a truly cohesive look.

**To learn more about these products visit:**

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# NAHB Offers Registration Discounts and Exciting New Opportunities in IBSx Virtual Experience

Registration is open for IBSx, the new International Builders' Show® virtual experience from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). NAHB transitioned the in-person event to a virtual show due to health and safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

This online alternative of IBS, the most comprehensive business-building event in residential construction, will showcase the most innovative new products, offer live and semi-live interactive education sessions with on-demand recordings, feature creative networking opportunities such as live chat and one-on-one meeting requests, and much more. Registrants can participate in all of the IBSx offerings, Feb. 9 through Feb. 12, from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. ET daily.

“IBS has always been the premier show of the industry, and this year is no exception. While this year’s show is a different format than our attendees are used to, we think they will really be impressed with the new offerings and top-notch industry access they have come to expect,” said NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla. “NAHB is excited about the new IBSx virtual experience where participants can log in and have access to innovative product demos, networking opportunities and education sessions—all available from home or the jobsite, on-demand and when they want the information.”

The week will kick off with a special keynote address from well-known television host Mike Rowe. Participants will also be able to stay on top of the latest industry trends and exciting new product launches and demos through product areas such as the Home Tech Zone and Start-up Zone. Networking opportunities and one-on-one live meetings with top industry suppliers and service providers will also be part of the week.

Participants who register with an All Access pass can expand their skills and learn about a variety of cutting-



edge topics offered in the more than 100 exclusive education sessions featuring top industry speakers. Another big draw of the week is the unveiling of NAHB’s official show homes, The New American Home® and The New American Remodel®, through a series of virtual tours and presentations. The homes are designed to showcase innovative building technologies, emerging design trends and the latest building products.

IBSx is not open to the public. Industry professionals should register at [www.buildersshow.com](http://www.buildersshow.com). Expo passes for the virtual event are free for NAHB members, and \$50 for non-members. Early-bird pricing—available through Jan. 8—for an All Access: Education + Expo pass is \$199 for NAHB members, and \$299 for non-members.

Further details on the virtual offerings will be forthcoming. For more information on IBSx or the International Builders’ Show, visit [www.buildersshow.com](http://www.buildersshow.com).

*[Editor’s Note: Complimentary registration is available to credentialed members of the working press. Visit [www.designandconstructionweek.com/press](http://www.designandconstructionweek.com/press) for more information or to register.]*



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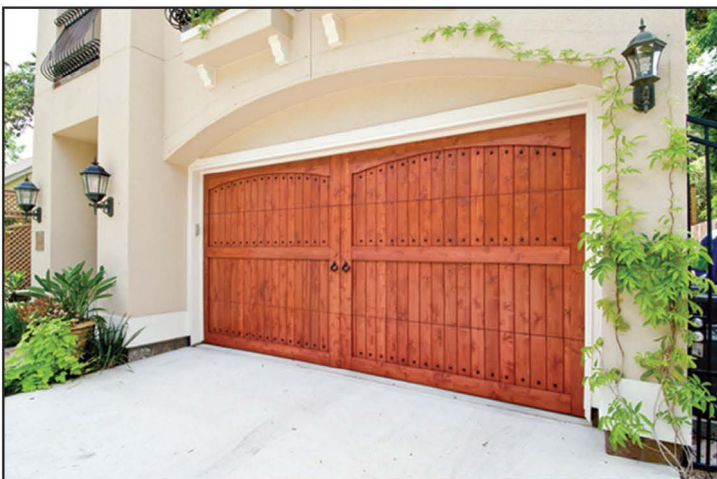
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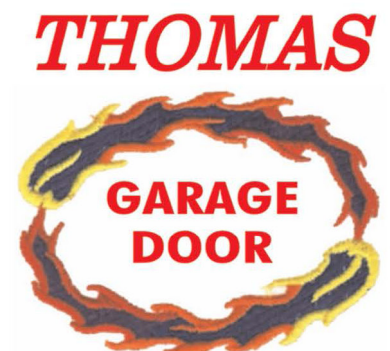
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The Metropolitan Builder  
5161 San Felipe Street #320  
Houston, Texas 77056



# Community HOME GUIDE

## 7 Reasons to Advertise on Community Home Guide.com

### 1 Cost Effective

You work hard for your money. That's why we keep our advertising rates as low as possible. A listing on our directory website is much less expensive than other advertising methods giving you more bang for your buck!

### 2 Measurable Results

Unlike traditional marketing methods where it's hard to track success, we offer key metrics and real-time traffic stats so you know exactly how many people are seeing your listing.

### 3 Locally Focused Marketing

By focusing exclusively on the local market, we're able to target the customers that matter most to you - local customers.

### 4 Get More Traffic

A listing on our directory website is a great way to get more visitors to your website and more customers to your business.

### 5 Increase Brand Awareness

Let's face it - the more exposure your brand gets, the better. That's why a listing on our directory website is a critical component to an overall healthy marketing strategy.

### 6 Always Accessible

Our mobile-friendly website allows potential customers to search and find your business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from any device - including desktop, tablets and smartphones.

### 7 Your Competitors are Advertising

If you're still on the fence about advertising on our directory website, consider this one very important fact: your competitors are doing it. Each day that passes when you're not taking advantage of advertising on our site is another day you're losing market share to someone else.

*Finally...a fast, easy and affordable way to grow your small business online.*



## Welcome to the Community Home Guide

Houston's newest digital marketplace; connecting homeowners with the local home builders, remodelers, renovation specialists & small home service companies.

We believe that Small Business is the backbone of our great country; therefore, the directory focuses on supporting our local, small

businesses. The very same businesses that are often the character of our neighborhoods and communities.

It is time to make buying from small businesses a conscious part of our routines, just like physical exercise — something you do because of the many benefits it brings.

**Get Started Today: [www.communityhomeguide.com](http://www.communityhomeguide.com)**

**Phone: 832-317-4505 • Email: [Gbernard43@aol.com](mailto:Gbernard43@aol.com)**

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