

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition
themetropolitanbuilder.com



Adelle Design + Build
Marries Beauty and Function

Adelle Design + Build | Houston, Texas



Adelle Design + Build Marries Beauty and Function

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Alison McMurtrey, owner of Adelle Design + Build, is a rare bird in the Houston market, for she is actually the designer and the contractor on her dozens of projects refining, renovating and restoring homes. She can talk design or talk building with her clients and then “grind it out” with the plumber on where to put the drain, she said.

“Sometimes I just do design work or just interiors work, or I just consult. With consultations I’m kind of a liaison between the client and the builder, which is an aspect I really enjoy,” she noted. “At times, it’s very hard for people to look at plans and envision what it’s going to look like. I can help them see the vision with my hard-line drawings.”

As a liaison in a new construction project, she serves as an advocate for the client. Her clients find it valuable to work with their own designer in the midst of the many meetings, questions, decisions and deadlines required by architects and builders.

Alison also said she loves working with architects. “My

preference is to work alongside an architect from the beginning of a project. I’m good at space planning and programming, that is, fleshing out what spaces are needed and how spaces should be used. This process is aided by the creation of schematic designs and sketches. In a home design, you don’t have to resolve everything with the architect, such as moving a door.

“I enjoy walking through all the architectural phases to ensure clients’ needs are met in kitchen and bathroom layouts, cabinetry design, lighting and plumbing fixture selections and placement, and the selections of paint colors and other finishes that help customize a home. I hope to make the architect’s and the builder’s jobs easier.”

She said about 60-65 percent of the company’s business is design, with the rest contracting, although there’s a blurred line where design ends and contracting begins, she admitted.

“I’m very practical; I like to make design decisions that are



both practical and beautiful, using refined details that aren't fussy. I will take the design one step further [than many builders]. No detail is too much for me. I love getting in the weeds."

Many of her clients are 35-45 years old with relatively young families who are building or remodeling a house. Maximizing storage and incorporating built-in cabinetry are important to her clients, according to Alison.

Being both a mother and a cook helps her understand the practical nature of kitchens, baths, mudrooms and overall living spaces. "I can provide the perspective of a consumer or user of these types of spaces." For example, she knows that frameless cabinets with pull-out shelves work better in small spaces. In most kitchen remodeling projects she can significantly increase the useable space with lots of recessed cabinets where there used to be voids. She knows where to put shelving for cereal boxes and cookies. "If you design effective, smart and organized spaces, kids will put

their stuff away," according to this mother of four.

"Women seem to appreciate my approach that things can look pretty and still work. At Adelle Design + Build we call it the marriage of beauty and function. I will use color in a fun way, such as on hand-painted tiles or an unusual countertop material in small, unexpected spaces."

Encompassing "all things house," Adelle Design + Build's typical projects include kitchen and bath renovations, built-in cabinetry, custom painting, flooring and finishes as well as outdoor projects with cabanas, outdoor kitchens and landscaping. In the last few years, McMurtrey said she has progressed to full-house remodels and additions.

During the spring of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down many businesses, McMurtrey completely renovated and "flipped" a house for resale. In the future she thinks it would be a fun challenge for her to build a spec house "where I can be my own client," but it would have to be the "right scenario."



Alison’s evolution into residential design and contracting was unexpected but not necessarily unpredictable. Growing up in the midst of design and creativity, thanks to her father’s work as a golf course architect and her mother’s influence in all aspects of making a home, she cultivated her interests in creative and artistic pursuits in art, music and writing during her youth in Shreveport, La. She was admitted into Louisiana State University’s nationally ranked interior design program but found its “tunnel vision” to be too restrictive. Expecting to attend law school, Alison transferred to Baylor University the next year to pursue a liberal arts degree. However, life interfered.

During the following years she worked in public relations/marketing. She had the opportunity to work for a progressive architecture firm where she learned about modern architecture, art and design. She then worked for a custom home builder and kitchen/bath designer in Shreveport where she learned about kitchen and bath design while at the same renovating her own home.

After a move to Houston, McMurtrey responded to a friend’s request to remodel her kitchen. “One thing led to another, and by referral I started getting busy.” She found the work conducive to having a family and formed Adelle Design + Build in 2009, using the middle name of her

youngest daughter for the company’s name because it had a French flair evoking her Louisiana roots.

At first, she was designing kitchens, then started building them, seeking out subcontractors who understand her designs and processes. Alison spent years putting her team of tradespeople together, selecting them because of their craftsmanship and artistry. They have traditional, old-school pride in their work and a strong work ethic, according to the company website, www.adelldesignbuild.com

Alison, along with Deb Turner, the firm’s project manager, coordinate work for as many as a dozen clients at a time since the projects are all at different stages. As the point person for logistics, Turner is the day-to-day scheduler and works at the job sites while McMurtrey provides more of the big picture perspective, creating drawings and working with clients on selections.

McMurtrey admitted that, at times, building can be more



gratifying than designing. “Design can be a very long, tedious process. When you tile a bathroom or paint a room, you see results right away.”

*To contact Adelle Design + Build,
call 713-818-1281 or
email alison@adelledesignbuild.com or
visit www.adelledesignbuild.com.*

Handcrafted, Elegant, one-of-a-kind wooden surfaces made to perfection



- wide selection of*
- *wood species*
 - *edge treatments*
 - *construction styles*
 - *textures*
 - *distressing*



*When it comes to High Quality Custom Wood Flooring & Rugs
There's only place to go - **International Flooring***



713-895-7562 office
richard@ifhouston.com
www.ifhouston.com

