

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition
themetropolitanbuilder.com



Bolio's Alair Homes Houston Focuses on Relationships First

Bolio's Alair Homes | Houston, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Chris Bolio of Alair Homes Houston is a man passionate about his work.

But his passion isn't driving nails. His passion is creating life-changing experiences for his clients, his trade partners and his employees. "Our business is not about the homes we build. It's about the service we provide, and the experiences we share. We work to create an environment that improves the lives of all the people we touch," Bolio stated.

"We spend time to create a relationship with our clients. That relationship is at the core of everything. If clients have a bad experience, you're not going to be successful as a builder.

"We don't choose projects; we choose clients."

He continued, "Homes are the manifestation of how we see our lives. They reflect our economic status, our jobs, our family life. They are a projection of what we see as

our future. They are the backdrop of our lives. They are where we watch our kids grow up and where we create our memories. Homes are such an emotional purchase, such an emotional commitment. As humans we have always searched for a place where we feel safe, where we feel secure, where we call home base. They are also one of our most expensive purchases.

"So the stakes are very, very high. Emotions can get high. Things can go very, very well or very, very poorly. No builder sets out to disappoint a client. Every single house is as individual as the people we are serving."

Alair Homes Houston can complete a small renovation for as little as \$50,000 or build custom homes for as much as \$5 million and above – and anything in between. The client's need is the determining factor. "Every client gets exactly what they want, balancing their desires with their budget," Chris explained.

He noted that the best builders and renovators use a



two-step process. The first step is aligning the clients' expectations with the builders' expectations. The second is weighing those expectations against the budget and educating the clients about what the costs are to meet those expectations. "Expectations of cost can vary wildly. We set budget and project expectation goals, then work towards a balance of the two, no matter what that may be."

"We work to create alignment of values with the client and tradespeople. What does the client need? How is the client best served?" Chris, who has been building homes since 2002 and custom homes since 2005, said, "The goal is to use our experience to best help our clients. Our clients get exactly what they want at exactly the price they want to pay."

However, "we're not for everybody. We have a very rigorous pre-selection process [to ensure alignment with the client]. We will turn away a client if we can't reach alignment. If we're not a good fit, I would prefer to say no to a big job than to be miserable building it."

According to this Houston native, Alair engages architects and interior designers to help meet the clients' needs when appropriate. Not married to any one architect, he uses a half dozen on and off. "We're always looking for great partners





who are aligned with our goals and can help us achieve that client's dreams.”

Bolio recommends that a homebuyer should select a builder based on the builder's ability to connect with the client rather than on the nebulous, projected cost. “Our industry, in general, operates where ‘guessing’ is okay on an incredibly intricate product; homebuyers will get three different bids or ‘guesses’ on costs. We believe that homeowners shouldn't settle for guess work to select a builder to work with.

“The home is personal to you, so picking a builder should be personal too! Get to know your potential builder. Do you want to have them over for dinner? We believe that connection and trust earned early in the process is extremely important,” he continued.

When he joined the international company in 2017, Bolio rebranded his self-named construction company as Alair Homes Houston; he partners with Nick Spector in their local company. Chris handled sales and development, and Nick oversees operations. They employ two project managers and expect to hire more project managers and a dedicated salesperson in the future.

Despite his being fluent in Spanish, Bolio said their company has no typical customer. “We've chosen not to serve a certain market. We serve all kinds of clients, with a huge range of clientele.” They will build all over the Houston market, but when they meet with potential clients, they consider if they can get to the job site every day “to surprise and delight the client.”

They complete 8-12 projects each year, with sales in 2021 projected to be \$6-8 million, split equally between new, custom homes and renovation projects.

Bolio and Spector's Alair Homes Houston is one of 111 individual homebuilding companies in Canada and the United States under the Alair Homes North America brand. Headquartered in British Columbia, Alair has the largest footprint of any premium custom home building and large-





scale renovation/remodeling brand in the world, according to its website. The core purpose of Alair is to bring together the leading custom builders and remodelers across North America under one brand, one team and one vision.

A second Alair Homes Houston, owned by Peter Lopez, shares office space with Bolio and Spector's business. Chris said the brand will expand to include many other local builders because sharing higher standards, business philosophy and best practices makes each business better.

Following a franchise model, each local company is individually owned, but the owners of each "have aligned together to create a reliable, repeatable experience for their clients," according to Bolio, who earned a degree in business from Texas A&M University. "These builders improve each other's business models by sharing their experiences and expertise, creating best practices, much like a Builder 20 group on steroids. We each have our own business, but we work together for each other's success. We have to be sure we're aligned as an organization."

The company's ethos is to measure success by customer



satisfaction and referrals, Bolio shared. No Alair partnership builds speculative homes. However, they will build for investors and those investors' needs.

For more information, contact Chris Bolio through the website www.alairhomes.com/houston or call 713-597-8910.

The Alair Homes Houston office is located at 9440 Bamboo Road, Houston, TX 77041.

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