

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition
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Dialogue with a Designer



 **BATHS**
OF AMERICA
FINE BATH & KITCHEN GALLERY

Missy Stewart Designs

Houston, TX



Dialogue with a Designer

Missy Stewart

***BATHS OF AMERICA** opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now offers door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.*

*This month **BATHS OF AMERICA** speaks with Missy Stewart of Missy Stewart Designs, an award-winning designer based in Houston, Texas, with more than 25 years of experience and countless homes and spaces designed. Missy designs homes where memories will be made for years to come and has a great time along the way. She prides herself on creating spaces that are contemporary, modern, and personalized to each client by combining interior, exterior, and outdoor design to ensure a cohesive aesthetic. Her goal is simple: to help clients design and execute a space that is uniquely their own.*

Having co-owned a construction firm for over 25 years,

Missy understands the importance and art of working with contractors and designing for a variety of finishes and home types. Over the years, she has built professional relationships with a variety of trusted vendors and craftsmen. This is imperative to create a complete space. She works with them to deliver a finished product that is not only beautiful but well built. Simply put, working with Missy means working with an entire team of home improvement professionals who cater to you. I'm thankful for vendors like Baths of America. They have a beautiful showroom that my clients love. Their staff is very knowledgeable. They have experts in each department. I appreciate that. They are prompt to reply and get quotes out. That is saying something in this busy market.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What motivated you to go into the interior design field?

Missy Stewart: I have been drawn to interior design even as a child. I was lucky to have parents who fostered this. I was allowed to change my room often. They would let me paint whatever I wanted and even changed my furniture out more often than most parents would. I was amazed at how the feeling of a room could change a person's spirit.



BATHS OF AMERICA: *How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

Missy Stewart: I graduated with a degree in early childhood education. I did not get a design degree. I came to this business by way of being in the construction business. I owned a construction company, and we built spec homes, homes for custom clients, as well as a house that my family and I would live in for two years before we sold and built another one for us. I was only making selections for the construction company and clients of the construction company for quite a long time. At some point, others wanted to hire me to design for them. I branched out, and exclusive became a designer, and was no longer in the construction business. I taught myself Auto CAD, and the design business was just what I needed to fulfill my career passions.

The most significant way I think the field has changed is that clients are much more educated coming to the table. Designers brought the information to the clients. The clients now have spent hours looking at images and get to know their styles. It is a win-win for everyone.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

Missy Stewart: An experienced designer should make the builder's job easier and work as part of the project's team. The designer will be aware of the builder's schedule and budget. The designer will create architectural drawings (including tile design layouts) and job site documents available to the trades. An experienced designer knows



things come up and should be available to the builder and their team. A builder and a designer who trust each other is an amazing team. I also like to think that designers help builders keep their work up to date.

BATHS OF AMERICA: *What sets you apart from other designers?*



should all be done soon, and I will be so happy for them to be enjoying the beautiful home they remodeled. I will also be glad to get photos of it. It is one of my favorite projects, and I wish I had the images to show on my website.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients

Missy Stewart: I like to start the design process with a discovery meeting. I like for clients to have at least a few photos to show me what they like. Clients may have a hard time verbalizing what they want, but they can look at a picture and tell you if they like it. Once I have a feel for what they like, I take over. I let them know if what they are drawn to is dated. I try not to influence them too much. If I show them how we can achieve their vision in an up-to-date version. Some clients know exactly what they want and are pretty on point.

I also like to connect with the builder to confirm his process. Some builders pass on their discounts to clients and bill directly, and others make it up. It is imperative to make sure I understand how the builder is billing the client so as I do not interrupt their process.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?

Missy Stewart: I'm not sure if it is a mistake, but I do think they do not think outside of the box as a designer does. You may not just want one chandelier in the dining room. I love using two chandeliers in a dining room. I just completed entry lighting that had three pendants hung at different heights. That is just an example. Designers see so many things and have such amazing imaginations.

Missy Stewart: The fact that I learned to design from a construction perspective is unique. I have been on construction sites for over 30 years. I enjoy the process and enjoy being on the job site.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What has been your most challenging project and why?

Missy Stewart: I have a project that has been going on for seven years. It is not complete yet. I designed, and the first-floor entry, living room, dining room, office, and powder room was remodeled. Right after we were done, my clients flooded with Harvey. They then had to repair what had just been done and more. We then remodeled the kitchen, primary bedroom, primary bathroom, and family room as well. The clients are still waiting to finish the primary bathroom. They did not have flood insurance. It



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'I believe luxury is living in a space that lifts your spirits, and I want to make yours soar.'
- Missy



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