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Basic Builders' Work
Hides in Plain Sight

Dialogue with a Designer:
Caroline Wheeler

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THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher



Wow! Can you believe that it's been a year and we are still dealing with the Covid 19 pandemic? On top of that, we are also dealing with the imposed mandates coming down the pipeline. Well, in deciding as to whether I am going to venture down to Orlando to attend the show in February, I needed to know what Health & Safety Protocols were being put in place for those attending the show. I

have posted that information below for your review. I've been told, by an IBS staff member, that we should keep checking the www.buildersshow.com website for possible Health & Safety Protocol updates. If you are planning on attending the show this year, be safe and enjoy. Florida is a wonderful state in which to visit these days.

Health & Safety Protocols - 2022 NAHB International Builders' Show and NKBA Kitchen & Bath Industry Show

Guidance related to large gatherings relative to COVID-19 (also referred to as SARS-CoV-2) and associated variants continues to change. What will remain constant is the commitment of the NKBA's Kitchen & Bath Industry Show® (KBIS) and the NAHB International Builders' Show® (IBS) to the health and safety of attendees, exhibitors, partners and staff at our shows.

We are working with our vendors, partners and the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) to protect your health and deliver a safe and productive environment in which to conduct business.

Individuals that attend or exhibit at either show should anticipate that the following protocols, which are based on current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State of Florida and local Orlando health authorities, will be enforced:

A. All registered attendees and exhibitors are required to provide:

Proof of a Negative COVID-19 Test Result within five days of attending the show*.

Two types of Negative COVID-19 tests are acceptable: polymerase chain reaction referred to as "PCR" (also



called diagnostic or molecular), or rapid antigen test (also referred to as a "rapid test"). Either of the following will be accepted for entry (when accompanied by a valid government issued photo ID):

Electronic proof of a Negative test result through a Show Management approved app, or

A printed or digital copy of your Negative COVID -19 test results, written in English, that indicates the type of test administered (PCR or Antigen) and has your name and the date the test was administered.

*PLEASE NOTE: Per the CDC, Negative COVID-19 test results are valid for 5 days (120 hours), meaning that

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Geis Development Good Fit for Busy Professionals

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Many of Houston's busy young professionals are finding the semi-custom building process that Geis Development offers is a good fit for their lifestyles ... just as the luxury homes themselves are.

Brandon Geis, owner, said his home-building process makes it easy for homebuyers to customize his home designs to match their particular needs. "They can take one of my designs and make changes to it." The buyers, who are typically double-income families with young children are purchasing homes for the second or third time and know what they want in a house but don't have the time to make the myriad of decisions necessary for a fully

customized house.

"About 10 percent of people want to be involved in every single detail. That's not my business model." He has found in his 24-year building career that it's overwhelming for a homebuyer, who doesn't do that sort of decision-making every day, to decide on room sizes and grout colors, for example.

"Home building is quite complicated. We deal with engineering, energy conservation and drainage. We know what the building codes are and what size of bedrooms are appropriate. We do the hard part, and the homebuyers do



the fun part [by selecting countertops, lighting, flooring and fixture options.] We simplify their choices of products within their budgets.” He said his buyers want something nice using their décor style that will re-sell easily in the future.

“Some people want a house that’s in the magazines,” Geis said. They also look at HGTV, Pinterest or other internet sites to get ideas. Lisa Roberts, his on-call designer, works with the homebuyers to “make each and every home special. We use their style but the brain of the designer. She does a lot of little things that set the house apart, things the homeowner doesn’t expect, but all with their approval and within their style.” Her team works closely with the clients to understand their unique style to make the house feel like their home.

“I have to build what people want. People are aware of trends, and I have to stay on top of those trends. Using Lisa as a designer is a big part of that,” he admitted.

Geis Development currently builds six to eight custom and speculative luxury homes in the Memorial, Spring Branch and Spring Valley areas of Houston each year, typically on tear-down lots because lots and land are getting harder to find. “I know the market, the square footage and the



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He said a walk-in “working” pantry with a countertop (in quartz), where the homeowner can keep small appliances out of sight, is popular too. The clutter-free kitchen counters showcase countertops and back splashes.

Other trends include eliminating the living room and perhaps even the dining room in favor of that first-floor flex room. “Everybody still wants a big island open to a great room,” according to Geis. “We can enlarge the breakfast nook to allow an eight-seat table if there’s no dining room. Others like the design feature that comes with a dining room with its table and chandelier, even though they may not use it.”

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features in those areas that will attract buyers.” Many homebuyers sacrifice yard space for “cocktail” swimming pools and over-sized two-car garages. His homebuyers are aware of future needs, too. Many are requesting that an electric car charger be put in the garage.

Game rooms, media rooms and a second downstairs bedroom suite are current trends. That second suite can be used as a flex room, such as a second home office, or for nanny or mother-in-law quarters as well as for guests. One homeowner made the flex room into an extension of the master closet to create a “salon” for herself.

Brandon said his “sweet spot” is a 4,000-4,500 sq. ft., five-bedroom home with four bathrooms that costs \$1-1.5 million. But he will build larger and smaller homes. His streamlined process shortens the time to build to 6-8 months instead of 18-24 months. He learned many efficiencies during the dozen years he worked for a production builder after graduating from Lamar University in Beaumont in 1996. He then turned to a more customized approach when he started Kinsmen Homes with a partner in 2008.

“I generally build a transitional type of home. I build what people want to live in and be comfortable in, something more livable than a photo-worthy home,” he noted.



Each home features quartz countertops, Subzero Wolfe appliances, KwikSet “smart” door locks, Coyote outdoor kitchens and high-end hardwood floors.

The company is currently building luxury homes for a neurosurgeon, a plastic surgeon, a lawyer, a commercial architect, a marketing business owner, a restaurant executive and a banker, Geis said, as an example of the type of clients it attracts. They want to be closer to work and to their children’s private schools than living in the suburbs allows.

He has found that his clients want to talk to a decision-maker, and he promises them, as the owner of Geis Development, that he will be at their home site multiple times a week, if not every day.

For Geis Development, which he created in 2018, Brandon expects to continue his current building process of semi-custom homes. But, “You have to evolve. Lots are getting scarce. Land is getting scarcer. There’re other projects out there, such as the build-to-rent concept. I have a project that will start next year. These are smaller homes that are almost like horizontal apartments in gated communities. I’m keeping my eye on trends in every way.”



To contact Geis Development, call 281-845-3050, email sales@geisdev.com or visit www.geisdev.com. The office is located at 8554 Katy Freeway, Suite 300, Houston, TX 77024.



Basic Builders' Work Hides in Plain Sight

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

The work of Basic Builders Construction is all over greater Houston, but few people may realize it.

Its eye-catching and award-winning endeavors allow businesses to conduct their work efficiently in an atmosphere that enhances their image, whether that business is banking, medicine, law or hospitality. Basic Builders specializes in all areas of commercial interior construction and renovations, most typically in the office build-outs and remodeling that account for approximately 98 percent of its revenue.

Its notable recent projects include La Table in the Galleria; all Treebeards locations; Taste of Texas; the first floor lobby and food court at Esperson building; Tudor Pickering & Holt Co., an energy investment and merchant bank; Global Energy Capital; Laminack, Pirtle & Martines, a law firm; Empryeann; and CCRD Consulting Engineers. It is currently

constructing a wine bar and outdoor seating area for the Post Oak Hotel in the Galleria section of Houston.

In a rare residential project, Basic Builders completed a multimillion-dollar condominium town house unit in the River Oaks area.

In 2019, it even played a major role in the restoration and recreation of NASA's Mission Control Room at the Johnson Space Center to commemorate the 50th anniversary of man's landing on the moon!

"We have the experience, the ability, and the manpower to bid and execute any size job, from building standard construction to custom-design decor. No job is too small or too large," according to Roxane Baer, company president. Projects range from \$1,000 to \$3 million.



Basic Builders maintains high standards and strives to complete projects ahead of schedule, agreed Jessica Kuhns, assistant project manager and millwork administrative assistant. “Because most of our projects consist of interior work, we don’t have to fight the weather to stay on schedule,” she said. Having an on-site warehouse also helps the company meet deadlines.

“We are one of the few general contractors that has its own millwork shop,” Fares said. Having a cabinet shop “allows us to control the quality. We treat all projects as high-end. Everything is custom-made. Nothing is stock. We use only

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Since its founding in 1989, co-owner and vice-president Don Baer has set high standards, according to John Fares, millwork supervisor. “I go into places [done by other contractors], look at the quality of work, and wonder how they got away with it. Don Baer wants the work done right the first time without cutting corners. He expects the best quality of materials and work possible.”



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Dialogue with a Designer

Caroline Wheeler

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 Caroline Wheeler, owner of Designer Details. Caroline's passion for interiors and turning diamonds in the rough into beautiful homes, has evolved into a very successful & exciting interior and remodeling venture. Her success has evolved by making Houston homes beautiful, one home at a time!!

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

Caroline Wheeler: *Growing up in Australia I always found our homes to be uninspiring. I was constantly changing my room around as a child, hungry for a new look each time.*

When I began traveling the world in my early 20's my love and obsession for all things interior was truly born. I knew I had found my passion and wanted to be a part of creating interiors that would be both evocative and personal to my clients at the same time. I continue to enjoy the excitement of wanting to create living environments that are uniquely different and that realize the full potential of a space.

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

Caroline Wheeler: My education in Australia focused more in the area of architecture. This didn't feed my craving to be on the front row of the design process. I've been a self-taught designer and remodeler for the past 20 years here in Houston and can't express how fulfilling this design journey has been. The industry has most definitely evolved in terms of educated clients. With the access to all the available online resources and social media, clients are definitely more self aware of style and their personal preferences. The continued improvement in design software has also been a major game changer in allowing us to present visual aids for a client to see either their new construction or intended remodel, completely reimaged



in ways like never before. The amazing selections in terms of materials has also never been so exciting, diverse, accessible or affordable.

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

Caroline Wheeler: Houston is home to many truly incredible designers. I believe that where I often differ is that I am well versed in the construction phase as well as the design. This helps to navigate the process of design differently and more efficiently for my clients, remodelers and builders. I’m extremely hands on at the job site as well as the design. My clients have complete access to me and know that when problems arise, I address them quickly and find solutions that won’t compromise their design or project. One of the qualities my clients definitely enjoy is that I listen. This is their home, and it needs to be a true reflection of “the client”. My job and passion are providing a design that beautifully echoes this sentiment in the most stylish ways.

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

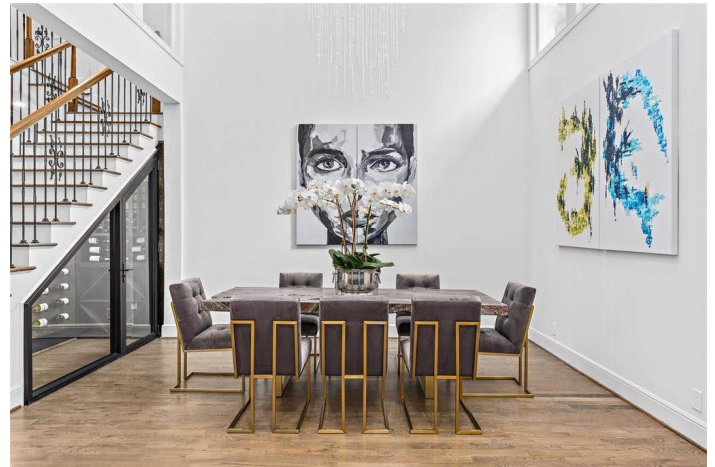
Caroline Wheeler: A first step in this process is to have a discovery consultation with the potential client. I request any inspirational images they can provide that helps to



learn their styles and preferences. I have a questionnaire that I ask clients to complete. This enables me to learn about their lifestyle, must have’s, pets and all factors that I need to take into consideration when designing for them. This is also the time to discuss the dreaded word for many, “budget”. Having the guide of a budget keeps many elements in line and is extremely important to have one to remain conscientious of all design selections and details. This initial meeting is very important. It provides a great amount of information that will help both the client and me also know if we are a good fit for each other.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Speaking about staying current,

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how to you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

Caroline Wheeler: Staying both current and on point with design trends are extremely important to me. I attend as many design conventions as possible each year. It's exciting to attend these and be at the forefront of design movements and developments. My continued relationships with long time vendors and resources also enables me to be aware of trends as they are happening. Being present on social media is equally as important. Not only are we able to share our works, but we also draw a lot of inspiration from the worlds leaders in the interior design industry this way. While trends are most definitely an important element incorporated into the design process, I also remain true to the client's personalities and always remember the design ultimately must be a reflection of themselves and the way they desire to live.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What is your favorite design style?

Caroline Wheeler: I'm eclectic in my design preferences and styles. I enjoy mixing elements that are often unexpected or contrasting in a way that surprises. There are simply too many styles that captivate me to narrow it down to just one. I'm fortunate that I can design across

the board in terms of styles. What excites me the most, as opposed to a favorite style, is helping a client discover their personality through design and then making it become a reality in their homes.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How would you characterize your personal style?

Caroline Wheeler: My personal style is sophisticated with subtle hints of glam. I enjoy the building of tone-on-tone colors and then adding unexpected bold, colorful elements. My personal style tends to be slightly more masculine and a curated collection of eclectic finds.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Any last thoughts, comments?

Caroline Wheeler: I feel blessed to work my passions daily. To flirt with tradition while delivering unique living environments for my clients.

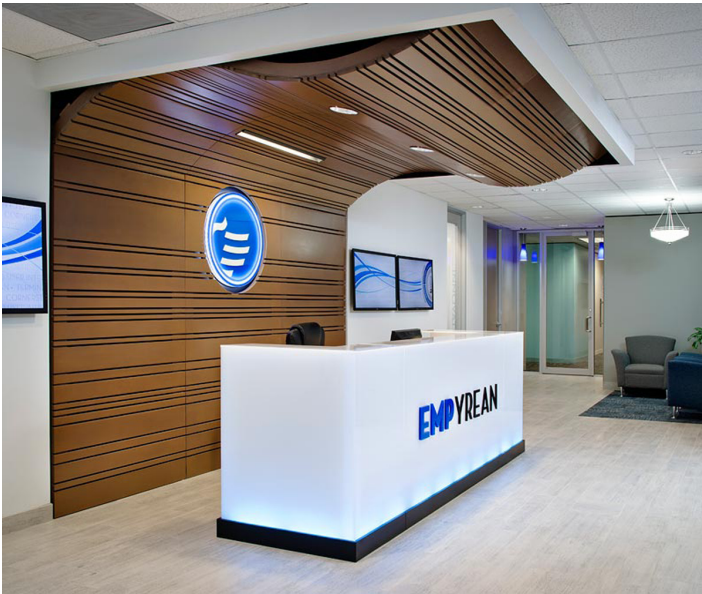
Caroline Wheeler

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domestic products, with most coming from Hardwood Products here in Houston.”

Basic Builders counts five cabinet makers among its 39 employees. Fares and two other cabinetmakers joined the company when their cabinet shop was acquired by Basic Builders in 1996.

Its four field superintendents, each with 30 or more years of



experience, supervise five to six projects at a time. While subcontractors handle electrical, plumbing and HVAC, “we pride ourselves on the work we do in-house, which includes demolition, drywall, doors, frames, hardware, ceilings and millwork,” according to Roxane Baer.

Many of Basic Builders’ jobs come from professional referrals. Its owners have a relationship with such architectural firms as MARs, Rottet Architects, Gensler and Zeigler-Cooper. Referring property management companies include Transwestern, Hines, CBRE, Stream Realty, Parkway Properties and Landry’s, according to Kuhns.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Basic Builders, as it has most businesses. “Because of the pandemic, people have been holding off on changing offices. Our business slowed down over the past year and a half, but it’s picking up again,” Fares commented. “It’s starting to get back to where it was.”

And Basic Builders is ready to meet the challenge!

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SIX BIG IDEAS TO TRANSFORM KITCHEN AND BATH SPACES!

By Linda Jennings

Undertaking a major renovation can be a lot of work and expensive but imagine making a big impact with just one fixture update. From adding a sensational

freestanding tub to a dramatic faucet, these brands offer sophisticated options able to transform kitchen and bath spaces with immediate sophistication.



MTI Baths Parisian in DoloMatte

Fresh Farmhouse

HamatUSA's Chelsea kitchen sink combines natural fireclay's unmatched strength and beauty with an ingenious workstation design. This revolutionary sink integrates a farmhouse apron-front with a unique work-ledge that accommodates a range of accessories. Its drop-ledge greatly expands the sink's functionality, making it easy for the included accessories to flow seamlessly between the upper and lower level. The Chelsea Workstation measures 33" x 20" with a center drain and a generously deep single basin. The sink is offered in an array of classic colors, including white, matte black, matte grey, and biscuit; the sink is eco-friendly, completely lead-free, and comes with a Limited Lifetime Warranty.

Velvety-Soft Tubs And Shower Bases

MTI Baths' latest DoloMatte material is available on their Designer Collection of freestanding tubs and low-profile shower bases. A cutting-edge true solid-surface material that is luxuriously beautiful, incredibly strong, and velvety-



MTI Baths DoloMatte Freestanding Tub - 178

soft to the touch. With an exquisite matte finish and inviting tactile experience, DoloMatte opens exciting new doors of design possibility. The new American-made solid surface is durable, impact/shock-resistant, and extremely scratch- and stain-resistant. The non-porous white surface is easy to clean and is resistant to mold, mildew, and UV damage.

Nifty Niches

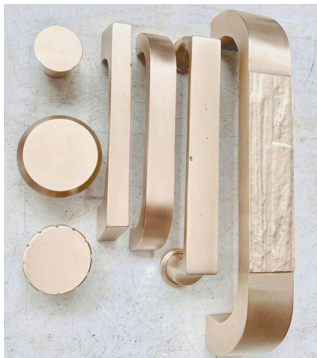


C-BOX by ESS

Bathroom storage has never looked so good or sparked so much fun! The C-BOX by ESS, is a collection of stylish storage niches that make practical use of previously unused wall space. C-BOX uses a unique frameless design that you can use alone, in pairs or in nearly any configuration.

Crafted of premium stainless steel, C-BOX is completely waterproof and easy to install and maintain. Available as a square or a horizontal or vertical rectangle, C-BOX designs come in three sizes ranging from 6" to 24" in length. In addition, five beautiful finishes provide fashionable options to suit any décor.

Champagne Tastes



Brushed Bronze finish from Hardware Renaissance

showcases the beauty of this copper-rich alloy. It is a living finish that ages without tarnish and can be easily re-waxed to maintain a rich look. Shown here on some of the brand's newest knobs and pulls, Brushed Bronze is truly the champagne of finishes and makes a statement in any room.

The Brushed Bronze finish from Hardware Renaissance is as pure and natural as it gets. Each piece from this bespoke luxury collection is a work of art. The hardware is sand cast in fine silicon bronze, hand chased, and finished with exceptional hand-applied patinas and waxed by hand.

With its appearance like fine champagne, Brushed Bronze

Industrial Chic

Add industrial style to the bathroom with dramatic metal detailing. The Furniture Guild got it just right with their new Logan Vanity, which is tastefully embellished with sleek metal accents and softly rounded corners. The solid brass brackets wrap all the way around the vanity and team nicely with the metal post legs. The Logan was thoughtfully designed for daily living with doors, drawers and shelves to create open and closed storage spaces. The vanity may be ordered in different sizes and configurations including single or double basin designs, as well as an array of spectacular finishes and metals. All metal elements



The Furniture Guild's Logan Vanity

are made by hand by talented Furniture Guild artisans. Available options include nice-to-have upgrades like walnut drawers or an integrated glass divider system.

Architectural Elegance



Rilievo from Gessi North America

took design inspiration from mathematical principles to create the Rivielo signature of a circle encapsulated by a square, a symbolic pairing of eternal movement which has inspired countless cultures through the ages. This diversity of shapes gives the collection a fluid versatility that fits easily into minimalist or decorative decors. The Rilievo Collection includes various configurations for sinks, tubs, showers, and accessories in multiple finishes for a fully cohesive look.

Created in collaboration with renowned architect group Hirsh Bedner Associates (HBA), the geometric design of the Rilievo Collection from Gessi evokes a feeling of harmony in the bath. HBA

For more information visit:

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Continued from page 3

the Negative test must have been completed no earlier than Sunday, February 6, 2022, in order to be accepted for entry for all three show days. Testing sites may be found [HERE](#).

B. If the individual is unable or unwilling to provide proof of a Negative COVID-19 Test Result:

Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination prior to entry will suffice.

Per the CDC, US domestic residents are fully vaccinated if they have completed two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The CDC has also indicated that it will consider international travelers who have completed full regimens of vaccines approved for emergency use by the World Health Organization as fully vaccinated.

Any one of the following will be accepted for entry (when accompanied by a valid government issued photo ID):

Electronic proof of your negative test results through a Show Management approved app, or

A CDC Vaccination Card (a photo or photocopy of your card is also valid, as is digital documentation via a mobile device), or

A Government Issued Vaccination Record in English (paper, electronic, or photo).

C. In addition, all registered attendees and exhibitors are:

Required to wear a facemask regardless of vaccination status when riding on an Official Show Hotel Shuttle and when indoors at the OCCC from move-in through move-out and at other show related venues.

Masks will be available at the OCCC if needed.

This Health & Safety Protocol incorporates the 2022 KBIS and 2022 IBS Terms & Conditions for all attendee and exhibitor registrants.

The OCCC has established safety measures for visitors including cleaning and hand sanitizer stations throughout the center. More information is available [HERE](#).

Show Management is continuously monitoring guidance from the CDC and state/local health authorities and reserves the right to adjust the shows' Health & Safety Protocol as relevant recommendations and tradeshow industry standards evolve.

Effective as of October 11, 2021 and subject to revision.



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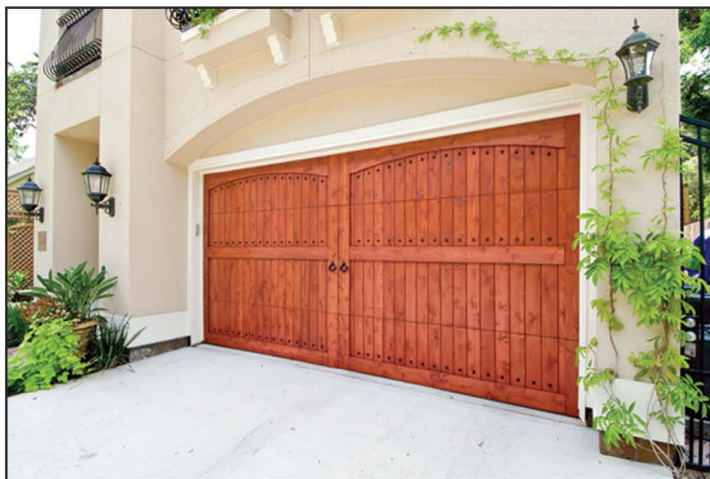
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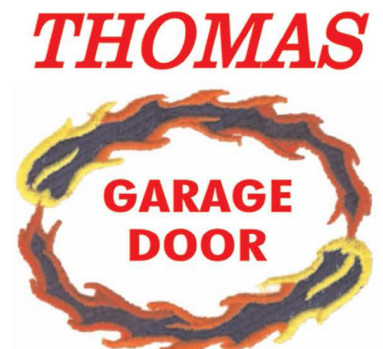
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