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Dialogue with a Designer - Shabazz Anwerr



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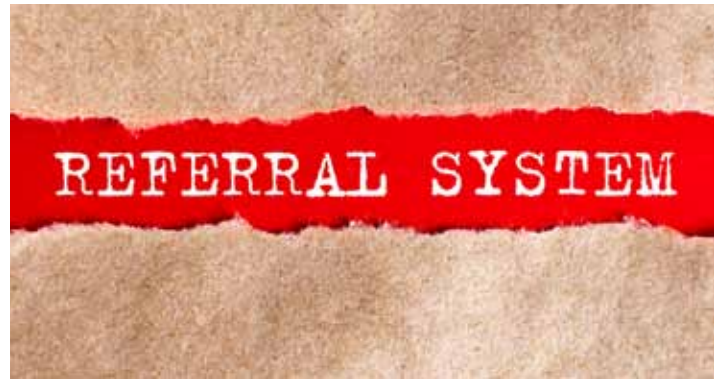
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher



Switching vendors and subcontractors from time to time is a given. There are times that you must deal with excessive increases in costs of products or services, unreliable delivery, poor communication, or just plain old poor service. These problems will inhibit you from reaching your short term and long-term business goals.

Regardless of your company's size, it behooves you to work with vendors you can count on. Evaluate your vendors' service on a quarterly basis.

When you consider replacing a vendor or subcontractor, it's important to keep your options open and meet with the vendors and subcontractors who have been referred. After all, they are invested in your success.

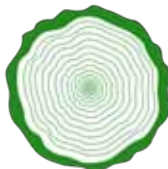
As you know, the vendors and subcontractors in which I represent have all been referred to me by the builders, remodelers and interior designers and in which I have met. Each of these referred vendors are brought on board on a category exclusive basis and are invested in making sure that each of the builders, remodelers and interior designers featured in the publication receive a high quality, professional packet of marketing material in which they can use to market to their prospective customers. It is truly an awesome opportunity!

The building professionals featured in this publication are referred and or vetted by the vendors I represent. If you are interested in being featured in a publication that invests in the building professional's future, please give us a call.

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Coach Light Builders' Designs Turn Heads

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Mike Tisdale of Coach Light Builders is a guy with an eye for design. His designs will catch your eye and turn your head and even lead to magazine features and awards. In fact, his first custom home, a 10,000-sq. ft. ultra-modern home in Memorial won House of the Year.

“I just have a natural design aesthetic. I had no idea I liked this stuff. I can put colors together, do this, do that. I don’t know why. I’ve never had art classes. That’s what’s so ridiculous. I have no idea. Zero. None [where this talent comes from]. But I can picture it [a design]; I can see what it’s like before [construction],” he said. “Buyers looking for someone a little bit different are a good fit with me.”

Tisdale said the major difference between other builders and him isn’t his design ability but rather his love of building homes. “It’s not a business for me. It’s something I love. How much fun is it to talk to people and pick things out? I haven’t set an alarm in 20 years.”

This Houston native started building about 25 years ago

by focusing on townhouses inside The Loop. He built about 350 of them in partnership with real estate investors. Everything was going wonderfully, he said, until the 2008-2009 drop in the economy. Then Tisdale build that first spectacular house for one of his investors, and he found his niche in high-end custom houses. “When opportunity knocks, you open the door. I thought, ‘Oh, wow! This is something.!’ I’ve been so busy building large customs since then that I haven’t looked back.” He said he has built a lot of athletes’ houses, including one for J.J. Watt.

“I have an eye for detail. I take a lot of pride in my work. I’ll get it [the construction] done right the first time. We have such a good team. Our trades and everybody else we’ve used forever, like 15, 20 years.”

Integrity is important to Mike. “I’m very careful with the construction and with the clients’ money. No money commingles with other clients’ money. If you misuse \$10, it’s the same as misusing \$10,000 to me. I’m very, very careful.



“I’m going to be as honest and accurate in the beginning of budgeting as at the end. My budgets may be a little bit more than other builders, but that’s because I like to do all of the allowances. I can’t stand change orders. The cost of a high-end custom home is the same as anything else per square foot. It depends on the extras. Thirty percent of the cost of the house is what the client picks out.” Think marble floors, indoor pools, indoor LED waterfalls.

Relationships with his clients are also very important to this business owner; most of his clients become his friends. “These people are so nice. It’s a different type of client at the high-end [of building]. If I meet with someone and like them, I’m in,” whether the house is a half-million dollars or \$10 million. “It’s a two-year marriage to build a custom house because it takes about a year to design a house for most people.”

Tisdale relies so completely on referrals that he doesn’t even bother to print business cards for himself or his two project managers.

Although most of Coach Light’s building projects are in The Loop, the company will build anywhere. While its projects are “all over the board,” the company builds mostly in the 8,000- to 9,000-sq. ft. range. He has two or

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three houses in construction at any given time and more in the pipeline. “Any more than that and I can’t keep up,” he admitted.

The company also does some remodeling projects (about 10-20 percent of its business), “but they’re got to be substantial, about \$250,000 and higher. It takes more energy to remodel. They’ve got to be fun, creative and exciting.” While there’s about a year backlog for

remodeling, most clients are willing to wait, Mike said.

Tisdale admits that he got into building by accident. A high school drop-out who later got his GED, he worked a while for Home Depot and for a paint store, accumulating knowledge that he would use as a builder. He opened a flooring store with a showroom so unusual that the design firm next door brought its clients over to see it. “I learned I can sell stuff. People get a comfort level talking to me.”

But he decided to explore building after he helped to sell a custom house and make a \$100,000 commission in 30 days. "I saw the potential in building if done correctly. I took my time, learning. I know how to run a business. If I weren't in building, I'd be owning some sort of business that would probably be related to something creative."

During his years in business, he's learned not to let any mistakes get in the way. Keep learning from your mistakes because you're never going to stop making them is his advice. "Once I screw up, I'm not doing it again."

Tisdale's future includes gradually turning the business majority ownership over to his new partner and building a small home of his own on a private lake. But it will be his wife Heather's project. A process engineer for BP, she's very artistic, very creative and able to connect the dots, Mike stated. Besides, wives always make the decisions in building, he's learned.

To contact Coach Light Builders, call 281-466-1873, email mike@coachlightbuilders.com or visit www.coachlightbuilders.com.

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International Flooring Is About More Than Just Floors

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.

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. "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.

Calderon works with the clients through the whole selection process, which leads to high customer satisfaction, at no charge to the builder.



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.

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.

In 2021 International Flooring expanded 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. 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.

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."

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Global Trends In Kitchen And Bath Design For 2022!

By Linda Jennings

The New Year ushers in an exciting array of luxury brands offering the builder market so many options to elevate kitchen and bath design. Here's a recap of exciting favorites coming from the world of design.

Gorgeous kitchen faucets, sleek finish options, and custom details lead the growing list of product requests to create a sophisticated style. The year ahead brings a new sense of optimism as homeowners continue to invest in home.



Venti20 Collection High Sink Mixer from Gessi North America



Acquabella Venet Totem Sink

A NEW TWIST ON THE TWENTIES

Extraordinary design transcends time; Gessi demonstrates this truth with their new Venti20 Collection, which captures the aesthetical spirit of the “Roaring Twenties” and reimagines it for the modern world. Elegant lines pair with meticulous detailing and a stunning display of craftsmanship to form the basis for an extraordinary series of bathroom fixtures. Detailed handles, fluted bodies, and reflective cuts combine in a singular silhouette that balances an industrial vibe with soft curves, inviting textures, and a traditional allure. The elegance and harmony of the high sink mixer (shown here in Warm Bronze Brushed) work together to create a functional sculpture for the bath.

TOTALLY TOTEM

Pedestal sinks have long been a perennial favorite in the bathroom, now European sink and tub brand Acquabella offers a fresh iteration of this classic style. The Venet totem sinks embody the essence of sleek, minimalistic design with a distinctive cylindrical silhouette and a chic sculptural quality that is dramatic yet refined. The Venet

totem features a round basin with sloping sides and a sculpted base that widens ever so slightly near the bottom. Measuring 15” x 17” x 34”, totems offer a space-saving design that is well suited for smaller bathrooms and powder rooms or equally dramatic when installed in pairs in a luxurious master bath.



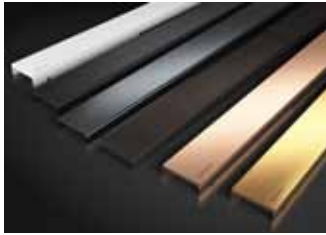
Imagine Split Finish faucet from HamatUSA

TURKISH TREASURE

With multiple state-of-the-art manufacturing plants in Israel and a facility in Turkey that incorporate all facets of the faucet and fireclay production, HamatUSA is rapidly gaining in popularity. Their latest kitchen faucet debut - the Imagine split finish faucet is offered in five distinctive

finish combinations with the body of the faucet done in

one finish and the handle and concealed spray head in coordinated contrast. The dual-function pull-down spray head is neatly concealed when not in use and includes an extendable hose that will easily reach all edges of the sink and beyond.



EasyDrain USA Modulo TAF linear drain

While the nearly invisible drain blends effortlessly into shower floors, the grate offers an opportunity to add a little pizzazz with six special finishes available for the grate plate. The stylish options include Matte White and Matte Black, Brushed Black Steel and Brushed Oiled Bronze, Brushed Gold and Brushed Cyprum. All options are flawlessly finished and crafted to be incredibly durable for lasting good looks.

DISTINCTIVE DUTCH DESIGN

Dealing with water is second nature for EasyDrain USA. The brand opens a world of design possibilities in the shower with a beautiful array of finish options for their popular Modulo TAF linear

ENGLISH LUXURY

Across the pond, Sterlingham Company Ltd. adds a luxurious marble option to its luxurious line of towel warmers. As part of the popular Cascades Collection, Marble Rails feature a sleek, space-saving design that consumes



Sterlingham Company Ltd Cascades Collection Towel Warmers

less wall area than traditional warmers. The single rails may be hung alone or stacked and arranged in nearly any formation. Measuring nearly 24" long, the rails are cleverly installed with hidden wall mounts for a seamless look. They are offered in a selection of five distinctive marbles: Nero Marquina, Bardiglio Nuvolato, Bianco Carrara Venatino, Calacatta Gold Calo-Bett, and Giallo Sienna and available in the brand's stunning line-up of sixteen modern finishes.



Officine Gullo Outdoor Kitchen

ITALIAN OUTDOOR KITCHEN

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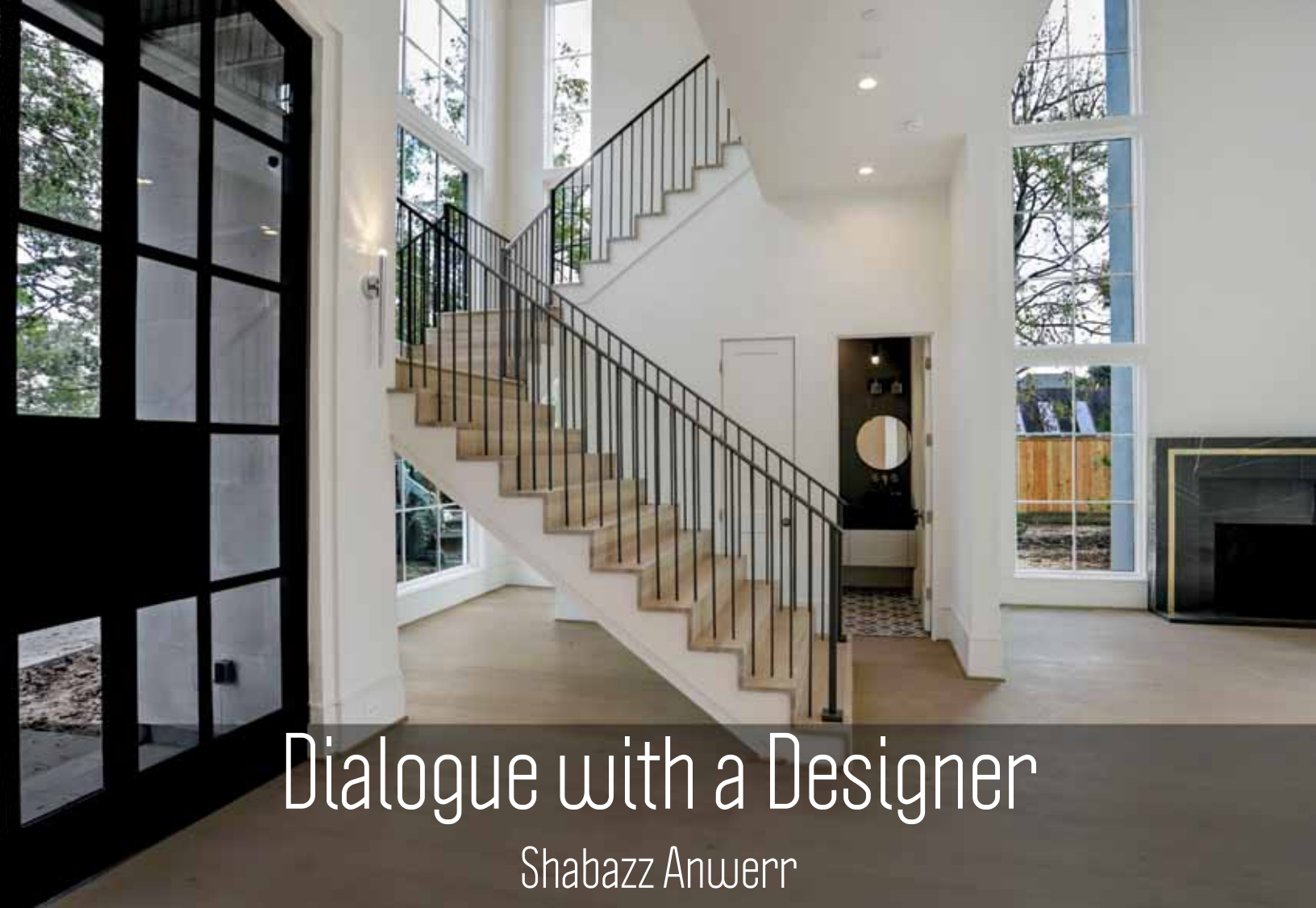


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Dialogue with a Designer

Shabazz Anwerr

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 Shahbazz Anwerr, Creative Director for Ashton Gray Development & Director of Operations for SVAG Construction.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: I was lucky enough to grow up in Dubai when the whole city was being transformed into a manmade marvel. I've always been a visual person and my creativity took over and started working with interior design; and loved the idea of breathing new life into a room. I would give full credit to my mentor Shaun Vembutty for seeing that spark in me and honing it. I

realized this was my passion but overall, it is the whole idea of building a space and collaborating with great mentors, architects and artisans and amazing vendors like Baths of America to create something different that gives us an edge and still be easy on the eyes but functional as well.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: Why since graduation? We can look back as far as the Stone Age to see evidence of early interior design ideas through the instinctive coordination of flora and fauna in prehistoric dwellings. Design is subjective so it keeps evolving and sometimes we revisit the same concepts with a fresher eye to still be with the trends and cater to the visual stimuli we all can have now with all social media platforms focusing more on talking points of any new construction, remodel or commercial space. The transition is not gradual but to keep up with the next trend before it is a trend so the project stands the test of time and not look dated by the time we are completed.

Our focus is always on functionality with aesthetics. I have noticed that past projects would revolve around the aesthetic appeal of a room but we try to work with spaces



with dual functionality. We merge juxtaposed styles, textures, colors and technology to create a well-designed space. The end result is to have a space be styled around experimentation and functionality.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: The answer is very simple. We have the insight and resources. We are constantly looking at this world with an eye for details. Today designers have so much access to infinite styles that allows them to create spaces that will wow the client. I am actively involved in the construction process and making sure the vendors, trades and the client are all in agreement with the vision. A lot of energy management goes in the back to create the right synergy. Construction is booming but the importance of management in this industry is what designers bring to the home while taking the stress away from the client. Any space is emotional and to manage these emotions and keeping the intelligence over emotion to deliver a space within expectation and in budget is what a designer can do. All that glitters is not gold; so, designers can sometimes bring more to the table than just picking up curtains.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: My own role is a hybrid between design and execution of the totality of the project. I am involved from trees to keys with SVAG Construction. Sumi Rengaraj and I make sure we plan everything way ahead of time. We are still in a pandemic. There are supply chain issues but we make sure we plan our projects within a

budget and work to accomplish that goal. Personally, my mind works best when I am not at work putting off fires in construction. From the moment I step in the shower in the morning I start planning my day. From the morning meeting with a client to the afternoon meeting with the contractor. I'm always thinking of my next step, project, meeting, or phone call. There are different aspects of design that we are involved in. There's a clubhouse or an active adult community [TAJ Residences] or our sold-out project in Austin that we are breaking ground soon; it is all different yet in the same family of possibility and design. Also, the exposure we have to seeing things constantly as a designer adds to my personal knowledge base daily.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: The latest project we are wrapping up in Piney Point has been the most challenging project because we were finishing this house during the thick of the pandemic and had all kinds of issues in creating a space that was modern but has the glamor that is not cold. We wanted to reinvent the color Gray and not do a white and gray house as most homes were trending then. We moved the lines of design to create an elevated space. We have won awards for our kitchens, bathrooms, overall interior design of projects that all were as challenging but more rewarding.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: As mentioned before; emotions ride

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high when selecting. I have to make sure I read the emotion and expectation correctly before even picking up my pencil. I always dread selection meetings with Shaun because his mind is so fascinating but to introduce a vision that we have is always a nerve wrecking process. We always start with the idea then evolve it or eliminate it. Somewhere, somehow it always comes together.

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

Shahbazz Anwerr: Repetition is a curse. In spec homes, we try to be neutral but give enough design flow space which means; whoever would end up walking the house can visualize their furniture. It is for them to trust that they can make better memories in that space. I have learnt to give breathing room to a space for clients. Also, I've noticed some clients save pictures on social media without understanding the framework or cost that would be involved is another mistake. The cost of wood can discourage over choosing something which won't be as cost prohibitive. I've noticed some designers are people pleasers and cannot say no to a vision. We nix ideas all the time so we can introduce better concepts that do not break the budget and still deliver. The biggest lesson is to push trends aside and design based on your aesthetic to create a space that will let you meet yourself and not the next DIY Instagram designer.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Speaking about staying current, how to you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?

Shahbazz Anwerr: Baths of America is a great resource to start with on what is trending for plumbing or appliances. Reading up on what other heavyweights are up to, watching a lot of trends or colors in fashion that pop up to know where the subliminal conscious is directed to, we are seeing a lot of mid-century colors coming back. It has

been 100 years from the roaring 20s but the fringe textures are coming back. Travel helps us a lot. I love visiting New York or New Orleans before I start a series of new projects to just look at the trends. Houston or Austin as well introducing me to the pulse of what is happening locally. The truth is simple. I am aware that simple is always going to be in style and look timeless.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What is your favorite design style?

Shahbazz Anwerr: All design styles are my favorite. We blend the contemporary with a timeless aesthetic. A style that was "contemporary" 5 years ago may not necessarily be contemporary now. Same goes with modern design that could date eventually. We try to play with time when the space tells us what is the overall vibe. The neighborhood also dictates our style. Scandinavian design is different than the mid century modern but blending styles and creating a unique wow factor is what drives us to be bold and take the risk. Shaun calls it, "Switch it up" –

For more information contact:

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Ruvati: Industry Leader In Workstation Sinks

By Linda Jennings

Why settle for a standard kitchen sink when you can have so much more? Ruvati offers the largest selection of workstation sinks in the US market, with over 80 different models for every room and setting from the kitchen and wet bar area, to the laundry and mudroom, and even the outdoor bbq area.

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work right on top of your sink. This keeps all the mess inside your sink and not on your countertop. Need to wash veggies or drain pasta? Simply position a stainless steel colander, and you are ready to go. Foldable drying racks reduce dish clutter, and a wide array of sturdy cutting boards convert the sink to counter space. Ruvati takes accessorizing the Workstation to a new level with their unique three-bowl condiment tray and five-quart mixing bowl/strainer set with grater/slicer attachments. The versatility of the Ruvati accessory line allows users to prepare and organize an entire dinner party within the space of the sink.

In addition to standard stainless steel, Ruvati offers workstation sinks in various materials, including fireclay and nano-PVD color stainless steel. Ruvati has recently added granite composite sinks to the Workstation collection: the epiStage series of top-mount and undermount sinks, and the epiCast series of modern farmhouse sinks. The Merino series is the latest addition to Ruvati's Workstation collection; crafted from marine-grade T-316 stainless steel, they are a perfect choice for outdoor kitchens and boat decks.

Whether you are looking for a multi-tasking central hub in your home kitchen or want to add performance to your outdoor kitchen, wet bar or RV, the Ruvati Workstation sink line has the perfect option.

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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

Phone: 832-317-4505 • Email: Gbernard43@aol.com

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