

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling: A Designers' Builder

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Craftsmanship by John

Dialogue with a Designer -
Mickey Bufalini

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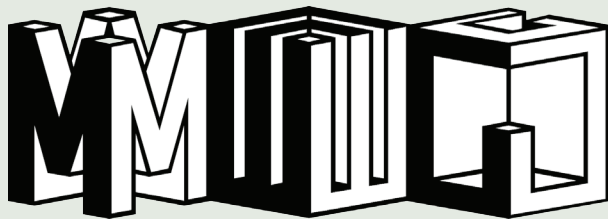
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Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling: A Designers' Builder

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

"I've heard that some builders find it a hassle to work with designers," according to Jenny Sneller, co-owner of Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling in Spring. "For us, designers are so integrated into our process, we consider ourselves a designer's builder. Every project happens because of a team effort." Designers and architects are integral members of the company's build team, working together toward creativity, quality and problem solving, she added.

Her husband Matt, co-owner, agreed. "Great design drives everything we do. Assembling a design team around each customer, with the best professionals in the industry, who are just as passionate as we are, is pretty fun. It not only

brings about an extremely high quality product, but it gives our customers a team of experts who can add experience, knowledge and advice at every stage of the project." Beyond the design team, their relationship with trade partners and subcontractors is absolutely essential. "We couldn't do what we do without them," he said.

During design, Matt likes to be very involved, especially on remodeling projects. "I'm good at visualizing what it could be," he offered. "I love it when a client comes to us with a picture, wondering if something is possible. If it's in a picture, I know there's a way. The challenge of figuring out how is the fun part."



When it comes to design styles, Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling stays true to the fully custom concept, not landing on just one particular style, Matt said. “We don’t build a certain style. Every project is a one-time prototype built for a certain person in mind.”

“Customers that gravitate to us are obviously looking for a quality product. The difference they find in us from other builders is the experience we’ll take them on from start to finish,” Jenny explained.

In fact, that ability to create a one-of-a-kind house and experience is what led the Snellers to open their own business in 2011. After graduating from Texas A&M and

gaining valuable skills with both a commercial builder and then a large production builder, Matt made the move to working for a custom builder. He quickly realized his passion for custom building and remodeling and couldn’t shake the feeling that he wanted to open his own company one day. “Our first project as Sneller Custom Homes was an 11,000 sq ft home in The Woodlands, still our largest project to date,” Matt said.

Nowadays their projects range from bathroom remodels to new construction luxury homes, with 10 to 12 projects in progress at any given time. “We really enjoy the mix of new builds and remodels,” Matt noted. “The challenges, the

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methods, and even the experience is so different for each one. I can't imagine not doing both."

Their clients range from young families, singles, empty nesters, grandparents and everything in between. "What unites our customers is they want to love their home. They want to love how it looks and also how it works for them. If a material they choose isn't going to hold up well, we'll say something. Form and function go hand in hand. A house that looks amazing but doesn't perform over time



isn't worth much," said Jenny, who is also a Texas A&M graduate.

After 10 years in business, Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling has quite a collection of awards. Houzz.com has awarded them Best of Houzz in the categories of Service and Design every year between 2014 and 2021. They have also won numerous local Greater Houston Builders Association Prism Awards as well as statewide Texas Association of Builders Star Awards throughout the years.

"We are running out of space in our office to put awards. That's something I didn't think I'd ever be saying," Matt said with a laugh. "When we take a minute to look at how far we've come, and all the customers and homes those awards represent, it's humbling. We're so lucky to get to do this every day."

*To contact Sneller Custom Homes & Remodeling,
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The Name Says It All – Craftsmanship by John

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

“We take a lot of pride in what we do. We deliver a high-end product for a fair price. The quality of our work is only matched by our service. We provide honesty and integrity along with our attention to detail,” stated John Gillette, president of Craftsmanship by John, Inc. “Good enough is not good enough for us. It’s got to be correct, not just good enough to pass.”

What started as a one-man handyman operation in 1992 has grown to 30 full-time employees that provide a full range of design-build home remodeling services to the Houston market. Projects include home additions, kitchen remodeling, bathroom remodeling, outdoor living spaces, custom cabinetry and other home renovations. Its staff includes carpenters, trim carpenters, cabinet makers, painters and office workers. Its largest project to date was a \$7 million whole-house remodel with \$1 million spent on granite floors!

Craftsmanship by John, Inc. provides design-build services for home remodeling and new construction custom homes

in Houston. Its design-build services ensure continuity between the design and construction of custom homes or home renovations. Its process encompasses building design, technical design, plans and 3-D renderings and estimating.

Gillette said, “Using both architectural and interior designers, we have the capability to create 3-D designs, which enable our clients to visualize their home remodeling project before we start construction. This process ensures that our clients get what they need and want within their budgetary constraints. Our staff draftsman can also generate drawings.”

One of the things that sets Craftsmanship by John apart from its competition is its cabinet shop. Three or four employees work in the company’s cabinet shop to create custom cabinetry for its clients. “We craft all the cabinetry by hand in our shop because it gives us more control and creativity, allowing us to customize the project and to make superior finished outcomes that flow seamlessly. We

can also exactly match existing trim work for seamless extensions of the clients' current spaces," John said.

"In addition, we can make front doors when a special size or design is desired or when we simply can't get a door because of the current supply chain issues. We also make custom wooden furniture, such as tables, workstations and benches," he added.

Its approach to customer service also sets Craftsmanship by John apart from other companies. "Whether our clients are out of town or living in the home, we communicate with them throughout the entire process with pictures, weekly meetings and progress reports. With our longstanding sub-contractor relationships and our full-time trades, we produce top quality craftsmanship at a steady, efficient pace," John noted.

Gillette keeps the company's work within a defined area that includes Memorial Villages, Tanglewood, River Oaks, Bellaire, West U, Inner Loop, Houston City Center, The Heights and Uptown Houston for efficiency's sake. "That's how our project managers get to every job site one or two times a day. I personally visit every job site each week. There's enough work where we are to accommodate that."

The company has 25 projects in process at any given time.

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Creating Memorable Spaces

By Linda Jennings

Eye-catching designs and a rainbow of colors are just a few of the emerging trends for new home design and renovation. The kitchen and bath continue to be the centerpieces of the home demanding function and

style to make a memorable statement. Well-appointed fixtures that take their cue from the Pantone color of the year to ones that come with all the bells and whistles lead the way.



Rendezvous Sink by HamatUSA

ALL THE BELLS AND WHISTLES

Homeowners and builders looking for a sink that can handle any workload with style and grace have found the perfect option with HamatUSA's Rendezvous. Offering both 16-gauge and 18-gauge models, Rendezvous is a full grouping of workstation kitchen sinks. Crafted from T-304 Stainless Steel, the Rendezvous sinks are available in three sizes: 26", 33" and 45" overall with new additions to the line debuting this year. The 16-gauge 32" sink comes as either a single and double bowl option. Built-in ledges easily accommodate helpful accessories included with every sink - a colander for rinsing produce and pasta, a drying mat sized to accommodate large pots, and a rubberwood cutting board for prep work.



Obsidian patina from Hardware Renaissance

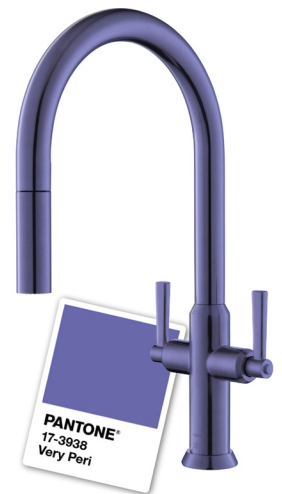
DARK DRAMA

Hardware Renaissance opens new options for lovers of dark finishes with their new Obsidian patina now offered on their bronze hardware collections. This rich dramatic matte is a true "living finish" that will

age gracefully over time, with each piece developing its own unique characteristics. Hardware Renaissance is the antithesis of mass production, instead carefully fashioning every knob, pull and lever by hand according to customer orders. Drawing inspiration from cultures around the world for their designs, Hardware Renaissance creates their sustainable masterpieces in New Mexico, relying on the skills of talented Indian artisans.

COLORFUL POSSIBILITIES

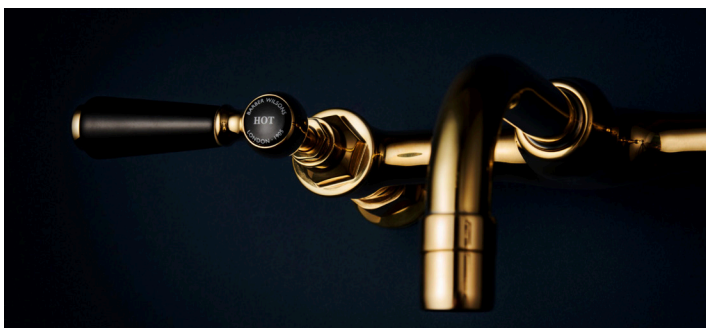
The Velox K.1800 model brings a modern, industrial vibe to the kitchen with its graceful high-arched spout and two minimalist-inspired levers. Colorful finish options really amp up the drama, with 20 different shades to choose from, ranging from sky blue, army green and deep red to more neutral options like distressed black, steel gray, and even a whimsical purple in honor of the Pantone Color of the Year for 2022 known as Very Peri. Velox is constructed of premium stainless steel with a pull-down faucet and dual function sprayer. Available with a matching soap dispenser, Velox features a single-hole installation and is ADA and WaterSense compliant with a flow rate of 1.8 gallons per minute at 60 psi.



Velox Faucet by Isenberg

ENGLISH LUXURY

No time travel is required to infuse vintage charm into the kitchen or bathroom – just this authentically reproduced Regent China lever faucet by Barber Wilsons & Co. Fashioned in 1890s style, this period piece incorporates the classic Bridge Tap. The wall-mounted Regent faucet features beautiful China levers with printed indices and a compact curved spout. An elegant choice for the kitchen or bath, it is offered in a lovely selection of finishes. Barber



Barber Wilsons & Co. Regent China Lever Faucet

Wilsons was established in London in 1905 and has built a sterling reputation over 100+ years as a purveyor of the finest in luxury bathroom and kitchen fixtures, all known for their spectacular workmanship and hand-polished finishes.

FARMHOUSE REINVENTED

The epiCast series from Ruvati features an apron-front farmhouse style that brings color and character to the kitchen with beautiful granite composites that are a fresh alternative to stainless steel. The epiCast sink has the look, feel and durability of natural stone. It is crafted from 80% crushed granite and colored all the way through for a consistent, luxurious look that will never discolor. The series is offered in three color options – Matte Black, Matte White and Matte Gray and comes with integrated ledges that serve as tracks for handy accessories that slide into place as needed.



Epicast Workstation Sink by Ruvati

VELVETY SMOOTH

With its smooth-as-velvet surface and beautiful milky white matte finish, it is no surprise that the new DoloMatte™ material from MTI Baths has quickly become very popular. So popular, in fact, that the company has opted to expand their initial offering to now encompass most tubs in their Designer Collection, including drop-ins, undermounts and Sculpted Finish® tubs. The thermoformed material is unique in its moldability and preparation process, which



DoloMatte from MTI Baths on the Andrea 13

includes hand-finishing to create that impressive velvety texture. DoloMatte is crafted from a thick, American-made slab of solid-surface specialty polymers blended with ground minerals. The result is an easy-to-clean non-porous surface that is highly resistant to impact, scratches, stains, mold, mildew and UV damage.

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Dialogue with a Designer

Mickey Bufalini - Collaborative Design Group Architecture & Interiors

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 Mickey Bufalini, Principal and Partner of Collaborative Design Group Architecture & Interiors, LLC. As a founding partner of and lead interior designer for Collaborative Design Group, Mickey Bufalini has built a formidable enterprise by encouraging creativity among her team of professionals who are consistently furthering their education in construction detail, interior design, and interior specification. With over 30 years of experience in the architectural world, she has developed a unique combination for an Interior Designer, one with a love of texture, colors, furniture, and history, along with the ability to tie it to the architectural finishes and details required of

both the exterior and interiors of a home. When viewing her work you won't find a design that looks like another, instead you will find a variety of design styles, all executed expertly with a sensitivity to her client's needs and expectations.

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

Mickey Bufalini: I attended St. Agnes Academy High School here in Houston, and one of the electives offered was Interior Design. The teacher entered all our projects into a "Finger Furniture contest" where we had to redesign our own bedroom and build a model, select finishes. I loved it and took 3rd place in the city. My teacher encouraged me to study Interior Design in college and it has been a satisfying career for me!

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

Mickey Bufalini: Everything is faster, technology has made it easier on the presentation side to the client, we are able to create our color boards and inspiration boards more seamlessly and send them via the internet to an out of state client, making it much easier to communicate long distance. Technology is also driving our architectural



specifications division, assisting clients with the home building selection process.

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

Mickey Bufalini: We are fortunate in that we have an Architecture arm of the company and can help our builders navigate the often-complicated process of blending the construction side with the aesthetic side of the project. We pride ourselves in meticulous specifications that accompany our construction documents including all exterior finishes, appliances, plumbing selections, doors, windows, flooring, ceilings, trim, fireboxes, lighting, wall finishes, counters, hardware and much more. This leaves no room for delay of the project and gives the contractor the ability to pre-order all materials needed on the jobsite. Given the current climate of backlogged materials, this gives our clients the opportunity to order materials way in advance and not wait for owners to make selections as they go.

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

Mickey Bufalini: We don't subscribe to one signature design style such as modern, transitional, or traditional as many other designers do. We aren't limited by a lack of education on design styles, so as experienced and creative professionals, we enjoy working on a variety of project styles. And we often find ourselves educating the client as well through the process. I can't tell you how many times a client comes to us with their new home plans, and they really have no clue what the architect has in mind for the ceilings, or what doorways are arched, and which

are not, etc. Many times, homeowners are unclear or do not understand what is drawn on paper, they must trust that the architect heard them and interpreted everything they wanted into the construction documents. As design professionals, we break the construction and specification process down into small bites so that the client can follow along and not become overwhelmed.

For over 30-years we have worked as a team with our clients to create unique homes that are infused with innovative, unique styling that meets their individual needs and design styles. We help them to bring their dreams to life and to create the spaces they imagined. We strive to produce a home that uses every element of design that serves a purpose. Using the latest technology, our team works meticulously to provide the client with an exceptional and sustainable design. We always keep the clients' vision in mind, and we are mindful of their budget, objectives, and timeline.

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

Mickey Bufalini: A home for a client whose primary residence is in Carmel California. We had limited time with the homeowner as she would fly in for two-day meetings, where we would make selections, and finalize finishes, furniture etc. The homeowners wanted to move in with literally their toothbrush, so all details had to be completely ready for move in. This included dishware, linens, furniture, accessories, cookware, literally everything. To top it off the home was not in Houston, it was in College Station, Texas, so the builder was not local.

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We had to have all documents completely detailed for ease of construction. We installed a camera on the property so that the homeowner could watch the progress of the Architecture, as well as our Architects. We do out of town projects all the time, this one happened to be 27,000 square feet with advanced control systems, and we used 85% recycled and repurposed materials on the project, which had to be sourced up to two years in advance.

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

Mickey Bufalini: We begin with the exterior and work toward the interiors. With new construction we start ground up and specify all exterior portions with our clients, including body of the house materials, roofing, windows, trim, paint, chimney details, walkway materials, all exterior doors etc. With the interiors, plumbing and appliances come first (it seems this would be early but it is so pivotal to the cabinetry drawings, and the spaces needed for these pieces (if wall hung toilets, or faucets, affect construction, do we need gas connections, etc.), We then select flooring, review the architect's cabinetry to be sure the appliances and plumbing will work, we select the counters, tile and then the lighting and hardware. For remodel work it is often pieces and parts of the above, but we do use the same process of selection. We have a proprietary set of schedules and spreadsheets that facilitate the collection and assimilation of all the information. We are always complimented on the thoroughness of our documentation and drawings by the builders and vendors that we work with.

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

Mickey Bufalini: Communication and unrealistic assumptions about budget, timeline, or level of involvement between them. Allowances are a guarantee of project overages, not knowing how much each component of the project will cost. Because the biggest impact for your



money will be in the final stages of construction, if you don't plan accordingly, they will not have the money for those impact items. We believe in creating a menu of costs in the beginning so that the client can make informed decisions along the way. It is like going into a restaurant, the menu allows you to see how much you will spend on dinner and allows you to decide to skip the salad so that you can afford the soufflé for dessert. If you don't know the cost of all the menu items, you may not be able to afford dessert at the end of the meal. Even when a builder is conscientious and explains and reviews the costs along the way, the homeowner gets caught up in the world of upgrades and/or changing their mind along the way, and the budget and allowance numbers creep. Job scope creep is the hardest to reign in and to overcome. The biggest cause of this is the lack of planning. Our methods allow for making all those decisions with a greater knowledge of the real costs before you sign with a builder.



For more information contact:
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With its large staff, it's able to start most jobs soon after the contract is signed.

Craftsmanship by John is a multiple award-winning company. Many projects have won awards in building, remodeling and design competitions in Houston and the United States throughout the years. The company is a proud member of the Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA). Gillette has been actively involved in the GHBA' Remodelers Council for many years.

Gillette envisions expanding the company a little more in the remodeling industry and branching out into the speculative housing market now that John's son Jackson and son-in-law Trent Hoffman are projects managers in the company. "Having them in the company has changed our future entirely."



*To contact Craftsmanship by John:
email info@craftsmanshipbyjohn.com
call 713-984-8834
or visit www.craftsmanshipbyjohn.com*

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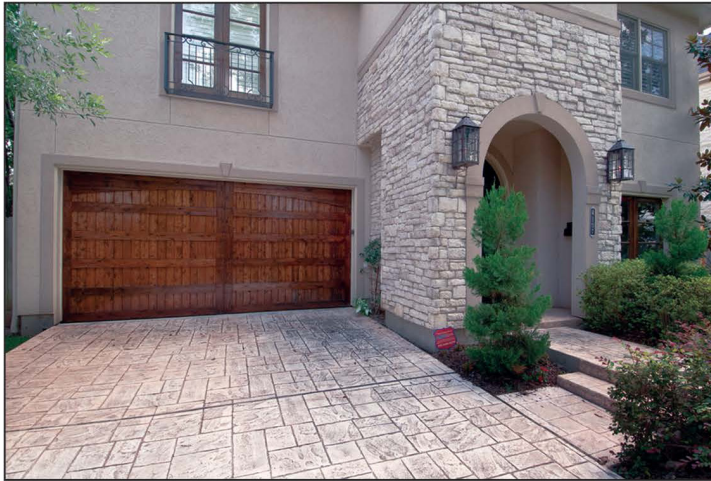
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THOMAS



The Metropolitan Builder
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Community HOME GUIDE

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

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