

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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## LeBlanc Custom Homes, A Step Ahead of the Pack

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Much More Than Attention To Detail

Dialogue with a Designer -  
Teena Caldwell

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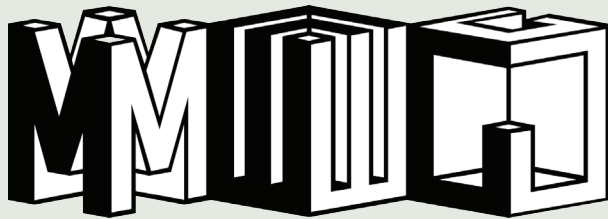


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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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For Local Information Contact:  
themetropolitanbuilder@yahoo.com  
832-317-4505  
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

2206 Paso Rello Drive  
Houston, Texas 77077  
832-317-4505

Owner/Publisher  
Giselle Bernard

Editor  
Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

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# Walker Zanger Makes a Textured Statement With Shift™ Collection Expansion

Boldly stepping away from standard stone finishes, Walker Zanger embraced the beauty of imperfection and the symphonies that textured surfaces can create. By an expansion to the already successful shift collection, they have added new dimensions to their impressive stone mosaic lineup.

Shift™ combines multiple textures of stone in various geometric shapes; the collection changes our perception of stone as a decorative surface. Chiseled, scraped, and hammered, the stone surfaces shift from one texture to another in an almost lyrical fashion, creating visual interest that changes with the play of light and shadow.

“This release is a great expansion to an already incredible lineup of stone mosaics, and these additions to the Shift™ collection give professionals and homeowners even more color and texture combinations to choose from for their designs.” Said Suzi Portugal – Vice President of Design and Sourcing at Mosaic Companies [Walker Zanger’s parent company].

The release of Shift™ marks an important month for the company, which also released another natural stone tile collection, Pietra Gris. The collection comprises thirty-two items, presented in four colors (white, gray, beige, and black) and nine shapes – eight mosaics – including a one-of-a-kind diamond and a 3”x8” subway tile. This collection can be primarily used for both commercial and residential interior walls.

## About Walker Zanger

Walker Zanger is North America’s most beloved high-end brand in slabs and tiles. For over 70 years, the company has helped design-trade professionals and homeowners realize their boldest design dreams with the most unique, original, and thought-provoking surface materials. Walker Zanger is a go-to expert in the industry and is often the first to discover new materials, styles, innovations, and specialty surface products. Rooted in natural stone design, the company continues to



push the boundaries of possibility, including recent introductions of cutting-edge materials like recycled glass slabs and porcelain slabs. Today, the company carries its innovative spirit with equal passion in its curated showrooms and slab galleries and dealers nationwide. To learn more about Walker Zanger, please visit [www.walkerzanger.com](http://www.walkerzanger.com).



# LeBlanc Custom Homes, A Step Ahead of the Pack

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Todd LeBlanc, President of Leblanc Custom Homes and former GHBA BUILDER OF THE YEAR, isn't just your typical mass market multi-family homebuilder, although he could be if he wanted to be part of a large conglomerate. He would much rather be known as a master builder who takes his time and builds an exceptional home for families. His homes are not only multi-functional; but they aesthetically pleasing, and always a step ahead of the competition.

Although he tends to specialize in new home construction, he has done major renovations in some of Houston's finest neighborhoods such as Tanglewood, Briargrove and the Memorial Villages. Undertaking the build-out of a new home or a renovation of a current home is one of the most stressful events that can ever happen during a family's lifetime. It is time consuming, decision

heavy and a constant educational process. Building is expensive, complex, and can be overwhelming. Products and materials are always changing. It is very important to the overall success of a project that the construction management process be updated and double checked on a daily basis.

A custom homebuilder must have a vast knowledge of construction in general, and the mental database of a computer. Todd understands the importance of a being the kind of professional whose work speaks for its self. It is the goal of LeBlanc Custom Homes, that clients recognize they are leaders within the industry. Todd prides himself as being a man who thinks outside the box; but that he is also personally involved in the day-to-day construction and finishing process. He and his team are always available to answer all questions or implement needed or requested



changes with confidence. A client needs to be able to relax, and also know that their builder as well as his team will take care of their concerns.

Todd's father was a builder; hence, he was brought up by a man who built solid family homes that were functional and followed classical styles. His father was a man with a strong ethical code, who felt the sale price was not as important as a satisfied client. That philosophy obviously rubbed off on Todd.

Todd's undergraduate degree from LSU and MBA from Baylor University was not in civil engineering, or construction management, but rather quantitative business

analysis. Along the way, Todd worked as a computer software consultant. Both backgrounds have benefitted his success and understanding as a homebuilder. In addition, he is also a Certified Graduate Builder (CGB), Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR, and has over 20 years of project management experience.

LeBlanc Custom Homes builds three to four custom or spec homes a year. With fewer projects, they are able to provide each client with the detailed personal attention that is expected and required. They focus on traditional, transitional, and modern styled residences.

*Continued on page 6*



*Continued from page 5*

Although, home building was not an original goal, construction was always a skill and hobby that he utilized throughout high school and college, and where he found he excelled and felt “at home”. Todd worked construction after school along side his father on the various residential projects that his Dad might be building at any given point in time. He was in his twenties, and working as a software consultant when he decided to build a house on his own. The “bug” to build something of substance obviously lasted as evidenced by his lengthy career within the building industry.

Todd’s entire family, his wife and their children are involved in some form or fashion with his business. If he builds a spec home, he and his family move into that home with the intent to improve the next home by testing out the many aspects that are involved in this particular home.

Their checklist is as follows:

1) Does the kitchen triangle work effectively or does the sink need to be relocated to the working island in the next house? Are the appliances easy to use or too complicated for a harried family? Does the entry introduce a visitor to the personality of the people who live in this home? Is it pleasant and inviting?

2) Are the bedrooms a comfortable size, and is there

enough closet or storage space for a family of three or four?

3) Is the lighting adequate or do LED wall-washers need to be added to showcase art, and or sculpture?

4) Is the living and dining space serviceable for entertaining, and how does the outdoor space work with the number of functions that are critical to a well-planned home? Is there a place for teenagers to gather and have fun without disturbing the adults? Are these spaces the heart of the home or just a space?

5) Has the architect’s floor plan, traffic pattern and flow worked well, or is there dead space? What statement does the house and exterior details make from the street? Is it welcoming?

6) Has the interior designer’s color scheme, material selections and or furnishings along with window treatments, flowed throughout the house?

7) Are the materials used to construct an outdoor entertainment area and pool effective? Are they safe? Are they practical? Do they meld together with the home’s interior to form an aesthetic bond?

8) Are the bathrooms compatible with the family’s everyday living? Are there enough sinks, showers, tubs, and privacy?





9) How does the garage and driveway function. Is there enough space to park multiple vehicles both large and small? Does the garage have enough storage space? Is it functional?

10) Is the landscaping sustainable from year to year? Will the plants come back after a freeze, or must they be replaced each year?

These are just a few of the important questions that

are addressed by the LeBlanc family. This input is instrumental in improving the value of the next LeBlanc Custom Home or spec house.

*For more information about  
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# Much More Than Attention To Detail

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

When a residential remodeler has been in business as long as Ivan Espinoza, he has to be doing something right. True? Not necessarily. Not every horse is a winning racehorse. Having a home built or remodeled by Ivan Espinoza Remodeling, is like winning a trifecta of outstanding qualities, professionalism, construction experience, and satisfied customers.

The key to Ivan's success is his ability to understand, and then bring the client's vision to a beautiful and satisfying reality. That gift is rare in remodeling and renovation. It takes attention to detail. It takes a leader who knows every trade's job and takes pride in the outcome of the job. It is clear when meeting with Ivan that he is a quick study with a keen eye. His team is capable of full build-out, just a bathroom, a kitchen or a small or large addition.

Ivan has been a remodeler for over twenty-five years. His business has grown from a small operating staff



to thirty plus employees who specialize in various trades, such as framing, drywall, painting, flooring, tile work, custom cabinet building, trim work, roofing, electrical, plumbing. Not every painter is a plumber, not every cabinet-maker can lay tile. Each trade knows their craft, and also has the ability to time their jobs so that there is no hold-up in the over-all time frame scheduled for the job.

In construction having an excellent team who knows and understands their craft, and also cares about the outcome of their particular cog in the overall job wheel is the difference between success and failure. It is also the difference between a happy client, and one who no longer trusts that their job is in good hands.

Ivan is one of an elite group of renovators in Houston who work mainly on high-end projects: yet his pricing is always fair. He finds the best materials at the most reasonable costs.

He and his team are also in demand with interior designers because they speak the same language, excellence in performance and outcome. Ivan's business comes to his firm through

referrals, repeat business, word of mouth and or through the trade, architects as well as interior designers.

His firm is also highly trusted and recommended to the clients of many realtors. One of Ivan's favorite designers to work with is Ben Johnston. Ben is a true visionary in the design world and among his peers. His star is rising quickly nationwide, and featured in many of the top trade magazines and publications in the country.

*Continued on page 15*



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# Go Bold With Color!

By Linda Jennings

Amplify Kitchen and Bath Design with Rich Infusions of COLOR this Summer.

Add a sense of joy when you introduce colors into kitchen and bath design. The visual aspect of adding bold hues is profound especially when combined

with functionality. From a kitchen faucet in a bold navy blue to a freestanding tub in plum, these new products embrace the unexpected and allow you to add individuality to your next building project.



Ruvati Pietra Sink

## STYLISH SHIMMER

Ruvati adds a touch of glamour to the bathroom with their Pietra vessel sink in gold mosaic. The 20" x 16" hand-finished basin rests on top of the vanity to properly show off its embellished exteriors done in beautiful metallic toned texture. The look is elegant and refined, the perfect artistic touch for a luxury-minded master bath or a show-stopping powder room. In addition to rose gold, the Pietra Collection includes a choice of gold, rose gold and silver exteriors paired with a glossy white interior, or a striking silver exterior with a dramatic black interior. All the sinks are crafted of thick porcelain ceramic for amazing durability with a smooth enamel interior finish that is resistant to scratches, chips or cracks.

## AMBER HUES

Grandeur Hardware's Baguette Amber Crystal Knob set in Timeless Bronze brings an infusion of color into the home in a subtle yet distinctive way, imbuing wonderful style and warmth. Crafted of lead-free crystal, Grandeur's crystal knobs are remarkable for their clarity and exceptional beauty. The baguette silhouette was inspired by Emerald-



Grandeur Hardware's Baguette Amber Crystal Knob

cut diamonds with a multifaceted surface that reflects the light and catches the eye. The knobs are available in interior and exterior sets and may be paired with a wide range of backplates and rosettes for a custom look. All Grandeur hardware is forged from solid brass, creating a blemish-free surface for the final finishing process.

## INDUSTRIAL PALETTE

Isenberg reimagines the kitchen faucet as a colorful focal point with their gorgeous Klassiker Kitchen Collection. Inspired by an industrial chic vibe, these stylish yet hard-working faucets come in a rainbow of 20 colors. Using advanced resin technology, Isenberg offers an array of



Isenberg's Klassiker Kitchen faucets

ceramic-based finishes that are eco-friendly and amazingly durable. Color options include neutral shades of gray, tan, black and white as well as dramatic hues such as crimson, navy blue, matte gold and army green. The Klassiker Collection features faucets of sizes and silhouettes -- from entry-level to professional grade -- all crafted from stainless steel with fine ceramic disc cartridges.

### VISIONS OF PLUM

Ideal for smaller spaces, this Lydia is a petite version of the original and features an integral pedestal and integrated slotted overflow. Lydia 3 is crafted of the brand's SculptureStone material and is available as a soaker

or air bath. The Lydia is offered in white or biscuit with a soft matte or hand-polished deep gloss finish. It is shown here in custom Plum color. MTI's SculptureStone bathtubs are 100% solid, mostly organic, beautiful and easy to maintain. All are individually manufactured and handcrafted using the highest-quality materials in the United States. Each product is built according to the specifications of the customer when it is ordered.

### KITCHEN DRAMA

Known for their beautiful sinks, Lenova mixes modern convenience with classic style in their Apron Front Ledge Prep Sink Collection. Notable for its sleek design and extreme functionality, this perennial favorite promises to be a stand-out in the kitchen. The NovaGranite Composite Sink is crafted from a proprietary mix of 85% crushed granite. It gives it a high heat tolerance and makes the sink extraordinarily durable and resistant to scratches, chips, and stains. In addition, the NovaGranite Composite Sink offers the flexible design options of Lenova's award-winning Ledge Series with an engineered platform ledge that converts easily into a food prep center with an array of useful accessories such as strainers and rolling grid drains.



Lenova's Apron Front Ledge Prep Sink



Lydia tub from MTI Baths

*To find out more about the product launches mentioned here and their fresh perspectives on home design, visit their websites:*

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# Dialogue with a Designer

## Teena Caldwell

*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 Teena Caldwell, owner of *Twenty-Two Fifty*. *Twenty-Two Fifty* was founded in July of 2021 by Teena and her daughter

Lauren Worsham. Teena previously worked out of her home and was the owner and principal designer of *Interiors by Teena*. She graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor's degree in interior design and has been in the design industry for well over 25 years. After months of talking about the possibility of owning a store, the ladies decided it was worth a shot. The store has taken off in ways they never expected. Our store is truly a "Boutique for the Home." We want our customers to walk into a visually stunning presentation of items from all around the world. Our team is ready to help you customize a mix of our pieces!

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

***Teena:*** Growing up, I was always fascinated with architecture and interior design. My grandmother was an amazing artist, and I spent a lot of time with her. I loved seeing her creations come to life.

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

***Teena:*** The field is now much more open to blending styles



together, which I love to do.

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

**Teena:** An experienced interior designer can give an overall concept that helps in avoiding costly mistakes. No detail is left out. Our team sits with the client and makes sure that everything on their plans will function for their family, as well as developing an overall design concept.

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

**Teena:** Going beyond the design process is what sets me apart from others. I really get to know my clients and understand their lifestyle. I also learn how they want the space to function.

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

**Teena:** *The most challenging projects are the ones that are currently being worked on because our industry is experiencing extended lead time on all items. Everything from appliances to upholstery are taking an extended amount of time, slowing the completion of the overall design.*

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

**Teena:** When the project is a new construction, I usually like to begin with the selection of hard surfaces such as countertops. They are a piece of art. It adds character and becomes so personal! The selections dictate the color palette and so many other selections that will go in the space.

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

**Teena:** It's so common for new homeowners to be excited about their new homes and immediately make purchases that later don't work for their space or lifestyle.

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

**Teena:** Shop! Shop! Shop! You see what's out there when you shop. I shop not only in interior design stores but all retail stores. Interior design follows fashion.



**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What is your favorite design style?*

**Teena:** I love a mixture of styles and time periods. I love the saying "Grandma had it. Mother threw it away. I bought it back."

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What fascinates you and how*

*Continued on page 14*



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*Continued  
from page 13*

*have you  
incorporated  
that into  
your designs.*

**Teena:** Repurposing fascinates me. In my retail store, the cabinets are made from wood

that was on the side of my grand- mother's home. This is the home my father grew up in as well. It makes me feel so good that a part of my past is still a part of my present.

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

**Teena:** I am very eclectic. I love mixing the new with the old. I'll end up using 18th century antiques and mix it with a modern acrylic piece. When the design is too much of one style, it can become boring and uninteresting.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What would be your recommendation for "what to do first" in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

**Teena:** Establishing a design concept. I ask clients to share pictures of interiors they like and the ones they don't like.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How to you keep yourself up to date with current design trends in the market?*

**Teena:** Every week I dedicate time to looking at the aesthetic styles that are influencing our space. I keep up with design blogs, social media, magazines, etc. And of course, I never miss the market!

*For more*

*information contact:*

**Teena Caldwell, Owner,  
Twenty-Two Fifty Interiors**

**Phone: (281) 265-2250**

**Address: 2250 Lone Star Dr, Sugar Land, TX**

**Website: [www.twentytwofiftyinteriors.com](http://www.twentytwofiftyinteriors.com)**







*Continued from page 9*

Hector Rodriquez is Ivan’s right hand man and project manager for the firm. A former Marine, Hector takes his duty seriously and is capable of managing the many on going projects or recalling the details of a past job. Zaria Portillo is the only female in this mass of masculinity and a beautiful one at that. She is also a family member. Zaria is an expert in managing the office, ordering materials, keeping up with the shipments, billing, etc.

Ivan serves clients primarily in in Bunker Hill, Memorial, Hunter’s Creek, and the Heights areas. He and his team understand the importance of an outstanding customer relationship. They take great pride in making sure that all



customers experience the style of relationship that extends far past the completion date of the work on their homes. They are always striving to deliver more than expected; hence, the reason most of his business comes from referrals.

*To contact Ivan Rodriquez Remodeling  
call Zaria at 281-889-4974 or email  
ivan77079espinoza@gmail.com*

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www.smartvacpros.com

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www.piercingmedia.com

## PROPERTY & CASUALTY

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www.goosehead.com

## REALTOR

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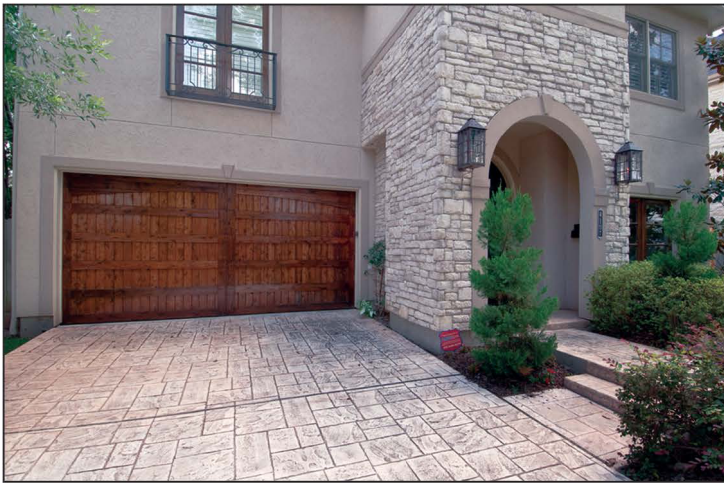
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