

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

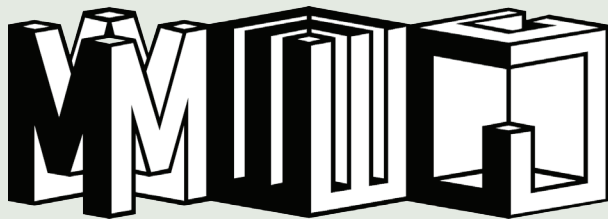
Greater Houston Edition  
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## DYNAMIC BUILDERS HAS ONE TEAM, YOUR TEAM

Gifford Construction -  
Preserving Houston's Heritage

Dialogue with a Designer:  
Melissa Snow



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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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*Feature Story*

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Giselle Bernard**  
Publisher

I am often amazed by new products on the market in which I am not completely familiar. In this issue, instead of writing a publisher note, I would like to run the following article. I've heard a number of speakers at the GHBA share information regarding the problems that arise when installing and repairing stucco on a home. Basically, while stucco is gorgeous, installed improperly can result in water intrusion, a builder's ARCH-NEMESIS! Let me know what you think.....

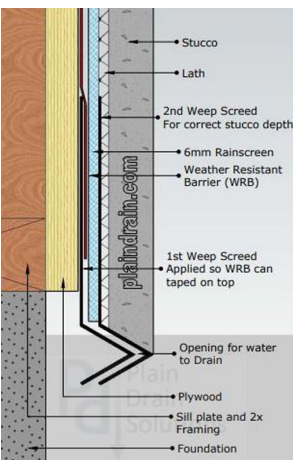
# When It Comes To Stucco, Plain Drain Solutions Addresses The Moisture Management Issues So Prevalent In The Houston Market

Have you ever wondered why your wood fence lasts longer than the plywood behind your stucco, even though it's exposed to the same elements? The answer is simple: your fence can dry properly, which the plywood can't.

It rains in Houston -- a lot! With all that rain comes a lot of opportunity for moisture intrusion. While Stucco is often blamed for moisture problems, the reality is that the lack of moisture management is the underlying issue. To address this problem, the new 2021 building code requires the inclusion of a 3/16" drainage cavity behind stucco.

A cost-effective way to achieve this is by using the Plain Drain Solution 6mm Rainscreen. It will provide you with drainage cavity that will help drain your assembly and allow it to dry out.

### What is a Rainscreen?



A 6mm Rainscreen (or drainage mat) is a moisture management product that provides a drainage cavity between your weather barrier and your exterior cladding (stucco, siding, stone). It is this drainage cavity, that will allow any incidental water to drain quickly, preventing any moisture buildup that can lead to mold, rot, and other damage. It is a cost-effective, easily installed product that will meet



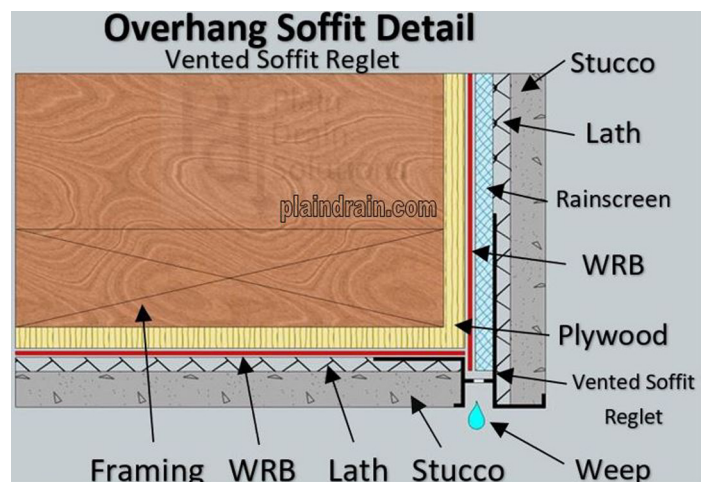
the requirements of the new 2021 building code.

### Why is rainscreen required behind stucco?

Due to our heavy rainfall, moisture intrusion in Houston can cause significant damage and rot. While stucco is often blamed, it's the lack of proper moisture management that's the root cause.

Wood can begin to mold and rot when it's not allowed to dry. The current drainage system, which is supposed to work between two tight pieces of paper, doesn't always work as intended. Thankfully, the new 2021 building code requires a 3/16" drainage cavity behind stucco to address this issue. The Plain Drain Solution 6mm Rainscreen can meet this code requirement, allowing any incidental moisture to exit the system quickly and efficiently.

*Continued on page 5*





**BILLIONAIRE  
THOUGHTS**  
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# 10 Steps to Successfully Delegate

by Sheles Wallace

Delegation is an essential leadership skill required to grow your business and allow you to invest your time more efficiently and effectively. However, delegating tasks is more than just assigning work to someone else. It involves clear communication, trust, and accountability. Here are ten steps to successfully delegate essential tasks.

1. **Identify the task:** Begin by identifying the activity you want to delegate. The action could be anything from a simple task to a complex project.
2. **Select the right person:** Choose the right person for the task. This person may be someone you have on staff or need to hire or outsource. Consider their skills, experience, and availability. You want to delegate to someone capable of completing the task and has the time to do it.
3. **Define the task:** Clearly define the mission, including its objectives, scope, and deadline. Be specific about what you expect to be accomplished. I have learned that asking them to repeat the instructions will ensure that the person knows what they are responsible for and what success looks like.
4. **Provide necessary information:** Now, you may ask yourself, “Isn’t this the same as defining the task?” Not really; this is the piece that often gets missed. We must provide the person with all the necessary information to complete the task. Information needed could include relevant documents, contacts, and other resources. Doing this upfront saves time and reduces mistakes. Don’t hide in the corner office; make yourself available to answer questions and provide guidance.
5. **Establish checkpoints:** Create checkpoints to review progress and ensure the task is on track. Checkpoints will help you identify and address any issues early on. You don’t want to wait until the deadline to discover that something went wrong.
6. **Empower your team:** Give the person the authority and resources they need to complete the task. Trust that they will make the right decisions and take the necessary actions. Empowering your team could include access to funds, tools, or personnel.



7. **Monitor progress:** Monitor progress regularly to ensure the task is on track. Creating a monitoring system will help you stay informed and make any necessary adjustments. Keith Cunningham put it best “Inspect what you expect.”
8. **Evaluate performance:** Evaluate the person’s performance once the task is completed. Provide feedback on what they did well and what they can improve. Feedback done properly will help them grow, develop their skills, and feel part of the team.
9. **Reward success:** Celebrate success and recognize the person’s contributions. Everyone likes to be appreciated for their hard work. Verbal affirmation and rewards will help motivate them to take on more responsibilities in the future.
10. **Repeat the process:** Use what you have learned to delegate tasks more effectively in the future. Empowering your team will help you build a strong company, accelerate your growth, and achieve your goals more efficiently.

Delegation is an essential leadership skill to help you achieve your goals and run a more efficient and effective business. Following these steps, you will successfully delegate tasks and empower others to grow and develop their skills. Remember to communicate clearly, and establish trust and support throughout the process.

Sheles Wallace

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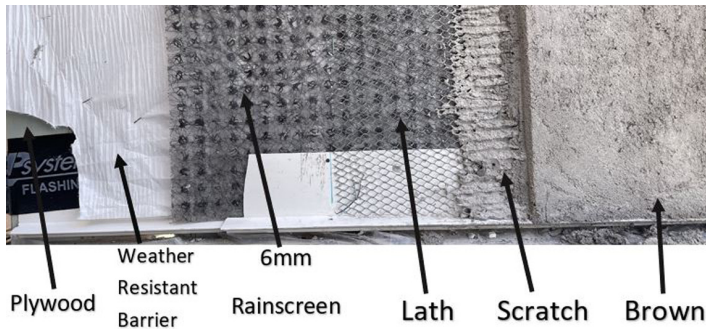
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Continued from page 3

### How Does Rainscreen Work?

Rainscreen is installed between the stucco and the sheathing, creating a gap that allows air and moisture to flow freely. This cavity ensures that any moisture that gets behind the stucco can quickly drain away, rather than being trapped and causing damage. Rainscreen also allows the system to dry out, preventing mold and rot from taking hold. With rainscreen, you can offer your clients peace of mind knowing their stucco houses are protected from moisture damage



The first is wrapped behind our WRB. Then we install Plain Drain rainscreen and ensure we backlap it for the built-in bug screen. Next, we install our 2nd weep screed to ensure we have the correct depth thickness.

Plain Drain was started to help change the perception of stucco in Houston. It's mission is to provide innovative and effective moisture management solutions that protect and enhance the built environment. It's goal is to be a trusted partner to architects, builders, and property owners, helping them create buildings that are not only functional and beautiful, but also resilient and sustainable for generations to come. Their goal is to provide cost effective solutions and products to ensure you have a healthy building after years in the stucco industry. Moisture management is where they excel. With this understanding of how water works, the Plain Drain Solutions team is able to help you create the right details to ensure that you have a working moisture management system when using stucco.

### Check out the Weep Screed Detail

At the base of the system, it is important that we allow a gap for the water to exit the system. This can be accomplished by installing a double weep screed detail.

For more information contact  
Bruce Honore at  
Plain Drain Solutions  
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# DYNAMIC BUILDERS HAS ONE TEAM, YOUR TEAM

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

There is nothing monotonous about custom home building. Charles Smith and Gama Paz know that better than anyone from their twenty-plus years' experience within the building industry. Today, they are the new management team of Dynamic Builders and are excited about the growth and direction of the company. The company was founded on Christian values. Gama and Charles will continue putting God first in their business dealings. Gama's primary focus is oversight of the daily construction and project management operations. Charles's primary focus is on the business aspects of construction, remodeling, and renovation. Together they form a strong team that their clients can trust to overcome challenges and bring their vision to life.

They were brought together by the previous owner of Dynamic Builders, Terry Collins, a mutual friend and mentor. He has since transitioned into a board member of

the company, leaving the company in the competent hands of Gama and Charles.

As a team, Gama and Charles continue to follow Terry's lifelong motto, "Your best method of growing a business is the support of happy former clients." They strongly believe that providing the best client experience is the best form of advertising. Dynamic Builders strives to provide unmatched service when building dream homes for their clients. Their goal is to make the task of building their clients' dream home both positive and memorable.

They are not only passionate about building homes; they are passionate about building relationships. It is important to be open to all influences from people, including detailed artisans who incorporate all their customers' wishes into a home they are proud to call their own.

The duo has a design-build approach to new custom





homes and large-scale (entire home) renovations. They maintain the quality of materials and service. They bring the architect and designer together from the start of the all-important design phase. Customers are also welcome to bring their interior designer or architect into the process. Weekly meetings with the team ensure the desired outcome and vision the client wants, all within the original projected budget.

From the time of the first team and client meeting, it might be three months to a year before the builder breaks ground. It is essential to thoroughly review as many details within the scope of work during the planning stage to avoid costly change orders. Dynamic Builders offers a phased approach that produces a design package that includes all the documentation to get the house ready for permit (i.e., engineering plans, septic design, architectural design, all city permits, etc.). They will then present the bid for the construction of the house. This allows them to build trust and transparency in the hopes to being chosen as the builder for their home.

Once ground is broken, Dynamic Builders ensures the entire process is seamless. Dynamic's sub-contractor team also endeavors to ensure every detail is in place.

*Continued on page 8*





*Continued from page 7*

Gama or Charles is on the job site every day to ensure every aspect of the home is top-notch, and no details are missed.

In today's every-changing environment, Dynamic Builders stays on top of what's happening within the industry. This allows them to stay ahead of any potential surprises, such as price increases and chain supply issues. They are competitive with their pricing but not at the expense of quality.

To give is to receive. Another important factor is personal involvement in Operation Finally Home, a non-profit organization that builds mortgage free homes for wounded veterans. Dynamic Builders has had the privilege of building many of these homes. Operation Finally Home depends on the generosity of developers,




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builders, sub-contractors and vendors to make it happen. They are honored to volunteer whenever asked.

When looking for a company that understands the dynamics of turning dreams into reality, look no further than Dynamic Builders, a luxury custom home builder serving the greater Houston area since 2002.

*Dynamic Builders can be reached at 713-545-3753 (Gama) or 832-710-1000 (Charles). Their office is located in Manvel, Texas, at 8809 Bailey Road, a satellite city of Houston.*

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# Gifford Construction - Preserving Houston's Heritage

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

It isn't often that we feature a construction company that specializes in protecting Houston's historical past. KC Gifford's company is well prepared to take on any project that requires historical preservation as well as renovate historical homes to bring them into the twenty-first century.

"The mission of the historical society is to encourage, advocate and administer the discovery, collection, preservation, and publication of historical information relating to Harris County and to educate the public about the important history of Harris County, Texas."

KC is one of the few remodelers on a first-name basis with Harris County inspectors and the board of HAHC. His company has renovated historic homes in the Heights, Memorial, Montrose, Southampton Place, and the inner city's 6th Ward. There is quite a process to gain the approval of the thirteen-member board to receive a certificate of appropriateness. Because Gifford Construction has been in business for the past fifteen years, often remodeling historic homes, he's earned a vast amount of credibility as an expert in the field.

Prior to forming his own remodeling business, Keith KC worked odd jobs starting when he was sixteen. Doing so taught him various talents such as tree trimming, the skill of roofing, and knowledge of complete construction. He went on to work with Lennar Homes, HHN Homes building townhouses, and Crawford Renovations. His interest in historical renovation was piqued after he established Gifford Construction and began receiving referrals in the historic area of the Heights.

All builders must adhere to the rules and regulations for renovating a historic home, and there are many. Potential buyers and homeowners need a seasoned builder who can guide them through the mountains of requirements and paperwork. Alteration, to name one area, includes: replacing historical material such as siding, railings, columns, beams, walls, porches, steps, balconies, painting, adding or eliminating doors or windows, or removing any and all existing structure.

Rehabilitation means returning a building, structure, or site to a state of utility that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving portions or exterior features that are historically, architecturally, and culturally significant.

KC mentioned that current homeowners are leaning toward transitional style - design that straddles the line between



*Continued on page 12*



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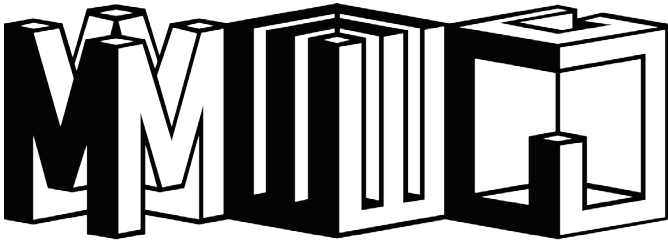


*Continued from page 11*

tradition and modern. Potential buyers should know that all changes must be approved by the 13-member preservation board, even if another structure must be removed before construction begins.

Clients who own or are contemplating the purchase of a historical home need a seasoned renovator who has an innate understanding of a city's history and how a city strives to protect the integrity of historic structures. KC Gifford is a builder that understands both remodeling and the problematic constraints of historical renovation.

***KC Gifford can be reached at  
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and/or  
KC@GiffordConstruction.com.***



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Photos courtesy of Fairmont Custom Homes

## Customer Reviews

**Matt Sneller -**  
*Sneller Custom Homes*

We are a custom builder/remodeler and have been working with Esvin/MWG for about 4 years now. They are one of our best trade partners that we have. Esvin is extremely creative and great around our clients, but he also does what he says he's going to do and is great about staying in communication. He has done everything from simple framed glass shower doors to very detailed shower enclosures to custom cabinet doors to a custom metal and wood table for our new conference room. I would highly recommend working with MWG!

**Michael Pelletier**  
*President/Owner Fairmont Custom Homes*

We have been working with Esvin Tista and MWG Innovations for over 5 years. Esvin is our go to for shower glass and mirror work. I am proud to say that we have been able to set market trends with the help of MWG Innovations and his excellent customer service. Rarely, do I find an individual that is as reliable as Esvin in our world of building custom homes. Esvin has been a great partner for Fairmont Custom Homes bringing excellent value to our customers and helping us become the number one builder in Fulshear, TX. We look forward to our continued relationship with MWG Innovations.

**Brandon Kraut -**  
*Construction Project Manager at Urban Craftsman*  
The MWG team does beautiful work, has great customer service, communicates clearly, and provides a great experience! I am a project manager for a custom home builder and we exclusively use MWG for our shower enclosures and glass work. I had them do my new shower enclosure at home as well. You can't go wrong with MWG!

## Sales Professionals



**Esvin Tista -** *Esvin@mwginnovations.com*

In his 12 years of experience in the glass industry, Esvin found himself wanting to do more than install glass. As a true Texan, he believes everything is bigger in Texas and decided to open his own business in 2018. Esvin is talented and has the passion and vision for designing and fabricating unique pieces of art for metal, wood, and glass consisting of shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. He credits his passion to his loving family and success to his professional team. When his not working, you will find Esvin enjoying the beautiful Houston weather fishing, hoping to catch more than a cold breeze on a sunny, rainy day, all in one trip to the bay!



**Lilian Tista -** *ltista@mwginnovations.com*

Lilian is experienced in management accounting. In search of a better balance between work and family time, she joined Metal Wood Glass Innovations LLC in 2021. Her commitment is to provide excellent service, helping the corporation to create and build a better business. She enjoys the opportunity to serve customers on a personal level and the originality behind each project. She spends her free time with her son. She loves to run, and occasionally you will find her running marathons and obstacle course races.

# Designing With Intention

## Products That Excel With The Luxury Market

By Linda Jennings

A warm and polished design aesthetic is a hallmark of luxury home decor. Workmanship is of the utmost importance in creating a space that excels in function while also creating a luxurious environment for renewal and inspiration. From the world of global design we've

collected the newest products in the home design market. From new construction to renovation, builders and homeowners alike know these “must have” amenities will add years of enjoyment and lasting value.



MTI Baths Cosmopolitan Collection

### SOPHISTICATED AND STRONG

The new Cosmopolitan Collection from MTI Baths is the epitome of luxury design for the bathroom with its sophisticated style and streamlined sensibility, with a twist - its affordable. The line includes 14 show-stopping freestanding tubs and eight complementing distinctive sinks. Plus, an innovative line of shower bases in different organic textures and colors. Shower floors reimaged. The products showcased in the Cosmopolitan Collection are destined to become the new standard of bathroom design. Each tub, sink and shower base is carefully crafted from MTI's signature mineral composite blend of organic dolomitic limestone. The cast engineered stone is meticulously formed with a chemically bonded coating and then finished by hand, creating a non-porous surface that is incredibly durable and easy to maintain. MTI offers the collection in a beautiful glossy white finish or with optional exterior matte finishes in white, gray or black.

### THE NEW SHAPE OF COLOR

Discover a new world of intuitive design with ORIGINI by Gessi. Stunning bathroom faucets take center stage in this fantastical collection with its mesmerizing array of colors,



Origini Basin Mixer in Glossy Ocra from Gessi

shapes and finishes. The faucets are meticulously sculpted into inspired silhouettes and finished with rich glossy hues or beautiful metallics. The collection's signature basin mixer has a chic industrial vibe with a pipework-inspired design and hard angles softened by rounded edges. Of particular interest is the finish insert that fits neatly inside the knobs and allows an extra indulgence of color and customization. ORIGINI is a celebration of the influence color can have on moods and ambiances, the ACCENT triad allows one to be daring when defining spaces.

### BRITISH BEAUTY

The Sterlingham Company Ltd. has debuted a new line-up of sleekly engineered Washstand packages. Crafted from solid brass, these artisan-quality washstands feature a stunning marble top with upstand and are finished with a British-Made White Vitreous China Bowl. Offered in a variety of finishes and marbles for the tops, the Washstand Packages feature styles that range from an English Edwardian: the Farringdon and Kensington - to a more modern aesthetic - Mayfair and Chelsea. Both the top rail and the rack can be heated utilising the same dry line heating cable featured in the brand's acclaimed towel warmers. Custom sizes are also available along with a





**Chelsea Washstand Package from Sterlingham Company**  
variety of foot styles. All stands include a support angle for supporting the marble slab against the wall.

### UNEXPECTED COLOR

Ruvati infuses an array of fresh colors into the bathroom with bold new finish options for their popular epiStone series of bathroom sinks. The chic collection of hues are offered in matte black, classic white, Avocado Lime Green, Pacific Blue and a lovely light pink called Sedona Clay. Made in Italy by skilled artisans, epiStone is crafted from 70% crushed natural stone and minerals blended with proprietary resins. Ruvati uses state-of-the-art technology to create engineered stone that perfectly mimics the look of real stone and is incredibly strong and durable. Its non-porous surface is easy to maintain and features a lovely satin finish that is silky smooth to the touch. Measuring 19" x 14" with a 5" depth, epiStone sinks are meant to sit securely on the countertop with no mounting ring required.



**Ruvati's epiStone Bath Sink in Sedona Clay**

### CLEARLY SENSATIONAL

The Carré Crystal Knobs from Grandeur Hardware are certain to be a dazzling addition to any home. The Carré Collection has long been a brand favorite for its versatile design and clean lines with a unique waterfall edge. The Carré Crystal knob follows suit, adapting easily to modern and traditional decors. Its smooth face and stepped edges



**Grandeur Hardware's Carré Crystal knob**

are as pleasing to the eye as to the touch. Each knob is a true masterpiece of careful craftsmanship with incredible sculpted facets that naturally catch the light. These new knobs may be paired with any of the brand's extensive plate and rosette options. Made from solid forged brass rather than cast brass for reliable performance and enduring good looks, the plates and rosettes feature a flawless finish, with nine designer options to choose from.

### BARRIER-FREE INSTALLATION

Acquabella breaks with tradition by placing the drain on the tray's longest side with their new Largo shower tray. This strategic shift creates more options for installation configurations and adds a gentle slope as a subtle design element. The Largo Collection is offered in a range of versatile sizes and is crafted of engineered stone. The non-slip surfaces make for a safer shower environment and are incredibly durable and easy to maintain. In addition, five color options are available -- a traditional snow white, a stylish latte brown, and two shades of grey and matte black. Largo trays are further enhanced by texture. Choose from the brand's Slate finish which mimics the effect of natural stone, or the popular Beton option, which imitates the look of cement. Their low profile design makes the shower easily accessible for all age groups and abilities with a quick and easy recessed installation for flush-to-floor fit or standard with a small lip.



**The Largo Shower Tray by Acquabella**

*To find out more about the hardware and fixture products mentioned here, visit their websites:*

[www.mtibaths.com](http://www.mtibaths.com) • [www.gessi.com](http://www.gessi.com)

[www.ruvati.com](http://www.ruvati.com) • [www.sterlingham.co.uk](http://www.sterlingham.co.uk)

[www.grandeurhardware.com](http://www.grandeurhardware.com) • [www.acquabella.us](http://www.acquabella.us)



# Dialogue with a Designer

## Melissa Snow

*MWG INNOVATIONS - With a passion for designing and working with glass, Esvin Tista founded MWG Innovations in 2018 on the idea that offering custom bath glass and mirrors for new construction and remodeling projects should fall in the line of an exquisite art job. Esvin takes great pride in creating unique pieces of art designed to bring life to the ideas given to him by the builders, designers, and trades he partners with. His work includes intricate designs of fabricated unique custom metal, wood, and glass pieces for shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. MWG Innovations is committed to providing all clients with high-quality products and services in which yield outstanding customer satisfaction.*

*This month MWG INNOVATIONS speaks with MELISSA SNOW DESIGNS. Melissa Snow recognized a need to make consistent, timeless designs attainable for those who seek the services of a qualified professional that will work with clients' wants. Because of her unique background and expertise, Melissa can execute original distinctive, yet timeless designs while delivering solid, reliable service to her clients. The company strives to bring their client's vision into reality, giving their clients the highest quality in their design while providing the best return on their design*

*investment. All of the clients have a unique vision.*

*Melissa Snow Designs embraces each project individually, providing fresh, innovative ideas and creative concepts for all project types regardless of the project size or budget. We deliver a custom professional approach to meeting both commercial and residential interior design.*

**MWG INNOVATIONS: What motivated you to enter interior design?**

**Melissa Snow:** I enjoy the creative challenge of walking into the space with a client, and they describe to me what they want, and then we make it a reality. I love several aspects of design, from various finishes to selecting the perfect accessory for a client. I enjoy rethinking the space with a client, whether choosing a new piece or knocking down a wall to open up a space. I enjoy the challenges and successes that occur from the space's new design.

**MWG INNOVATIONS: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?**

**Melissa Snow:** Trends like the colors and styles of the interior and exterior of homes have changed dramatically. The use of technology for our clients to visually see spaces

*Continued on page 17*



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## Sales Professionals



**Jeff Steiner -**  
*jsteiner@bathsofamerica.com*

Jeff has always enjoyed working with people and being able to offer them his exceptional services. No matter the size of the job, Jeff makes sure that the customer is satisfied and that the job he started gets his full attention until completion. After sales, Jeff also follows up with clients to ensure they are aware of the functions of the products they have purchased and if he can assist in any product demo in person. Jeff, along with his assistant, Hillary Ratliff, started the appliance builder sales division at Baths of America. He has been in the appliance industry for 30 years now and has led Baths of America to one of the largest appliance dealers in Houston, TX.



**Hillary Ratliff -**  
*Hratliff@bathsofamerica.com*

Hillary has been in appliance builder sales for the past four years and has no plans to go to another industry. Assisting Jeff with his builders, Hillary makes sure that products are ordered, scheduled for installation and the logistics of jobs are handled sufficiently. Hillary enjoys the appliance category as it is a very niche, and the relationships that she's made in this industry. Helping builders and meeting new clients and industry partners has become a reason why Hillary plans to keep continuing her plans to grow in the appliance industry.



**Chadney Alvarez-**  
*chadney@bathsofamerica.com*

Chadney has been in plumbing and hardware sales for 25 years now. Starting as a bookkeeper at EXPO Design Center at age 18, she has developed herself into one of the leading salespersons in the plumbing and hardware industry. Developing customer relationships is very important to Chadney and a key reason why she's been very successful in maintaining her business. Starting from the beginning, when plans are just on paper, making selections, and seeing the final projects come to fruition a year or so later makes me love what I do.

## Customer Reviews

**Brian Phillips - Cayson Graye/Alair Homes**

As a custom home builder, we have specific needs when it comes to appliances for our projects. Jeff and his team offer not only the selection we need for our clients, but also the expertise, competitive pricing and professional installs. Baths of America is a vendor with whom we are very proud to partner.

**Courtney C - Client**

After having a horrible experience at another appliance dealer, we stopped into Baths of America on a whim and were paired with Vincent. We told him about our situation and the terrible experience we had been having with the other company, and he was able to get us our appliances in a reasonable time. Not only was he upfront with us, but he was in constant communication with us throughout the whole process. We had some issues with installation on our end due to our contractor's mistake, and Vincent was even able to help us remedy the situation. Thank you, Vincent for helping us 100% through the whole process and always being in constant communication. True customer service!

**Coraline Wheeler - Designer Details**

Love! Love! Love this place. You will be pleasantly surprised to enter a beautifully designed showroom with a lot of exciting eye candy!! Every time without fail, the customer service has been excellent. Their knowledge and quick turnaround with quotes are always impressive, especially given the current environment. The range of products is a visual delight as well as impressive to take clients to when sourcing appliances, faucets, hardware etc. A must-visit! You won't be disappointed.

Continued from page 16

we create in 2D and 3D perspective has been a great tool in showing the final desired design for their spaces. Another change has been how we can interact with our clients locally and out of state through Zoom meetings, job site walks, and text and emails. The expectations and the overall knowledge of our clients have increased. We love when they come to us with many of the key concepts they want to integrate into the design of their home. They expect us to make their dream space come to life, and we accept and enjoy that challenge.

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

**Melissa Snow:** A custom home builder or remodeling contractor's partnership with the interior designer is key. We create a functional design space representing the beauty the client wants to see and work with the builder or remodeler to build the home or area for them. We can assist them in suggesting items to the client or builder that are within the budget allotted by the builder/remodeler. Also, an interior designer can keep the project on track to meet the set deadlines for the necessary selections. All of these are just the start of how an interior designer can assist them in a project.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What sets you apart from other designers?*

**Melissa Snow:** Melissa Snow Designs is set apart from other designers in many ways, but one key characteristic is our attention to the client. A key characteristic that sets good customer service apart is not just hearing but instead listening to what the client needs, wants, and desires for their space. It is essential to have a functional and beautiful space at the same time. The client should make the final decision since they will spend the most time in the designed space. The client indeed leads the process in the way we approach each aspect. Our company is very flexible in the process when working with a client. They may desire to work hand in hand with Melissa Snow Designs or allow our company to select and then bring options for them to view. Sometimes we completely design a space and then show the client the final design with 3D renderings. It is all up to the client what they desire and prefer.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What has been your most challenging project and why?*

**Melissa Snow:** We designed a 20,000 square-foot restaurant project that was a historical property; truthfully, that was the most challenging. As the design team onsite daily, the challenge was balancing what we could rehab compared to what needed to go in new – think mechanical,

Continued on page 20





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**Richard Arnold -**  
*richard@ifhouston.com*

Richard Arnold is the proud co-founder of International Flooring and is based in Houston, TX. With over 25 years of experience in the building industry, Richard has worked his way up from Construction Manager overseeing over 200 home builds to becoming the CEO of three construction companies: International Flooring,

Texas Treads, and Karina Homes. His robust construction knowledge qualifies him to solve a variety of building needs, from product sourcing to installation, crew management, and more. Richard takes a hands-on approach with clients through multiple job site visits and straightforward advice. Working with Richard means connecting with Houston's top custom builders, designers, and remodelers

## Customer Reviews

**David Herzog, CEO - Herzog Homes, LLC**

Herzog Homes has built over 2,000 on the east coast. When we opened our Texas division, we learned of Richard Arnold, owner of International Flooring, by way of a very strong recommendation from our construction lender. Any referral from a construction lender is extremely credible. We met with Richard and the rest is history. They installed the flooring in our first home over 5 years ago, and they have done every home since, including two of my personal homes. Accordingly, we have given Richard and his company abundant referrals to customers, friends, designers, and builders alike. Additionally, we strongly recommended them to the CBUSA builder chapter for membership. This is a very selective organization, comprised of over 50 regional builder who work with our internally approved trade contractor and suppliers. After membership vetting, they were accepted, and we are elated to have them as part of the CBUSA team. Richard and International Flooring have executed expertly, their employees are professionals, and we cannot say enough great things about this company. They are regularly voted favorite quarterly trade by our team, and we look forward to decades of continued partnership. I am happily available to discuss our superb relationship with International Flooring. I can be reached at David@HerzogHomes.com or 832-314-9000.

**Selena MacKay, Owner of The WM**

International Flooring is my go to source for flooring. The selection is outstanding. Richard is very knowledgeable and is able to always meet our budget with quality products that make my clients super happy!! The service is excellent and overall a great experience working with him.

**Steve Gulledge, Gulledge Homes**

I highly recommend using International Flooring for all your flooring needs. Richard Arnold, an owner of International Flooring, knows his product inside and out. He can explain the different wood species and flooring options to my clients, so they are well-informed in making their flooring decisions. Richard bids on the job and walks the jobs, overseeing the jobs closely. He communicates daily and closely with his project manager, Eduardo Trigo with whom I really enjoy working. International Flooring provides my clients and I with outstanding service. If there are issues with punch items, they take care of it right away. I must add that Richard has built an island butcherblock countertop for me that turned out fabulous.



*Continued from page 18*

electrical, plumbing, and structural. In addition, to keep it within the historical landmark guidelines, this project took a lot of patience and required a lot of knowledge. As always, the most challenging things in life and in design end up being the thing that brings us the most joy. We face daily challenges, from the possibility of items not being installed correctly to a paint color that needs to be tweaked. Ultimately, how you handle your challenges tends to say volumes about you.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders’ and remodelers’ clients?*

**Melissa Snow:** The client and Melissa Snow Designs usually have an initial meeting to discuss their desires for a space and to share their inspirational photos (usually saved on Pinterest, Houzz, etc.). After formulating a priority of desires and a design plan, we will then set out to select the perfect design elements to complete the space. The builders and remodelers have many working relationships

with vendors we use for the needed materials to design the space. The material selection process is dynamic, allowing our company to see the newest high-quality material or product. As the design process evolves and a similar pattern of choices emerges from the client, one can hone in on which of the specialized vendors will assist us in developing their design vision.

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

**Melissa Snow:** Our company attends design seminars and trade shows, receives several publications, and discusses trends with our working partners. Also, our clients bring new design concepts to implement into their spaces. It may not be a specific product, color, or finish, but a concept that is entirely out of the box, and we must turn it into reality. As in any business, there is a need to keep educating, growing, and being exposed to the newest trends in the market.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

**Melissa Snow:** For the client or builder – visual references such as pictures are one of the key ways to share your desires. Think of a collage – you may not like everything in the pictures, but by bringing several pictures together, they end up having an overlapping continuity. Besides saving ideas and concepts of what the client wants the space to become. I would also suggest educating yourself on some of the costs. For example, view the price of granite slabs to gauge the material costs per square foot of the client’s preference. This knowledge helps differentiate the reality of the costs of material to be used regarding the budget.

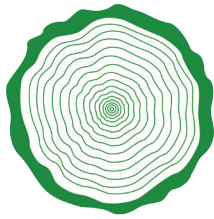
**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *Any last thoughts or comments?*

**Melissa Snow:** The remodeling or building of a home is an enormous task. Take it day by day but be prepared to have the selections the builder or remodeler needs to make sure your project stays on track. Select an organized, creative, and personable interior designer.

Whoever you choose will listen to your desires and incorporate them into your space. It is a good idea to have a key individual to lead you in your final selections so there will be no costly mistakes.

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**Houston, TX 77024**  
**281-639-0039**  
**Melissa @melissasnowdesigns.com**  
**www.melissasnowdesigns.com**

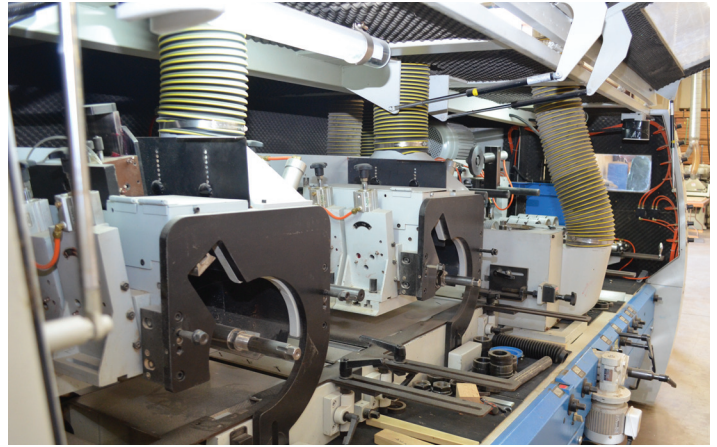




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## Sales Professionals

### Customer Reviews

**Cullen Franz - Savannah Grace Homes**

“Hardwood Products has gone over and above to source the best quality materials for the best price to help me grow my business. Kenny Francis and the HWP team has provided me with outstanding customer services that leaves other competitors in the dust. I can't say enough about the value that I have received in partnering with HWP. My custom homes have never looked so good !! Thank you Kenny and HWP !!”

**Matt Sneller – Sneller Custom Homes and Remodeling**

“I have known and worked with Kenny/Hardwood Products for over 15 years. We consider them to be one of our most loyal and trusted trade partners. We are a custom builder/remodeler and use them for a lot of our interior and exterior trimwork/materials. Their pricing is fantastic, but even better than that is their customer service. Kenny is always easy to get a hold of and super responsive to any issue that arises. We would highly recommend using them!”

**Rick Davis - DC Kitchens & Remodeling**

I can't say enough about working with Hardwood Products. I've been in business for about 35 years and have been working with Hardwood products for as long as I can remember. I find their entire staff trustworthy and extremely professional, especially Kenny and Laura. The entire staff has a full understanding of their extensive line of hardwood products. I find that they are extremely dependable, and their customer service is outstanding. They always go out of their way in providing the very best in high-quality materials and for the best price. Not only that, I find them to be very dependable. I can trust that they will always be on top of things. I feel more comfortable working with them than anyone else.



**Charlie Molloy -  
cmolloy@hwp.us**

Charlie has over 30 years of experience in the building material industry, dating from 1992 to the present. He has expert knowledge of most building products, including hardwood lumber, plywood, cabinet hardware, plastic laminate, and custom moldings. In his previous years, he was a manager in the grocery industry for Eagle Discount Supermarkets and Randall's Food markets in the Houston area. His strengths include managing employees, customer service relations, logistics, and outside sales. He has lived in the Houston area since 1968 and spent his childhood in Spring Branch, graduating from Spring Woods High School. He went to the University of Houston where he majored in Music, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Business management. Hobbies include playing the National Anthem with his trumpet at professional baseball games, hiking in the Big Bend area, and woodworking. Charlie has been married 39 years and has one son, a daughter, and two grandchildren.



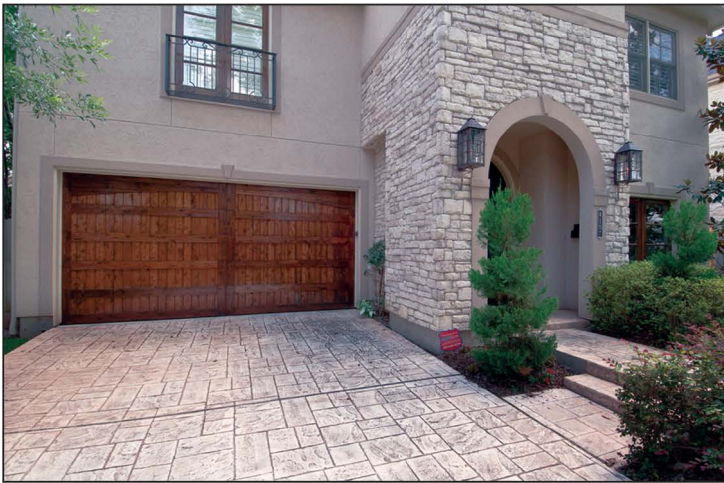
**Kenny Francis -  
kfrancis@hwp.us**

Kenneth has 32 years of experience in the building industry from 1990 to present. He started at Wilsonart in 1990-2001 in the Houston area. He was employed as the operations manager of over 27 employees. He decided to take his sales knowledge & expertise to Hardwood Products 2001 - present. Kenny enjoys working with companies & building relationships. From commercial millwork shops and remodelers to Custom Builders. Every day is a challenge, from supply & demand to rising costs. Providing innovation & service for the customer is the bottom line. Kenny has lived in Houston his entire life & knows the area well. His hobbies are anything outdoors, from hunting and exercise to sports. He has a wife of 17 years & two beautiful daughters.

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