

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

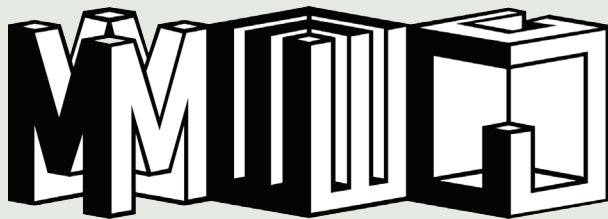
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## Damian Derby Of Carrera Custom Homes Rite Of Passage

Leveltx: Gold Standard Of The  
Construction Industry

Dialogue with a Designer:  
Jennifer Kizzee



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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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*Feature Story*

## 06 Damian Derby Of Carrera Custom Homes Rite Of Passage

**By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID**

## 03 Publisher's Note

## 04 Essential Tips for Boosting Customer Experience

**by Sheles Wallace, Billionaire Thoughts**

## 10 Emulate Authentic Bath Design With These Original Products That Are Built To Last

**By Linda Jennings**

## 12 LEVELTX: Gold Standard Of The Construction Industry

## 15 Metal Wood Glass Innovations

## 16 Dialogue with a Designer - Jennifer Kizzee

## 17 Baths of America

## 19 International Flooring

## 21 Hardwood Products

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# PUBLISHER'S *note*

With immense gratitude and appreciation, I write this publisher's note to express my heartfelt thanks for your steadfast support throughout the years. As I reflect upon the incredible journey I have shared in the residential home-building industry, I am reminded of your partnership's tremendous impact on the magazine's success.

Since the inception of our trade publication, our mission has been showcasing some of the most remarkable building professionals within the industry and representing the vendors to which they have referred. Your unwavering support and participation have been instrumental in making our publication a trusted resource within the Houston, Texas, community.

Your expertise, craftsmanship, and dedication to excellence have transformed our city's landscape and inspired us to deliver the most relevant and engaging stories possible. Your feedback and contributions have helped shape our publication, ensuring that we provide information and resources that are both informative and insightful.

I am incredibly grateful for the trust you have placed in us. Your ongoing collaboration

and willingness to share your experiences have fostered a sense of community within our publication, making it a platform for knowledge exchange and professional growth.

As we progress, I pledge to continue delivering the highest quality content that addresses your evolving needs. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to showcasing your achievements, highlighting your innovative projects, and offering valuable industry perspectives.

In closing, I extend our most profound appreciation to every one of you, our esteemed Residential Home Builders and Vendors. Your continued support and trust have been the cornerstone of our success, and we consider ourselves privileged to serve as a bridge between you, the vibrant residential home-building industry, and the consumers looking to build, buy or remodel their homes in Houston, Texas.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and for being an integral part of our thriving community. We look forward to more years of collaboration, growth, and shared success.

With sincere gratitude,  
***Giselle Bernard***





# Essential Tips for Boosting Customer Experience

by Sheles Wallace

The customer experience is more imperative today than ever before. Implementing a great customer experience in your organization is one of the most significant opportunities to win over your competition.

The Covid pandemic caused many issues, some of which still affect businesses today. Including but not limited to:

1. **Delays and Disruptions:** With global supply chains disrupted, businesses faced significant delivery delays. These led to an uptick in customer service inquiries and complaints about delayed or missed products.
2. **Limited Staffing and Increased Wait Times:** Many businesses had to furlough or lay off staff due to the economic impact of the pandemic. These resulted in fewer customer service representatives, increasing wait times for customers seeking support.
3. **Shift to Digital Channels:** As physical stores closed, there was an increased reliance on online shopping, which led to a surge in customer service queries through digital channels. Many businesses struggled to manage this shift, resulting in poor response times and customer dissatisfaction.
4. **Lack of In-Person Support:** Industries that typically rely on face-to-face interactions for customer service, like hospitality and retail, were particularly hard hit. They had to quickly adapt to remote customer service, which presented its own set of challenges.
5. **Communication Issues:** With rapid changes in business operations, travel guidelines, health, and safety protocols, etc., communicating these changes effectively to customers became a significant challenge.
6. **Product Availability Issues:** There were widespread product shortages due to supply chain disruptions and increased demand for certain goods, leading to customer dissatisfaction and inquiries.
7. **Technological Challenges:** With the sudden shift to remote work, many businesses face technology challenges, affecting their ability to provide adequate customer service.

Allow me to share a secret with you. Your customers no longer care, and they are sick of the excuses for why the customer experience is unpleasant. They are no longer



giving the “Covid Pass,” even if it’s the real issue. With inflation rising, buyers are more selective about where and how they invest their dollars. A great customer experience is critical to the long-lasting success of your organization.

Implement these 5 Strategies to improve the customer experience in your business.

1. **Understand Your Customers:** Segment your customers and their specific needs and preferences. Create customer personas better to understand their behaviors, motivations, and pain points. This understanding allows you to personalize their experience.
2. **Collect and Use Feedback:** Regularly gather customer feedback through surveys, reviews, and social media. Use this information to understand what works well and what areas need improvement.
3. **Offer Personalized Experiences:** Leverage customer data to offer personalized experiences. This can range from product recommendations based on past purchases to personalized communication.
4. **Prioritize Employee Experience:** Happy employees are more likely to create happy customers. Invest in your employees’ well-being and provide them with the tools and training they need to succeed.
5. **Create a Customer-Focused Culture:** From top management to frontline employees, everyone in your organization should focus on delivering an exceptional customer experience.

Sheles Wallace

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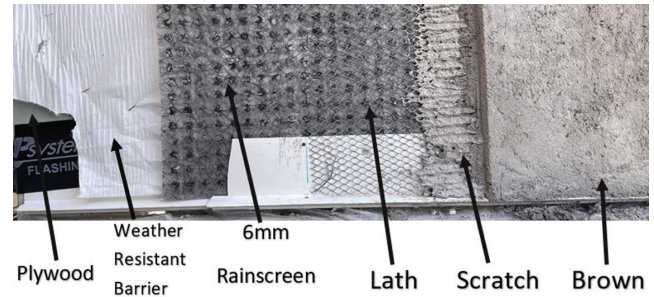
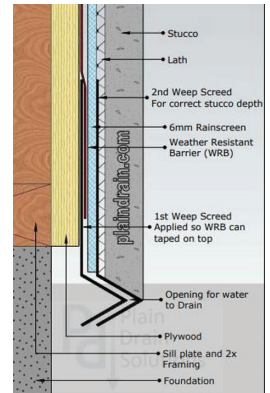
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# Damian Derby Of Carrera Custom Homes Rite Of Passage

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

“A rite of passage is a ceremonial, societal, religious or philosophical change from one norm to another greater norm with deeper meaning and convictions,” as is my understanding of this philosophical discussion with the very interesting, humorous, intelligent Damian Derby of Carrera Custom Homes.

“The goal in my life’s work in building beautiful luxury homes is creating the perfect life-nurturing environment for my clients where memories of special events last a lifetime,” stated Damian. He understands the human condition of people.

Building a home is all about creating memories for homeowners. That is the real reason people build or buy a custom home. They see themselves living day-to-day life in

those spaces, making memories. It might be the first steps of a baby or grandchild, graduation, or even a wedding celebration. Life’s memories range from outstanding to the depths of despair.

Damian Derby understands that fact about life and wants his homes to become a family’s sanctuary that will comfort emotions. That is the reason there is so much attention to detail in Carrera Custom Homes. From the selection of the lot to the effort to place that home on the lot in such a way as to have beauty to look at from each vantage point from room to room.

Every home has beautiful materials and finishes, all top of-the-line from the selections of countertops, woods, paint finishes, hardware, stone, roofing materials, and even the





landscaping. Carrera Custom Homes is in a league all its' own.

Damian feels that beauty should exist in every home. Websters Dictionary defines beauty as a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, form and function, that pleases the aesthetic senses. This definition defines the philosophy of a Carrera Home. Remember that word when you search for a builder to create a custom home for your family.

Beauty is much more than its definition. That is the reason there is extreme beauty in every historical monument, home, castle, estate, the iconic coliseum in Rome from

the Parthenon in Athens, Greece to the Great Pyramid of Giza through history to the Eiffel Tower in France and Buckingham Palace, in London, England.

The great architectural “thinkers” of Greek beauty are Phidias and Konstantinidis. We still see their influence today in architecture, especially in our buildings in Washington, DC, where Congress convenes in the United States Capitol, and the White House, designed by James Hoban and is a Neoclassical world-recognized symbol of the United States and is the very essence of freedom. Beauty means many things and relates to all subjects,

*Continued on page 9*



*Continued from page 6*

buildings, and construction worldwide. The massive works of the Renaissance are all about beauty. Damian knows and understands them well. They were the precursor to the Industrial Revolution.

Americans consider Frank Lloyd Wright the father of American architecture, and why? His homes are still the definition of beauty and integrating the natural environment into a home. Nature and beauty work together. Fallingwater, the Guggenheim, and the Robie House are considered three of his most influential works, 21st century architects still draw inspiration from the execution of the perfect nature of beauty.

Modern architecture is a mixture of the Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus movement, where “form follows function”. In the US we have such luminary architects as Phillip Johnson, who drew inspiration from the work of the German architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe. “The Glass House” is considered one of Phillip Johnson’s most memorable works of art. Robert Stern is known for his study of post-Modernism, and how it can be applied in residential design to create beautiful homes.

Beauty and the appreciation of historical value are fundamental to Damian Derby’s identity and the homes he constructs. His career in construction commenced by working alongside his homebuilder father, which laid the foundation for his passion. Damian further honed his skills



by obtaining a master’s degree in architecture from Texas Tech School of Architecture.

Damian’s extensive architectural training and profound grasp of history empower him to craft homes that exude timeless elegance. His ability to seamlessly accommodate client changes and requests is a testament to his expertise. His portfolio includes collaborative built works in Texas and Michigan, as well as contributions to planned university projects in the United Arab Emirates and Senegal. In Houston, he has made his mark by designing commercial buildings, church sanctuaries, schools, and even movie theaters. Damian’s construction ventures extend to distinguished subdivisions in Houston, such as River Oaks, West University, and Memorial, as well as



estates in Richmond. Most recently, he has embarked on several building projects on Lake Jackson.

Damian is a deep thinker, a second-generation builder, and truly understands what a custom home means to homeowners. At Carrera Custom Homes, they have defined the art of luxury. His personal philosophy is to design with the end in mind, as a writer would with a screenplay or a book. He endeavors to build custom homes that families can and will enjoy for generations along with a legacy of memories to enjoy.

Damian is a versatile builder skilled as an architect, with knowledge and talents ranging in traditional, modern, contemporary, French Country, Mediterranean, and Italian styles. Known for his beautiful and functional homes, he tells a story through his designs, envisioning spaces where families create lasting memories. With the ability to both imagine and produce results, Damian celebrates the essence of family life, crafting homes that are cherished and adaptable. His creations are more than just structures; they are living testimonies to love, joy, and the journey of life.

*To reach Damian Derby of Carrera Custom Homes to build “your custom home” email him at [dderby@carrerahomes.com](mailto:dderby@carrerahomes.com) or call 832-797-0561.*



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# Emulate Authentic Bath Design With These Original Products That Are Built To Last

By Linda Jennings

When it comes to remodeling projects or new construction, the options for bath design are limitless. For those looking to balance a fresh style and that all-important functionality, we've collected the latest bath and hardware products that elevate the luxury factor and

are a wise investment. From authentic sculpture stone tubs from MTI Baths to functional shower hardware from Gessi the following products celebrate original design.



The Cascara SculptureStone tub from MTI Baths



Acquabella's Zermatt wall sink

## THE STANDARD FOR SOLID SURFACE

SculptureStone by MTI Baths sets the bar for what "solid surface" should be. Made from the highest and purest grade of natural ground minerals, this extraordinary material results in tubs with a luxurious look and softly organic feel. The difference is discernible both to the eye and to the touch. SculptureStone is dense, consistent and non-porous, resulting in a product that is incredibly durable, impressively hygienic and easy to maintain. While others in the marketplace may use the term "solid surface," they fail to live up to these standards. All MTI SculptureStone tubs are made in the United States and finished by hand. Their tubs are available as soakers or air baths, all with ergonomic designs that cradle the body for a supremely relaxing bath experience. The solid construction results in enhanced insulation properties, helping to keep bath water warm longer. The tubs are offered with a deep glossy finish or a soft matte in a choice of white or biscuit.

## CLEAN LINES AND CHIC SOPHISTICATION

Wall-mounted sinks are becoming increasingly popular, particularly in smaller spaces where their compact design helps conserve floor space and give the illusion

of spaciousness. Acquabella has perfected this on-trend design, as evidenced by the success of the Zermatt series. The sink is offered in six size configurations from 32" x 20" to 60" x 20", all 4 3/4" deep, and can be ordered as a single or double basin. It is seamlessly sculpted from the brand's signature Dolotek, a cutting-edge mineral composite blend with a silky smooth surface and flawless finish. Eco-friendly Dolotek is amazingly durable and easy to maintain, and its antibacterial surface helps to create a more hygienic bathroom environment. Zermatt sinks are available in the standard Snow White finish with optional Latte, Black, Dark Grey and Light Grey versions.

## THE SHOWER WEARS A TAILORED SUIT

Gessi elevates the functional components of shower enclosures with their newly released Shower G collection of hardware and accessories, adding the perfect finishing touches to the bath. Shower G is a singular design achievement reflective of Gessi's commitment to both



**The Shower G Collection from GESSI**

aesthetics and functionality. Woven metal is used throughout the collection to embellish different elements like hinges and clamps, which can be ordered in bespoke sizes. Coordinating accessories like handles and towel holders offer visual contrasts with their round and square silhouettes. The collection is available in a lovely selection of finishes such as aged bronze, copper, antique brass and brushed black metal.

**STYLISH SHIMMER**

Upgrade the traditional bathroom sink for one that adds an element of glamour. The Pietra Collection by Ruvati



**The Pietra Vessel Sink from Ruvati**

features hand-finished vessel sinks with embellished exteriors highlighted in chic metallic tones and textures. The look is subtle yet extraordinary – a touch of bling without being overblown. The vessel-style installation

*Continued on page 14*

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# LEVELTX: Gold Standard Of The Construction Industry

LEVELTX is a residential and commercial construction company that boasts decades of combined design-build expertise. LEVELTX believes in these three core values: FAMILY, INTEGRITY, and PASSION. The GOLD standard of their company culture stems from the belief in each other's capabilities and talents while relying on everyone's contributions to reach their goals and achieve their full potential. They are committed to hard work and are passionate about doing the right thing for their team members and their clients to deliver the best results. They love what they do, and it is evident in the products they build. Their team consists of dedicated professionals who possess diverse backgrounds in various areas of construction. These professionals are eagerly waiting to transform your project vision into a tangible reality.

Every LEVELTX home tells a unique story to reflect their personal narratives. Trustworthy and reliable, they always deliver on their promises. Their family rooms are designed to create lasting memories, and the integration of open-

plan kitchens into the living space is a fundamental aspect of every LEVELTX build. This area is often considered the heart of the home, where families gather for important events and cherished moments.

They currently have three active lakefront communities in Lake Conroe: The Cove at Lake Breeze, The Harbor at Clear View Estates, and The French Quarter. In 2024, LEVELTX will be in these luxury communities: The Cedars, Blue Jack National, The Manors, High Meadow Estates West, Blue Heron Bay, and Chapel Bend. Also, LEVELTX has a build-on-your-lot division that offers design services to build the home of your dreams. LEVELTX offers homebuyers a red-carpet experience from the initial meeting until they receive the keys to their new home, ensuring a seamless process.

Not only does LEVELTX excel in residential construction, but they also specialize in commercial build projects. They offer aesthetically pleasing and functional tenant build-



out services. Additionally, the company has extensive experience constructing jewelry stores, gas stations, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping centers, industrial parks, sports and medical facilities, office buildings, and hotel & lodging facilities in the Houston and The Woodlands area.

Moreover, they can convert any piece of land, residential property, or commercial build into a lucrative investment. Within the building and investment industry, LEVELTX is a turnkey solution due to its wide range of services, and they execute each task with utmost excellence. When you entrust LEVELTX with your construction project, you can rest assured that they are fully committed to bringing your unique vision to life.

LEVELTX actively participates in community events and demonstrates its dedication to making a positive impact. They proudly sponsor Angel Reach, a non-profit organization under the United Way project, and are currently constructing three group foster homes for children in the foster system. They also actively support the MS-150 initiative. Community involvement holds a deep commitment and passion for LEVELTX.

As proud members of the GHBA, NAHB, Associated Builders and Contractors, Texas Association of Builders,

*Continued on page 14*





*Continued from page 13*

Design-Build Institute of America, The Texas Association of Builders, Remodelers Council, and The Woodlands and Willis Chambers of Commerce, LEVELTX maintains strong connections within its community.

*To get in touch with a LEVELTX professional, simply visit their website at [www.leveltx.com](http://www.leveltx.com) or call 832-850-2456.*



*Continued from page 11*

is perfect, perching the sinks on the counter to show off their beautiful sides. Shown here is the 14” round model; the collection includes square and rectangular models in metallic gold and silver, all made of thick porcelain ceramic. As with all Ruvati products, Pietra sinks are covered by a Limited Lifetime Warranty on materials and workmanship.

### **SAPPHIRE SPLENDOR**

Salò Art offers hand-crafted hardware in unique designs that are sure to become a stunning focal point of any bath. The Glass Meld Collection, part of the brand’s Flowerday Designs line, is an artisanal selection of colorful and expressive glass pulls set into beautifully finished metal bases. Skilled artisans fuse the glass through kiln firing with temperatures reaching up to 1500 degrees to achieve the line’s signature dual-layer designs. Each pull is unique with its own variations in patterns and swirls, but all are

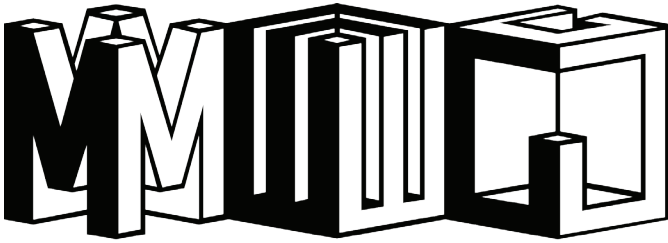


remarkable hand-crafted works of art. The glass pulls are offered in seven gorgeous colors, from liquid blue and dramatic marbles in coral, sapphire and turquoise shades to more subtle options like forest green, mica black and majestic white. The pulls are finished in matte black, polished nickel, satin brass or white and are available on MyKnobs.com.

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

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## 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.



# Dialogue with a Designer

## Jennifer Kizzee

*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 Jennifer Kizzee, Jennifer Kizzee Design. The JKD team is an extension of Jennifer's values of drive, resourcefulness, and positivity. Born and raised in a tropical city in Southern Mexico, Jennifer came to America with little more than a suitcase and a few words of English. Though the transition was tough, she knew she was destined to create a life that she loved, and worked hard at many jobs, from cleaning homes to climbing her way up the corporate ladder. Jennifer has always had a passion for design ever since she*

*was younger, and that passion resurfaced once she decided that interior design was her true calling in life. She founded JKD the same way she came to America—with a vision and deep-seated determination. Now, Jennifer empowers her team to problem-solve for their clients, to take risks, to own their perspectives and opinions, and to become empowering leaders themselves.*

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

**Jennifer Kizzee:** Soon after I discovered I had a knack to make any space look fun and cohesive even with existing elements in a room, the whole concept of it unleashed a serious passion for interior design and organization. Just like many of my fellow designers, my story began helping friends and family during down time and next thing you know, I'm leaving my full-time job to follow my dreams. I never, ever in a million years would have dreamt that it would become what it is today!

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

**Jennifer Kizzee:** Building or remodeling a house it's an

*Continued on page 18*



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## Sales Professionals



**Jeff Steiner -**  
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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*

exciting milestone for everyone involved, including the contractors. However, this process can become daunting and frustrating if the execution plan between the client and the contractors/builder is unclear. This is where experienced designers can bring so much value to the table. Not only can we ensure the delivery of beautiful & cohesive spaces, but we also understand the importance of spatial planning, which can genuinely impact the finished product.

Without a doubt, our Honesty and transparency are paramount. We dedicate ourselves to building trust with every client we encounter. At JKD, our projects are not only characterized by our contemporary and innovative approach, but also by our knack for foreseeing challenges and providing effective solutions for our clients.

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

**Jennifer Kizzee:** It's always challenging when working with clients who have difficulty trusting the design process,

but it's our duty to guide them through the plans and selections, even if it takes ten more tries. Ha!

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

**Jennifer Kizzee:** In order to have a successful project in collaboration with a builder, we always start with a series of sessions with the client to understand their vision, must-haves and overall feel. Once that's done, we start specifying the materials by priority and work our way into selections in collaboration with the builder.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What are some common mistakes builders and homeowners make?*

**Jennifer Kizzee:** Lack of storage, low ceilings, low-quality materials, small closets and heavy color scheme selection.

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

*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*

**Jennifer Kizzee:** We do our best to know what’s happening in the industry as it’s constantly evolving. We do a minimum of two product knowledge training sessions a month with vendors and manufacturing companies. We also attend KBIS, Market, and many industry-related events.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What is your favorite design style?*

**Jennifer Kizzee:** That’s always a tricky question because I genuinely appreciate different styles, but lately, I have been gravitating towards English Country with a modern spin!

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *What fascinates you, and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

**Jennifer Kizzee:** I am fascinated with organic elements that bring a wave of warmth into a space. If you peek at our portfolio, you will see the use of different types of woods, textured tiles, rattan, cane, and linen fabrics.

**MWG INNOVATIONS:** *How would you characterize your style?*

**Jennifer Kizzee:** Transitional. We get to touch so many traditional Texas homes, and once we finish refreshing them, we usually land in a “Transitional” style space that feels timeless and comfortable to our clients.

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

**Jennifer Kizzee:** Understanding the “feel” and style would be my first recommendation. Next, it’s knowing what’s valuable for the end user and, from there, building a budget. And last but not least, prioritize furniture orders based on production timelines.



**Jennifer Kizzee Design**

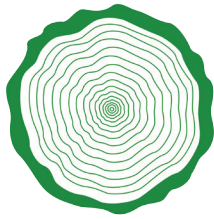
2116 Sedona Dr

League City, TX

Email: [info@jenniferkizzee.com](mailto:info@jenniferkizzee.com)

Phone: 832.304.7134

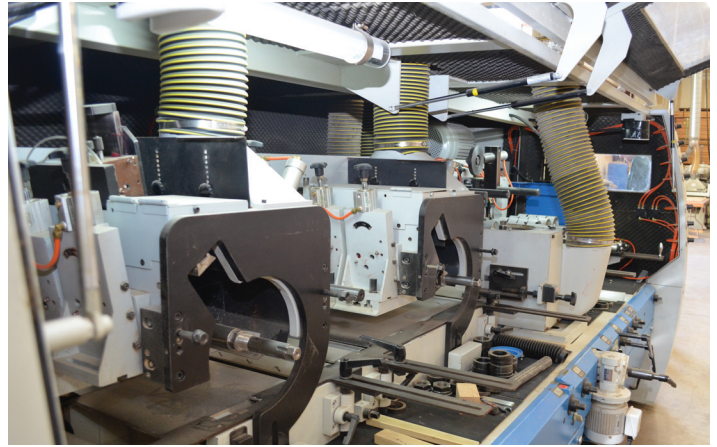




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## Sales Professionals

### 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.



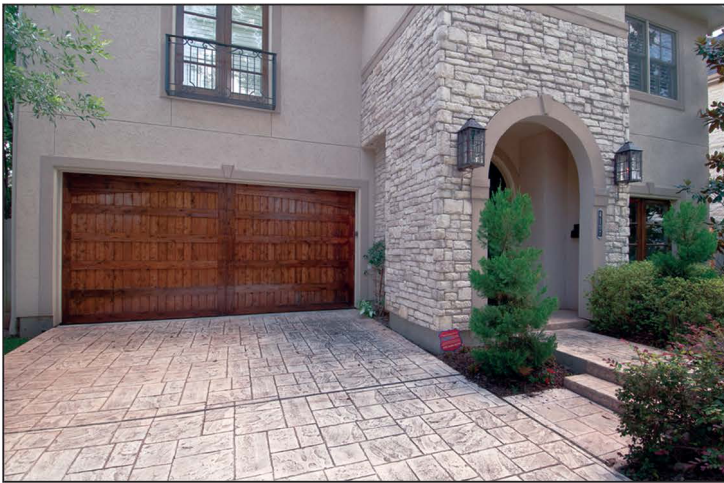
**Kenny Francis -  
kfrancis@hwp.us**

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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