

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

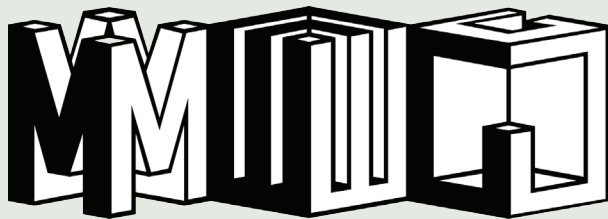
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Feature Story

06 Sherpa Builders' Partners On-Site from Day One to Day Done

By **Kathy Bowen Stolz**

03 Publisher's Note: The Importance of Working with Multiple Vendors

04 Why Your Business Needs Business Credit

by **Damon Wallace**

10 Planning Your Next Luxury Bath Project?

By **Linda Jennings**

13 Hardwood Products

14 Vivaldi Lifestyles Provide Instant Facelifts

By **Kathy Bowen Stolz**

17 Metal Wood Glass Innovations

18 Dialogue with a Designer

R J Clifton

21 Baths of America

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PUBLISHER'S *note*



Giselle Bernard,
Publisher

The Importance of Working with Multiple Vendors

In the dynamic and ever-evolving field of custom home building, interior design and architecture, the importance of working with multiple vendors cannot be overstated. Engaging with a diverse range of suppliers offers several critical advantages that can significantly enhance the success and efficiency of any project.

First and foremost, collaborating with multiple vendors fosters competition, which often results in better pricing and improved quality of products and services. This competitive environment ensures that clients receive the best possible value for their investment.

Additionally, relying on a single vendor can create a bottleneck in the supply chain, leading to potential delays and project disruptions. By having multiple sources, the building professional can mitigate these risks, ensuring a more seamless and timely execution of projects.

Diversity in vendor selection also provides access to a broader spectrum of materials, styles, and innovative solutions. This variety enables designers to explore and implement unique and customized design elements that truly reflect the client's vision and preferences.

Furthermore, multiple vendor relationships cultivate a network of expertise and support. This network can be invaluable when troubleshooting issues, as different vendors bring unique insights and solutions to the table.

In conclusion, the strategic use of multiple vendors is not just a logistical necessity but a critical component of delivering exceptional design outcomes. It empowers building professionals to offer better value, enhance project reliability, and create distinctive, high-quality spaces that exceed client expectations.



Why Your Business Needs Business Credit

As a trades business owner, you know the importance of having the right tools and resources to get the job done. But have you considered the benefits of building business credit? Establishing a strong credit profile can help your business grow and thrive in ways you may not have thought possible.

Here are just a few reasons why trades businesses need business credit:

1. **Access to Funding:** With business credit, you will have more financing options available to you, including credit cards, loans, and lines of credit. This means you can invest in new equipment, hire more staff, or take on larger projects without dipping into your personal funds.
2. **Lower Interest Rates:** By building a good credit history, you can qualify for lower interest rates on loans and credit cards. This can save you thousands of dollars in interest payments over the life of the loan.
3. **Increased Credibility:** Having business credit shows that your company is a legitimate, established business. This can help you attract new customers, partners, and suppliers, and give you a competitive edge in your industry.
4. **Protection of Personal Credit:** By keeping your business and personal finances separate, you can protect your personal credit score from any business-related financial issues.
5. **Higher Credit Limits:** Business credit cards and loans often have much higher credit limits than personal accounts, giving you more flexibility to make large purchases or investments.
6. **Tax Benefits:** The interest you pay on business loans and credit cards may be tax-deductible, reducing your taxable income and lowering your tax bill.
7. **Long-Term Growth:** Building business credit takes time and effort, but it can pay off in the long run by helping you secure larger contracts, better financing terms, and a stronger reputation in your industry.
8. **Gap Funding:** Without interim funding, you're forced to turn down lucrative opportunities, watching as your competitors snap them up. But with gap funding, you can bridge the financial gap and take on jobs that would otherwise go to others.

Building business credit is an essential step for trades businesses looking to grow and succeed. Give your business the opportunity to have the right tools for the job.



Plain Drain Solutions

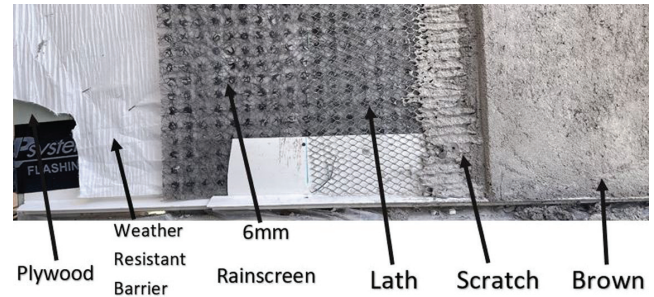
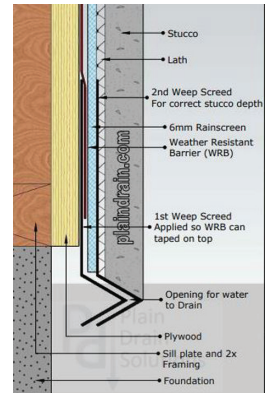
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Sherpa Builders' Partners On-Site from Day One to Day Done

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

To say that Rahul Desai and Russell Wiefeling are hands-on builders is an understatement. The partners in Sherpa Builders are on-site six to eight hours every day, overseeing the two, three or four speculative homes they build each year, because “we’re really mindful of how they’re built,” stated Desai.

“Quality is our number one goal,” Wiefeling agreed. “If you walk through many other spec homes, you clearly see the difference. We hear it often from buyers and realtors. It doesn’t cost a lot more to build a really good home, but it does take more time and attention. We’re there from Day One to Day Done.”

Rahul confessed, “I do my best to find every flaw. If I see something wrong, I can’t walk away from it.” As an

example, he described a wall that was out of plumb. The subcontractor said the homeowner would never see it, but Rahul explained he would always know it was there. The wall was straightened immediately.

“We don’t leave anything to doubt; if we did, most likely the wrong thing would happen. Our time spent each day on the job sites is focused to reduce mistakes or on things being overlooked. You wouldn’t believe how many times we’ve stopped simple mistakes from happening just because we’re there,” Desai continued. “Subs do not enjoy coming back three or four times. Better to do it right the first time.”

His partner agreed. “You’ve got to be there. So much can



get ‘lost in translation’ [with so many trades involved].”

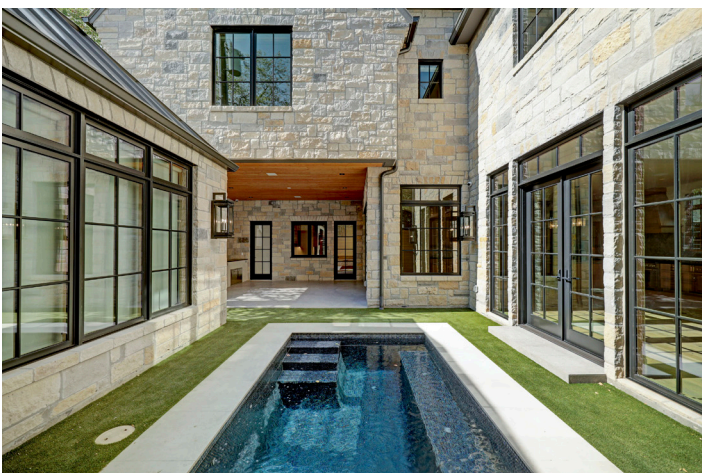
They prefer relationships with subcontractors who are family-run businesses, just as they are. “Dealing directly with subs who are the business owner is an immense advantage,” Rahul added. He has worked with several of his subs for more than 20 years.

Russell noted, “We’re there for every home inspection throughout the building process. If there’s a deficiency, we want to know what it is, and, as we are proficient in many building trades skills, we personally can more often make needed adjustments so that progress is not hindered.”

Desai and Wiefling are so confident in the quality of their homes that they have a Dare to Compare sheet that they

Continued on page 8





Continued from page 6

give to prospective buyers. They tell them, “If you can find a better-built house, you should buy it.” And they hear comments in return, such as, “This is the best built house we’ve seen” after they’ve walked through 30 others.

With its first 10 homes in the \$2 million + range, Sherpa has focused on “Inside the Loop Living,” including Afton Oaks, Southgate and West University Place. Its next project is a \$4 million home in Tanglewood.

Its single-family homes are basically designed for “malleable living,” according to Rahul, with a primary suite and three or four bedrooms, each with its own bathroom and closet. “There’s always a big social space upstairs and

an outdoor living area. We also reserve as much space as possible on the lot for a pool.”

They work closely with an architect to ensure that the houses fit the lots and for each to have its own unique look. “We don’t want our houses to all look the same. Each of our homes are more custom to the lot and neighborhood,” Desai explained.

They use quality construction materials, including 5/8-inch sheetrock throughout the entire house, 2x6 framing, foam insulation and hardwood floors throughout. “These upgrades add more costs to the project but provide a much better home.



The two came to their building careers from completely different paths but both at a time when they were seeking something new.

Rahul Desai worked in IT for 20 years until he took a severance package from Cisco in 2002 during a corporate

downsizing. He slowly transitioned into building stick-frame hotels before starting Sherpa Construction (d/b/a Sherpa Builders) in 2015. His wife suggested the name Sherpa as Rahul is an avid mountaineer and had recently hiked to Everest Base Camp. There a Sherpa is the one who guides people to their destination, such as a dream home.

Recognizing that “another set of eyes makes homes better,” he asked his friend Russell Wiefeling, originally a union steamfitter in Pittsburgh, to join him two years later when Russell’s 20-year encore career in sales with the Big Four accounting firm KPMG was ending.

The varied background of the two partners creates an unusually symbiotic relationship. They don’t split many responsibilities. Both focus on the tasks at hand and somehow it balances. We make a really good team. We both work equally hard. It takes care of itself,” Rahul explained.

Russell added, “I love this guy. He’s my brother.”

For more information, call
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Planning Your Next Luxury Bath Project?

Here's some inspiration to create the perfect space.

By Linda Jennings

If it's time to update your bath decor, take a look at some of these great new solutions. From floating vanities to minimalist shower bases, renovation and new-build options are abundant! Make your builder project a huge success with these brands that offer timeless products

for years of enjoyment. A little creative product choice can transform your space to a whole new level. Create a relaxing and enjoyable room to wash and renew with these gorgeous and inspiring trending products.



Delgada Shower Base by Acquabella

Exceptional Shower Bases

Create a shower environment that offers beauty, functionality and accessibility with the Delgada Collection of one-piece shower bases from Acquabella. These one-piece shower bases are available in various sizes and come with center or end drain options. They feature the brand's Pizarra natural stone texture and are offered in a palette of five colors made exclusively in mineral composite. The low-profile, multiple-threshold design allows for the installation of glass enclosures on up to three sides, resulting in a modern, streamlined look. Additionally, these bases can be recessed into the floor for a seamless, zero-barrier installation, making entrance and exit easier. Thanks to their one-piece solid construction, there's no need to worry about regularly replacing or re-sealing grout - think of these shower bases as one large, easy-to-clean tile. The non-porous, shock-resistant surface is UV- and stain-resistant, ensuring durability and low maintenance.

Powder Room Perfection

Spectrum brings a new level of sophistication to the smaller bath with fresh designs that celebrate chic elegance and minimalist style while offering exceptional functionality



Spectrum's Floating Vanity

for daily living. The Floating Vanity boasts a stunning oval backlit mirror that creates immediate drama and exudes luxury with its waterfall sides on the quartz countertop and matte lacquer drawer fronts. The illuminated linen cabinet offers the ultimate in pampering, bringing a spa-like vibe to the bathroom. The soft-close drawers are crafted from natural ashwood and offer custom dividers, providing ample space for all your bathing necessities. To complete the look, a matching white vessel sink and lavatory faucet in matte black create a striking contrast.

Textured Tub

Ruvati's latest innovation, the Cordona freestanding bathtub is the perfect addition to any modern bathroom. Crafted from the brand's signature EpiStone material it is developed using state-of-the-art technology to bring exceptional strength and beauty to this collection. It is composed of 70% crushed natural stone and minerals bonded with a proprietary resin that gives the material



The Cordona tub from Ruvati

its strength and durability. Naturally beautiful with a look similar to real stone, the epiStone material is strong, durable, and has a luxurious satin finish that is silky to the touch. The double-ended oval shape provides maximum comfort and allows for easy cleaning. Available in white or black, the Cordona collection is the most modern option for any bathroom renovation.



Grandeur Hardware's Carré Long Plate with Georgetown Lever

A New Handle On Style

Grandeur Hardware opens the door to a whole new world of luxury hardware and accessories. Their full product line offers stylish options for every door in the home, including entry sets, interior sets and handle sets, along with elegant tall plates, brass hinges and cabinet knobs and

Continued on page 12



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Continued from page 11

pulls. All locksets are forged from solid brass and never cast, resulting in a more intricately detailed product that is sturdier and has fewer imperfections. And many of their hardware collections come standard with premium features that competitors consider optional. Their Concealed Screw Mechanism (CSM) is a perfect illustration. This popular design cleverly hides the screws that attach rosettes and short plates to the door, resulting in a clean look unmarred by visible fasteners.

Striking Character

The Coda Collection from ICO Bath is offered in a flat front, or a playful ripple front design that adds texture. A matching side cabinet extends storage space and streamlines the bathroom's overall layout. This European inspired vanity includes popular features like integrated handles and soft close hardware. The Coda Collection comes in three sizes, with two drawers for storage. Optional curved or modern legs are also available. These elegant pieces are crafted from the finest materials and quality European craftsmanship. At the heart of each design is the simplicity of a product that functions as flawlessly as it looks. All models are durable, practical and provide a generous wash space to bring a little luxury to any daily routine.



Coda Rippled 36" in Matte Black from Ico Bath

To learn more about these luxurious bathtubs
visit their websites:

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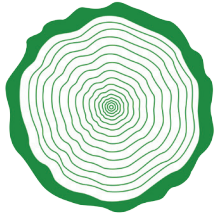
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Sales Professionals



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.

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.



Vivaldi Lifestyles Provide Instant Facelifts

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

For the Khanna family, first, it was tile. Now it is lifestyle!

When Anjali Khanna began to offer floor tile and natural stone back in August 2001, the business, then named Superior Granite, was in her family's one-bedroom house

on the southwest side of Houston where they also stored their inventory.

That humble start was literally and figuratively the ground floor for a company that has expanded several times and now employs 110 (including installers) at its six retail locations. With its growing product line of cabinets, countertops, appliances and flooring, Superior Granite became so much more than flooring that the company name changed in 2015 to Vivaldi Lifestyles. "The goal is to give customers the experience of walking into a lifestyle," said Sanjay Khanna, CEO of Vivaldi Group.

He added that Vivaldi Lifestyles caters to homeowners, fabricators, builders, architects, interior designers and distributors in addition to restaurant owners, lawyers and apartment complex and multi-family building owners. The company offers the same customer service policies and turnkey service for all its materials, no matter the customer.

"Another goal is to provide superior products that give a home or commercial property an instant facelift. These products include high-quality custom or RTA (ready-to-assemble) cabinets, closets, wood or tile flooring, Foster sinks and appliances, countertops and backsplashes in Houston and our other service areas. We have various styles, colors and materials you can choose from," Sanjay stated.





Other locations are Albuquerque, Corpus Cristi, Laredo, McAllen and Nederland.

When the 10,000-sq.-ft. showroom opened in 2016, customers had choices that were not previously available in Texas, Sanjay noted. Despite this larger showroom, the Khannas went on a hunt for yet a bigger space, relocating again in 2021. They now feature their products in a 40,000-sq.-ft. showroom on Hempstead Road, part of a 160,000-sq.-ft. facility that includes a state-of-the-art stone fabricating shop.

The Khannas, who offer quartz, quartzite, marble, granite, onyx, porcelain and semi-precious slabs in the largest collection of superior natural stone in Houston, now have the space to showcase the quality, variety and vastness of color ranges in the stone products that they import from Brazil, Italy, Spain and India. Vivaldi Group employs a full-time inspector at each site to ensure quality. “I ask the

inspectors to go look for particular colors if they’re not available in a factory. They send me pictures of every slab. Every single piece I bring here has been inspected by me,” Sanjay explained.

“We have thousands and thousands of colors and finishes in ceramic and porcelain tile and real wood floors. We also have luxury vinyl tile. A full range. Nobody wants carpeting anymore,” he said.

Vivaldi Group – despite its divisions of appliances, stone, custom and production cabinetry, flooring, multi-family, commercial and hospitality (installations) – epitomizes a family-owned-and-operated company.

A “natural designer,” Anjali remains president of the Vivaldi Group, although she limits her hours to four or five each day, while her husband Sanjay is CEO of all divisions

Continued on page 16



to be home more frequently with his growing children. He transitioned from steering a floating “small city” into steering a growing company. “It took about two years to decide to leave my full-time job. I enjoyed my sailing days. It took time to wean off the sea,” although he admitted that the sea still calls to him.

Their son Tanuj, who trained as a chemical engineer, joined the company after “a lot of coaxing” in 2015, according to his father. Tanuj took over the cabinet division, Superior Cabinets by Vivaldi, in 2016, easily absorbing any and all cabinet processes because “his whole brain is an engineering platform,” Sanjay said with a laugh.

Tanuj goes to cabinetry and machinery trade shows every year to keep abreast of the latest technology and techniques. “I used to teach him. Now he teaches me,” Sanjay added.

“We are always striving for knowledge, exploring new technologies in materials and finishes while remaining competitive. We attend trade shows regularly. After moving into a bigger cabinet manufacturing facility, I believe that in the next three to five years the cabinet business will be our largest growth area.”

Sanjay said he hopes their daughter, who is majoring in finance and marketing in college, will one day show an interest in the stone business and join the company, solidifying Vivaldi Group as a family-owned business for years to come.

For more information, visit www.vivaldi-group.com or email info@vivaldi-group.com or call 713-785-8408. The Houston facility is located at 12614 Hempstead Road, Houston, TX 77092.

Continued from page 15

after joining the company at his wife’s behest in 2004 when their daughter was born.

Gone for months at a time in his job as a sea captain, piloting the largest cargo ships in the world for a Norwegian company, he acknowledged that he needed

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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.

Double L Interiors -

Double L Interiors has worked with Metal, Wood, Glass Innovations (Esvin) on a several jobs. The process has been nothing but short of perfection. Interior design process can be trying. However, the right vendors make all the difference! MWG is one of those vendors you can rely on to make your idea come to life. Esvin "gets design!" He understands and appreciates the details that go into every space. Keep up the excellence Esvin!

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

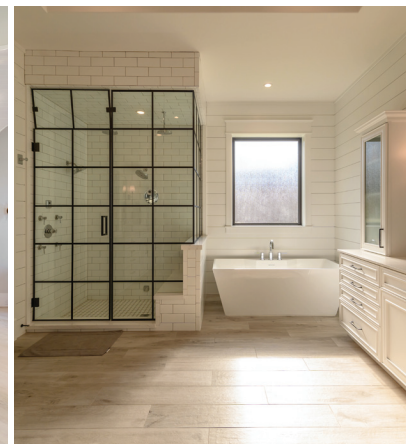
metal, wood, and glass consisting of shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. He credits his passion to his loving family and success to his professional team. When his not working, you will find Esvin enjoying the beautiful Houston weather fishing, hoping to catch more than a cold breeze 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

R J Clifton

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 Rhonnika Clifton owner of R J Clifton Designs, LLC - your ultimate partner for all design needs, offering comprehensive services in architecture, engineering, design, construction, procurement, and final installation, all handled in-house while respecting your budget and timeline. We serve homeowners, real estate investors, builders, small business owners, and retailers, providing full-service interior design solutions from concept to completion. As an award-winning firm based in Houston, we specialize in turn-key design and styling services for residential, boutique commercial,

and real estate development properties. Our experienced team works closely with clients, architects, and builders to create cohesive designs and renovations that align with their vision and budget. We manage every aspect of the process with exceptional customer service. Our portfolio includes luxurious residential homes and high-end boutique commercial spaces. With a reputation for solving complex design problems and delivering quality workmanship, our work has led to countless referrals and satisfied clients.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: *Three things motivated me to enter interior design...my love of helping people, fashion, and my oldest sister. I studied healthcare throughout high school and the first part of college with the aspiration of becoming a nurse. After transitioning into the workforce, I started working in the plus-sized fashion retail industry, celebrating my love of fashion...something I revered from watching my grandmother's and mother's fashion choices. These two passions made it very easy to enter and navigate the world of interior decorating & design. My oldest sister is the first person who related my love of fashion to a potential career in interior decorating. It was her encouragement and guidance, as a serial entrepreneur, that*



led me to begin a decorating company which, subsequently, led me to my career in interior design.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: Since graduating from The Art Institute in 2013, I've seen the industry change immensely. Areas such as technology, cultural design appreciation, and the growth of the nation's Black interior designers are just a few of the ways the industry has flourished. When I began researching the industry in 2006, the nation recorded approximately 500 Black Interior Design Professionals. Today, 2 percent of interior designers in the U.S. are Black, according to data from the job search company Zippia. Additionally, social media and the Covid-19 pandemic

have had a huge impact on how we use technology. There are tons of software programs available now to streamline the old-school techniques of hand-drafting, block-and-balanced boards, and floorplans.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: As an experienced interior designer, my 9+ years of expertise can be a game-changer for custom home builders and remodeling contractors. Whether registered or graduates of an accredited institution, we bring a keen eye for detail and a knack for

Continued on page 20



Continued from page 18

creating cohesive, functional spaces that align with the client’s vision. By streamlining the selection of materials and finishes, our services save both parties (builder/contractor & homeowner) time and reduce stress. An experienced designer can also ensure that the design not only looks great but is also functional, practical, and efficient, helping to avoid costly mistakes and rework. Together, we can transform a project from ordinary to extraordinary, making the entire process smoother and more enjoyable for everyone involved.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: This is a question I get often, and probably my least favorite to answer because it feels so weird to talk about myself, lol! I have been decorating, designing, and organizing residential spaces for local and nationwide clients for close to 18 years. My passion and knowledge of space planning, color theory, and textures are the basis of RJCD’s bold, unique designs. Additionally, aside from being an Interior Designer, I also divide my time as a mentor, coach, and former adjunct professor to students and aspiring and emerging interior design professionals.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: My most challenging project began during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. We took on a full home renovation in the Royal Oaks subdivision, which included exterior and interior painting, new lighting, A/V, flooring, custom window coverings, furnishings, and landscaping. Dissatisfied with my general contractor, I sought referrals from a colleague and chose a mid-range option. Initially, the GC and his team performed well, but issues soon arose with the project manager’s availability, understanding of high-end materials, and the quality of subcontractors’ work. Despite voicing my concerns and the GC’s promises to improve, the problems worsened.

The client eventually confronted the GC, who admitted to overselling his capabilities. Nearing the project’s end, the client decided to finish with the GC but remained unhappy, especially with high-end materials in two spaces. Ultimately, I completed the project with custom furnishings and accessories, but due to the client’s frustrations, we couldn’t photograph the finished work.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: Since starting my design career in 2015, I’ve seen some common mistakes builders and homeowners make. One big one is underestimating the budget. It’s easy to overlook hidden costs that add up quickly. Another mistake is skipping the planning phase and jumping straight into construction, which can lead to design and functionality issues down the road. Lastly, not considering the long-term needs of the space often results in a beautiful but impractical home. Taking the time to plan thoroughly and think ahead can save a lot of headaches.

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

RHONNIKA CLIFTON: Although each of my designs offers a unique vision for every homeowner, they all share a common appeal that draws clients to us: boldness. Our clients come to us with the hope of creating a space that matches the vision in their heads but have been afraid to execute on their own. Whether the style is transitional, classic traditional, or modern, all our designs feature bold, expressive colors, textures, and patterns.

R J Clifton Designs, LLC

Design Outside The Lines

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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.

Rosenberg + Gibson Designs

After having a horrible experience at another appliance dealer, we Baths of America has been Rosenberg + Gibson Design's go to bath and kitchen gallery since 2018. They offer an extensive range of top-tier products, all conveniently available under one roof, which makes the purchasing process seamless. But their best asset is the exceptional customer service experience. Their entire team is knowledgeable and friendly. It's always a pleasure to work together on design projects and we are grateful to have them as an industry partner.

Missy Stewart Designs

Baths of America is a key partner for sourcing plumbing, appliances, and hardware for my interior design company. Working with Baths of America has been an advantageous experience, thanks to their exquisite showroom and a team of knowledgeable staff dedicated to providing top-notch service. The showroom at Baths of America is nothing short of inspiring, showcasing a diverse range of high-quality products that align perfectly with my projects' aesthetic and functional requirements. The variety and sophistication of their offerings have significantly contributed to the success of my interior design ventures, allowing me to curate spaces that exceed my client's expectations.

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