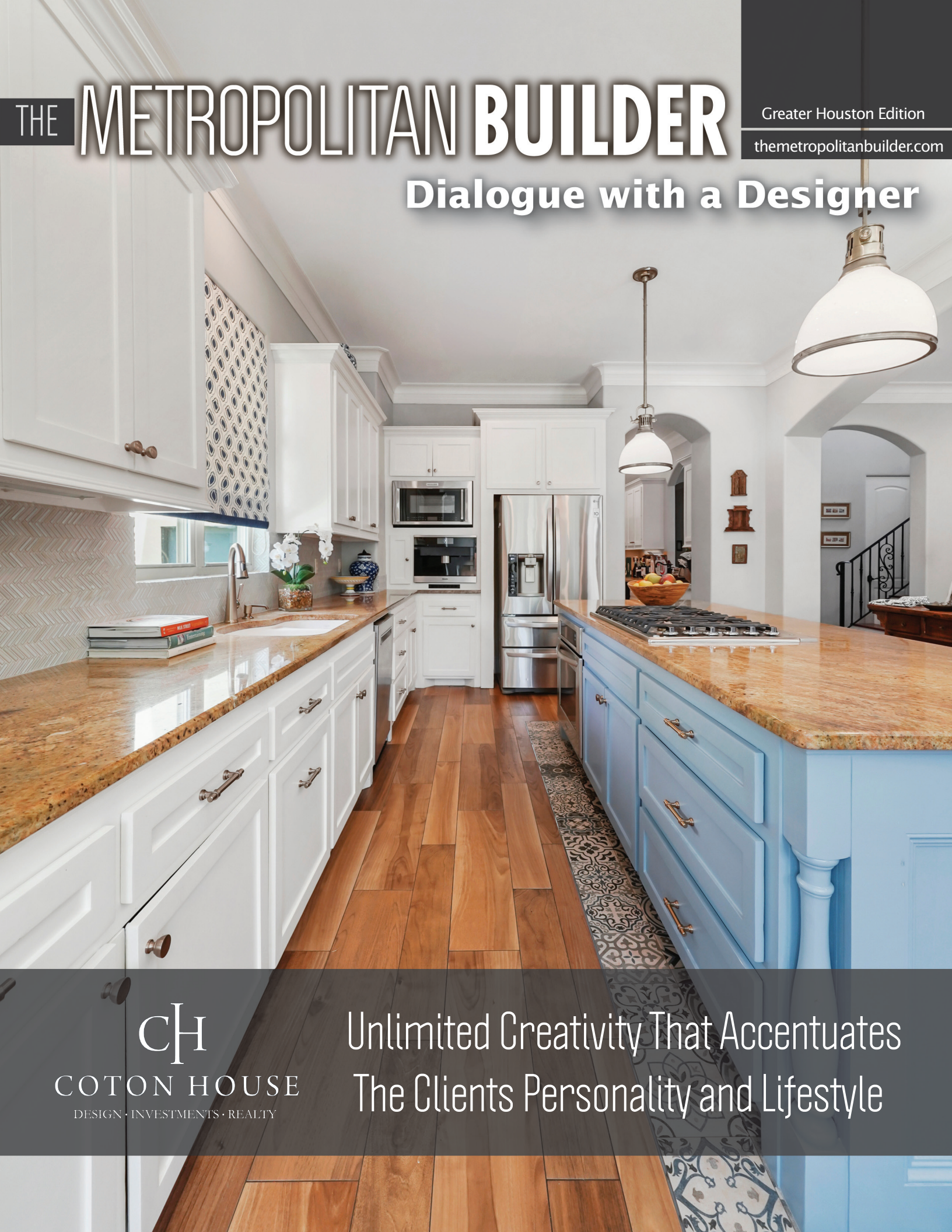


# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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## Dialogue with a Designer



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COTON HOUSE  
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Unlimited Creativity That Accentuates  
The Clients Personality and Lifestyle



# Dialogue with a Designer

## Mariana De La Garza

*BATHS OF AMERICA* opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now offers door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.

This month *BATHS OF AMERICA* speaks with Mariana De La Garza, an award-winning interior designer. As the Creative Director of Coton House, her focus is on being 'design-centric' and creatively defining the perfect combination of selections and finishes that reflect each client's personality and lifestyle. Her creativity isn't limited to a specific design style but accentuates her clients' style. She earned a B.A. in Interior Design and a minor in General Business Administration from Sam Houston State University. Her work has been recognized by The American Society of Interior Design (ASID)-Texas Gulf Coast Chapter with multiple Ruby Awards and by The National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA)- Texas Gulf Coast Chapter with various leadership awards. NKBA selected

her for their 2023 Thirty Under 30 class.

***BATHS OF AMERICA:*** What motivated you to enter interior design?

***Mariana De La Garza:*** Interior design has always been a passion of mine. I've had strong opinions about it from a young age, including how a space should function, feel, and look. My journey in this field began with an Interior Design degree from Sam Houston State University. I continue to enhance my knowledge through classes, always striving to stay at the forefront of the industry.

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

***Mariana De La Garza:*** The field of interior design has seen a significant shift since my graduation, mainly due to the influence of social media. For our team, it's all about educating the client and ensuring they have the correct information to make the most educated decisions for their home.

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

***Mariana De La Garza:*** What sets Coton House apart is our real estate and interior design expertise. This dual



perspective allows us to make informed decisions about the products and finishes that should go into a house, considering factors such as price point, local expectations, and resale value. With a vast network of wholesale accounts, we can assist builders and remodelers in helping their clients articulate their vision for their homes, allowing them to focus on the construction or remodeling process.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** I listen to my clients and ask questions, starting at the initial consultation and throughout the design process. Our goal at Cotton House is to advocate for the client and work as part of the team with builders, remodelers, architects, and any other specialties that a project may require.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** It was a challenge for me to learn if our design team is a good fit for the client. Sometimes, we turn projects away because we know our team is not a fit to fulfill the client's needs. We like to educate clients to help them make an informed decision, including determining a budget.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** We always ask the client for inspiration photos. Our team wants to know what they've seen and what they like about it. From there, we ask questions to learn what they like and dislike, what they need, how they want their space to function, etc. We can typically finalize all finishes within three design presentations.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** Not all finishes and materials must be specified, ordered, delivered, and checked before starting the project. The project will go much smoother if finishes are readily available and help keep it on schedule.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** Product training, networking, conferences, and social media all help one stay current with the latest trends and products.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** If I had to pick one, it would be mid-century modern, but I believe in combining elements from all styles to create a perfect design for the client.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What fascinates you, and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

**Mariana De La Garza:** Color and pattern! I love working



with both, but I also enjoy projects where clients want an “all-white” space, and then I can play with textures and shapes to add interest to the space.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** *Our design team wants you to enjoy your home and for it to feel like you. We curate the perfect pieces for your space to make it feel warm, sophisticated, and dynamic. We want your new design to be a reflection of you.*

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *Any last thoughts or comments?*

**Mariana De La Garza:** We listen to our clients, but the client needs to remember during the process that they hired their team for a reason. Every person on the team brings something different to the project. The projects with the best outcome, both financially and aesthetically, are those with clients who trust the process and their team.

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

**Mariana De La Garza:** Including a designer from the beginning makes the process more seamless. Your designer should be able to work with the builder to get you a comprehensive bid. Clients often do not know how much it costs to get what they want. Our design team works through that process with clients when required.







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