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A Conversation with  
All Star Construction

The Visionary Work  
of Pamela O'Brien





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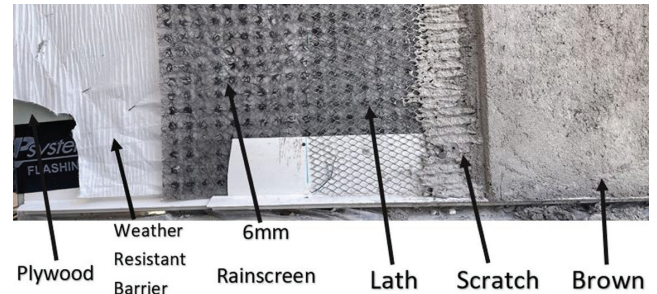
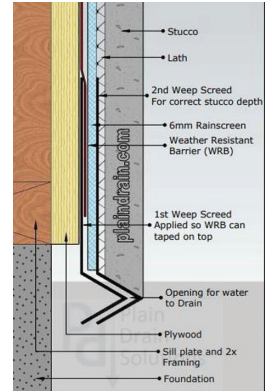


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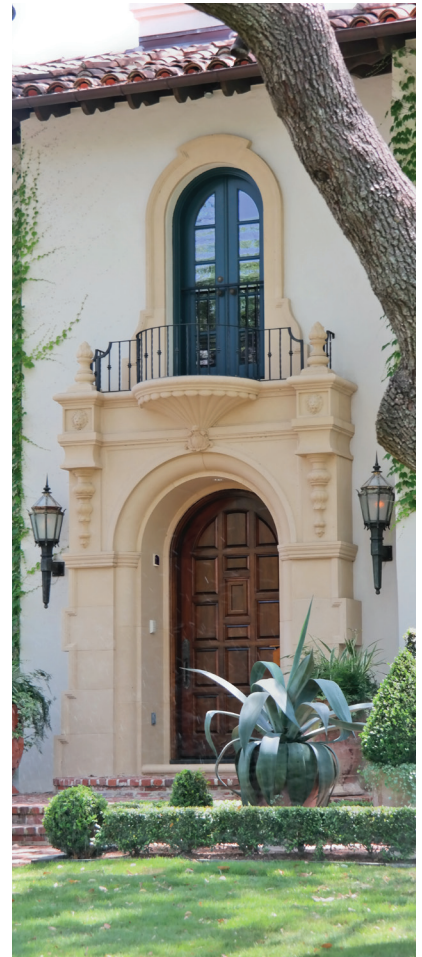
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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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# PUBLISHER'S *note*

**Giselle Bernard,**  
*Publisher*



## Partnerships Bring Success

In a city as dynamic and design-forward as Houston, custom home building is no longer just about craftsmanship—it's about collaboration. As the residential market stabilizes and suburban development surges, we're seeing an exciting shift: today's most successful builders aren't working alone. They're forming powerful partnerships with architects, interior designers, and trusted trade professionals to deliver homes that are both highly personalized and remarkably functional.

This month, we shine a light on what sets exceptional builders apart in this evolving landscape. From integrating smart technologies and sustainable materials to curating beautiful,

livable spaces tailored to modern lifestyles, it's clear that the homes making the biggest impact are those created by a team. Architects bring vision and structure. Designers bring flow and finesse. Builders bring it all to life.

If you're building or remodeling in Houston, our advice is simple: assemble your dream team early. The synergy between builder, architect, and designer not only elevates the end result—it transforms the experience for the homeowner.

Here's to thoughtful design, strong partnerships, and homes that tell a story.







# Liu's Imprint on Each of Nouveau Luxury Builders' Homes

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Whether contracted or speculative, all custom luxury homes from Nouveau Luxury Builders have John Liu's imprint on them in every inch and every corner.

"I can design in addition to building quality homes. For some projects I do it all by myself. I pencil down the design the old-fashioned way, but I have drafters who put the design in the computer using AutoCad."

Unlike many other high-end custom homebuilders, Liu noted that his company, Nouveau Luxury Builders, does design and build. "I don't stick to just one style, I can do contemporary or traditional styles, depending on the preference of the customer.

"Most of the time what I'm trying to do is to please the

customer, but a lawyer, doctor or engineer who knows their field may not have the imagination for home design that I have as a professional builder/designer. I throw some ideas at them, if they don't like the ideas, I will then suggest something else as an alternative. My goal is to build something amazing beyond their imagination. A lot of times people don't know how far a design can go," he explained.

"Custom homes should be different from other homes. I want my homes to stand out. Many so-called custom home builders still do cookie-cutter homes. You have to spend a lot of extra time walking in untested waters to build the unique, luxury custom homes that I build. But I like to take that challenge. We are the company for those who want to build trendy and timeless homes sporting new designs and new techniques."





He tries to produce unparalleled design by using different materials, colors and shapes. It's not unusual for him to use materials, such as stucco and brick, in an unexpected way on an exterior, for example. "I spend a lot more time than a regular consumer thinking about designing and building. I know materials, with new ones being invented every day."

He puts special emphasis on kitchens, bars and master baths because those areas are highly visible and frequently used. They need to be uniquely stylish with practical functions, in his opinion. In addition, he pays special attention to powder rooms because they can trigger compliments on the owner's style and taste from the guests. "Extra time and money invested in these areas are highly perceived," John said.

Liu may continue his design concept by creating furniture to correspond with the interior and exterior as well as making interior selections, such as flooring, countertops and fixtures.

Building a custom home is "highly individualized" to each client and each builder. "We cater to discriminating customers who desire to build their style and value into their homes and who want their homes to make a statement of their taste and lifestyle. We are where inspired design meets with unrivaled craftsmanship."

*Continued on page 6*







*Continued from page 5*

According to this native of China, on two occasions homeowners visited one of his spec homes to shop for some design ideas for remodeling their almost-new homes. But they ended up with buying his homes because they loved them so much that they decided to sell their own homes instead of remodeling them.

Liu always has one spec home under construction, which allows him to display his creativity, although he admits he has to consider the market appeal. The spec homes and most of his custom homes have a second-floor master suite with two water closets because they are useful and convenient. He also puts an office on the second floor, considering that homeowners who like to entertain need privacy and security from visitors. Elevators in a two-story house are included because “extra luxury features don’t

really cost that much.”

The company, founded in 2002, constructs three to five homes each year in the \$3-10 million range with an average price of \$5-6 million. The company motto of Integrity, Quality and Reliability sets Nouveau Luxury Builders apart from other contractors, according to its owner, who emphasizes honesty and transparency to his clients.

“We always try to save every possible dollar for our customers while adhering to the highest quality standards. We are very good at budget control. We work very hard for good quality at a good





price,” noted this one-time banker with the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C.

The company typically builds in Houston’s “upscale” neighborhoods of Memorial, River Oaks, West University and Bellaire, but “if the budget is right, we could go beyond these neighborhoods,” he added.

*To contact Nouveau Luxury Builders  
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or email [john.nlbuilders@gmail.com](mailto:john.nlbuilders@gmail.com)  
or visit [www.nlbuilders.com](http://www.nlbuilders.com)  
The office is located at  
11111 Katy Freeway, Suite 910, Houston, TX 77079.*



# Designing With Color!

## New Builder Trend: Kitchen And Bath Spaces Come Alive With Hues Of Vivid Blue!

By Linda Jennings

The fun of designing with color starts here ... with stunning fixtures, fittings and hardware making their colorful debut in the luxury builder market. Visions of sky blue hues enliven the home creating a space with

bold personality. These beautiful new products are definitely the feel-good factor packing a punch with a bold expressive statement. No one will be singing the blues with this playful hue.



**Bello's Flutello Bathtub in Blue/White**

### Fluted And Fabulous

Bello introduces a tub design that makes the design process dynamic with its textural vibe and colorful personality - Flutello. Shown in a two-tone blue and white, the visual harmony and balance of the tub creates a bathroom that invites wellness and joyful renewal. Color plays a huge role in design and this hue on the Flutello is beautiful blue bliss. Measuring 67" x 30" x 24", Flutello is crafted from durable Bellocast™, a naturally slip-resistant surface for a rejuvenating soak. Featuring the timeless elegance of fluted architectural elements, easy installation, and a color-matched drain assembly, Flutello embodies a luxurious aesthetic that elevates bathroom decor. Discover more at [bellousa.com](http://bellousa.com).

### Lively Blue Knob Celebrates Creativity

Part of furnipart's News Collection, the Colette knob was designed by VE2 design studio. Embodying the creative



**The Colette Knob in Blue by furnipart**

vision and signature of its designers, it is available in three rich, lustrous finishes: Maroon Red, Slate Blue and Dusty Yellow. This collection celebrates creativity and embraces the beauty of individual expression. By combining the finest materials and finishes with innovative designs, the News Collection aims to create products that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also crafted with lasting durability that can bring joy for decades to come. Furnipart is a leading manufacturer of designer handles and knobs for kitchen and bathroom furniture. Visit [furnipart.com](http://furnipart.com) to see more of the new collections.

### Pump Up The Volume With Blue

Flusso Kitchen & Bath Company captures the essence of industrial design with its remarkable Tanz faucet in blue. Notable for its sleek lines and elegant curves, this chic faucet takes inspiration from the unexpected beauty of plumbing mechanics to create an abstract sculptural look that is a true stand-out in the kitchen. As part of Flusso's popular Klassiker Collection, Tanz is available in an array of beautifully durable finishes. Options include traditional metallics as well as 20 thin film ceramic-based finishes ranging from glossy white and black, to soft shades of



**The Tanz Faucet in Classic Blue from Flusso Kitchen & Bath Company**

green and brown and bolder hues such as crimson and Classic Blue. Crafted from premium stainless steel, this exceptional faucet was created to Isenberg's exacting standards of excellence. Thoughtful features include fine ceramic disc cartridges for smooth lever movement and an eco-friendly design with 1.8 GPM flow rate. See the entire color collection of kitchen faucets at [isenbergfaucets.com](http://isenbergfaucets.com).

### **Chic Bath Sink Awash In Pacific Blue**

Ruvati infuses an array of fresh colors into the bathroom with bold new finish options for their popular epiStone series of bathroom sinks. The stylish collection of colors complements the modern profile of the sleek vessel-style basins, creating sensational statement pieces that are



**Ruvati's epiStone Canali Bath Sink in Pacific Blue**

beautifully memorable and impressively practical. Made in Italy by skilled artisans, epiStone sinks are crafted from 70% crushed natural stone and minerals blended with proprietary resins. The oval silhouette of the sink was intentionally designed for maximum comfort, enhanced water drainage and efficient cleaning. The epiSinks are available in two size models; the Canali measures 19" x 14" and has a curve to the vessel base, while the spacious, straight-sided Omnia measures 23" x 15". epiStone

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*Continued from page 9*

sinks are meant to sit securely on the countertop with no mounting ring required, and their thick construction makes the sinks naturally sound-absorbing and a smart choice for busy bathrooms. Explore [ruvati.com](http://ruvati.com) for more information on the colorful sinks.



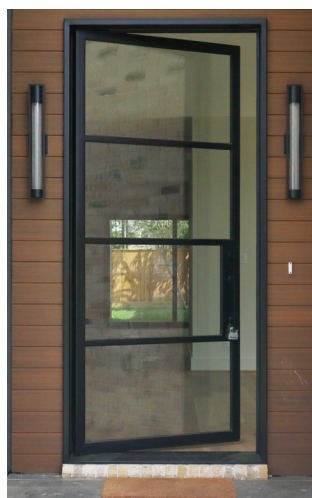
MTI Baths' Mallory SculptureStone tub in Sapphire Blue

## Sculptural Perfection In Sapphire Blue

Indulge yourself with the most opulent option for freestanding tubs. 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 completely solid and homogenous, from the surface all the way through. Nothing exemplifies the beauty of the exceptional SculptureStone solid surface like the Mallory freestanding bath. Shown is the Mallory, an elegant double slipper tub that brings soft curves and a gently rolled rim. The Mallory measures 65.75" x 35.5" x 22.75" and is available as a soaker or airbath. Discover the SculptureStone collection at [mtibaths.com](http://mtibaths.com).

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# *A Conversation with All Star Construction . . .*

## **A Guide to Building or Remodeling with Confidence**



*Building or renovating a home is one of the most significant investments a homeowner will make, and selecting the right professional for the job is crucial. In this exclusive Metropolitan Builder Q&A, we sit down with custom home builders and remodelers to address the key questions prospective clients often ask. From understanding the building process and timelines to discussing materials, costs, and industry trends, this conversation is designed to provide homeowners with the insights they need to make informed decisions. Whether you're embarking on a custom home project or transforming an existing space, our experts share their knowledge to help you navigate the journey with confidence.*

*This month, Metropolitan Builder (TMB) sits down with ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION. Founded in 1979 by Herb and Hilda Haws and their three children, this family-*

*owned company began as a real estate franchise rooted in the simple belief that "if we take care of the business, it will take care of us." With backgrounds in business, insurance, real estate, and residential construction, the Haws family quickly shifted their focus to what they loved most—remodeling. Over the years, they've worn many hats, from real estate inspectors to insurance restoration specialists, but found their true calling in remodeling and home additions. What started as a hands-on operation has evolved into a multi-generational business, now including Dennis's daughters, who carry on the legacy. Working from the building they constructed in 1984, and alongside many of their original team members, the company's success has always been rooted in craftsmanship, integrity, and a customer-first approach that continues to define them into*

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*the third generation.*

### Experience & Credentials

**TMB:** How long have you been in business?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Since 1979, Family owned and operated.

**TMB:** Can you share an example of projects that you've completed?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We have completed around 7,000 remodeling projects across the Greater Houston Area. Most recently a 440 sq ft detached studio addition; full interior home remodel including updating the kitchen, all bathrooms and knocking out walls; a rear patio conversion to airconditioned space and many more

**TMB:** Are you licensed, bonded, and insured?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Remodelers are not required to be licensed in the state of Texas; however, we do use licensed tradesmen in the fields of plumbing, electrical and HVAC. All Star is fully insured and does carry the required bonds to do sidewalk/driveway work in the City of Houston.

**TMB:** Do you have any industry certifications or affiliations?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We do not carry any industry certifications. Our wealth of knowledge comes from our experience.

**TMB:** Are you part of any builder or remodeling associations?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We are members of the local chapter of the Greater Houston Builders Association and the Remodelers Council. We are also a part of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. We have been an accredited member of the local Better Business Bureau since 1982.

**TMB:** Can you provide references from past clients?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Yes! You can read some of our customer testimonials on our website at [www.allstarconstruction.com](http://www.allstarconstruction.com) or read our multiple online reviews through Google, BBB, Facebook, Houzz, Angi etc.

### Project Approach & Communication

**TMB:** What is your process for planning and executing a project?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We assign a project manager to each customer who will walk you through the job from concept to completion. The project manager will meet with the customer in their home, discuss scope of project and budget. They will return with quote and design





options. The project manager will remain the direct contact for the customer throughout the build. They will schedule the trades and communicate back with the customer. An executive of the company will make periodic drop in checks during the build.

**TMB:** How do you handle unexpected changes or challenges during a build?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** The project manager will determine the problem and all the possible solutions. Other team members may be brought in to discuss the best solution and options will be communicated to the homeowner.

**TMB:** How often will we meet or communicate about the project's progress?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** The project manager will be in daily communication with the homeowner throughout the project to go over scheduling, weather delays, answer any questions, address any issues, etc. The project manager will visit the worksite daily to check progress and quality.

**TMB:** Who will be my primary point of contact throughout the project?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Again, the project manager is the primary point of contact, but we do also have a full office staff and physical location open to the public. There are multiple owners who are on call 24/7.

**TMB:** How do you involve clients in the decision-making process?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** The client will make most

decisions on design and type of materials with the project manager in their home. Additionally, they will be given access to make selections on items such as tile, countertops, cabinetry through our suppliers by visiting their showrooms or through an online link.

**TMB:** Do you have systems or tools (like project management software) to keep clients updated?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We choose the more personal approach to communicate with our customers via phone call, text or email. We do not use a client Relations Management tool.

**TMB:** What is your approach to staying on schedule?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** It is in the best interest of all parties involved for us to stay on schedule. We use experienced project managers and have multiple crews to help prevent down time. Most importantly, we set clear expectations with the client from the beginning and keep daily communication. On a weekly basis, office management is watching reporting, daily activity and communicating with the project managers on the back end to monitor workflow.

**TMB:** How do you handle delays, and how are they communicated?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** When a delay arises, the project manager immediately determines the best solution, confirms schedule adjustments with crews then communicates back with the customer.

*Continued on page 14*



## Budget & Financial Transparency

**TMB:** Tell me about the budget and financial transparency.

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We are a “lump sum” contractor; therefore, our agreements with the client include a very detailed scope of work for a lump sum price. There may be “allowances” listed on items that have not yet been selected for example tile. The agreement may include a \$5/sq ft material allowance. Change orders are used only when the client makes a change in the original scope of work. Change orders are agreed upon by all parties before any changes are expedited.

**TMB:** How do you establish and control the project budget?

**ALLSTAR CONSTRUCTION:** We use job costing software and post costs to projects on a daily basis, then monitor weekly reporting. The reporting reflects estimate versus actual spend.

**TMB:** Are there any additional costs I should anticipate?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We are not a company that will ask for additional payment towards something we misestimated. The only additional costs that may arise would be when the client makes a change in scope.

## Timeline & Project Management

**TMB:** What is a realistic timeline for my project?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** An estimated project timeline can be determined and relayed by the project manager

**TMB:** Do you use subcontractors, and if so, how are they selected and managed?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We do use subcontractors, some of which have worked for us for 20-30years. We hire individuals skilled in a specific trade. The guy installing your cabinets is not going to be installing your tile or faucet. This example would consist of a skilled trim carpenter, skilled tile installer and a licensed plumber.

## Quality & Warranty

**TMB:** What type of warranty or guarantee do you provide?

**ALLSTAR CONSTRUCTION:** We provide a 1yr warranty on labor. All material warranties are extended to the homeowner. We encourage all our customers to reach out for our assistance with any issues whether it has been 5 or 15yrs. We are usually able to help the customer in some way regardless of the time frame. We are proud that we have an extremely low level of warranty calls in relation to the number of projects completed.

**TMB:** How do you handle warranty claims or post-project concerns?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** We encourage our



customers to contact our office directly with any warranty claims so it can be documented in their file and followed through to satisfactory completion. The warranty is backed by a third party.

**TMB:** Do you have a final inspection or checklist process before completion?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Once the project is complete, there will be a final walk through and punch out list created. The punchout list will be completed to confirm final completion and final payment is due.

## Client Satisfaction & Final Steps

**TMB:** How do you ensure client satisfaction from start to finish?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Proper expectations and communication.

**TMB:** What do you do to keep projects clean and secure during construction?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Floor protection, designated workspace entrance and exits, onsite dumpsters and portable restrooms.

**TMB:** How will my home be protected throughout the build?

**ALL STAR CONSTRUCTION:** Construction materials will be delivered as needed and/or arranged to be kept in a secure place. A lockbox is installed for contractor access.

**To contact All Star Construction**

**(281) 847-0294**

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# How Custom Home Builders Can Stand Out in Houston's Evolving Market

Houston's residential building market is gaining fresh momentum in 2025. Home sales are on the rise—especially in the luxury segment—and suburban areas like Conroe are experiencing rapid development. While the volume of new single-family starts may dip slightly, opportunity still abounds for custom home builders who know how to stand out. In a city known for innovation and growth, differentiation comes down to strategic partnerships, thoughtful design, and delivering a lifestyle—not just a house.

Here's how custom home builders can position themselves ahead of the competition:

## 1. Prioritize Architectural Collaboration

A custom home is only as good as its blueprint. Partnering with a skilled architect ensures each home is uniquely designed to reflect the homeowner's lifestyle, site conditions, and long-term needs. In Houston, where buyers expect elevated design and functional layouts, working with an architect brings a layer of design intelligence that elevates the entire project. It also opens the door for creative, climate-conscious solutions that are increasingly in demand.

## 2. Bring in an Interior Designer Early

More than ever, buyers are looking for homes that feel custom. Interior designers bring that finishing touch—but their influence goes far beyond selecting furnishings. When involved from the start, designers help shape spatial flow, lighting plans, material selections, and even cabinetry layouts. This

collaborative approach ensures that every detail is cohesive and that the final result is both beautiful and functional.

Designers also help builders navigate homeowner preferences, streamlining the decision-making process and reducing costly change orders. In a competitive market like Houston, where out-of-state buyers are seeking high-end finishes and curated experiences, a designer's eye is a powerful differentiator.

## 3. Build Smarter, Greener Homes

Today's homebuyers are tech-savvy and sustainability-minded. Builders who embrace smart home integration, energy-efficient systems, and durable materials are already ahead. In Houston—where heat, humidity, and hurricanes are a part of life—resilient construction methods can be a major selling point.

Architects and designers can play a huge role here, too, by selecting finishes that are both sustainable and stylish, and by ensuring technology is seamlessly incorporated into the home's aesthetic.

## 4. Lean Into Lifestyle-Focused Design

With the surge in suburban growth, especially in communities like Conroe, buyers are looking for more than just square footage. They want homes that support their daily routines and long-term aspirations. Builders should focus on offering flexible floorplans that can accommodate home offices, fitness spaces, multi-

*Continued on page 20*



## *Elevating Design, Transforming Spaces:*

# The Visionary Work of Pamela O'Brien



**By Giselle Bernard**

As the principal designer of Pamela Hope Designs, Pamela O'Brien brings a distinctive approach to interior design that transcends aesthetics to create spaces that genuinely enhance her clients' lifestyles. With a career spanning over two decades and hundreds of projects throughout Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and the Texas Hill Country—along with endeavors from Maine to Alaska—Pamela's work reflects a remarkable blend of creativity, functionality, and collaboration.

But what truly sets Pamela apart from the myriad of talented designers in Houston's vibrant design community? It's not just her impressive portfolio of award-winning projects or her knack for garnering media attention. It's her ability to foster genuine connections—with clients, builders, contractors, and even historic spaces—that transforms the design process into a seamless and enjoyable journey for all involved.

### **A Collaborative Vision**

Pamela approaches each project as a partnership, valuing

collaboration as much as creativity. She's known for working closely with builders and remodelers to ensure every detail aligns with her clients' needs and dreams. By focusing on how homeowners will live in and move through their spaces, Pamela's designs are as practical as they are beautiful.

For her, it's not just about picking the perfect color palette or the trendiest materials; it's about solving problems. Whether it's optimizing pantry access for a busy home chef or ensuring privacy for a serene master suite, Pamela anticipates the little things that make a big difference. "We create homes that support our clients' lifestyles and make their lives easier," she says.

### **A Proven Track Record**

Pamela Hope Designs has a history of tackling complex projects with grace. Take, for instance, the transformation of Houston's historic Star Soda Bottling Factory into a stunning wealth-management office. The project was

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riddled with challenges, from its labyrinth of dark, tiny rooms to the surprises inherent in any century-old structure. Yet, Pamela's ability to think creatively and collaborate with architects and contractors turned the project into a triumph—so much so that the architects claimed part of the space for their own offices.

This adaptive, problem-solving mindset extends to her work with national and local businesses, including Bellows Construction and Dean & Draper Insurance Agency. Whether it's repurposing a historic building or crafting an elegant new space, Pamela's designs tell a story of innovation and timeless appeal.

### **Personal Touch, Professional Precision**

Pamela describes her personal style as “classic with a twist,” and this philosophy extends to her process. Clients often remark on her ability to seamlessly blend timeless fundamentals with bold, forward-thinking elements, creating spaces that are both enduring and fresh.

Her dedication to staying on top of industry trends is another hallmark of her work. From attending the famed High Point Furniture Market to drawing inspiration from her travels, Pamela keeps her designs fresh and dynamic. Yet, she's quick to prioritize her clients' individuality over





fleeting trends, ensuring that every space feels uniquely theirs.

## Designing with Heart

Perhaps what resonates most with those who work with Pamela is her warm, approachable demeanor. She and her team pride themselves on being professional, organized, and—most importantly—fun. “We want our clients and builders to enjoy the process as much as the results,” she says. Her commitment to clear communication and respect for budgets ensures a stress-free experience for everyone involved.

## Redefining Interior Design

Pamela O’Brien believes that great design is more than just a luxury—it’s a pleasure that enriches lives. From historic renovations to cutting-edge contemporary spaces, Pamela

*Continued on page 20*







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Hope Designs stands out not only for its creativity but for the thoughtful way it brings people together.

For Pamela, design is not just about transforming spaces—it's about elevating lives. If you're ready to begin your own design journey with a partner who listens, collaborates, and delivers, Pamela O'Brien and her team at Pamela Hope Designs are ready to make your vision a reality.



**Contact Pamela O'Brien at**

**713-880-1934**

**or**

**[pamela@pamelahopedesigns.com](mailto:pamela@pamelahopedesigns.com)**

**to start transforming  
your space today**



*Continued from page 16*

generational living, and indoor-outdoor entertaining. Interior designers are invaluable here—they understand how to tailor these spaces to real life, helping builders

deliver homes that aren't just well-constructed, but deeply personal.

## 5. Create Strategic Vendor Partnerships

A well-rounded project team makes all the difference. Builders should align themselves with trusted vendors—flooring, countertops, plumbing, lighting, and more—who can deliver quality on time and within budget. When these vendors are introduced as part of a curated team alongside the architect and designer, the result is a smoother process and a more cohesive product.

Homeowners love knowing their builder is connected to a trusted network. It reduces decision fatigue and builds confidence.

## 6. Tell the Whole Story

In a crowded market, storytelling sets you apart. Builders who highlight the why behind their work—why they choose certain materials, collaborate with specific professionals, or design the way they do—create emotional connection with buyers. Sharing these stories through social media, websites, or print features gives potential clients a deeper understanding of your values and vision.

## The Bottom Line

Custom home building is more than delivering a beautiful product—it's about creating an experience. Builders who partner closely with architects, interior designers, and carefully selected vendors are able to offer a higher level of service and a more inspired final result. In Houston's dynamic market, that's what sets you apart.



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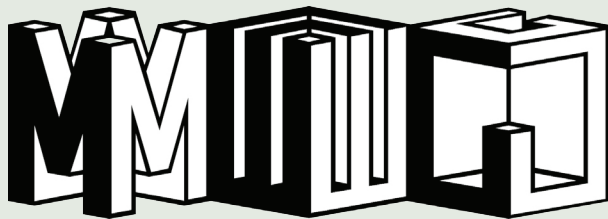
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