

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition

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## EMBRACE YOUR SPACE

With Builder Inspired Updates For  
The Kitchen And Bath.

Manuel Builders  
Expands to Houston Market

Divine Renovation:  
Building Trust, One Home at a Time

Dialogue with a Designer  
Cynthia Cannizzaro | One Design Place





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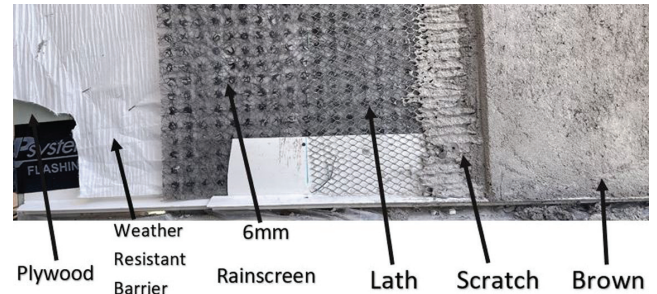
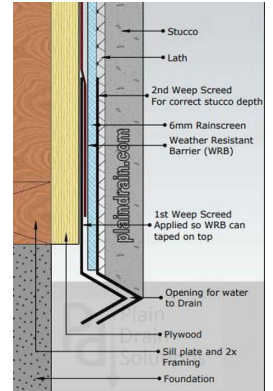
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# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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# PUBLISHER'S *note*

**Giselle Bernard,**  
*Publisher*



## What If the Right Introduction Could Change Everything

In a city as vast and competitive as Houston, are you relying on exposure—or are you building meaningful relationships?

If you're a vendor, how much of your success depends on more than just being listed in a directory or seen in an ad? What if you were introduced—personally—to vetted builders, remodelers, and interior designers who not only value your work, but were already open to collaboration?

And if you're a builder, how much easier would your next project run if every vendor on your job site showed up on time, communicated professionally, and delivered what they promised—because they were referred to you by someone who already trusts them?

This is where The Metropolitan Builder stands apart. Unlike broad-based organizations where visibility is transactional and the member list is open, our network is intentionally curated.

- Our builders are vetted. Not every builder makes the cut—we look for reputation, craftsmanship, and professionalism.
- Our vendors are referred. We don't accept cold applications. Vendors are invited because someone we trust has already worked with them and vouched for their integrity, reliability, and service.

We don't just connect businesses—we create partnerships rooted in trust.

How many opportunities are you missing by relying on traditional trade associations to deliver real business? How much stronger could your next quarter look if your marketing didn't feel like guesswork?

If the right introduction can change everything...

Isn't it time you worked with a platform that makes the

right introductions?

Let's move from visibility to credibility—and from networking to real results.

Warm regards,  
Publisher, The Metropolitan Builder







# Manuel Builders Expands to Houston Market

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Everyone – even builders – knows that greater Houston is a desirable place to locate.

One of the latest in the Houston market is Manuel Builders, a family-owned company that originated in Lafayette, La., more than 65 years ago that is expanding across the state line.

The company is focused on the northern side of greater Houston in six counties in the rural areas, including Tomball, Montgomery and Huntsville, according to Marie Watkins, division president of Manuel Builders.

At this time the company owns 1+ acre lots in Chapel Bend and The Manors in the High Meadows development where it will build both ready-to-buy and custom homes that focus on that focus on functional family life but also offer Southern beauty.

Manuel has more than a dozen homes in production

currently but expects to build 25-40 in 2026 and then as many as 100 per year within five years. “My goal is to build Houston into a new central hub for Manuel Builders,” she stated. “We’re committed to Texas.”

Already living in the Houston area, Watkins looked at homes built by other companies while she researched the market on behalf of the company owners, Greg and Missy Manuel. “I learned there are a lot of high-end builders in the Houston market who build great homes, but they don’t build affordable homes at our price point,” she added.

“We have streamlined processes to keep everything affordable but also make it as easy as possible for the homeowner. We package as much as possible to fit the homeowners’ needs but also offer custom options,” she explained.

Manuel Builders caters to two very different buyers.





The first type of buyer wants to build as much house as they can afford, anticipating being able to add extras, such as a carport or outdoor kitchen, later. Manuel accommodates that buyer by pouring the slab for the carport or pre-plumbing the waterline and drain for the kitchen. Watkins said these houses usually have about 1800 square feet with a price point of \$135-\$150/sq. ft. or about \$240,000-\$270,000 when built on the buyers' lots. "These are a very nice package," she added.

The second buyer will add every option available – such as custom mantles and imported backsplashes – to their home package. These options are at the homebuyers' discretion, and everything is detailed as a line item so that the buyer can see what each element costs, she emphasized. These houses can range from \$450,000 to \$800,000, she noted.

Manuel will also build for someone who comes with a custom home plan.

The company focuses on providing an exceptional customer experience, according to Marie, who joined the company as a sales consultant 14 years ago after buying her first house from the Manuels.

"We lock in our prices on the contract, and if we say

we're gonna do it, we'll do it." The company guarantees a completion time from the start date and will pay a per diem rate if construction goes past that guarantee. That's typically six months for a 2200-sq.-ft. house. "That policy drives our attorney crazy," she laughed.

Manuel Builders uses design centers with in-house designers and selection purchasers to enhance the customer experience and to control the number of stressors that the homebuyer might face. The Houston design center opened in March 2025.

Of course, breaking into a new market meant finding new tradespeople. She and her coworker Sam Maldonado walked neighborhoods and visited job sites, checking out workers' abilities and asking for recommendations. "We on-boarded very thoroughly," Watkins said the tradespeople all got a trial run on the house that she and her husband were fully remodeling.

"We love our trades. We threw them a party the night before we opened our design center."

A new market also means finding new staff. "We are

*Continued on page 6*









*Continued from page 5*

growing our team to serve more homeowners. We train as long as it takes for our staff to be able to serve customers. Our superintendents attend weekly training classes with a focus on communication with the homebuyer,” Marie noted.

And communication with the buyer is a key to the company’s success. A superintendent, who is responsible for 8-12 homes, meets with buyers before construction begins to explain the building process. The superintendent presents them with an information packet to ensure the buyer feels comfortable and understands the process. That process includes two walk-throughs, including a Memory Moments site visit so the buyers can add handprints or place mementos in the slab. The other is a Framing Walk,

an intentional pause and stop so that buyers can consider any tweaks now that they are able to walk through their custom home in real life. Repositioning lighting fixtures is a frequent adjustment.

And, in case it isn’t obvious, “We build for families,” Watkins stated.

***For more information about Manuel Builders  
visit [www.manuelbuilders.com](http://www.manuelbuilders.com)  
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# Embrace Your Space

## With Builder Inspired Updates For The Kitchen And Bath

By Linda Jennings

Live life to the fullest with these golden inspired updates that transform a home into a place of comfort and wellness! Luxury builders and homeowners agree that creating a place for wellness is the top priority for customers and design professionals. The mission is to design a fresh interior that is both functional and helps

clear the mind, offering solitude and renewal. We've curated the most luxurious building amenities to create a space that rejuvenates and revitalizes - comfortable but also elegant. From a dramatic golden rainshower in the bath to an innovative utility sink, these are products sure to make your house a forever home.



Pontem Home's Lunaris Collection

### Italian Flair In A Chic Finish

Sleek curves, modern vibes, and 15 chic finishes—Pontem Home's Lunaris brings unmistakable Italian design flair to any bathroom. Crafted in Italy from high-quality ceramic, the Lunaris washbasin offers a sculptural silhouette that balances elegance and edge. It pairs beautifully with an optional powder-coated stainless-steel console (in matte white or matte black), customizable with either a ceramic shelf or a lacquered drawer in coordinating or contrasting hues. With clean lines and a contemporary palette, Lunaris invites you to mix, match, and personalize—whether you're drawn to minimalist cool or craving a bold pop of color. Designed to be both functional and expressive, Lunaris turns everyday rituals into elevated moments. Discover the Lunaris Collection by Alice Ceramica at [pontemhome.com](http://pontemhome.com).

### Utility Room Upgrade

Upgraded utility rooms continue to lead the “want list” for new homes and renovations. MTI Baths' Jentle Jet is ideal for specialized laundry rooms but also doubles as a



MTI Baths' Jentle Jet Utility Sink

multi-tasking utility sink. Part of the new MTI Solutions Collection, the award-winning Jentle Jet laundry sink has a compact exterior that fits neatly into a laundry room and does double duty as a utility sink. Three strategically-placed micro-jets thoroughly launder your finest hand-washables without harsh agitators. The sink can be undermounted or flush-mounted and is available in two sizes. The durable universal and versatile laundry/utility sinks are constructed using Acrylic CXL. The surface is also non-porous, thus making cleaning and sanitizing easier, faster and more effective. And because

the color goes all the way through the acrylic, the finish is renewable. Visit [mtibaths.com](http://mtibaths.com) to see more of MTI Baths' collection of utility sinks.

### Go For The Gold

The Serie 260 Shower Set from Flusso Kitchen & Bath is a stunning addition to any bathroom, combining functionality with elegant design. Featuring a generous 12-inch shower



head that offers a luxurious rainfall experience, paired with a 15-inch arm for optimal positioning, this set elevates daily routines into a spa-like experience. The brushed bronze finish adds warmth and character with subtle golden hues and a sophisticated texture. Crafted from premium solid brass and equipped with fine ceramic cartridges, this durable set promises both longevity and exceptional performance. The shower set is part of a fully developed collection including faucets, tub fillers, and accessories, designed to create a beautifully coordinated bath ensemble. See the entire Serie 260 Collection at [flussofaucets.com](http://flussofaucets.com).

**Two-Tone Cabinetry**

This beautiful kitchen space showcases a kitchen and island featuring Covered Bridge Cabinetry’s Hudson Door Style, with the kitchen and island finished in SW6201 Thunderous, while the fridge wall is painted in BM-OC-25 Cloud Cover. The pantry is finished in SW7036 Accessible Beige, and the bar area, like the kitchen and island, is also coated in Thunderous. This stunning Covered Bridge project is packed with thoughtful, functional details, including double fridge drawers, double dishwashers, and sleek appliance panels. The towering wall cabinets make smart use of the space, elevating both the kitchen and pantry. But perhaps the standout feature is the island, with its elegant void toe treatment, reeded end panel, and inset



*Continued on page 10*      **Serie 260 Shower Set from Flusso Kitchen & Bath Company**

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**Barber Wilsons' New Milne Lever Faucet**

cabinets, all working together to create an heirloom-quality look. Discover the entire Collection of Luxury Cabinetry at [coveredbridgecabinetry.com](http://coveredbridgecabinetry.com).

### Mixed Finishes

Lenova combines form and function in the K250WB, a mixed-material focal-point faucet that is part of the brand's Design Edition line. The K250WB is as beautiful as it is efficient, with a dual-function spray head and a magnetic docking system. Crafted of the finest type



**Lenova's K250WB Design Edition Faucet**

304 stainless steel with zero lead content for maximum durability and manufactured with superior ceramic cartridges for drip-free performance, the new faucet measures 22-1/2" in height with an 8" spout reach. The K225 Collection is available in White PVD with Brushed Brass, Brushed Brass, Matte Black, and Brushed Nickel finishes. Lenova incorporates proprietary PVD processing to create a matte finish that is amazingly durable and easy to maintain. See the entire Design Edition collection at [lenovagroup.com](http://lenovagroup.com).



**Barber Wilsons' Regent 2020, 1890's Style Faucet**

### Timeless Luxury For The Kitchen

No time travel is required to infuse vintage charm into the kitchen or bathroom - just this authentically reproduced Regent 2020 faucet by Barber Wilsons & Co. Fashioned in 1890s style, this period piece incorporates the classic Bridge Tap. The wall-mounted Regent 2020 faucet features beautiful cross handles with white porcelain buttons and a gently curved spout. An elegant choice for the kitchen or bath, it is offered in a lovely selection of finishes. Barber Wilsons was established in London in 1905 and has built a sterling reputation over 100+ years as a purveyor of the finest in luxury bathroom and kitchen fixtures, all known for their spectacular workmanship and hand-polished finishes. Explore the Regent Collection at [barberwilsons.com](http://barberwilsons.com).



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# Divine Renovation: Building Trust, One Home at a Time

By Lesley Bercegeay

When homeowners in Houston search for a remodeling company, they're often looking for more than skilled labor—they're searching for someone they can trust with their home, their time, and their family's comfort. That's exactly what they find in Divine Renovation, a company that has built its name not just on craftsmanship, but on character.

Founded by William "Will" Cole, Divine Renovation offers more than remodeling services—it offers peace of mind. Will's background isn't typical for a builder. He spent years in the U.S. Air Force working in aerospace mechanics and engineering, followed by a successful corporate career that took him across the country and around the world. But a deep desire to be present with his family—and to build something of true meaning—led him to start remodeling homes. What began with a personal construction project quickly evolved into a full-time business rooted in service, integrity, and faith.

Clients often say that working with Divine Renovation feels different. It starts with the first phone call—Will's calm demeanor, his careful questions, and his habit of truly listening create an immediate sense of trust. That trust only deepens as the project unfolds. Homeowners find themselves welcoming not just a contractor into their space, but a team of professionals who treat their home with genuine respect. Job sites are tidy, timelines are honored, and communication is constant and clear.

Will believes that who enters your home matters just as much as what they build. That's why every employee who joins the team must come highly recommended and must possess not only skill, but a sense of peace and professionalism. Clients often say the workers feel more like extended family by the end of the project.

That feeling of care extends beyond the job site. Through Divine Renovation's charitable outreach, Working with





Angels, the company donates salvaged materials and funds to local churches and families in need. Something as simple as a used light fixture or box of bulbs can make a world of difference to someone who's been going without. For Will, it's a way to make every project matter in more ways than one.

Over the years, Divine Renovation has become one of Houston's most trusted names in remodeling. The company has been named one of the city's Top Remodelers for eight consecutive years, earned multiple Better Business Bureau Awards for Excellence, and maintained a flawless reputation with former clients, many of whom return again and again—or refer their friends and neighbors. The

majority of the company's business comes not from ads or marketing, but from word of mouth.

That's because what Divine Renovation delivers goes far beyond beautiful kitchens, luxurious bathrooms, and elegant additions. It's the experience that leaves the strongest impression—an experience marked by professionalism, kindness, and meticulous attention to detail.

One client recalled a custom pool project that included a lion's head water feature modeled after a wrought iron sculpture the homeowner had admired in New Orleans.

*Continued on page 14*





*Continued from page 13*

Divine Renovation created the piece through multiple iterations until it was exactly right—then custom-fabricated matching grates, drains, and finishing touches that tied the entire outdoor space together. For Will and his team, “good enough” is never the goal—perfection is the standard.

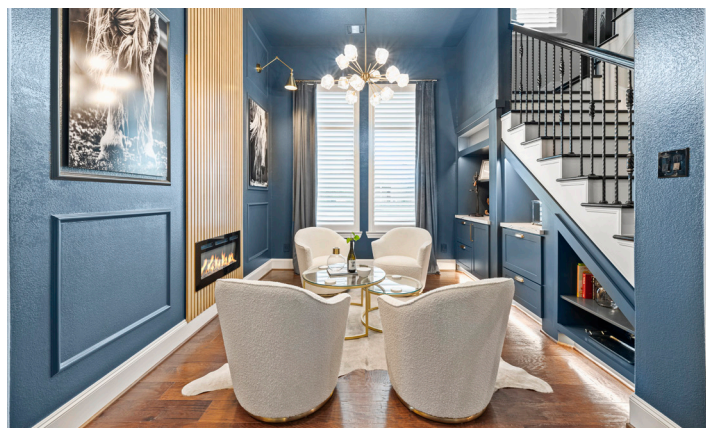
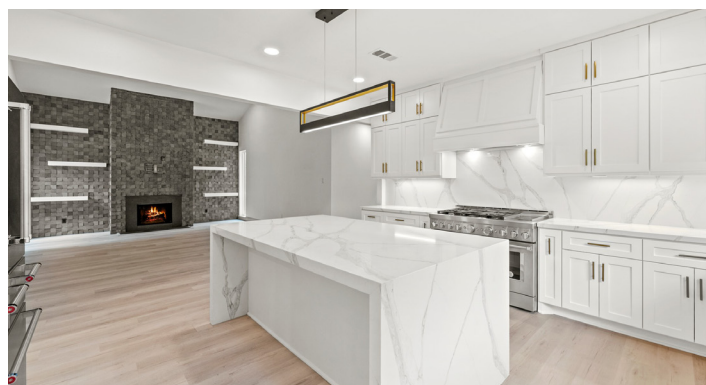
Even after the last tile is laid and the final walkthrough completed, Will often stays in touch with his clients. When the company received a BBB award, he invited past clients to join him on a celebratory sailing trip on Galveston Bay. It wasn’t a PR stunt—it was simply a way to share a

joyful moment with people who had become more than customers.

Will’s commitment to service also extends to the Greater Houston Builders Association, where he serves on the Remodelers Council and co-chairs charitable events like the annual NRG Charity Garage Sale, which raises money for community projects through donated building materials.

With such a diverse and accomplished background—from aerospace to remodeling—it’s clear that Will Cole brings a unique perspective to home renovation. But what makes





Divine Renovation truly stand out is its unwavering commitment to doing right by every client. That means showing up on time. That means delivering on promises. That means being the kind of people you're glad to have in your home.

For homeowners looking to remodel with confidence, Divine Renovation isn't just a safe choice—it's the right one. It's a company where craftsmanship meets conscience, where remodeling is about more than floors and walls—it's about people, purpose, and leaving a lasting, positive impact.

*For more information about  
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# Dialogue with a Designer

## Cynthia Cannizzaro | One Design Place



*Welcome to The Metropolitan Builder, Houston's premier trade publication, dedicated to showcasing the finest building professionals in the industry. Each professional featured has been personally referred by trusted vendors and subcontractors who collaborate with them, selected for their unmatched talent and unwavering integrity.*

*As Houston's leading resource for consumers looking to build, buy, or remodel, we provide a window into the exceptional craftsmanship, innovative designs, and unparalleled quality that define our city's top builders. Let The Metropolitan Builder inspire your next home or renovation project and connect you with the experts who can make your vision a reality.*

*This month THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER speaks with This month, The Metropolitan Builder sits down with Cynthia Cannizzaro, owner of One Design Place, to talk about her passion for transforming homes and the lives of the people who live in them. With more than 20 years of experience as both an interior designer and contractor, Cynthia has built a reputation for creating kitchens, bathrooms, and living spaces that are as functional as they are beautiful. From her belief that the heart of the home deserves thoughtful design to her hands-on approach in every project, Cynthia shares what inspires her, how she brings clients' visions to life, and why making a house feel like home is at the core of everything she does.*

**TMB: What sets you apart from other designers?**

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** INTEGRITY-I care deeply about my clients and giving them a home that they love to live in. I closely examine the lifestyle of my clients, as well as their preferred style. I think it's very important to do your best to immerse yourself in your client's world and understand how they live and what they do in each space. I conduct a lifestyle survey at the very beginning to learn what activities are important to them and determine how to best support them in the design of the space.

I believe, function is as important as aesthetics in creating my designs.

I am actually in the business of transforming lives.





For example, when we design a new kitchen for someone, we consider every person in the household. When we get it right, each person's life should be transformed, and there should be easy entrance and exit from their home. Many people live in chaos in the morning as they try to get out the door. Our designs eliminate this chaos and many more.

**TMB:** *What motivated you to go into the interior design field?*

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** When I was choosing my college major, I was looking at the things that I was passionate about, and they were architecture, fine arts, psychology, and dance.

I enrolled in the School of Architecture at LSU, and in our second year, they offer an option to continue in architecture or interior design. I chose interior design because I felt it combined art, architecture, and psychology —three of my passions—into one career. Later, I realized that at a young age, I was constantly building Barbie “living rooms” and drawing floor plans of the homes where I was babysitting. It was just a natural progression.

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

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** The field of interior design has changed quite a lot, mostly in the technology arena. The fundamentals and principles of design remain the same. When I became an interior designer, the profession was only about 10 years old, so it certainly has developed over the years.

Technology has made communication with clients significantly easier. In the actual design, there are cooktops that you can't see, often in your island, until you turn them on. Refrigerators that can keep your grocery list, timers that you can set by voice, faucets that you don't have to touch to turn on, and coffee pots that you can program to make your coffee before you wake up and much more. Much of the technology is useful in the arena of aging in place and ADA compliance. Creating a home that is more accessible for individuals with disabilities is a remarkable option.

**TMB:** *How can an experience Interior Designer help Custom home builder or remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** An Interior Designer can help builders and contractors by having all choices made in advance and making sure Product is delivered to the job site prior to when it's needed. The art of interior design mitigates many risks for both the builder and the Remodeler.

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

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** I believe that my most



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**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** I'm working with Builders and remodelers clients. I would find out where the builder or Remodeler likes to purchase their products. I would familiarize myself with the product and then have a meeting with the client to determine their goals and objectives, as well as their preferred style. Most clients do not know how to articulate what they like and dislike with words; therefore, I help them express it through photographs.

Once we know the clients objectives and what they're drawn to we can begin the selection process.

**TMB: What are some common mistakes made by Builders and homeowners?**

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** I think the biggest common mistake is a lack of communication or the assumption that the other person knows what you want or expect. Speaking about stay current, how do you keep yourself up-to-date with all of the design trends happening in the industry today?

As a designer, your education does not end when you graduate from college. Every year, you must stay up-to-date with the latest trends and innovations.

I take CEU classes for interior design, architecture, and real estate.

Many of the products we specify also offer yearly updates, or their representatives bring new products or services, so that we remain current. The trick is just to make time to meet with them.

**TMB: What is your favorite design style?**

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** I don't have one favorite design style. If you look at my projects, you'll see that they cover a wide range of styles, because I believe a great interior designer should get into the mind of the client and design something that feels like an extension of them. One of my greatest joys is when a project is complete and the client tells me it truly reflects who they are—that's when I know I've done my job well.

**TMB: What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs?**

**CYNTHIA CANNIZZARO:** Two things come to mind, technology in smart homes and how beauty creates peace on earth.



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challenging project was immediately after the pandemic, when we were experiencing supply-chain issues every day. We were remodeling a kitchen and many of our items were backordered for long periods. We waited for Cabinets for almost 8 weeks and the job had to just come to a halt until they arrived

Many of the other products were also delayed. This delayed delivery disrupted the workflow and caused anxiety for everyone.

**TMB: How do you begin the material selection process?**



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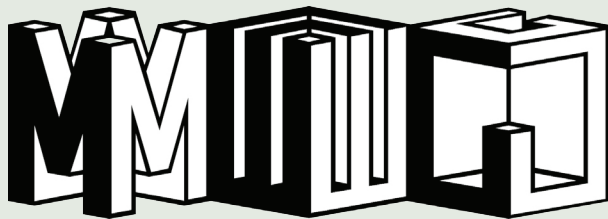


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