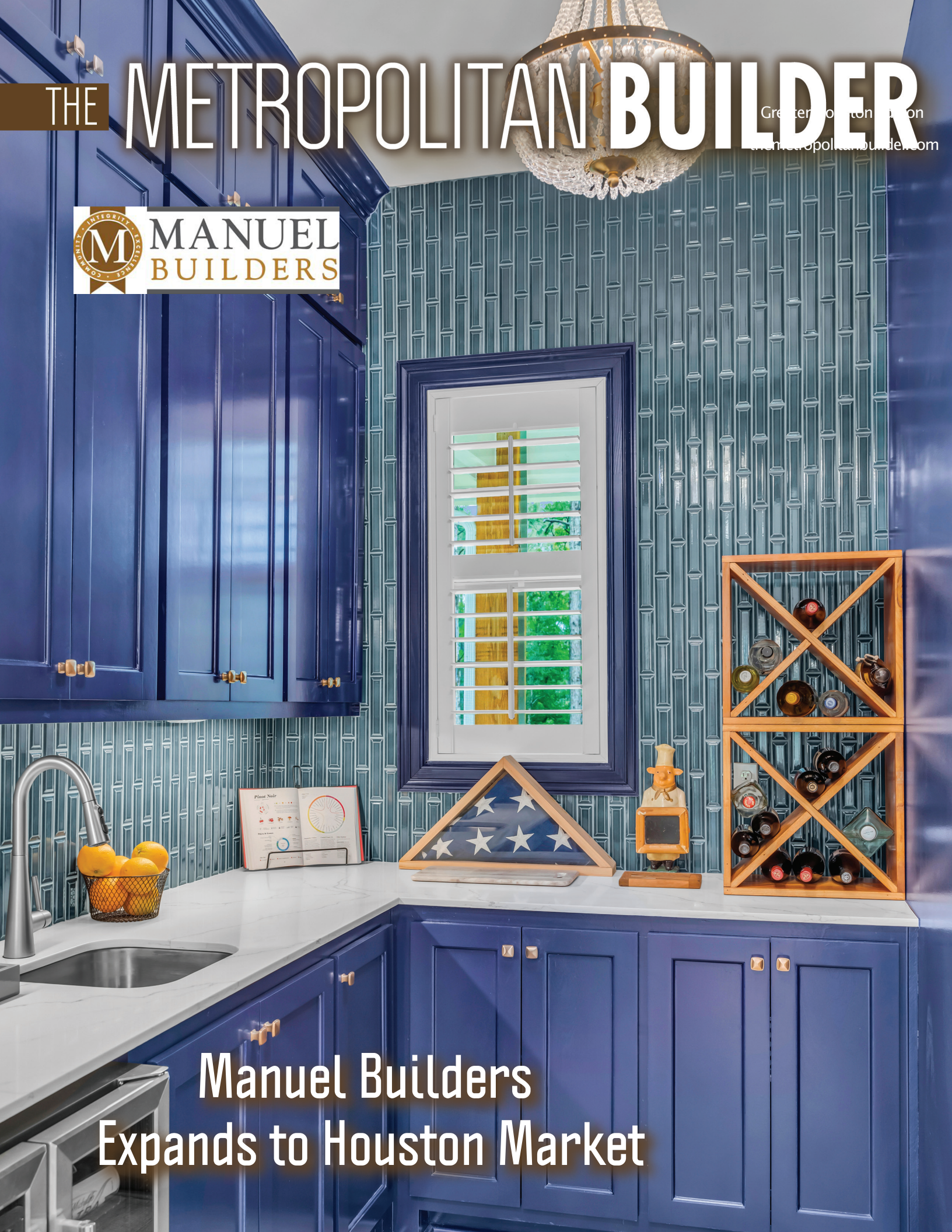


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# Manuel Builders Expands to Houston Market

**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 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 visit  
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