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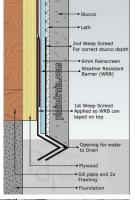
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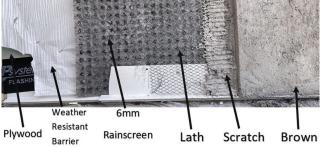
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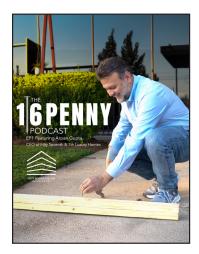






## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

An Industry Trade Publication | December 2025



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# PUBLISHER'S note



Giselle Bernard, Publisher

### PHOTO BY VIKA STRAWBERRIKA ON UNSPLASH

## Exclusivity, Representation, Partnership & Now -Our New Podcast Network: Expanding Your Influence in 2026

Exclusivity, Representation, Partnership & Now—Our New Podcast Network: Expanding Your Influence in 2026

In a crowded marketplace, the fastest way to stand out is to stop standing in line. As we enter 2026, we're elevating the three core pillars that have consistently turned visibility into measurable revenue for our partners—category exclusivity, hands-on sales representation, and curated networking partnerships and we're adding a fourth pillar that will dramatically expand your reach:

### Our new podcast network

Together, these elements create a powerful equation for the year ahead:

focus + access + amplified storytelling = profit.

## **Category Exclusivity**

When you own your category, you own the conversation. Our exclusivity model eliminates noise by giving one best-in-class provider the spotlight within each category. This strengthens your positioning, deepens trust, and enhances lead quality. Exclusivity isn't about closing doors; it's about opening the right ones—without competition at your elbow.

#### Sales Representation

Visibility is valuable, but conversion is everything. That's why our work goes far beyond media. We represent you personally—making warm introductions, communicating your value with precision, and moving



conversations toward real opportunities. Our "publisher as sales liaison" approach shortens sales cycles and transforms your marketing investment into predictable, high-quality engagement.

### **Networking Partnerships**

Great business still begins with real conversations. Our monthly introductions bring you face-to-face with vetted custom builders, remodelers, architects, and interior designers who are actively buying. Builders meet new resources; sponsors meet the professionals they are supporting; and every handshake has a next step. This is curated networking with a purpose—and a predictable ROI.

## **Our New Podcast Network: Your Voice, Amplified**

This year, we're adding a new dimension to your visibility: a podcast platform designed specifically for the residential construction and design market.

#### Our podcasts will:

- Feature in-depth interviews with builders, remodelers, architects, designers, and categoryexclusive vendors
- Showcase your expertise to an expanding audience of

Continued on page 4

#### Continued from page 3

homeowners, industry peers, and potential collaborators

- Create long-form, evergreen content that can be repurposed for social media, websites, newsletters, and sales presentations
- Give sponsors expanded talking points, storytelling opportunities, and a modern channel for thought leadership
- Strengthen the connection between featured professionals and the vendors who stand behind them

This is not entertainment, it's strategic exposure. It builds authority. It deepens trust. It elevates your brand beyond print and digital into a medium that allows your voice to resonate long after the interview ends.

## **A Team Behind Every Featured Professional**

Equally important is the message we want every builder, remodeler, architect, and designer to hear: you are not standing alone.

Our represented and referred vendors choose to partner with you. They underwrite your marketing materials and invest in your success-not as advertisers, but as strategic allies. From magazines and digital flips to plaques, social

content, and now podcast visibility, they ensure your story is delivered with impact and consistency.

Their commitment to elevating the professionals we showcase is the foundation of our ecosystem: when you rise, they rise—and together, the entire network grows stronger.

## **Looking Ahead to 2026**

If your goal is profitable growth—not just impressions this is your moment.

- Secure your category.
- Leverage our expanded media platforms.
- Step confidently into the rooms and onto the airwaves where real buyers are listening.
- We will drive the introductions.
- We will amplify your voice.
- We will give your brand the focus it deserves.
- You continue delivering the excellence that keeps clients coming back.

Here's to a year of sharper focus, stronger partnerships, elevated storytelling—and higher margins.

Let's build it together.





# Inside Luxury Homebuilding: An Interview with Fifty Seventh & 7th



Building or renovating a home is one of the most significant investments a homeowner will make, and choosing the right professional is essential. In this exclusive Metropolitan Builder Q&A, we sit down with leading custom home builders and remodelers to answer the questions homeowners most often ask—from timelines and materials to craftsmanship, costs, and industry trends. Whether you're beginning a custom build or transforming an existing property, this guide is designed to empower you with clarity, insight, and confidence.

This month, Metropolitan Builder sits down with Fifty Seventh & 7th Luxury Homes, a firm founded by a physician-turned-builder whose passion for architecture and real estate has redefined luxury living in Houston. Inspired by the elegance of New York's iconic 57th & 7th intersection, the company has grown from crafting refined Inner-Loop residences to developing extraordinary estates in River Oaks, Memorial, and the Memorial Villages ranging from \$1 million to over \$20 million. Operating from a private design studio in the Design Center on Old Katy Road, their tight-knit team of seasoned superintendents, design professionals, and long-standing trade

Arpan Gupta, CEO Fifty Seventh & 7th Luxury Homes









### Continued from page 5

partners has achieved multiple record-breaking sales of ultra-luxury spec homes. No matter the price point, the firm remains committed to thoughtful architecture, meaningful finishes, and uncompromising craftsmanship.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: Tell us about your background and the origins of your company?

ARPAN GUPTA: Well my background by education is in medicine. I have an undergraduate degree from Rice and a Doctorate of Medicine from the Baylor College of Medicine. But I had always been interested in architectural design and real estate, so when an opportunity fell in my lap, I decided to take the plunge.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: Where does the name of the company come from?

ARPAN GUPTA: Well, the name Fifty Seventh & 7th Luxury Homes is inspired by the New York intersection for Carnegie Hall. I've always been impressed by its architecture, spirit of philanthropy and endowment, and timeless design. It represents the level of refinement we aim for.

#### THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: You've recently

### moved into new offices, correct?

ARPAN GUPTA: It's been about two years now since we completed construction, but yes, we are in the Design Center on Old Katy Road. Our office functions as a private design studio where we can meet with architects, review materials, and manage active projects.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: Tell us about the team involved on each of your homes?

ARPAN GUPTA: The team is intentionally small and made up of experienced superintendents, construction leadership, design professionals, and long-standing trade partners who have been with us for years. We attract top talent the same way we attract top clients: by focusing on meaningful work, strong design, and a culture that values precision, pride, and craftsmanship over volume.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: When did you start building luxury homes?

ARPAN GUPTA: We started building homes in 2009, mainly in the Galleria, Montrose, and the broader Inner Loop. Those early years were focused on well-designed luxury homes that fit the scale and character of the neighborhoods. In 2019, we launched what was our ultraluxury division, Fifty Seventh & 7th, which pushed us into a completely different arena in terms of scale, finishes,





and architectural ambition. Fortunately, we experienced significant success, and what started off as a division evolved into our primary focus.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What do you mean by significant success?

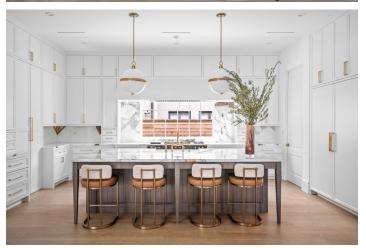
**ARPAN GUPTA:** Well, it was perceived as quite the gamble. Marketing a \$9.5M spec home in River Oaks had never been done before. Ultimately, we sold that home at full price, which was, at the time, the highest-spec home in Houston history. We have been fortunate to break our own record two more times since, once in 2023 and again in 2024, each time at full asking price.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: How many homes do you undertake per year?

ARPAN GUPTA: It really varies depending on the product mix and the resources available. For example, we currently have a 17,000-square-foot home under construction, so we allocate more resources to that project. Because we primarily build as a spec developer, we build more luxury homes at any given time. If we focused only on custom clients, we'd realistically be able to handle about half as many homes, as it requires more resources to maintain the level of communication and service that this type of work requires.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What's the difference between a production builder and a custom builder, and where does your company fit?





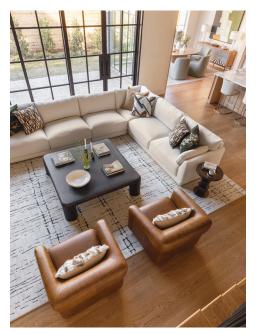


ARPAN GUPTA: Production builders focus on volume and repeatability. Their homes start with standardized plans that are built repeatedly with limited variation. Custom builders work the opposite way; everything starts from scratch, and the process is tailored around the client and the site. We fall firmly in the custom category in terms of design, architecture, and craftsmanship, but because we build as a spec developer, we maintain more control over the process and the final product. The homes are one-of-a-kind, but they're built under our vision, not by committee. That's allowed us to build custom-level homes consistently without the bottlenecks that come with exclusively custom work.

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## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What price points and areas do you build in?

ARPAN GUPTA: Our homes currently range from \$1 million up to more than \$20 million, depending on the division and the location. The sub-\$2 million line is focused on the Inner Loop. The ultra-luxury division builds in River Oaks and surrounding areas, Sherwood Forest, Memorial, and the Memorial Villages (Hunters Creek, Piney Point, etc.). The constant across all of them is an emphasis on thoughtful design, strong architecture, and meaningful finishes.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: Do you only focus on the luxury market?

ARPAN GUPTA: Whatever the price point we are building, we maintain the most luxurious finishes for that market. Some agents or builders may tell you that luxury is only above a certain price point. I would say luxury is more a reflection of the level of finishes, artisan, and workmanship—whatever the price point. So yes, we only focus on luxury homes, but after establishing ourselves at the very top of the market the last few years, we felt it was the right time to bring back the type of homes that originally built our reputation: luxury homes under \$2 million, but still crafted with intention and attention to detail.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What is your process for planning and executing a project?

ARPAN GUPTA: We put a lot of energy into preconstruction. That includes studying the site, reviewing the tree and topo surveys, working through the architectural massing, and establishing a clear interior design direction before breaking ground. We handle the engineering and bidding upfront so that the schedule and budget

are grounded in reality. During construction, our VP of Construction and senior superintendents manage the day-to-day work with weekly coordination meetings and regular mock-ups to confirm details. By the time a home is finished, we do our own internal punch list to make sure everything is right before clients ever walk through it.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: How do you handle unexpected changes or challenges during a build? ARPAN GUPTA: They happen on every high-end project, whether it's related to protected trees, design adjustments, or structural refinements. Our approach is simple: communicate early, present options, and move quickly so momentum isn't lost. Because most of our homes are spec, we can make decisions efficiently without compromising the design or slowing the build down.

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What is your approach to staying on schedule, and do you sell homes early in the process?

ARPAN GUPTA: Our schedules are built around realistic timelines and contingency buffers. We order long-lead items early, lock in selections upfront, and maintain tight sequencing with our trade partners. As for sales: we typically do not release homes early. We may turn down a buyer if the home is too far from completion. Our design integrity depends on being able to execute the vision fully, and early sales almost always pull a project off track. Releasing homes later in construction protects the outcome.

For more information contact:
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Fifty Seventh & 7th Luxury Homes
(281) 788-5700
www.fiftyseventhandseventh.com
arpan@fiftyseventhandseventh.com

## **Punctuated With Personal Touches**

## Creating Kitchen And Bath Spaces That Celebrate Style And Wellness

## By Linda Jennings

Creating sanctuaries at home begins with innovative design ideas that reflect a homeowners unique personality and lifestyle. From a cold therapy plunge pool for the ultimate in wellness to a tub that flips the color to the inside these products are sure to create a sophisticated home space that delivers big on wellness. Indulge in

these new fixtures and fittings that will create a timeless family treat. These interiors resonate with the top tier luxury for builders and homeowners looking to create a space that indulges the senses while offering functionality for years to come.



**Bello's Interior Colored Bathtubs** 

## Flip The Switch On Color

Bello is turning the bathtub industry inside out with its latest innovation - a freestanding bathtub with color on the interior! This pop of color on the inside creates a unique immersion into a sea of blue, creating a dreamy space to bathe with visions of Mediterranean seas or a dip in a luxurious swimming pool. Also available in a dramatic black, this transition of color to only the interior bathing well makes a decidedly bold aesthetic impact. Bello's unique material allows for the integration of color into both the interior and exterior surfaces. Available on all Bello's bathtubs, as special order 10-12 week lead time, each features a color matched drain assembly. Crafted from durable Bellocast, a high quality innovative composite material that is water, grease and stain resistant. It requires little maintenance and a slip-resistant surface. The natural insulating properties of Bellocast keep bath water warmer longer for a rejuvenating soak. All Bello bathtubs are handcrafted with an innovative Safecoat Hydrophobic coating made in the USA, certified free from chemicals known to the State of California to cause birth defects

or reproductive harm. This ensures a safe, toxin-free environment for your skin. Discover more atbellousa.com.



The Brigade Faucet from Barber Wilsons

## **New Curves On Traditional Designs**

Hailed for their signature solid brass construction and timeless designs, the Brigade Bath Faucet is the latest iteration by Barber Wilsons & Co. the renowned British purveyor of traditional kitchen and bath faucets and fittings. The new **Brigade Collection** 

is notable for its gracefully arched swan neck spout and knurled detailing on the handles. Available with a 6" or 8" spout as a lavatory fixture, the Brigade line also includes a wall-mounted design, Roman tub fixtures, and a thermostatic shower valve. The collection is offered in all of Barber Wilsons' standard finishes as well as their lovely new Brushed Brass finish, shown here. With its classic silhouette and distinctive style, this exceptional faucet complements a variety of decors, from vintage to transitional, and even brings a new twist to contemporary settings. The Brigade faucet is the perfect choice for luxurious baths and powder rooms. See the entire collection at barberwilsons.com.

## **A Dusting Of Feminine Color**

Suspended as if weightless, this broad rectangular sink mounts directly to the wall to achieve a look that is both etheral and futuristic. A fluted 'skirt' cultivates a sense of expansiveness and enduring sophistication. Made in Los Angeles with a proprietary lightweight, high-strength

Continued on page 10



Bespoke Sink in Textured Blush Concrete by Vast Studio

Continued from page 9

concrete in any color the client desires and comes with a choice of smooth plaster look, textured concrete or bespoke metal (exterior) finishes. It is shown here in a romantic Blush Concrete finish. Vast Studio combines minimalist luxury with unique features like ergonomic design, high-quality materials, and a variety of styles to suit any bathroom decor. Discover the entire collection of luxury bath products at vaststudio.com.



Velox from Flusso Kitchen & Bath

#### **Practical And Timeless Faucet**

Transform your kitchen into a hub of efficiency and style with the innovative Velox collection of kitchen faucets from Flusso Kitchen & Bath. These functional faucets feature a semi-professional-grade model, a coordinating bar faucet, and a filter faucet with side handle delivers cool, filtered water directly from your sink. As part of Flusso's popular Klassiker Collection, Velox faucets are constructed of premium stainless steel. The Velox Collection features single-hole installation and is ADA and WaterSensecompliant, with a flow rate of 1.8 gallons per minute at 60 psi. The collection is offered in standard, Fast Ship finishes of Stainless Steel or Brushed Gold PVD. Choose colorful finish options to really amp up the drama -20 different shades to choose from, ranging from sky blue, army green, and deep red to more neutral options like distressed black, steel gray, and dark tan. For more information about Velox and other Flusso Kitchen & Bath designs, visit flussofaucets.com.



Diamond Spas Fraser cold plunge pool

## **Luxurious Therapy Pool**

Cold therapy plunge pools, also called ice-baths, have become the new rave among health enthusiasts. The Fraser, from Diamond Spas, is a luxurious therapy option homeowners can now covet in the convenience of their own home. Crafted from stainless steel, the standard design cold therapy plunge pool accompanies spas, saunas, or steam rooms and is kept at 55 degrees or colder, depending on client preferences. By rapidly cooling the body, blood circulation is stimulated, pores are closed and detoxified, joints are numbed, pain reduced, and muscle spasms are relieved. Cold therapy pools are an ideal option for athletes, sports facilities, health clubs or anyone looking for total body wellness. Discover the entire collection of luxury cold plunge pools at diamondspas.com.

To find out more about the brands featured here visit their websites at:

www.bellousa.com • www.barberwilsons.com www.vaststudio.com • www.flussofaucets.com www.diamondpsas.com

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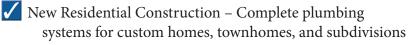
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Sand Dunes



Prairie Clay



Timberland Suede



Tundra Gray



Cavern Steel



Desert Stone



Terra Brown



Garden Sage



Summit Blue



Midnight Shadow





# Building a Legacy of Integrity: Why Tyler Custom Homes is the Builder Next Door

By Jacob Dow

In the competitive landscape of custom home construction, where innovation often overshadows foundational principles, one builder stands out for his unwavering commitment to integrity, transparency, and a deeply personal approach. Steve Clayton, founder of Tyler Custom Homes, isn't just constructing houses; he's forging lasting relationships and building a legacy rooted in genuine craftsmanship and the trust earned by being, quite literally, the "builder next door."

Steve's journey into custom home building began not in a sales office, but with a hammer in hand. "I like building things. I've always been a builder, carpenter, building things and watching them progress to be a finished product," he reflects. From framing homes at 14 to mastering plumbing and various trades, Steve's hands-on experience forms the bedrock of Tyler Custom Homes. This ground-up expertise sets him apart, ensuring every project is managed with an intimate understanding of true construction.

At the heart of Tyler Custom Homes' philosophy is a simple yet profound principle: "being real." Steve explains, "Being real is a big word. That means you're honest. You don't lie. You don't hide things. You don't trick people." This commitment to unvarnished truth extends to every facet of the building process, especially when it comes to client communication and project costs. In a testament to this transparency, Tyler Custom Homes stands firm on a unique policy: they don't mark up change orders. Steve believes that this approach builds trust and simplifies the often-



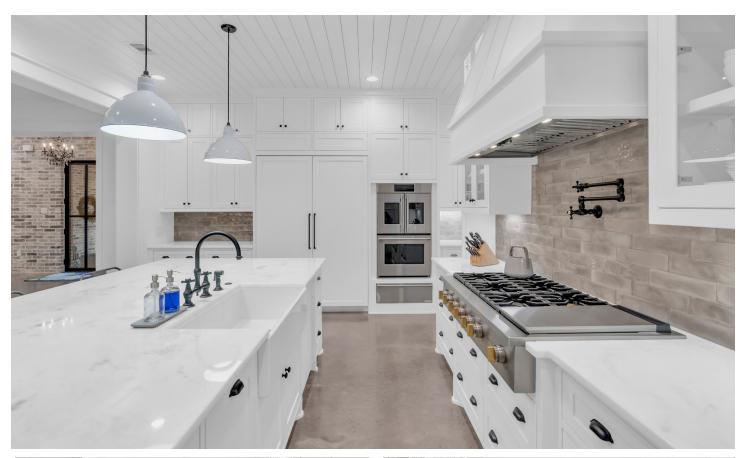
complex financial aspects of custom building. "Because we live in this neighborhood... it's always easier to remember the truth."

This local presence is not just a geographical detail; it's a cornerstone of the Tyler Custom Homes brand. Building extensively within his own community, Steve understands that his reputation walks hand-in-hand with his daily life. "The biggest thing that has made us successful is living in the community where we work," he emphasizes. This proximity fosters a level of accountability and personal connection rarely found in the industry. Clients don't just get a builder; they gain a neighbor and, often, a friend.

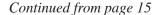
The evidence of this philosophy is woven into countless client stories. Steve proudly recounts building for the entire family of his project managers, a testament to enduring quality and trust. He shares anecdotes of going "above and beyond", like instructing his painter to refinish a client's faded shutters while they were out of town, simply because he noticed they needed attention, without even a word. "We just did it," he says, underscoring the proactive care embedded in his service. For Steve, the ultimate gratification comes from clients who become lifelong friends, referring others and even entrusting him with multiple projects over the years.











Tyler Custom Homes eschews the high-volume model, prioritizing "quality over quantity." Steve's focus remains on delivering a meticulously crafted home, a "trophy" that represents a family's hard work and cherished investment. The company's signature often lies in robust structural details like 2x12 headers and hurricane clips, standards that reflect an unwavering commitment to durability and strength. Yet, it's the personal journey of collaboration that truly defines each home. Steve sees himself as a "chameleon," adapting to each client's personality, offering his experience while honoring their input. "I let them give their input, but then I'll give them my experiences," he notes, balancing vision with practical wisdom.

Looking ahead, Steve Clayton's vision for Tyler Custom



Homes remains steadfastly linked to its origins. He aims to leave a legacy as a "true custom home builder with true integrity," a testament to 25 years (and counting) of dedicated service. In a world constantly seeking the next big thing, Tyler Custom Homes reminds us that sometimes, the most profound innovation lies in an unwavering commitment to timeless values: honesty, craftsmanship, and the genuine care of a builder who truly is, and always will be, part of the community.

In the end, Tyler Custom Homes is more than a construction company it is a reflection of Steve Clayton himself: honest, grounded, and devoted to doing things the right way. His hands-on expertise, neighborly presence, and heartfelt commitment to transparency have created a brand defined not by flashy trends, but by lasting trust and enduring quality. As Steve continues to craft homes













that stand as both physical and personal testaments to his values, he proves that true success in custom home building isn't measured in volume, but in the lives touched, the friendships formed, and the timeless integrity built into every project. For more information or to begin your custom home journey with Tyler Custom Homes.



Watch Property Video

For more information contact:

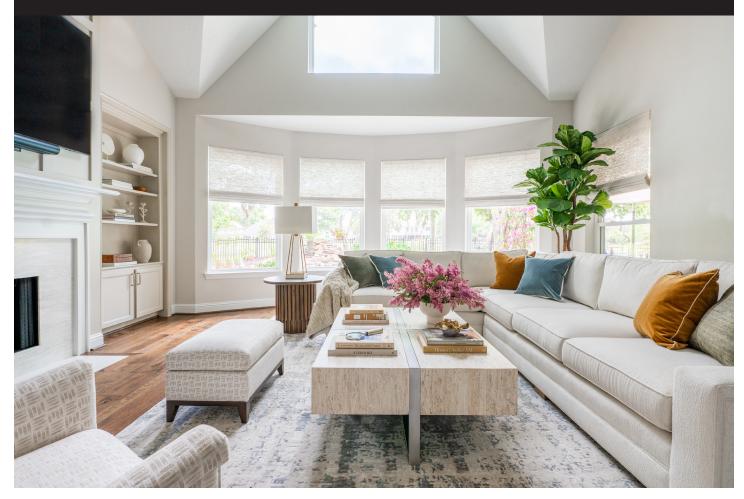
Steve Clayton, Owner Tyler Custom Homes

281.850.7995

steve@tylercustomhomes.com

Steve Clayton, Owner **Tyler Custom Homes** 

# Dialogue with a Designer: CLR Design Services, Inc.



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 features Crystal Reeves, ASID, RID, NCIDQ-Principal and Founder of CLR Design Services, Inc., a full-service residential and interior design firm serving clients across Texas and beyond. Crystal stands out in the industry for her rare

blend of technical expertise, creative vision, and humancentered design, with a specialized ability to craft beautiful, functional spaces for individuals with both visible and invisible disabilities. Inspired by her Alaskan roots and backed by more than 25 years of experience, she is an ASID Medalist, a Texas Registered Interior Designer, NCIDQ certified, an active TAID member, and a healthcare and pediatric design specialist known for solving complex spatial challenges with clarity and innovation. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Crystal is also committed to serving her community through her volunteer work, adding depth and purpose to the spaces she creates.

## THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What motivated you to go into the interior design field?

**CRYSTAL REEVES:** Oddly enough, my path began with a college "career" test. I loved learning but had no idea what to major in, so I took the test—and while it suggested attorney as the top choice, I quickly ruled that out since









I hated confrontation. The next two options were interior design and graphic design, so I enrolled in an art class to see if I had any talent. I ended up with an incredible professor who encouraged me and saw potential... and the rest is history.

What's funny in hindsight is that I didn't grow up around design at all. I split my time between two parents, lived in apartments, and had no exposure to the design world. But that unfamiliarity sparked curiosity. Every new experience, client, and project became—and still is—an opportunity to learn and create something beautiful from the ground up.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated? CRYSTAL REEVES: I graduated college in 1995—so honestly, what hasn't changed? Technology and communication have completely transformed the industry. What we once did with hand sketches and watercolors is now done with PowerPoint, 3D modeling, and even AI.

Beyond the tools, our awareness as designers has evolved. We now think much more deeply about the materials we use, their environmental impact, and how spaces affect the people who live and work in them. There's also a growing focus on designing for unique populations, like the neurodivergent community, and recognizing that design



influences far more than just what we see—it impacts how we feel and function.

New research continues to show how sound, light, touch, texture, and even scent shape our well-being. Design today is really about creating spaces that support the whole person—their wellness, their comfort, and their joy. Of course, it still needs to look amazing, but now there's a shift to focus on the substance behind the beauty—and the world is finally starting to see that.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?

CRYSTAL REEVES: An experienced interior designer can make a huge difference on a custom build or remodel by helping clients navigate the thousands of decisions that come with any project. We see the big picture—the full vision—and how every choice connects, from the floor plan and custom cabinetry designs to tile patterns, finishes, and fixtures.

But it's not just about selections; it's about collaboration and communication. Once the design is complete, we stay

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involved throughout the build, working closely with the builder and the client to ensure that the vision is being executed as intended.

And of course, every project comes with surprises—like discovering a pipe that can't be moved after all. That's where an experienced designer/builder relationship really adds value: by problem-solving together creatively, reimagining the space within the real-world constraints, and still giving the client something beautiful and functional. In short, we help bridge the gap between the client's dream

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and the builder's reality.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER: What sets you apart from other designers?

CRYSTAL REEVES: I'm a people person first—I love getting to know my clients, understanding how they live, and what makes them happy. I push them to think beyond their inspiration boards—showing them things they didn't even know they could love—while making sure they never make a mistake. I'm authentic, loyal, and always design with function first. I use Universal Design principles not because someone's aging, but because they make life easier for everyone. My goal is simple: make life smoother, more joyful, and live by my mantra—Life Doesn't Have to be This Hard.

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