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Leonidas Homes Reflects
Rallis' Heritage, Travel

Leonidas Homes | Houston, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz



As you might expect, by growing up in Greece and the U.S., culture and travel have heavily influenced Vasilis Rallis as a builder, from the design of the homes he builds to his company's name.

Often using ideas and materials from other parts of the world, Rallis' Leonidas Homes usually features exterior living space, such as terraces and patios, so that the homeowners can be outside entertaining guests or enjoying the space themselves, much as people in Greece and the Mediterranean do.

"A lot of my clients have also traveled or even lived abroad and appreciate a unique home with plenty of outdoor living areas. Houston has nice weather for the most part, so it's great being able to sit outside and enjoy a café or

wine in your own space.

“Many builders think just interior when it comes to living space, but to us exterior is just as important. There is just something different about enjoying natural sunlight in the summer or a cool breeze in the fall. No one likes to be cooped up indoors all of the time,” he noted.

Leonidas Homes’ tastes are usually contemporary, modern or Mediterranean, the kind of home that causes someone driving down the street to take a second look, according to Vasilis. “We use a lot of design elements and materials from other cultures, and both the interior and

is on quality, not quantity. We want to become well known, but we don’t want to get too big. We want to maintain our personal attention to customers.”

Leonidas Homes recently started to accept selective custom home clients after many prospective homebuyers approached Vasilis. For the first ten years the company did major remodeling projects and has since transitioned to new construction custom homes.

“We seem to attract people in the 28-50 age bracket who like that style of contemporary or modern house. They’re usually not first-time homebuyers, although our remodel



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exteriors offer unique expression of the home itself.”

Vasilis builds his Leonidas Homes in the Montrose, Midtown, Memorial and Spring Branch areas of Houston – areas where homebuyers and their neighbors appreciate unique homes with flair. “We not only put our expertise and minds but also our heart and soul into the homes we’re doing. It’s not necessarily your typical build-out; it’s a process we carefully and meticulously take pride in making just right.

“We’re an elite builder. We don’t do a ton of homes, typically no more than five in a given year. Our emphasis





projects many times are.

“We want to take on clients that see our vision and we see theirs; we don’t take on just any house. If we’re a good fit, they’re going to get something really special. I like to have real conversations with them over a café or casual lunch. I like to get to know them, to learn first-hand their thought process and philosophy,” Vasilis noted.

He said that a house can be a blank canvas where the builder and homeowner use their vision to make it a really special home. “I hope to encourage the clients’ artistic side. If I can tap into that, we can be much better at matching what they want. We will use all of our knowledge to create a home that is unique as they are.

“My favorite part of building is making someone’s home their kingdom, to make their dream home become a reality,” he added.

Leonidas Homes uses talented architects that can focus on the specific type of home that Rallis and his customers are looking to create, whether it’s contemporary, modern or Mediterranean design. “We work very closely with the architect to get plans just the way we want them.”

Born in Dallas to a Greek father and American mother, Vasilis said his family moved to Greece after his businessman father Leonidas died unexpectedly when Vasilis was quite young.

“My dad is a massive inspiration to me. He’s the reason I am who I am and what I’m doing.” His father reorganized businesses, especially restaurants in New York and Texas.

Vasilis later returned to America to pursue higher education, but first, his desire to travel the world and serve his birth country led him to join the U.S. Marine Corps. He was based in California and later began college there before transferring and graduating from the University of Houston.

In ancient Greek an “architektón” was a “master builder” who created something exquisite out of nothing. Building appeals to Vasilis because he likes doing just that. “You just need to have the vision to create what others can’t yet see,” he noted.

The company name, Leonidas Homes, which is named after his father, and the logo, which features Ionic



columns with a Greek star, were carefully chosen. The columns come from the Ionian Islands that Vasilis would frequent as a young man. The Greek star (a.k.a. Vergina Sun) on top pays homage to King Leonidas and Alexander the Great. “Just like my father, both these men inspire me because they were able to do a lot with a little.”



He started in the building industry by buying homes while in college after his military years. He set out to buy the ugliest house in a neighborhood and turn it into the nicest house in the neighborhood. The first two houses he renovated with the help of a cousin and other family members. But by the third house he had transitioned from laborer to the role of general contractor, focusing on finding properties and doing designs. He learned more about construction techniques and how to create a successful business from others in and out of the building industry.



Over the years he developed relationships with subcontractors and vendors, often using the same ones over and over again. “They may come and go, but I continue to use the ones that best understand my expectations and have attention to detail,” Vasilis said.



Vasilis has a trusted project manager, Jerry, for his new construction projects. His sister, Sofia, acts as property manager/realtor/marketer, and his brother in college is prepping to join the team as well. Vasilis’ key role is to “make sure the ship’s running right” through careful planning, design and vision.

Away from work, Vasilis enjoys reading, fitness and international travel – most recently a trip back to his native Greece for his sister’s “Big Greek Wedding.” If he were not a builder, he speculates that he might have pursued a professional sports career ... or taught philosophy.

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