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### Beacon Builders: Setting A Higher Standard

Beacon Builders | Houston, Texas



# Beacon Builders: Setting A Higher Standard

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Platinum, one of the world's three precious metals, is the most coveted. More than silver, more than gold. Although the building industry doesn't offer a platinum award for excellence, Beacon Builders is working just as hard as if it did.

Saahir Ramji, President of Beacon Builders, said Beacon's goal is to be considered a platinum-level builder by creating energy-efficient living environments that exceed national standards.

Beacon Builders works with Environments for Living, a program offered by TopBuild Home Services. The platinum program requires that homes perform 18 percent above the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). Participating in this program means Beacon Builders is held to a more stringent standard for construction and performance.

According to the company website, there are two limited guarantees within this program: energy use and comfort. Energy use refers to the estimated annual amount of energy needed to heat and cool a home. As described more fully in the guarantee, if actual use exceeds the estimated amount, the homeowner is refunded 100 percent of the cost difference. The comfort guarantee promises that the temperature at the location of the thermostat will not vary more than three degrees plus or minus from the center of

any conditioned room for that zone.

Beacon Builders also want to give its homebuyers a platinum-level product in other ways. Because the typical buyer of a Beacon Builders home is a young professional, Ramji makes sure the homes have desired finishes at an affordable price.

His building team includes an in-house architect, field superintendents and contracted interior designers. His role as president is to acquire and develop land and to coordinate sales with real estate brokers. He also double- and triple-checks everything that comes to the office. His team's skills and attention to details "set us apart" from other builders, he said. It also helps that Ramji's partners, Malik Ali and Jeffrey Carnahan, have extensive knowledge in the industry.

Beacon's products range from a typical two-story, single family residence to three- and four-story townhomes in and around Houston. Buyers may choose from 20 floor plans, with more becoming available all of the time, thanks to the in-house architect.

The price range is often \$350,000 to \$499,000 for its 2,100- to 2,600-square foot, three-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath townhomes, such as the gated 18-home community underway in Spring Branch off Hempstead Road and

another gated 13-home community off Clarkson Lane in Spring Branch.

These town homes have a lot of features, including quartz countertops, hardwood floors, LED lighting, stainless steel appliances, wiring for surround sound and security systems. Some even have roof decks. The homes are wired to be “future ready for technology,” Saahir noted. He added that these features are part of the standard package for Beacon Builders’ homes, not added as upgrades as by other builders.

Beacon Builders also has a “build on your lot” program in addition to the spec homes it builds annually. Clients can meet with the in-house designer to explain their needs and wants. From there Beacon Builders can sketch out several layouts that fit the clients’ lot and then continue by designing a fully custom home.

The custom homes that Beacon Builders has built in the past range from \$1.2 million to the \$5 million home it built in the River Oaks area. “This home in the River Oaks neighborhood was a one-of-a-kind build that is fully home automated where one could control nearly everything from their cell phone,” Saahir said. It has custom wood floors, ultra high-end kitchen appliances, cabinets shipped from Germany and an elevator. The home even features a 13-seat theater!

Some of the company’s custom home clients are buying their second Beacon Builders home. One example is a client who first bought one of Beacon’s spec homes. When the buyers were ready to build a custom home on their own lot, they contacted Beacon, which built them a \$2 million lake-front home in Sugarland.

But Saahir doesn’t limit his work to residential building. As a principal in Beacon Developments, he also builds commercial retail centers, some which are located in Sugarland, Pearland, Tomball, Spring Cypress and Houston. They range in size from 15,000 to 100,000 square feet.

Before becoming a builder, Ramji majored in international studies at Texas A&M. He then followed in his father’s footsteps by attending law school at South Texas College of Law, where he focused on real estate. His exposure to building came at an early age while observing his family develop hotels and retail properties in the Houston area.

“My dad has been a very good mentor to me. I learned when to take risks and when not to take risks from him. When I started my own business in 2007, while in law school, he kept me grounded, even when I had many sleepless nights.

“It was a big learning experience for me. Basically, I

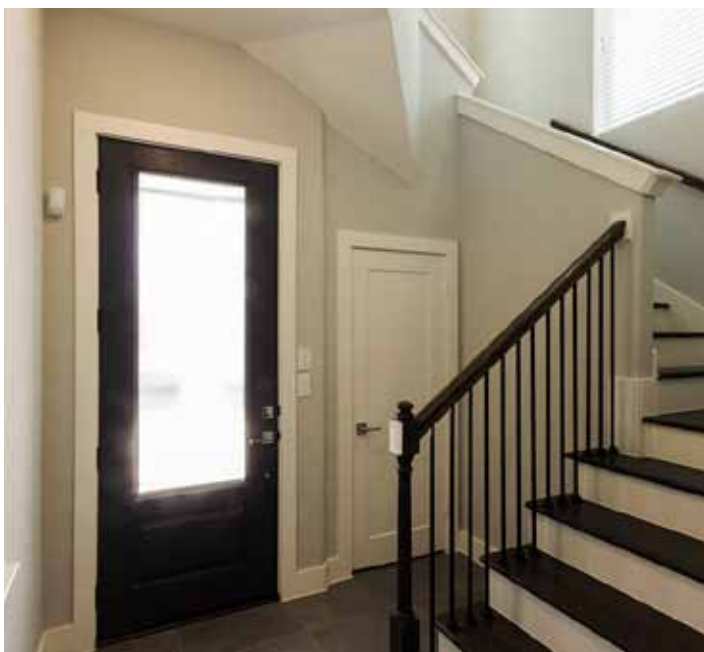




learned first-hand what it takes to succeed. I learned not to overbuild.” Consequently, his company successfully survived the “market corrections” that followed.

He also decided that he needed to know more about construction so he could keep costs and quality under control. Ramji earned a master’s degree in construction management at the University of Houston. He continues to expand his construction knowledge by attending seminars presented by the University of Houston and the Greater Houston Builders Association and by attending continuing education classes for his law and real estate licenses.

When not working in his business, Saahir volunteers his time to several organizations, one being the Aga Khan Foundation USA, a non-profit social development agency working to alleviate ultra poverty in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. His advice to friends and family is



to find a cause close to their heart and become passionately involved to better this world.

Saahir has no plans to change the trajectory of Beacon Builders during the next five years. “I like our boutique company. While I’d like to expand our build-on-your-own lot/custom home side, I don’t want to build more than 20 homes a year so I can focus on each.

“After 10 years as a builder, I still get a sense of real satisfaction and appreciation with each project. Building is something you can see. Your projects can change the face of a street or a whole area. You know it’s your work.”

He relaxes by focusing on his family. He tries to take his wife and three-year-old twin sons on a trip every two or three months, but it’s the daily trip of dropping off his sons at school every morning that he enjoys the most.

Saahir Ramji is living his own version of platinum-level excellence.

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