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Carnegie Signature Collection
Offers Concierge Services

Carnegie Homes & Construction | Houston, Texas



Carnegie Signature Collection Offers Concierge Services

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Of course you're familiar with concierge services at hotels, corporations and even hospitals, but did you know a Houston builder offers concierge services to his clients?

Arpan Gupta, president of Carnegie Homes & Construction, rewards buyers of luxury homes in his Signature Collection series of homes with an embedded concierge service for two years. At no extra charge those buyers receive landscaping services (manicuring, mowing, maintenance and changing of perennials), HVAC system maintenance, premium appliance training/seminar by SubZero and Wolf technicians and elevator serving. Keeping that elevator working is important, because many of his projects are three-, four- and five-story vertical homes!

Homes in the Carnegie Signature Collection fall in the \$2- to 8-million range, Gupta said, while other homes typically range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million. According to Gupta, the company has completed more than 100 homes. He noted proudly that no two homes have had the same finishes to date. "It does take a bit more work to make each



home unique, but it's worth it."

He began to dabble in the larger luxury homes in 2014, deciding to expand the concierge services his staff was already providing to its clients. Because many of his homebuyers were out of town or working long hours, they weren't able to connect with utility companies or landscapers, for example. Gupta said his staff wanted to take the burden off their homebuyers' hands by coordinating those connections.

"I think of Carnegie Homes as a customer service company that happens to build homes," Gupta stated.

Gupta's path to building is rather unconventional. Although he completed medical school (expecting to be an interventional cardiologist), he never practiced medicine. "I enjoyed medicine, and thought it was a way to give back [to the community]. But I was always interested in all facets of construction and real estate. Medicine is great, but I really like the idea of creating architecture and leaving a mark on the community or city that comes with building.

"I bought my first rental property, a condo, while I was in college. Then I bought a few more condos. And while I was in med school, I did some large remodels."

Calling himself a "little bit of a gambler and a little bit of a contrarian," Arpan got an opportunity to build two custom

spec homes in the Galleria section of Houston in 2009. During “the worse market in history,” Gupta thought, “there was no place to go but up.”

Gupta decided to pay homage to the legacy of Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist known for supporting education and the arts in his philanthropy, when he named his company Carnegie Homes & Construction. “I found inspiration in Carnegie’s rags-to-riches story and felt he embodied quality, luxury and class.”

Gupta too emphasizes quality in his work. People were so impressed with the artisanry and attention to detail in those initial spec homes that Gupta said he was able to build on that reputation. From those two houses, he expanded to eight, then 16 and now 30 to 50 homes a year and 12 employees. Half of the staff is in the field as superintendents, project managers and warranty specialists. The other half is in the office as interior designers, purchasing agents and administrators.

“Unfortunately I’m no longer able to get to know every single buyer personally, but I know the buyers are in great hands because my team can handle anything. I make it a point to surround myself with great people.”

With completed projects in the Galleria area, River Oaks, West University, the Heights, Memorial Park and the Woodlands, Carnegie Homes & Construction specializes in all styles of construction. It uses architects from three premier Houston firms rather than have an architect on staff.

“Architects often have expertise in a particular style or areas. We provide the same ease of expertise as many design-build firms do. But we don’t believe in forcing our clients to stick with an in-house designer who seldom is as established as the architects we use. We just absorb the architectural costs for our buyers. This way they have a better, higher quality of design and experience without the price tag.”

Arpan, a New Jersey native who has lived in Houston since he was four years old, is constantly on the lookout for new property. “I drive my family crazy because I spend weekends and evenings looking.” He looks for property in areas where he detects an undercurrent of excitement, such as a sense of community or new walkability.

Sometimes he converts a commercial property to residential. Sometimes he tears down an older home and re-plats the area to allow several vertical homes in the same space. “Nothing is off limits.”

He’s really excited about a new project called The Masterson Oaks at Westmoreland. It is in the





Westmoreland Historic District, which was an extension of Louisiana Avenue in the late 19th century. Carnegie is building 15 single-family, detached homes in the \$750,000-\$1.2 million range; they will be comprised of 2 ½, 3 or 4 stories.

But in order to implement Arpan's vision for the development of this property, certain restrictions written in the 1920s had to be changed. Those changes required notarized approvals from 75 percent of all the landowners in the historic district. And those notarized signatures had to be acquired within one year of the request! For some builders, this task would seem insurmountable, but Arpan and his team were undeterred, he said, and achieved 76 percent approval in 363 days. But this was no simple door-to-door campaign. These signatures came from owners as far away as Singapore!

"We're saving a 300-year-old oak tree and are building a park around it as a homage to the area's history. This is a labor of love, that's for sure," Gupta stated.

In order to serve the growing number of spiritually-focused homebuyers seeking Carnegie's services, the company specializes in architectural design and construction governed by the principles of Feng Shui and Vastu Shastra,



which translates to the “science of architecture.” These principles determine energy flow throughout the home and impact design, layout, measurements, ground preparation, space arrangement and spatial geometry.

His team considers such things as the placement of ovens and showers so that fire and water are not on top of each other. They may have to reorient a home to face a different direction or to compensate for longitude and latitude. They may have to round the edges of sheet rock to a quarter-inch bull nose because sharp edges will cut the energy and be a negative force in a house. “But we are tolerant and respectful of others’ beliefs. These are truly custom homes,” Gupta noted.

*For more information about
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