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Sims Luxury Builders Exceeds Expectations

Sims Builders | Houston, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz

When Chris Sims started building custom homes in 1988, he was surprised by the market's low expectations of builders. He decided to prove he could deliver a quality home and a quality experience to each of his homeowners.

"Building or renovating their dream home should be an exciting time in our homeowners' lives," according to Chris, who is currently chief executive officer and serves in a consulting role during the architectural design and construction phases.

Added Michael Sims, president and chief operating officer, "Over-promising and under-delivering is a problem in our industry. We strive to deliver an experience that is truly transparent, rewarding and enjoyable for our homeowners."

Michael and his team are determined to rise above the status quo. As an example, seven years ago the company began using a construction management software on each of its projects, allowing clients to view their home's budget, schedule, selections and progress photos at any moment through its easy-to-use app.

Based on his own experience in the field, Michael saw a

need for a project manager and a construction manager to work collaboratively on each home. These project teams handle between two and four houses at a time, depending on complexity, location and duration, taking into account that a home takes 10 to 24 months to complete.

"Years ago, we operated similarly to other builders with a field superintendent who functioned as his own little island on his projects. Over the last decade, we've shifted to a team approach because we've seen that it delivers a better home and a better experience to our homeowners," Michael said.

Construction managers focus on project schedule and supervising construction, ensuring quality control and preventing pitfalls that could result in warranty issues for their clients. Project managers focus on keeping the budget in line, vetting proposals, ordering materials and coordinating selections. "Besides our weekly project team meetings, which are designed to proactively identify issues before they snowball, communication is constant between these two partners," Michael said.



A focus on client education also sets Sims Luxury Builders apart from its competition.

“We really try to educate our homeowners about the building process through in-person conversations, our website (www.simsbuilders.com) and our blog. Everyone wants to understand the path ahead, and they feel comfortable when they see that we are focused on listening and helping as much as possible.

We’re able to tell from their first-hand feedback that our process works well. Taking that approach of helping first has allowed us to become trusted advisers for our homeowners,” Marie Sims, client success manager, stated. Married to Michael, Marie joined the company 10 years ago. Her current focus is helping prospective clients and continually improving the company’s processes.

However, the company’s 10 staff members see their roles in an even larger context. According to the company website, “When you hire Sims, you’re not just hiring a contractor. We are advocates, negotiators and stewards of our homeowners’ resources. We are teachers, sounding boards







and think tanks. We are mentors to the trades, problem solvers and quality controllers. We are project managers, motivators and expeditors. We are optimists in the face of constant challenges. We are team builders.”

Clients of Sims Luxury Builders include young professionals as well as empty nesters. After 31 years in business, the company is getting repeat customers. Marie shared the story of a family who built a custom home with Sims 18 years ago and recently hired the company again to build a patio home as their family downsizes. Other builders may experience the same sort of repeat business, but the unique element in this situation is that the young family who bought the original home also hired Sims for a whole house renovation. “It is humbling to have both of these families trust us with their most important investment, and we hope it speaks to how pleased our homeowners are with their completed homes as well as their experience working with us,” she noted.

Sims Luxury Builders’ projects may be as small as 4,000-sq.-ft. garden homes or as large as 30,000-sq.-ft. estates, ranging from \$1 million to \$10 million. Typically the company has 8-10 new construction or home renovations in progress at a time.

Capacity is a concern for the company’s leaders when it comes to growth. They refuse to undermine quality or diminish their standards by taking on more projects without adding just the right team members to handle them.

The company builds in the neighborhoods of West University, Tanglewood, Memorial Villages and River Oaks, although for the right project it will travel beyond

Houston’s inner loop and Sugar Land, where it is headquartered.

Although the team most enjoys working directly with clients to build their dream home, they will occasionally build a speculative home depending on the team’s capacity, lot availability and current market conditions. It has a spec home in Tanglewood going on the market in January.

Sims builds in all architectural styles, priding itself on creating well-proportioned homes and getting both the interior and exterior details just right. “If a detail is especially complex or we suspect there may be a better way to execute it, we take the time to get it right. Chris, Michael and our construction managers will spend hours making sure the smallest issues are not ignored or rushed through but instead solved using the best possible path forward,” Marie said.

Already a multi-generational company, Sims Luxury Builders intends to continue building high-end, single-family custom homes for years to come. Those homes are its passion and its strength, according to Marie. Why mess with success?

***To contact Sims Luxury Builders,
call 281-242-7900,
email marie@simbuilders.com
or visit www.simsbuilders.com***

***The business is located at
4665 Sweetwater Blvd., Suite 106,
Sugar Land, TX 77479***