

# THE BUILDER'S JOURNAL<sup>TM</sup>

Greater Houston Edition



Country Builders, Inc.  
Consistency, Heart and Innovation





## Country Builders, Inc. Consistency, Heart and Innovation

It takes a special mix of tenacity, perseverance and straightforwardness to thrive long term in the building industry. These traits allowed business owner and builder, Terry Picklo, to survive the lean years of the 80's, at a point in the industry in which many scrambled to hold on to their livelihoods. Today, along with his son Nick, and office administrator Terry Ann, he garners respect from clients, colleagues, vendors and tradesmen, using this same successful tenacity and raw honesty. "My father

grew up on a farm where they started work before the sun rose and continued after it set. His parents instilled a strong work ethic in him, which rubbed off on me," says Nick.

Terry founded Country Builders, Inc. in 1981 after managing a lucrative lawn and garden management company. He built a few speculative homes the first two years, before deciding the custom market was where he wanted to be. Today, Terry Ann handles the office duties, including putting together

the bids, contracts and calculating the payroll. Nick, who grew up working with the various trades, joined the company full time in the late 90's. He has worked his way up to Sales/Marketing and shares Project Management with Terry. "To date, we have built nearly 500 custom homes in the Houston area," states Nick.

Consistency, heart, and innovation are the bedrock of the company's business practices. This blend allows them to fully satisfy customers, utilize

the polished skills of their loyal trade partners and remain in-the-know regarding current techniques and products. Nick stays at the forefront of the trade by attending industry conventions and applying what he discovers to their techniques. “Industry innovation translates to incorporating the new, while continuing to utilize the best people, service and materials in every home. This helps to ensure consistency, whether the home is worth \$150,000 or \$1,000,000. Consistency also leads to success, by always having happy clients. If a client sees one of our other homes, they automatically know what they can expect, with no unpleasant surprises,” explains Nick.

Terry and Nick prefer to use the term **trade partner** instead of subcontractor when referring to the various trades that are involved in the building process. “It is a matter of respect. Our trades are an integral part of quality control and we want them to be just as satisfied as our customers.” Here is where the heart portion of running a business factors in. The family members at Country Builders have formed close professional and personal relationships with every trade partner, some of which



have worked with the company for over 20 years. “We socialize and problem solve together, and because we see them as our extended family, we are there whenever they need us.” In the day-to-day aspect of things, Terry and Nick follow a timely pay schedule, give advance notice of upcoming homes, and also make sure the right materials are delivered on time and exactly where they need to be for each project.

“Timeliness is critical, because tradesmen have their own specialized and skilled way of doing things. Therefore, if they don’t have what they need on time, it throws them off. It then trickles down, which ultimately throws everything else out of balance,” notes Nick. “We enable people to take charge of their work, which produces a tiered-down effect to our customers. They are pleased with our services and their new custom homes.”

The blend of Terry’s old school approach to business with Nick’s thirst for progression through innovation, has created a truly solid balance for the Picklos. Nick has watched his father conduct his business with honesty, modesty and a deep respect for others. He is organized, knowledgeable and uses his common sense, which reflects itself in the company’s financial stability and efficiency. “I like being my own boss and I’ve been fortunate to work in construction. I love working outside and working one on one with the home owners. I want things done right, and when I say I will do something in a timely manner, I do it. It’s how I was raised,” states Terry. His clients receive and appreciate this straight shooter.





Nick's contribution is to stay on top of industry development. "We take time to educate the homeowner as to what is available and match it to what they need. We even discuss features such as energy efficiency and automation in our homes." Further expanding their trade repertoire, the company offers additional options such as design/build and real estate services. "When we sit down with a client, we show them what's out there, what our standards are, and exactly what they need to get what they want, all while remaining within budget." A client who comes to them with nothing but the desire to build a home will

be taken through a seamless progression of lot location, budget setting, designing house plans, and finally building and landscaping a custom home. "We are flexible, offering both the hands-on approach of a smaller company, along with real customization, in the true sense of the word. We can find out what clients want and take it above and beyond. The sky's the limit."

Nick emphasizes the use of natural and sundry materials such as stone, slate and granite, complemented with wood-toned stains, paint, and glaze finishes. He sees an aesthetic advantage to blending different layers and textures, which create an inter-

esting visual palate. "This combination draws a person's eyes to three or four features, each different while still retaining cohesion. It's this depth that marks the difference between a house and a home." Typically, they

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***"We are an Energy Star Builder and a Certified Graduate Builder, an industry recognized certificate from the National Association of Home Builders. In 2007, we were voted into the list of Houston's Top 100 Custom Builders."***

***—Nick Picklo***





start with one facet and slowly build it out, following through to the exterior, while thoughtfully blending the home with its environment.

Two great examples of this technique are the Montana Style log home, and a home with an approach to design that mixes Colorado Country with Texas Hill Country. "The owner of the log home calls it her large cowboy cabin. Her husband wanted a home to reflect the style of a Montana cabin and she wanted the home to resemble a Cowboy/Native American style. I know we satisfied both of them." The exterior is made of Cedar log siding and the inside showcases a vaulted cathedral ceiling with large architectural beams. These

offset a warm 26' stone fireplace featuring a Bison head. "After building this home, we were a little amazed that we (all of the team) could build a home of this magnitude and attention to detail. It's really beautiful."

The second example is a blend of Texas Hill Country with Colorado Country. "I took a trip out to Eagle, CO to see the different construction trends of that mountainous area and decided to combine those styles with our native Hill Country." The design integrates stone seen in Colorado homes and the appeal of rusted metal roof accents and roof pitches commonly found in the Texas hills. They incorporated brick archways, Knotty Alder wood, special paint techniques and different textures and

layers. "I knew the look that I wanted to achieve. When we showcased the home, the vast majority of visitors confirmed we pulled it off."

Both father and son derive pleasure from what they do and how they do it. They enjoy the daily changes in routines and challenges. "Each home is unique and throws a different curve ball, but that simply makes what we do interesting. We take things in stride and look forward to seeing our projects come to fruition. We have found a happy medium between our two perspectives and personalities. It works!"

*For more information, please contact Country Builders, Inc. at 1-800-980-1089 or visit their website at [www.countrybuilders.net](http://www.countrybuilders.net).*

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