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MODERN HOME BUILDER

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BLUE-CHIP BRILLIANCE

Bluewater Home Builders provides a seamless process in delivering luxury homes. **PAGE 16**

A TRANSPARENT BUILD

Loudermilk Homes is taking custom homebuilding further by maintaining integrity. **Page 42**

Realizing the Future

Loudermilk Homes takes custom homebuilding to the next level by integrating smart home technology. **BY ERIC SLACK**



Loudermilk Homes employs a nine-step design process to ensure client satisfaction.

“Integrity and transparency are very important for us across the board.”

**SHERWIN LOUDERMILK PRESIDENT
AND OWNER**

Atlanta-based Loudermilk Homes has taken a unique path to creating a custom homebuilding success story. Its president and owner, Sherwin Loudermilk, didn't come into the business with an extensive construction background. Instead, he started in the world of computer science.

“I started out as an entrepreneur building PCs when I was 14 years old, got into building websites, which led to the dotcom industry working at IBM,” Loudermilk says. “In my last role at IBM, I worked with telecommunication companies developing back-end infrastructure processes and created a Home of the Future in an IBM lab over 15 years ago. Eventually, I realized I wanted to get back to my entrepreneurial roots and saw an opportunity in the building industry.”

Soon after entering the construction world, Loudermilk decided to specialize in the custom home sector. His wife comes from the residential real estate business, bringing in a keen awareness of design and coupling that with Loudermilk's understanding of the smart home phenomenon. Since 2009, Loudermilk Homes has focused on creating highly differentiated homes that can serve its clients rather than concentrating on volume.

“We transitioned into the larger luxury home business so we wouldn't compete with production builders, increasing the price, complexity and size of the homes,” Loudermilk says. “Our approach is to focus on exactly what the clients want.”

EXTENSIVE PROCESS

Loudermilk Homes takes a flexible and thorough approach to creating its clients' dream homes. It works closely with the clients on design, going through nine different stages of a process that can recommend radical changes to make sure clients are fully satisfied. It also has an internal software program called Loudermilk Connect that allows the company to walk through the building process with clients.

“They get an app on their devices they can use to see everything we see,” Loudermilk says. “Our controllers, procurement managers, designers and superintendents all input information into Loudermilk Connect so the client can see everything in real time, such as schedules, any delays, work in progress, inspection status, daily

PROFILE

LOUDERMILK HOMES

www.loudermilkhomes.com /

Headquarters: Atlanta / Services: Custom homes



Loudermilk Homes maintains close ties with its vendors to help ensure a high level of quality in its homes. It has worked with many of them for years.

logs and our plans for correcting any problems and catching up if there are delays.”

Loudermilk Connect gives clients access to selection information related to items such as appliances, colors, lighting, fixtures and more. Clients can make changes in the system and have access

to an array of details and price points that allows them to analyze the situation and make decisions.

“With us, they can see everything line by line in real time so they know everything they need to make their decisions,” Loudermilk says. “We have video cameras on the site so they can see the house regularly. We try to be completely transparent and show every aspect so clients are never blindsided, making this a fun process.”

Currently, Loudermilk Homes does around 12 homes per year with an average price of about \$1.8 million. Its projects are mostly located in Atlanta and its metropolitan surroundings.

“There is a lot of difference between the urban and suburban locations,” Loudermilk says. “In suburbs, we are in strategic country club locations where we can build on available lots. In the urban areas, there are many teardowns with older homes on decent lots where we can custom-build new homes for clients. The urban locations allow for building whatever you want on the lots, while the suburban country clubs have neighborhood regulations you have to follow.”

To help the company get its name out, it is highly active on social media and with search engine optimization. Additionally, the company relies on word of mouth. “Since we work on a small number of homes for unique clients, it is easy for them to communicate about us,” Loudermilk says. “We’re building a strong reputation across clients, and that referral system is helpful.”

WORKING TOGETHER

Another area where the company has built a strong reputation is in the vendor community. It has ties with core subcontractors in areas such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, audio/video, framing and more.

“These are companies we’ve been working with for years,” Loudermilk says. “We pay them well, they take care of us.”

The vendor relationships are critical because of the complexity of Loudermilk Homes’ projects. For example, the company likes to have open-web trusses in basements for containing all ductwork. The vendors also have to be capable of working in the smart home environment.

“This is not just about controlling thermostats from smartphones,” Loudermilk says. “It is about having a brain in the home connected to every aspect – lighting, security, irrigation and beyond. Our homes start to understand client behavior and helps

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“We’re building a strong reputation across clients, and that referral system is helpful.”

SHERWIN LOUDERMILK

them better control the home through high AI levels that work for the homeowner. The technology is less visible, but it does more.”

Imagine a home where the doorbell rings while the front irrigation system is on. The home shuts the irrigation off for a time before turning it back on in a few minutes. Or, electronic shade systems that automatically activate based on the angle of the sun, and Sub-Zero refrigerators that analyze what is in the fridge and knows how often it is opened to help improve energy efficiency. These are elements that can be part of Loudermilk Homes’ projects.

“This is still the beginning of this,” Loudermilk says. “We recently began having Amazon Echo integrated into the house and with the brains of our systems. We are working with them to be a leading homebuilder in the space, using that technology and having it be more integrated into homes and wiring homes so clients can control aspects of their home by simple voice commands. For example, stating ‘Alexa, turn off first floor lights,’ or ‘Alexa, turn on CNN.’”

The company is also staying on top of the aesthetic trends that are influencing clients. Loudermilk says many of its projects are finding a blend between a contemporary edge and southern charm.

One of its signature projects has been the Habersham residence in Atlanta’s Buckhead neighborhood. Located near to the state’s Governor’s Mansion, it is the most technologically advanced home the company has ever done. Additionally, the company has purchased all remaining lots in The Manor Golf & Country Club, an exclusive high-end gated community in Milton, Ga.

“There we are doing elaborate homes and integrating our technology to offer a high level of quality,” Loudermilk says.

Technology will continue to be a huge differentiator for Loudermilk Homes. It will be a key competency in terms of its work on smart homes, as well as with Loudermilk Connect and what it provides for oversight of the custom process. The company strives to be the best of the best and give clients the best quality possible.

“Integrity and transparency are very important for us across the board,” Loudermilk says. “If we can continue down that path and set ourselves apart with technology and quality, our projects will speak for themselves and contribute to our growth.”)



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on great success, continual growth,
and forward thinking leadership.**



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