



Building Through Common Vision

Construction staff adopts its architect's vision, ensuring the design intention becomes reality at Jauregui Architecture, Interiors and Construction

By Rob Heselbarth, Editor

At Jauregui Architecture, Interiors and Construction, the construction team's involvement with an architect begins before pencil is ever put to paper. On each project, at least one member of the design/build firm's construction team serves as a consultant to the architect.

At Jauregui (pronounced "how-da-gee") in Austin, Texas, construction staff members not only consult with architects about costs, what works and what doesn't, they understand the architect's intentions and the philosophy behind a design.

The construction team's understanding of an architect's vision ensures that everyone at Jauregui is on the same page. This guarantees the delivery of the intended design according to customer desires, resulting in satisfied hom-

owners and a good reputation.

Ray Sasser, project builder at Jauregui, involves himself with architectural design in a project's early stages, including meeting clients, if possible. "There's a lot of communication between construction, estimating, designers and architects to make sure the intended character of the home is developed from start to finish and that nothing gets lost in translation. To do that, we truly embrace the psychology and aura of the design intention."

Not only does all the preparation and understanding result in an architect's vision coming to life, but it also increases the chance of success when encountering a rare problem in the field. The confidence that comes from the Jauregui team's unified understanding of a project's purpose makes it easy to solve a problem.

Left: Jauregui has expanded its services to include the design of pools and their surroundings, as well as interior design.

Below: The Mediterranean style of the house incorporates domes and other interesting architectural elements borrowed from Texas missions.



Jauregui Architecture, Interiors and Construction

Austin, Texas
www.jaureguiarchitect.com

COMPANY STATS

Full-time employees: 23

Industry memberships: AIA, NAHB

Annual design/build projects: 90 percent

Residential new construction: 100 percent

“We eliminate almost all allowances, so everything is designed in and selected, and the cost assigned to it won’t change. We take pride in that. We give a price we know is good and won’t change. We still have change orders, and always will, but the fact that the team is as involved as it is makes it so a change order will be made with the intention of the design in mind,” Sasser says.

Building customer profiles

Luis Jauregui, president and founder of Jauregui Architecture, Interiors and Construction, fully understands the benefits of being a design/build company. Jauregui

grew up in an area of Mexico where the design and build phases were handled by the same firm, as is the case in most countries other than the United States, he says.

Despite this perspective, Jauregui and a partner formed the company in the early 1980s as a residential architecture-only firm. The build component was permanently added about one year later. Jauregui employs a lead architect, Jim Gandy, but finds it difficult to remove himself completely from the design side of the business.

For every Jauregui project, a lengthy, detailed customer profile is created before an architect ever begins designing. The profiles are based on the answers to several questions about personal and professional lifestyles, family life, habits, hobbies, etc. Profiles are created to get an accurate picture of who will be living in a home so architects can design a house that beautifully suits their lifestyle.

The profile process is employed on spec homes as well. On spec projects, Jauregui team members answer the questions based on experience and demographics. Many times the answers are so accurate that Jauregui’s spec homes are sold long before construction is completed. “Our potential customers typically are empty nesters because when you

Careful client profiling results in few change orders and happy customers.

get into homes in the \$2 million range, young families can't afford them," Jauregui says.

"In 25 years in business, we hit it right in our first presentation about 90 percent of the time and changes rarely happen. When completing their profile questionnaire, clients tell you the things that are important to them. They don't know all that is important to them, but they know the basics. So we read between the lines a lot and help them figure out what they want," Jauregui says.

Completing a client profile for imaginary customers on a spec home can be a risky venture. But not at Jauregui. The company had done such a good job

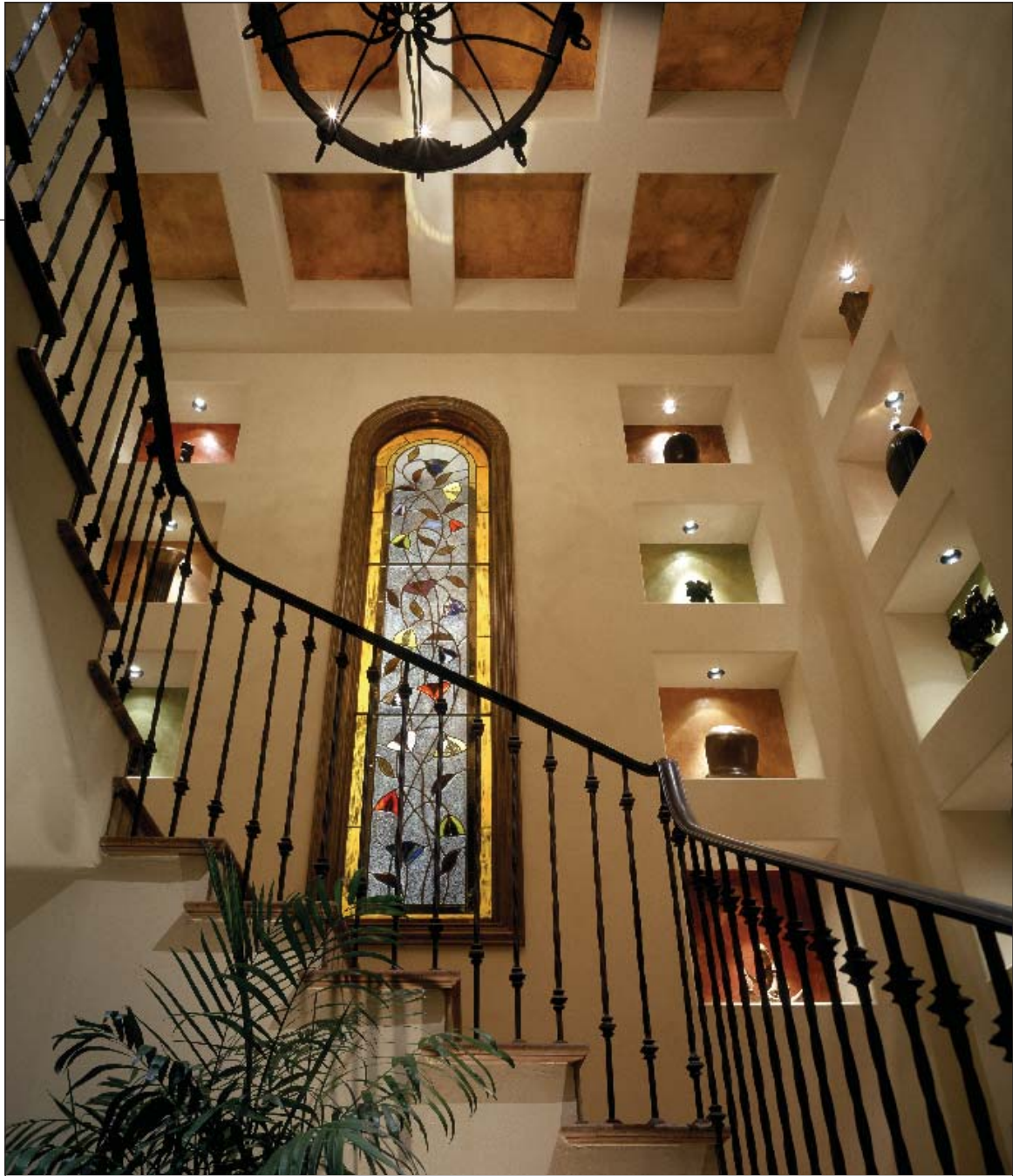
of profiling its Seven Oaks spec house, and such a good job of getting the construction side involved early in the project, it was sold before completion, and without many construction snags, Sasser boasts.

"Any change order-related issue that surfaced was really more of a massaging of the original intention to make something wider or taller by a few inches, for example," Sasser explains. "If everyone in the structure of the company is doing his job, they embrace the philosophy of a design and have a start-to-finish outlook on it, and can see where the project is going and therefore avoid major problems."

Expanding upon the start-to-finish philosophy, Jauregui took a comprehensive approach to designing everything inside — and outside — the Seven Oaks house. They designed and built much of the elements, includ-

ing landscaping and the pool. And rather than working with one of the interior designers they typically partner with, Jauregui handled the interior design work itself. The success of the interior design on this project prompted Jauregui to open its own interior design department, Jauregui says, in addition to announcing that it now designs pools for clients.

As with all Jauregui's projects, getting an estimator involved early on in this project was important to its success. "Estimating is an integral part of any job. A grasp of your costs is one of the strongest design tools an architect can have," he says. "I committed to start a design/build company because as an architect, I saw how budgets and plans would rarely make it to construction. Our customers know from day one what's realistic so they can adjust anything they need to in the early stages of planning."





Photos: Mark Knight and Paul Fink

The use of domes is typical of mission homes. The groin vaults throughout the house add visual interest and with careful planning are not difficult to create.

Chambers residence

Unlike the Seven Oaks home, the Chambers house in Georgetown, Texas, north of Austin, is a custom home with actual clients. The clients wanted their home's style to have a Texas ranch feeling. The use of timber combined with a Tuscan style in the kitchen and other places creates interest and appeal. An interesting combination of materials, such as the clay tile roof with a copper roof adds to its appeal, Jauregui says. Carved stone columns also were included in this project.

The main challenge with this project was the lot it sits on, which the developer carved for himself. Three sides of the lot border a golf course making the land almost like an island, Jauregui says. "For example, we had to decide where vehicles would enter the lot so they are not in view from the neighboring golf course. We also decided where to place

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Jauregui understands its typical clients so well that its spec homes look as good as the homes it builds for actual customers.

windows in the house to get the best view of the golf course,” he says.

Jauregui’s favorite part of the Chambers house is the courtyard as one walks into the main entrance. The foyer was designed so when visitors walk through the front door they feel like they’re outside. The low arches made it look a little more like a cave that is cozy and intimate, but still with vistas, he says.

The groin vaults throughout the home might look



Sometimes fitting a home and all its elements on the land it's built on can be as complicated as designing and building the home itself.



The construction staff at Jauregui understands an architect's philosophy behind a design, ensuring a common vision that helps to produce the architect's intended design.



tricky to construct, and they are, but building them properly is a factor of once again embracing the philosophy of the entire project, Sasser says. "If we on the construction side know what we're supposed to do and understand the big picture, building ceiling elements like the groin vaults are not that difficult. And if we hire people who embrace our comprehensive attitude, it becomes contagious.

"When you have a big-picture culture and everyone in the company embraces the same idea, people understand and feel it. We project our com-

pany in this light, and when you do, you'll find that your subs will too. And if they carry through with the design/build philosophy, it is contagious and people pick up on it," Sasser adds.

The Chambers and Seven Oaks homes are typical of Jauregui's work, and viewed together they illustrate how the company's custom and spec homes look the same, as a testament to the success of their client profiling process. "We feel good about what we do, and feel like we're not taking such a risk with spec homes because of the way we do business." ♦

► Specs

Seven Oaks
Austin, Texas
Size: 9,200 sq. ft.

INTERIOR
HVAC: Rheem
Doors: Jeld-Wen
Faucets, fixtures: Delta, Toto
Sinks: Elkay, Kohler
Lighting: Lightolier
Appliances: KitchenAid, Sub-Zero

EXTERIOR
Roofing: Monier Lifetile
Insulation: CertainTeed

Chambers Residence
Georgetown, Texas
Size: 7,223 sq. ft.

INTERIOR
Dishwasher, disposer: KitchenAid
Freezer, refrigerator: Sub-Zero
HVAC: Rheem
Lighting: Lightolier, Minka-Aire
Security system: HAI
Oven: Viking Range

EXTERIOR
Insulation: CertainTeed
Entry doors: Craftsmen in Wood