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www. About New Austin Homes. com

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## A Letter from the Editor

Welcome to *About New Austin Homes* magazine, a publication dedicated to helping the buyer through the process of purchasing new homes in the Austin metropolitan area. In each issue, you'll find helpful articles relating to the process of purchasing a new home, such as choosing the perfect lot, finding the right builder for you, financing options and working with a broker to purchase real estate. In every issue we will also showcase different builders, so you can get a good idea of their style and help you choose the best builder for your needs.

Buying new construction is a much different process than buying an existing home, and it requires specific industry knowledge. That's why we've formed the Avalar New Home Group. We believe that buyers of new construction deserve to work with professionals that understand the nuances involved in building a home, so they may limit the number of surprises and enable you to make the best decisions. We've got years of experience working with builders, and our expertise can help to take away the headaches associated with buying a new home. When you use a member of our experienced group as your buyer's representative, we represent your interests, and only your interests.

#### Start Your Search at www.AboutNewAustinHomes.com

Six years ago, we built a website specifically designed to educate buyers about the process of finding the perfect new home, and to give them a place to search the current inventory. Currently, the site receives over 1.5 million hits per month, and is one of Austin's only sites where you can search for new homes and conduct research on subdivisions, areas, builders and vendors.

The website is designed to work hand in hand with our quarterly magazine *About New Austin Homes*.

#### Let Us Represent You!

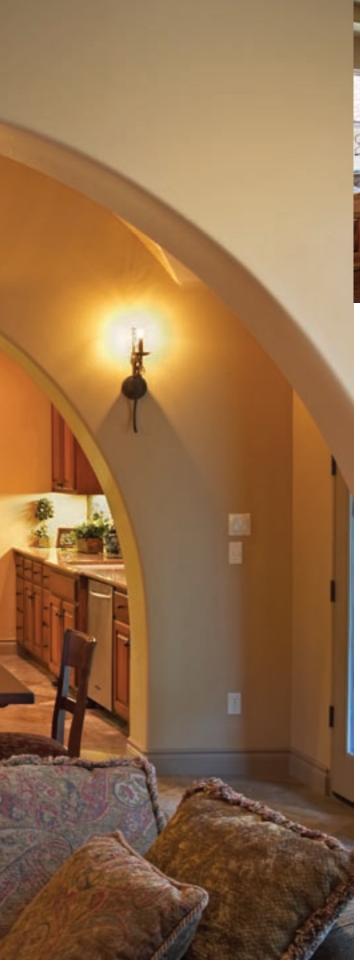
We would love to have the opportunity to represent you when you are ready to begin the process of finding your new home. But most importantly, we want to share with you the importance of having an experienced Realtor® representing your best interests when you are considering building or buying a new home.

Regardless of whom you choose, the most important factor involved in the process is choosing a qualified agent to represent you—plus, it costs you nothing!

Good luck in your search, and we would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you have as they arise!

Sincerely, **R. Michael Brown**Avalar New Home Group









It pays to compare, whether you are shopping for groceries, for an automobile or – especially – a new homebuilder. Every builder thinks they build the best house in town, but determining the best is really quite subjective.

It is important to look beyond the headlines and the roadside billboards because the key is to find the best builder for your tastes and personality.

There are dozens of factors to consider when you are deciding on a builder for your new home, including the different types of architectural styles, how many years the builder has been in business, the financial stability of the builder and, not surprisingly, the personality of the builder. And the ability to get along, especially with the custom builders, is crucial to the home building process.

According to R. Michael Brown, president of Avalar Realty's New Home Group, the single most important thing to determine about a builder is their integrity.

"You have to be able to trust the builder and know that they are dealing honestly with you," Brown said. "This is one of the most important reasons to use a member of our Avalar New Home Group. We have a familiarity with many area builders and can share our experiences with you to help you make the right decision."



#### "THE WAY A BUILDER FINISHES A HOME IS A GOOD INDICATOR OF HIS ATTENTION TO DETAIL"



#### There Are Differences Between Builders

There are so many differences between builders, and it is important for buyers to compare many options before signing on the dotted line

First, there are personality differences, because what one person might see as confident, another could see as arrogant. Matching personalities is critical to help minimize potential conflict.

Also notable is the fact that builders have specializations. Builders may say that they can build in any style, but most of them have a certain specialty with which they are most experienced.

Avalar New Home Group works to try and match you with someone who knows how to build the house of your dreams.

"Builders are in business to make money, and so when someone approaches them about building a custom home, they may say what the buyer wants to hear in order to get them to sign a contract," said Brown. "A good example is the Tuscan style home. Over the past few years, the Tuscan style has become very popular, and so there are more and more builders saying that they can do Tuscan if a client is interested.

"But some builders do a much better job with it than others, and

more efficiently than others," Brown stressed. "This can mean a big difference both in costs and in construction time, not to mention overall quality."

Then there is the need for attention to detail. It is important that the builder (or the job foreman) monitors the progress of construction on a daily basis. Some builders do not do this and are unable to effectively supervise every project. This leads to mistakes, some of which will be caught and corrected – and some which may not. A clean, organized worksite is one good indicator of a builder with good attention to detail.

"The way a builder finishes a home is a good indicator of his attention to detail," Brown said. "It is important to see different examples of your builder's work. Ideally, you can see other homes they are building in various stages of construction. There are dozens of things that you can look for, but it boils down to details."

Brown recommends that before you choose a builder you: 1) Check out the foundation and see if there were mistakes made that caused them to have to jackhammer the slab to fix a pipe location problem; 2) Investigate how well the framing was done, and if the builder allowed wood to be used that was defective or

warped; and 3) See if the construction sites are kept clean and well-maintained. These are just a few of the myriad of details that the specialists at Avalar can help you identify and work through.

#### AboutNewAustinHomes.com

To help with your comparisons of builders, their specialties and many other aspects of the home building scenarios, go online to www.AboutNewAustinHomes.com. This website was created six years ago by the founders of the Avalar New Home Group to inform buyers about the process of finding the perfect new home, research builders and new developments.

"Additionally, in our experiences," Brown said, "it is often quite difficult to track down information on new home construction, particularly since many builders do not put their home on the market until it is close to being completed. Our website aims to pool all available information on new home construction to one central location so our clients can have a more complete picture of what is actually available on the market.

You can sort the available data by several different criteria, from the area of town, to a specific subdivision, builder and price, to name a few."

All of these tools can give you a good start, but it should never replace the role of a qualified Realtor® acting as your buyer's representative.

"We would love to have the opportunity to represent you when you are ready to begin the process of buying or building a new home," Brown said. "But most importantly to us, we want to share with you the importance of having a licensed Realtor® representing your best interests when you are considering building or buying a new home – don't do it alone."

#### To upgrade or not to upgrade – that is the question

Every builder has a different definition of "standard." Builder "A" may claim that they have a "premium appliance group" or an "upgraded carpet package" for the same price that was quoted to you by builder "B" for his standard specifications – no upgrades. But before you get too excited, compare Builder A's packages to Builder B's packages. Sometimes you may find that builder B has the same appliances or the same carpet as builder A, but he doesn't refer to it as an upgrade.





In some cases, it is not uncommon to see builders offer bonuses and discounts that substantially affect the price (upwards of \$12,000) of your new home. The Avalar New Home Group can help the buyer determine what is real, or if another builder has different features as standard where this builder does not.

"This is a very tricky area, and also one of the strongest reasons for having a member of our Avalar New Home Group working for your interests," Brown said. "Builders will often boast that they offer large discounts, huge incentive packages or a certain amount of free upgrades. There are literally hundreds of issues that must be accounted for. It is important to cut through vague terms and flowery descriptions and get to the details."

"Our New Home Group at Avalar can help you price different upgrades to see if they are worth it," Brown added. "In our experience, sometimes the upgrades are a great idea and will save you money in the long run – other times, the upgrade is nothing more than a profit center for the builder, and you would be better off without it."

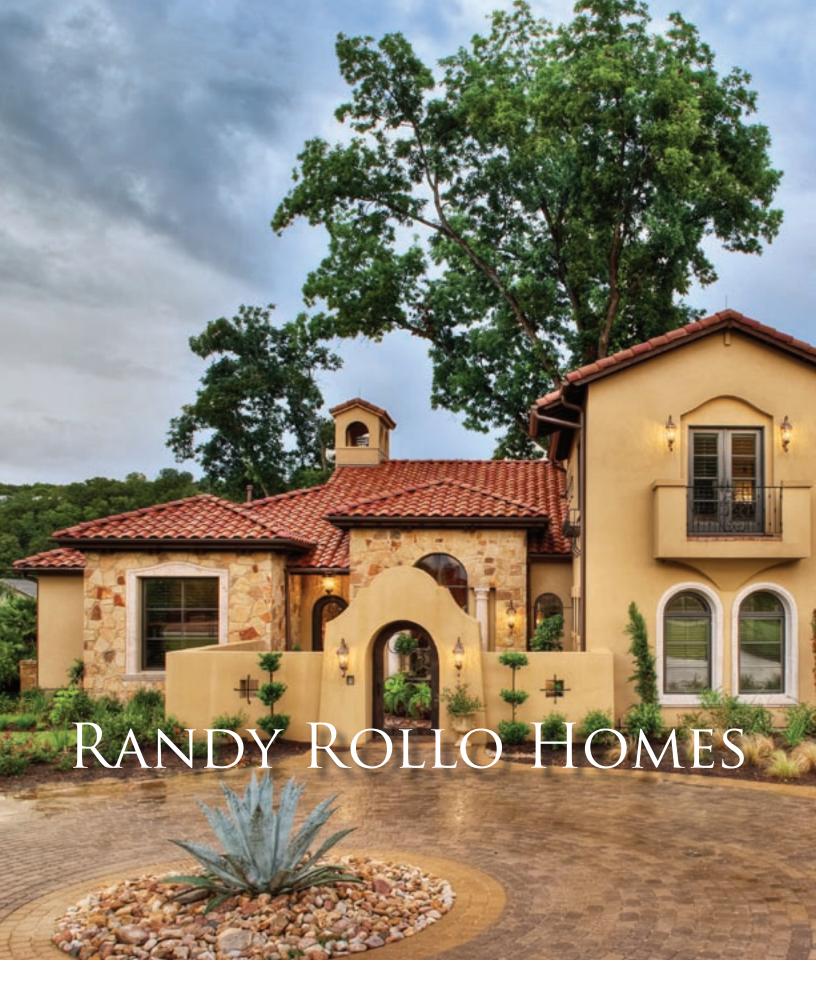
Because Avalar specializes in new homes, its agents can help you differentiate one builder from another, and they can use their knowledge and experience to find the perfect fit for your personality, your style and your budget.

#### Make a checklist - and check it twice

Builders definitely have styles that they are best at – although many will tell you that they can build any style home that you want. The best thing for you as a buyer is to have one of the agents at Avalar show you different examples of each prospective builder's homes.

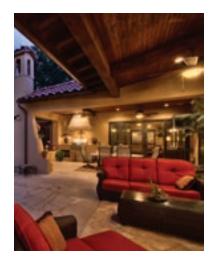
Most builders always have projects that are under construction, and often they have completed (or nearly completed) homes that are for sale. Try to see many examples of their work, so that you can begin to feel more comfortable in the quality of the builder's work as well as the predominant style that they build.

Checking the builder's attention to detail, looking for mistakes that have been made in the construction process, and seeing how clean the builder keeps their job sites are all "little things" that can make a big difference in your home building experience.









Randy Rollo is one of Austin's top luxury homebuilders, known for artistry and expertise in creating homes that blend with the environment through efficient and comfortable design.

"Each of us has a vision of our perfect dream home," says Rollo. "It may be a childhood memory, a picture from a magazine, or just a feeling inside. We specialize in developing that perfect home for our clients."

Rollo Homes' spacious floor plans offer an intrinsically warm, comfortable feeling that flows gracefully and logically throughout the home. Exteriors are mixed with stucco and natural stones to create a casual elegance unlike any other.

"When I build a home, I spend time with each family to determine the unique lifestyles and preferences in choosing the floorplan and architectural style," says Rollo. "We understand the need to find the right site, the desire to create something unique, meet the desired budget, and complete the project on time. Through this process together, we shape the vision for each room, every area, down to the landscaping."

"One of our clients told us that what she really liked about their home was that there was more than one fun spot," recalls Rollo. "Instead of just one room that creates a warm and comfortable feeling, like a living room with a fireplace, our homes will have five or six different rooms that can be enjoyed by the entire family."

Rollo Homes begins with a character study; taking an existing home site, developing a preliminary sketch and establishing a primary budget. From

the planning phase, Rollo Homes develops the perfect solution to maximize the site's amenities and space.

"What we do that is different? I call it balance," says Rollo. "Balance means that we maximize the features of the lot, making the best use of the views, trees, privacy, topography. Inside the house, our floor plans maximize lifestyle and efficient use of space. In the finish out, every detail from the light fixtures to the appliances are balanced to fit overall value of the home."

Rollo Homes concentrates on making the homebuilding process as pleasurable as possible. "It's our process that truly separates us," says Rollo. "Our people are involved with clients on a daily basis. And because of our supply of qualified contractors that specialize in custom homebuilding, we minimize the issues that may arise."

Rollo notes that when working with a custom homebuilder, it is important to find a Realtor® with experience in working specifically with new homes. "Building a custom home can be a painful process," says Rollo. "But an experienced Realtor® can really smooth out the process with the homeowners."

"We also respect the fact that there are many choices available to you in selecting a custom homebuilder. We value the trust that is given to us when homebuyers make Rollo Homes their partner in building their dream."

Everyone at Rollo Homes is committed to building a beautiful home, and creating a great experience. "We believe that vision, balance, craftsmanship and a commitment to uniqueness help us fulfill your highest expectations," says Rollo.





# 2008 PARADE OF HOMES

FEATURING

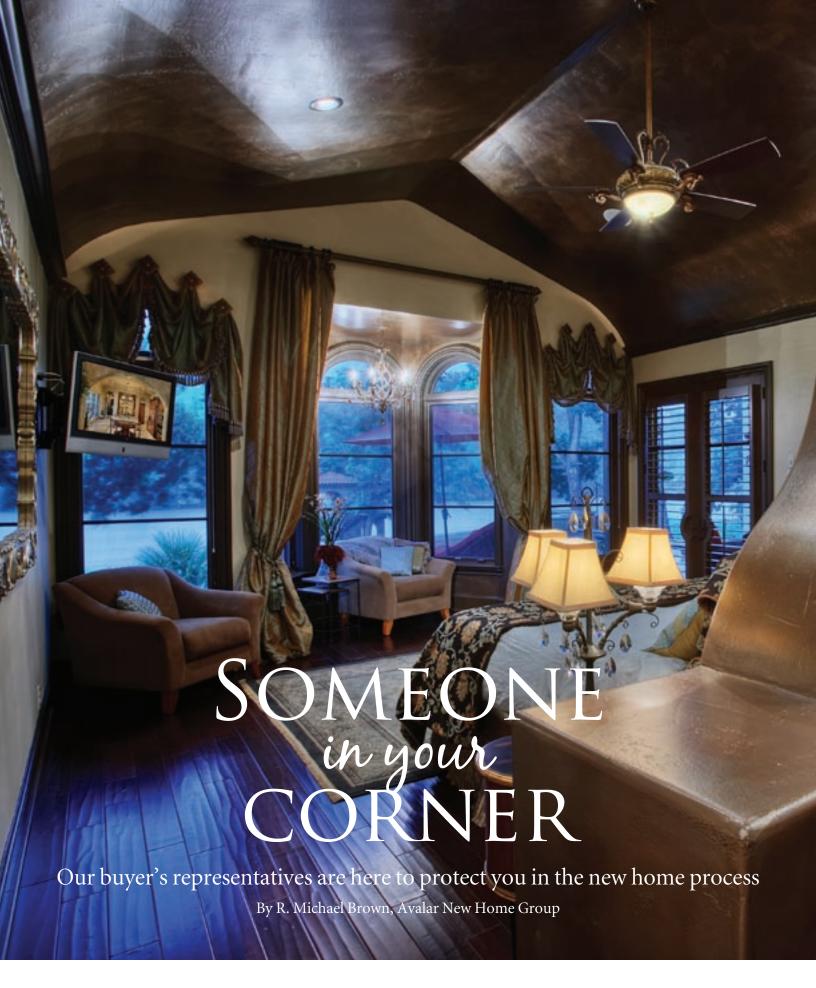




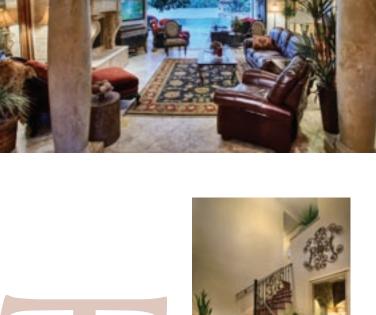
www.NewHouseBuilder.com

Perfection in every detail









This is your life, and finding the right place to spend it is paramount to your quality of living.

The purchase or building of a new home is one of the most important and long-lasting financial decisions an individual or family will make in their lifetime. Often it seems like the procedure pits the buyer against the rest of the world, and there are times when even the simplest of details seem to fall through the cracks while all parties are pushing through to the end of the process.

Wouldn't it be nice to have someone in your corner to help with the decisions that will impact your final satisfaction?

Well, buyers do have someone on their side, and using a buyer's representative can be an essential piece in the new home building or buying puzzle.

#### What You're Up Against

Question: How many homes does the typical person purchase and sell throughout their lifetime? The answer is: not nearly as many as the builder of that new home that you have your eye on!

The good news is that you can level the playing field by having your own buyer's representation from a professional Realtor® that is knowledgeable about the new construction process and will work to represent your interests throughout the process.

Due to Federal tax advantages, even people who love moving will usu-



ally only do so once every two years. Since Avalar Austin Realty works with homebuyers every day, our Realtors® deal with all kinds of unique situations and put that experience to work for their clients.

Additionally, we work with dozens of homebuilders and are able to advise our clients on the reputable ones we've worked with in the past, and the ones with whom we've had less than great experiences that are in the marketplace.

Most homebuilders rely on word of mouth and referrals for their success. They have a vested interest in making sure Realtors® are confident bringing them buyers. Therefore, a Realtor® is better able to negotiate with the builder.

#### What is a Buyer's Representative?

A buyer's representative represents the buyer who is purchasing property in a real estate transaction. Research by the National Association of Realtors® has shown that when a buyer's representative is used, the prospective buyer found a home one week faster and examined three more properties than consumers who did not use a buyer's representative.

The buyer's representative works solely for, and owes fiduciary responsibilities to, the real estate buyer and has the buyer's best interests in mind throughout the entire process.

#### For Whom Do They Represent?

Depending on the business arrangement you have with a licensed real estate agent, that agent may actually be negotiating for the seller, not for you – the buyer.

The best way to be certain that an agent is working for your best interests is by signing a buyer representation agreement with an agent. To

effectively serve a new homebuyer, a buyer's representative needs to understand the intricacies involved in new home construction, as well as be able to successfully communicate these intricacies to their client. Avalar New Home Group's agents not only understand these issues, but also have experience in the new home market in Austin.

Too many homebuyers – particularly in new home purchases – go into negotiations without a professional working on their behalf.

A buyer's representative will serve as their advocate. It is important to understand that all listing agents, builders and any 'on-site' salesmen are working for the seller, not for you. It doesn't matter how friendly or helpful they are, at the end of the day, they are responsible for getting the best deal for their seller.

When using a member of our experienced group as your buyer's representative, we represent your interests, and only your interests – even though our expertise does not cost you a dime. The reason for this is that we are compensated by the seller, and that is an aspect of the real estate transaction that many are not aware of.

I am often asked how important is it to have someone on your side in the new home buying and building process. I always answer that I cannot stress the importance enough.

Most people would never think of representing themselves if they found themselves being sued – they would hire a professional as their defense attorney. They would want to have someone who practiced law every day and had knowledge and expertise in all the intricacies of our judicial system. They would want to have someone who advised them on how best to answer questions, how to respond to the judge and to the prosecuting attorney. There is so much on the line for them.





It is the same with buying a home. This is the largest investment most people will ever make, but so many people do not receive the counsel of a qualified buyer's representative to help them make the best decision.

Here are just a few of the services that Avalar New Home Group provides to our buyers:

- Evaluate specific wants and desires and locate properties that fit those specifications.
- Assist the buyer in determining the amount that they can afford (help them get pre-qualified with a lender) and show properties in that price range.
- After identifying properties that fit their criteria, we will preview
  the homes before showing our clients to eliminate homes that
  don't fit the personal tastes of our clients, which saves them
  from wasting their time in homes that they would not want.
- Research the selected properties to identify any underlying problems or issues to help the buyer make an informed decision prior to making an offer to purchase the property.
- Advise the buyer on structuring an appropriate offer to purchase the selected property based on market conditions and trends.
- Present the offer to the seller on the buyer's behalf.
- Negotiate on behalf of the buyer to help obtain the identified property while keeping the buyer's best interests in mind.
- Assist in securing appropriate financing for the selected property.
- Provide a list of potential qualified vendors (movers, attorneys, carpenters, et al) if these services are needed.
- Most importantly, fully represent the buyer throughout the real estate transaction.

The buyer's representative is responsible for helping their client find the home of their dreams. They also need to be sure that their clients are aware of every positive and negative aspect of this home before they commit to purchasing, and to be sure that they get the best value for their money.

#### Saving Money and Grief

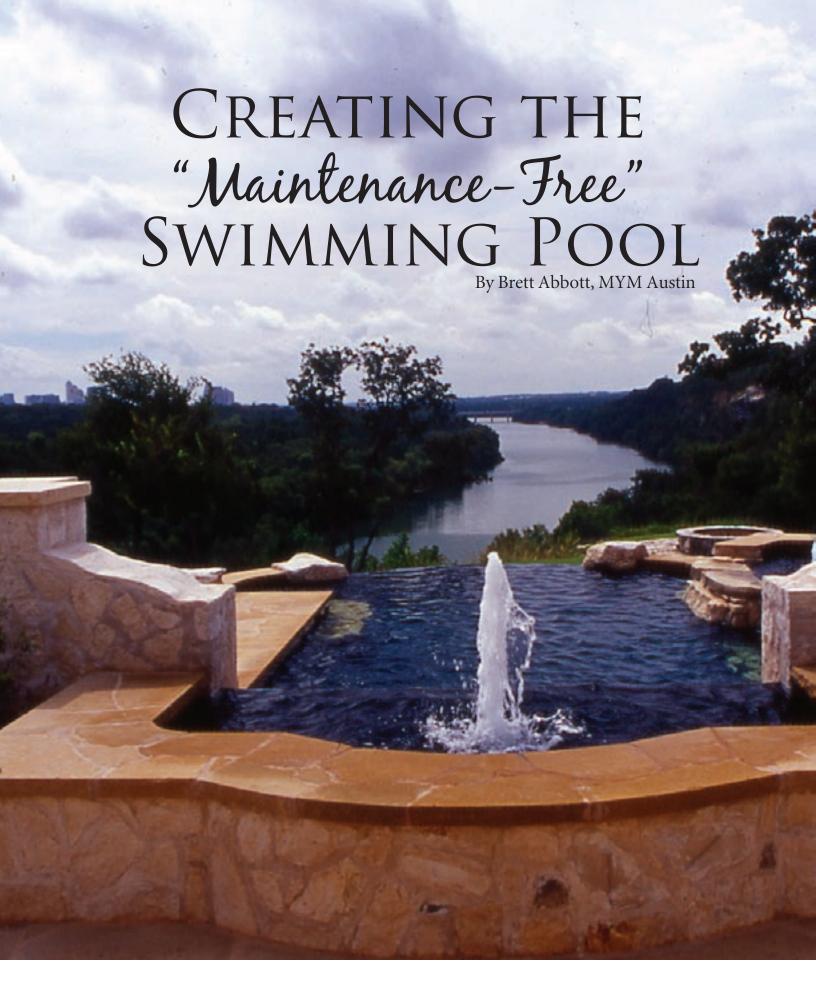
There are countless stories about how properly using a buyer's rep saved the buyer money or grief.

"Homebuilders are usually able to anticipate future price increases in advance, and with our established relationships with these builders, we sometimes are able to warn our clients and help them to move forward in advance of these increases. Just recently, we helped a client sign a contract with a builder one week before a 10 percent cost increase."

Conversely not using a buyer's rep can affect more than just your pocketbook – it can affect your peace of mind and satisfaction.

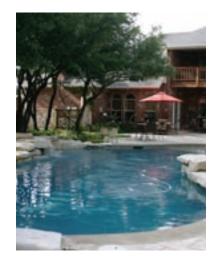
We have heard countless horror stories of builders who were not delivering on many promises that had been made to the buyer. The buyer did not have any legal recourse because they did not get these promises in writing in the contract, and they did not force the builder to be specific about what would be done and how it would be done. This not only cost the homebuyer countless time and stress, but also cost them a lot of extra money getting the problems fixed and the home finished to their specifications."

Whether in the courtroom or the conference room, when you are negotiating a new home purchase or construction, it is vital to have a professional in your corner. So look for the people with your interests at heart – the buyer's representative.









In years past, the downside of owning a swimming pool was the weekly ritual of skimming leaves, clumsy vacuuming, and dumping smelly powdered chlorine into the water. But recent developments and new technologies have made these old headaches a thing of the past. Today's swimming pool is fast approaching the point of requiring virtually no maintenance at all. The secret lies in controlling the three biggest challenges to pool cleanliness: Dirt, debris and chemicals.

The first step in keeping the pool clean is vacuuming up any dirt that collects on the bottom. There are several excellent "automatic cleaners" on the market, but they all have one drawback – You have to haul the contraption and its assorted hoses out of the pool and store it somewhere whenever you want to use the pool. Not too terribly difficult, but still a nuisance and a bit of an eyesore. A better solution is the new "in-floor cleaning" system. Somewhat reminiscent of a pop-up sprinkler head, a collection of nearly invisible, flush mounted cleaning heads are strategically located throughout the bottom of the pool. Permanently built in to the pool, but never in the way of any swimmer, these systems make old-fashioned "vacuuming" obsolete. One catch – You can't retrofit an existing pool with this system; It needs to be installed when the pool is built.

The next step is to minimize the dirt that gets into the pool in the first place. This is where automatic pool covers come in. Any pool or spa can be fitted with a durable cover that not only blocks out dirt and debris, but also provides excellent safety protection against anyone falling in the pool.

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In fact, some of these covers are so strong, you can actually walk across them, as though the pool wasn't even there. These are usually installed in a hidden "cubby" that keeps the cover hidden and out of the way, except when in use. Most of these covers can be customized for any size or shape pool.

The third challenge for pool owners has been chemical maintenance, including the handling of chemicals, and managing the levels of four or five different chemicals all at the same time. This is an area where lots of different options have become available. Let's review the more popular options:

Chlorine generators, sometimes also referred to as "salt pools," are now at the heart of a raging debate in the pool industry, with some key players sharply divided. The well-known benefit of a chlorine generator is that you can virtually eliminate the need for weekly handling of chlorine. Instead, you simply pour a pre-determined amount of common rock salt into your pool, and a small, silent, in-line generator converts the salt to chlorine. Excellent in theory, and pretty good in practice, except that some homeowners and some pool builders are reporting trouble with the salt eating away at the coping or other stonework on the pool.

Unfortunately for Texans, this problem seems to be more prevalent in Central Texas than in any other part of the country. Some speculate that it has to do with the softer limestone that is often used in these parts. Harder stones and Sundek-type surfaces don't seem to be bothered as much by the salt. Sealing the limestone also appears to help.

Ozonators and UV Radiation are becoming increasingly popular methods of sanitation. Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and/or ultraviolet light will kill bacteria, and greatly reduce the need for chlorine in the water. Yet another approach is the addition of special minerals and buffering agents such as "Pool

Frog<sup>™</sup> or "Mineral Springs<sup>™</sup>" to help stabilize the water. Any or all of these approaches, when combined with a chlorine generator, can allow you to leave your pool for weeks at a time without worrying about the chemicals.

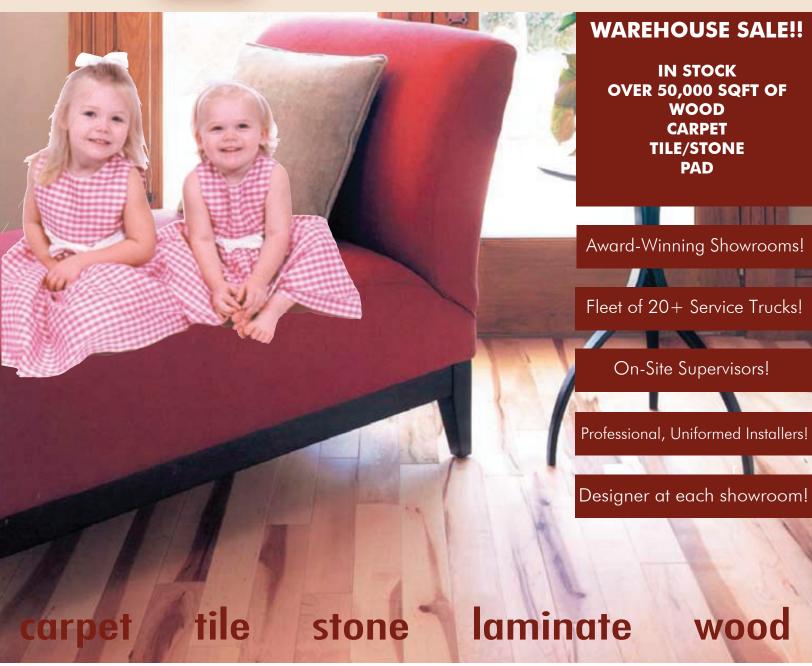
The latest and perhaps most promising water-management technology involves "super-filtering" the water to the level of pure drinking water. This system, currently offered by EcoSmarte™, actually eliminates the need for chlorine and salt altogether, using traditional drinking water technology instead (oxidation & ionization) to purify the water. In fact, it's so clean and pure that many homeowners are using it for their koi ponds as well.

Modern automation has further reduced the homeowner's involvement in taking care of the pool. Some of the latest systems will actually monitor the chemicals and adjust the levels for you. The remote controls on these systems (waterproof, of course), allow you to open or close the covers, turn on lights or waterfalls, or just about anything else you want to control or automate. Most homeowners leave one remote out by the pool, and install a second one inside the house, for easy access.

Of course, the fastest and simplest way to create a maintenance-free swimming pool is to hire a pool maintenance company to handle it for you. In addition to handling the weekly maintenance, they'll also keep a sharp eye out for potential problems before they occur. The better service companies will remind you when it's time for your semi-annual filter clean and system check.

For more information on these latest technologies and the trend towards "maintenance-free pools," contact your local reputable pool builder. 1-800-NEW-POOL / <a href="https://www.oceanQuest.com">www.oceanQuest.com</a>





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#### **CENTRAL**

6203 Capital of TX Hwy. @360 &2222 PHONE 512 360.2222 9-6 M-F, 10-5 Sat, 12-4 Sun

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The Avalar New Home Group is proud to introduce our newest team members: Robin Scott

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For many of us, buying a new home is one of the most important financial decisions we will make, and we know how important it is to work someone who is an expert. We want to deal with professionals who are experts in the area we want to live in. We want to work with seasoned pros that know how to navigate potentially difficult waters.

The Avalar New Home Group and The Avalar Ultra Properties were formed for those exact reasons – to help their clients navigate the often confusing world of new home construction, and the equally challenging luxury home market.

Both of these specialized organizations are a product of Avalar Austin Realty, which is owned by the DaSilva Group. The team is led by R. Michael Brown, a real estate broker for over 24 years, his wife Kay DaSilva, also a 24-year veteran in Austin real estate, and Kay's son Michael DaSilva, an Austin native with more than five years of real estate experience in Austin. About New Austin Homes Magazine sat down with the co-owners, and in this profile we will learn more about these two groups.

#### **Avalar New Home Group**

Currently, Avalar Austin has more than 40 agents working as a part of the New Home Group. They specialize in representing buyers in the purchase of new homes, as well as representing builders and helping them to effectively market their homes to consumers.

"We formed the Avalar New Home Group because there was

a niche in this industry that wasn't being served," says Michael Brown. "There are so many nuances to the relationships between clients and builders that there needed to be a group that better understood those nuances and that could bring everyone together so that all would benefit."

"We found that area builders needed a better way to communicate with real estate agents about the opportunities that they had available," says Brown. "We have developed alliances with many of the area's most respected builders to help them get their homes in the hands of the people that are the best fits for them. Having that mutual relationship with many different builders lets our clients know we are also working with them to find their dream home on their dream lot. It is a win-win situation for all parties."

"Working with new home buyers is really exciting, but is an entirely different process than selling a resale home" Michael DaSilva said. "Many real estate agents do not understand all the issues involved in the building process, but our New Home Group works hard to facilitate this process, and to create an open trusting relationship between the builder and the buyer. Our ultimate goal is to help people make the best decisions during this exciting – but often difficult – process."

"The future of residential real estate is in the building of these alliances between builders and agents to better reach their clients," Brown added. "The bottom line is that we give our clients the tools to best evaluate the properties they are considering in order to make sure they are pleased with the end product."

#### AboutNewAustinHomes.com

One of the tools that has been a big part of the process can be found online at www.AboutNewAustinHomes.com. The site was launched six years ago, with the goal of filling a need for updated and accurate information about new homes in the greater Austin area that are available over \$300,000.

#### **Avalar Ultra Properties Selling Distinctive Lifestyles**

The luxury home market presents a host of issues unique from the typical real estate transaction. Luxury homes, generally defined as homes that are over \$750K, are different types of homes with different types of clients, and Avalar Ultra's Luxury Home Consultants know how to deal with those differences.

In most cases, buying a luxury home is not a first-time purchase, and the buyers are much more sophisticated about their needs and desires. They have a much better idea of what they are looking for, and they are much more financially secure, often having their financing lined up before they start engaging with agents.

There's also a larger degree of privacy when it comes to showing homes of this nature. Almost always, luxury homes are shown by appointment only, as opposed to just putting a lock box on the front door and allowing agents to come by with clients at any time.

The Avalar Ultra group is also very adept at helping their clients who are moving in from other cities feel more comfortable during the search. "Our agents must also have an awareness of lifestyle and a higher level of connections and market knowledge to acclimate their out of state buying clients," says Kay DaSilva. "They



may be looking at the cultural possibilities, country clubs and educational opportunities for their children. In many cases, their RE-ALTOR® is the only person that they know, and you become their new best friend—especially after spending over eight hours a day with them."

"If a couple falls in love with a home," says Kay DaSilva, "as their counselor, you have to supplement that emotion with detailed analysis of the market conditions and guidance that helps them make a sound financial decision. I see our challenge as luxury home agents is to try and satisfy both the business decision and the emotional needs of our prospective buyers and sellers."

You can learn more about the Luxury Home Groups at www.AustinUniqueHomes.com

#### Who is Representing You?

It's hard to overstate the importance of having an experienced professional working for you when you are searching for your dream home. "I must stress that even if a client doesn't use our services, they need to have someone to represent them in their real estate negotiations," Brown said. "You need to have someone in your corner who is watching out for your interests, because this is going to be among the most critical negotiations and decisions of your life."



## Selling Distinctive Lifestyles AvalarUltra.com



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Janet Asher



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Lisa Nauert





Linda Vandermause Linda@AvalarAustin.com

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WWW.2500BETTISBLVD.COM

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WWW.11509FIRETHORNCOURT.COM

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL VICTORIA BUTTLER AT 512.917.7026

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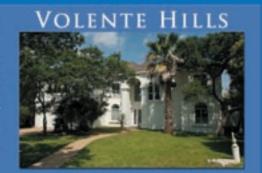


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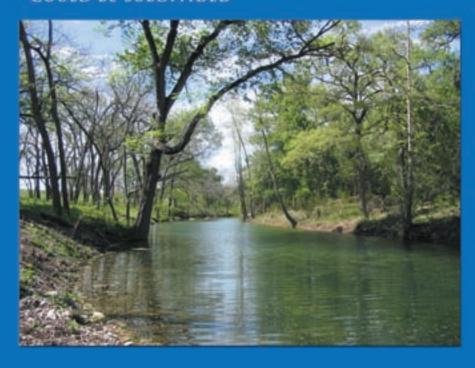






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www.ranch362.com

## GUIDE TO AUSTIN AREA HOMEOWNER RESOURCES

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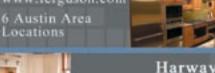


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We hope these listings will be helpful to you in your search for local service providers for your home needs.



# GUIDE TO AUSTIN AREA HOMEOWNER RESOURCES

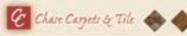
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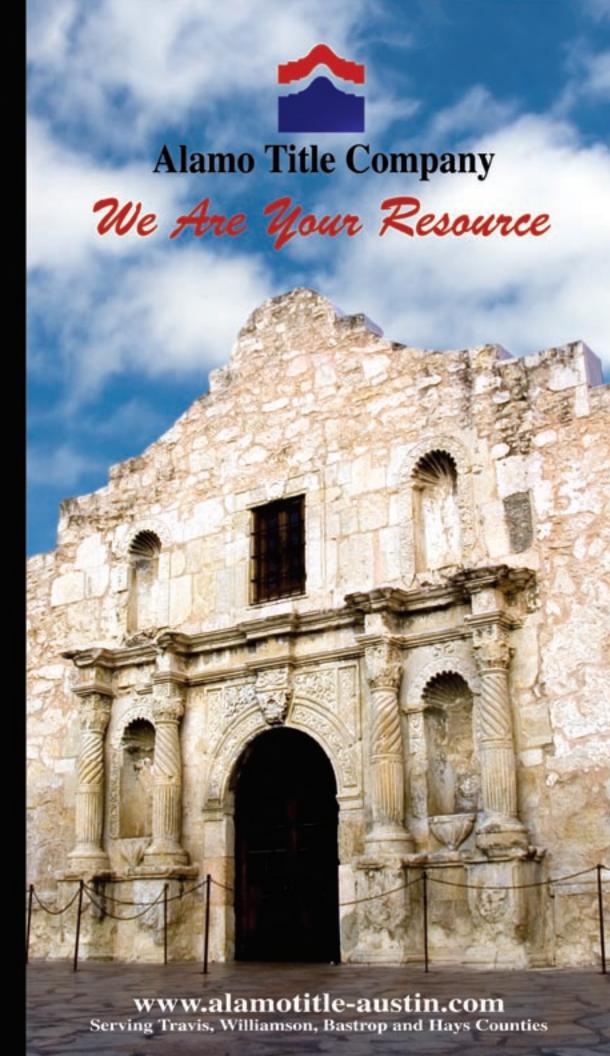
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Stonewood's Greg Anderson focuses on communication to build growing home business

By Steve Habel, Managing Editor

It's no accident that Greg Anderson has built a track record of success and satisfaction in the custom home market. If the foundation of that success comes from the quality of his homes, the cornerstone is his unparalleled commitment to communication with the buyer. Anyone who has been through the custom building process can tell you how crucial timely and effective communication between themselves and the builder is, and there are few that compare with Greg Anderson.

Greg established and honed his methods in the prestigious and demanding markets of Northwest Houston as a founder of Life Built Homes. Now he is bringing his talent and expertise to Austin as President of Stonewood Builders, who are currently building about 15 custom homes a year in the Lake Travis area.

"This is my second custom home building company – I also own Life Built Homes, Inc. in the Tomball/Magnolia/Woodlands area of NW Houston," said Anderson. "I moved out here primarily to be a part of the dynamic Austin market and have been very fortunate to have associated myself with good developers and fantastic subcontractors and trades."

A graduate of The United States Military Academy at West Point, Greg served for five years as an Army officer commissioned in field artillery. While in the military, Anderson learned the advantages of communication, and he has carried on that practice in his move to the real estate industry.

"The mission of Stonewood Homes is to develop both horizontal and vertical bands of trust that enables professional and competent expectations," said Anderson, in language you might expect from an Army officer. "With positive communication our customers will receive the quality they deserve, our tradesmen will flourish in an environment they can deliver in and our employees can work in a place where they can grow."

Stonewood Homes' philosophy in building a home is to always deliver a quality product from start to finish. They never compromise their standards in engineering, materials or construction just to make a sale.

"Your home is a major investment, and we strive to make that investment pay off," Anderson said. "At Stonewood Homes, our vision is to build homes that establish a standard of excellence to which all others will strive. Through innovation, uniqueness and quality, our exclusivity will be an industry standard-bearer."

Anderson and his brother Jim Anderson started Life Built Homes, Inc. in 1997. Together they grew the company from a small start-up to a well respected firm that is included in the Southern Living Magazine Custom Builder Program. Encompassing less than 100 builders nationwide, this recognition marks the professionalism, integrity and attention to detail that represents Southern Living.

In 2004, Greg created Stonewood Homes, Ltd., bringing the same degree of craftsmanship that inspired Life Built Homes to the Hill Country. It has been such a success that within a year Stonewood was also recognized by

Southern Living magazine and was included in its 2004-2005 honor list.

Trust is the real key to the builder-buyer relationship. Anderson said when the two parties sit down together, his goal is to make the buyer feel at ease about his approach to building their dream home.

"You're shopping for a homebuilder," Anderson said. "Where do you go? Who do you trust? Is a Stonewood home the best? Am I going to get my money's worth? Those are good questions, and we don't want to answer them with slick, obnoxious marketing hype."

"Obviously, communication is the key for a successful home builder," Anderson added. "I really believe that each project is special because it is somebody's dream home. Many other custom builders will only build speculative homes because of the much harder process of building a custom home for an individual, but I choose to really recruit for those custom build jobs."

Anderson assigns a customer relations representative to each buyer to assist in the arduous selection process and retains an interior designer for each buyer as well. Stonewood also utilizes the internet to help keep out-of-town customers up-to-date with the progress of their home with photos and comments at each step of the process.

Anderson prefers specific neighborhoods to build his custom homes, and strives to build in areas where he is surrounded by other successful custom builders, a proven developer and a well-represented real estate team

"I believe that success breeds success," Anderson said. "A developer, the real estate staffs and the builders in a development are all part of a team building a lifestyle. You don't want to be in a position where one weak link can hurt the entire chain. I encourage the exchange of information that will help improve the overall development of a community."

A tour of a Stonewood home will inspire buyers with the quality of craftsmanship found in each room of the house. They will discover elegant woodwork, modern appliances, beautiful fixtures, custom treatments and more. Stonewood can assist buyers in all areas of the building process, from lot planning, house plans, financing and building.

Anderson speaks glowingly of his continuing relationship with Avalar Austin Real Estate, a realty that specializes in the sale of custom homes.

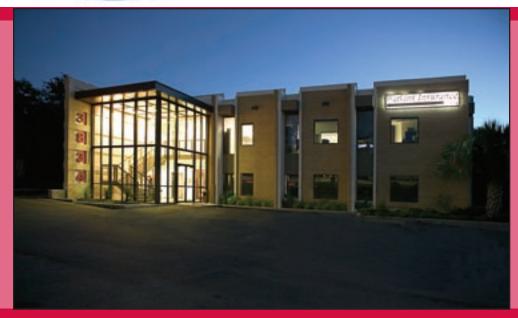
"Having worked with a large number of Realtors® in the area, I have found the most consistent success with a handful of Avalar agents and brokers," Anderson said. "Whether it is through the training that Avalar promotes or the selection of its agents, I feel that the Avalar team consistently reacts most professionally to my real estate needs. My experience has been consistent with great communication, up-to-date real estate knowledge and a level of professionalism that consumers in the real estate market demand."

For more information on Stonewood Homes, please visit www.StonewoodHomes.com

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