

Azalea Custom Homes, Inc.

Building Homes by Building Relationships

By Dominic Massa

For successful custom home builder Faron Breaux, and Azalea Custom Homes, it all comes down to achieving a solid foundation, guaranteeing quality workmanship and materials both inside and outside a home, and maintaining a close and comfortable relation-

This great room sparkles with ceramic tile floors, 5-1/4 inch baseboard mouldings, and raised hearth fireplace with ceramic surround and raised wood mantle with fluted pilasters. Finishing off this fine room are leaded-glass transoms, triple crown mouldings, 19-foot ceilings, ceiling medallions and recessed and fan lighting. Suppliers include Jefferson Door and Lumber Products. Photo by Joe Bergeron, M. Photo, C.P.P.

ship with clients. Breaux has found success in Southeast Louisiana by combining these elements in each one of his homes. His stature as a personable, straight-forward and extremely skilled, qualified builder should keep building his reputation as a talented builder throughout the region.

Faron, a Westbank native, studied mechanical engineering at the University of New Orleans, while working for his father, W.J. Breaux, a well-known local general contractor.

"While in school, I drew plans for houses for friends and relatives, which helped quite a bit, along with working in the summers with my dad on construction sites. So I got an early education in construction," he said.

That early home building training was combined with a brief stint in commercial construction.

"I also worked for a company building nuclear and chemical plants around Louisiana," Faron explained. "Back in the mid-1980s, there was a cutback in production, so things slowed down quite a bit. A friend of mine was in real estate and talked me into going into real estate."

After some time in real estate, and the building of his own home, Faron eventually moved full-time into the construction end of the business.

He and a partner formed F&G Construction in 1990, with six houses completed that first year. With one year under his belt, Faron saw his workload grow to 11 homes in his second year, and things haven't slowed down since, despite some tough times in the marketplace.

Currently, Azalea Custom Homes builds in the \$175,000 to \$400,000 price range, with projects throughout the New Orleans area, averaging 90 percent presold, with one or two spec homes under construction each year. Azalea Custom Homes are found across town, in the Stonebridge, Plantation Estates and Place Pontchartrain developments, as well





Providing warmth and practicality, this kitchen continues the theme of the great room with ceramic tile floors, granite countertops, maple cabinets with crown, and fine wallpaper. Also, note the down-draft cooktop, brass faucets, porcelain finished cast iron sink, leaded-glass transoms and recessed fluorescent lighting. Lighting by Bayou Lighting. Plumbing suppliers include LCR Corporation. Photo by Joe Bergeron, M. Photo, C.P.P.

customers expect in the building of their new home.

"I'm on the job site constantly, meeting with the owners almost every day and making sure they're happy with the progress of the home and the quality of our work," Faron said. "I also like to keep my hands in everything, which means not only talking with the clients, but also being on site so that if there are any difficulties, we can keep things moving at a steady pace."

Along with making the construction process a comfortable one, Faron ensures that what's going in the finished Azalea Custom Homes product is built to last.

"What's behind the walls, to me, really is the most important part, sometimes more so than the decorative touches," he said. "I believe in putting pilings wherever necessary; using the post-tension cable slab, because I feel it's a stronger type of slab; using spruce studs in all the walls, for straighter walls. The stronger the house, the better it'll come out in the end."

Finishing touches are also very important and easily recognizable in an Azalea custom home.

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as River Ridge, Marrero and Chalmette.

When asked to explain the secrets of his success, Faron pins it down to two words: quality and communication. He attributes much of his success to having the skills and talents needed to ensure a solid foundation and structure in every home, along with the decorative touches that every home buyer seeks, combined with effective communication between the builder, subcontractors and the customer.

"I think a lot of people are attracted to me because I do have a relaxed demeanor and am pretty open with people and honest. Good, bad or indifferent, I try to tell people from the very start exactly what's going on. I try to be as honest as possible, and I think most people appreciate that," Faron said.

"If I were a client looking for a builder, the most important features I would seek out are communication skills. A successful builder is someone you can communicate with and get along with, especially since this is sort of a marriage that's going to last three to six months," he said.

Faron's no-nonsense style is evident in his daily visits to the construction site, to keep clients posted on the progress of the home, and maintain the standards his

This 4,700-square-foot, contemporary Acadian home is a bonus for the neighborhood. What curb appeal! This home features a brick and stucco facade, pediments above the windows, fluted columns, leaded-glass front door and transom and sidelight, dentil block frieze board, operable wooden shutters, brick front porch, dimensional shingles and insulated windows. Brick by GATS Masonry. Photo by Joe Bergeron, M. Photo, C.P.P.



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"The buyer demands eye appeal, and we cater to that. On the exterior, we're using a lot of stucco, which adds color to the front of a house. Inside the house, I often use transoms over the doors, sometimes with leaded glass or stained glass to add aesthetic value to the home. We do use wider trim baseboards, crown mouldings, high and architectural ceilings and, of course, our interior designer is available to take things a step further."

A skilled team of subcontractors is also essential to Faron's success and the level of quality customers come to expect.

"The subs are what make a builder," Faron admitted. "You could be a good salesman, a good designer, but unless you have good subs, you're not going to make it. Most of the subs I have working with me have been with me almost since the start, and that adds a lot to our product."

After a decade in home construction, Faron can look back at countless achievements and recognition in the local market. For him, it's his list of satisfied customers that makes everything worthwhile.

This sun room is the perfect place to relax after a long day or over Sunday-morning coffee. Finely fitted out, this room includes ceramic tile floors, 5-1/4 inch baseboard mouldings, insulated windows and recessed lights. Services provided by Southern Decor. Photo by Joe Bergeron, M. Photo, C.P.P.



Formal elegance is the statement made by this dining room. Crown mouldings, 5-1/4 inch baseboard mouldings, wood floor, dimensional ceiling, ceiling medallion, gold-plated chandelier, leaded-glass transom and wallpaper border add up to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Services provided by Insurance Underwriters. Photo by Joe Bergeron, M. Photo, C.P.P.

"I think I'm most pleased with the referrals I get from previous clients," he said. "So far, just about all of my clients have been pleased enough with their new home to recommend me to a friend or relative. We don't do much advertising, so for our business to keep growing based on referrals is gratifying."

Faron Breaux brings a no-nonsense, comfortable business philosophy to each and every project. Combined with his commitment to quality both inside and outside each home, his growing reputation in the region for his working relationship with his clients and the decorative touches that make Azalea Custom Homes stand out, should keep Faron Breaux building on his success for years to come.

We congratulate Faron Breaux, and Azalea Custom Homes, on being named *Builder/Architect's* Builder of the Month.

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