

# THE BUILDER'S JOURNAL

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**Bayway Homes**  
Skeele ensures Bayway Homes are 'built better'



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For the Greater Houston Builders Market

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OF HOME BUILDERS



## Bayway Homes

### Skeele ensures Bayway Homes are ‘built better’

*By Kathy Stolz*

Often the simplest philosophies are the best philosophies. When Jon Skeele started the bay area’s Bayway Homes in 1997, his greatest desire was to produce well built homes at affordable prices.

Fourteen years later this simple philosophy continues to serve Bayway well, leading to Bayway Homes being named Builder of the Year by the Bay Area Builders Association not once but three times!

“Built Better” is Bayway Homes’ slogan. But “built better” is more than a slogan for Jon and his 20 employees. They put “built better” into practice

with every home they build. And the company has built more than 1,000 homes in 20 communities!

“‘Built Better’ refers to the construction methods that we employ that go beyond the building code compliance and make our homes ‘Built Better.’ For example, we install 4 x 8 sheets of OSB on all of the external surfaces before the brick or cement siding goes on. While building codes require that panels be placed at corners and in certain locations on homes, we do the entire house,” Skeele, company president, said.

“Another example of ‘Built Better’ exceeding the building code is that we use six nails per shingle, instead of the four nails per shingle allowed,” Jon stated. The extra two nails per shingle allowed Bayway Homes’ houses to withstand 2008’s Hurricane Ike largely unscathed.

A Bayway homeowner, Lori Kennedy, said, “They (Bayway) build an incredible product. When we had 100-mile-an-hour winds come through here, the only thing damaged on our house was a fascia board on the chimney. And they fixed that.” She lives in Borden’s Gully.





Barbara Uland, who lives in Dickinson's Berry Field community, agreed with her home's durability. When Hurricane Ike hit, she didn't even feel her house shake!

Jon noted, "We use 3000 psi concrete in all of our foundations, and the engineers only require 2500 psi. After all, a home is only as good as its foundation."

Both homeowners noted that their houses are extremely well insulated. Barbara said, "The heat and air are even throughout the house. I can just set the thermostat and go. And my gas and electric bills are much less than they were in my previous home." Lori said, "Our house is so well insulated, we had to put in an intercom because the kids couldn't hear me when I called them to dinner."

Bayway includes other touches in its homes that many other builders don't. Bayway rounds the interior corners and arch the doorways to create an elegant, sophisticated look. The company also extends its upper kitchen cabinets to 42 inches, giving its homeowners almost 12 inches more of storage space than other comparable homes.

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Ann Bragg, president of Bayou Realtors, Inc., said, “We sell a good many of Bayway homes. We enjoy selling them because we’re confident that they’re well built.”

Although most builders find a marketing niche and stick with it, Bayway builds in multiple markets.

“We’re a local company and pay attention to the local needs. From the start we have been a community builder, where we build in a community and have a sales model home with professional salespersons and superintendents on site. We started with one community and today we build in seven communities,” Jon noted.

“We build in communities that we feel that we can provide homebuyers with a good product at a fair price. Sometimes this means we are building single family detached homes, other times it means we are building townhomes or stilt homes.”

Bayway, which is headquartered in Friendswood, builds in Galveston and Harris counties and is currently building in the following Texas communities: Berry Field in Dickinson, Borden’s Gully in Dickinson, LaPorte in LaPorte, RainSong in Texas City, Searidge in Seabrook, Southridge Crossing in Houston, and Steeplechase Terrace in Jersey Village.

Bayway’s success may also be attributed to its unique approach of assigning a manager to each community it builds in. “Our managers have complete control over the communities that they build in. They handle all aspects of a project, from product lines, price point and standard features to community activities, project amenities and marketing efforts. The salesperson, the superintendent and administrative functions are all under the manager’s control. That way they can make sure that we live up to our

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commitments and can respond quickly to residents and future home owners,” Skeele said.

Terri Rekieta was living out of state while Bayway built her home in the Steeplechase Terrace community. “Don Lowry, Bayway’s salesperson, helped me through every step of the process. The experience was great as far as I was concerned. Buying a home is one of life’s major purchases and sometimes people end up with regrets. I’ve been in my house for two years, and I don’t have any regrets.”

Jon said, “We are fitting into the communities that we live in and want to provide homes for our neighbors. This is very different from larger builders

that build the same floor plan all across the country or region and they hope that the buyer likes what they are doing. We are trying to listen to our community and build what works for our community.”

“Jon, in my opinion, is a cut above the average builder,” offered Mike Duckett, senior vice president of Sterling Bank. “He’s not just a guy who builds out of the back of his truck, helter-skelter. He goes to the trouble to educate himself, to study the latest building techniques, and knows what he’s doing.”

Bill Simons, a sales associate at 84 Lumber in Houston, agreed. “Jon is a unique builder in that he knows the product he builds and he sticks to his

market. We lost 70 percent of our builders during the past few years, but Bayway Homes is going strong. Jon is the only builder I know that has stuck to his program and hasn’t gotten off track.”

What’s the future for Bayway Homes? Skeele said, “We are planning to stay in the Houston market and build in new communities where we feel we can add value to existing communities and provide homes that people can afford. We are successful because we are passionate about what we do and try to have fun while doing it.”

*For more information, please contact Bayway Homes at 281.648.2425 or visit their website at [www.baywayhomes.com](http://www.baywayhomes.com).*

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