

# ACADIANA BUILDER



**Platinum Homes**

**Jason and Laurie Huff of Platinum Homes' Unique Team**





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## Publisher's Note

I love this time of year! As we enter the special season of thanksgiving, our rich family heritage, traditions and celebration of life are what make Acadiana the special place we live. Holidays are the time to rejoice in all of the abundance, of which we are so thankful, with the people we care about the most. Remember to enjoy all that this special time of year has to offer. The gathering of family and friends, delicious food, festive decorations and hearts full of thanksgiving: we are so blessed! I also want to take this

time to let all of you know how thankful I am for you, the reader, the advertiser and the builders who have been featured. It is my privilege to journal these builders of Acadiana.

Our featured builders are Laurie and Jason Huff of Platinum Homes. This duo is a very talented team. Both licensed builders and both with a heritage in the construction industry, they are wise beyond their years

in their profession. They build beautiful homes with all the detail, quality and craftsmanship of any master builder.

Enjoy,  
April Becquet  
[www.acadianabuilder.com](http://www.acadianabuilder.com)



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FOR THE ACADIANA BUILDER'S MARKET SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

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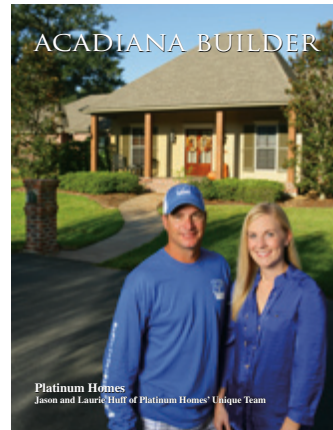
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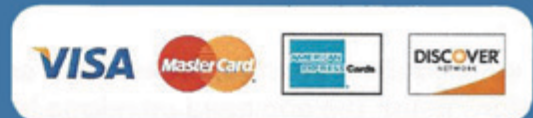
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*A gold gilt crystal chandelier hangs majestically from the custom gilt ceiling medallion. Hand painted Italian furniture and custom draperies add the finishing touch to the dining area. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com*





*This great room, framed with rustic antique wood beams and scored concrete floors compliment the custom glazed cabinets, colonial cream granite and beautiful crown molding. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com*

## Jason and Laurie Huff of Platinum Homes' Unique Team

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Jason and Laurie Huff of Platinum Homes provide a unique take on the homebuilding industry – they're a husband and wife team who are both licensed contractors! Because of their backgrounds, Jason supervises the job site construction, and Laurie oversees all design aspects and the office. "Most builders don't have a dual team. The way we do it is very efficient so our construction time frame is shorter than most builders. The majority of our homes take four months from slab to finish; smaller homes take about three months," Laurie noted.

Platinum Homes, located in Lafayette, constructs about 24 custom homes each year in the \$250,000 to \$700,000 range. It is now building in Island Oaks Plantation, Ella Trace, Audubon

Plantation, Copper Meadows, Crystal Cove, and in the new Charleston Village subdivision.

"We're different than big companies. We're hands-on; we hold our customers' hand throughout the entire building process," Laurie stated.

As a trained interior designer, Laurie oversees all aspects of the planning and design process, beginning with floor plans. She considers how someone will actually live in the home as she designs each property. She then helps clients to select the right materials and finishes required to complete their dream home.

"My role is to help the customers make smart decisions. They have hundreds of them to make, right

down to door knobs and cabinet pulls. Customers either know what they want or they have no idea, but either way is easy for me. I'm visual, so I ask 'Can you show it to me?' I give them homework to collect photos of how they want their home to look."

She also helps customers with their budgets by making cost-effective decisions; therefore, they spend their money wisely. For example, is a range hood on sale really a bargain if it's noisy? At the end of the day, she tells the customer, "It's your home. I'm going to tell you the good, the bad and the ugly, but you have to make the final decision."

While Laurie is either in the office or in showrooms with customers,

*Continued on Page 12*



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# Thermador: Real Innovations for Real Cooks

Thermador, the American luxury kitchen appliance brand, has provided real innovations for real cooks for nearly 100 years. The iconic line of cooking, cleaning, refrigeration and ventilation products remains committed to empowering culinary enthusiasts to be their best through continuous innovation breakthroughs – from the world’s first wall ovens and gas cooktops with the patented Star® Burner to the Freedom® Induction Cooktop, the first full-surface induction appliance, and the Freedom® Collection, the first modular built-in fresh food, freezer and wine preservation columns.

## **Thermador Freedom® Collection**

The award-winning Thermador Freedom® Collection line of built-in refrigeration, freezer and wine columns continues to inspire culinary enthusiasts to re-think their kitchen layout.

Break with tradition and enjoy the freedom to separate freezer and refrigeration units! Place fresh food columns in areas where you need them most, and perhaps relocate a less-used freezer column to a less trafficked part of the kitchen. Plus, with a range of widths available – in 18”, 24”, 30” and 36” – you can mix and match the sizes that best accommodate your needs.

The Freedom Collection also provides flexibility

to place these innovative columns in other areas of the home where guests are frequently entertained, such as a wine column in a dining room to display favorite vintages, and refrigeration columns in media rooms for convenient access to chilled beverages and snacks.



## **Thermador Freedom® Induction Cooktop**

Just last year Thermador introduced an innovative new cooktop that takes induction cooking to a new level - the Freedom® Induction Cooktop. It is the first full-surface induction appliance with the flexibility of a natural-mapping user interface that intelligently recognizes cookware size, shape and position to deliver heat without boundaries.

The Freedom Induction Cooktop offers all of the benefits of traditional induction technology: instantaneous and precise temperature control, making it as responsive as gas; and easier cleaning with its smooth and flush surface. At the same time, the cooktop enables home cooks to place their cookware anywhere on the cooking surface, including specially shaped cookware such as griddles and oval-shaped pans. The natural-mapping user interface of the Thermador cooktop empowers home cooks to move their cookware around during the cooking process, which is especially helpful as they add and remove different cookware during meal preparation — such as sauces, boiling water, and sautéing — so there are no limits on where to place the cookware.

With more than 30 international patents, the Thermador Freedom Induction Cooktop is built with 48 individual 3-inch induction heating elements below the surface of the appliance. This translates to a 63 percent more effective cooking area on the surface by eliminating the conventional standard of predefined elements.

## **Thermador Steam and Convection Oven Line**

Thermador is the only luxury appliance brand to offer three different steam oven options, allowing cooks more flexibility when selecting one to match their individual design tastes. In August, Thermador welcomed the newest addition to the line: the Thermador Professional® Series Built-in Steam and Convection Oven. This is the first built-in steam oven to match the look of the Thermador Professional Series appliance line, featuring restaurant-style knobs, a stainless steel finish and a bold, chiseled design. It features all of the innovative steam and convection cooking benefits Thermador introduced in the Pro Grand® Steam Range and Masterpiece® Series Built-in Steam and Convection Oven.

Steam ovens continue to be welcomed into a growing number of American kitchens because the method of cooking provides unrivaled taste, texture and quality as food cooks while being enveloped in its own natural juices. Plus, steam

cooking is healthier — food retains more of its essential vitamins and nutrients, and the moisture and flavor from steaming in natural juices means you can forego adding ingredients higher in fat and cholesterol, such as butter or cooking oil. In addition, steam ovens are perfect for refreshing leftovers to the taste and texture as though they were freshly baked.

## **Pro Grand® Steam Range**

Many culinary enthusiasts are looking for appliances that can fulfill their every cooking need





all in one appliance— whether it’s baking, broiling, steaming, grilling, sautéing or warming. A shining example of this is the Thermador Pro Grand® Steam Range -- the Ultimate Culinary Center -- which features six Star Burners, a grill/griddle, convection oven, steam and convection oven, and warming drawer. This range can do it all – it has the Power Burner with 22,000 BTUs to bring water to boil faster, the ExtraLow simmering feature that allows the cook to place delicate sauces on to simmer but doesn’t require them to continually tend to them, the steam and convection oven gives food better texture and flavor, the warming drawer can hold and warm up to 10 dinner plates, grilling meats and vegetables can be done indoors on the grill plate, and the convection oven features the Thermador True Convection system that directs heat to cook faster and more evenly.

### Thermador Kitchen Design Challenge

The Thermador Kitchen Design Challenge is back with more reasons than ever for professional kitchen designers to create and submit their ultimate kitchen designed for culinary inspiration: this year’s contest has doubled the number of finalists that will be selected to 16, the prize purse is \$100,000 and the contest is now opened to include design firms rather than only individual designers as in years past.

Designers, builders and architects are invited to submit their boldest, most luxurious Thermador kitchen designs completed during 2012 and 2013 by the March 1, 2014 entry deadline.



The finalists will also enjoy a trip to the Thermador Experience & Design Center in Southern California where the national winners will be announced during a gala event. Plus, entrants could see their designs featured on the Thermador website, on the Thermador blog, in Thermador eNewsletters and on Thermador social media channels – giving designers and their clients added bragging rights.

Because Thermador wants to celebrate all of the beautiful kitchens created over the last two years, there is no limit on the number of kitchens a single person or firm may enter, and there is no entry fee. Participants may visit <http://www.thermador.com/designcontest2013/> to read the official rules and enter.

### Star® Partner

Thermador values the talented trade professionals who design and build today’s luxury kitchens. By signing up for the Thermador Star® Partner loyalty program, designers, builders and architects will be the first to know about Thermador special trade-only promotions, new products and events. It is easy to join the program by visiting [www.thermador.com/star-partner](http://www.thermador.com/star-partner).

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Continued from Page 7

Jason is out in the field meeting with subcontractors to ensure that each step of the construction phase is followed as planned. "Subs love to work for him, since he's not a demanding person. He's very patient. Jason gets along with everybody and makes them feel comfortable," according to Laurie. Platinum Homes has used many of the same subcontractors since it began in 2003.

Customer service is important to Platinum Homes. If a customer calls with an issue after moving in, Jason will try to get to that home the same day to solve the problem. "He's our best customer service. We encourage customers to call if they notice anything," Laurie said. "But we don't have very many callbacks."

Platinum Homes has a reputation

for quality home building, which is displayed throughout the building process and is evident long after the sale. Noting that "happy people talk about their builder in a good way," the Huffs proudly display testimonials from customers on their website. They are pleased they've garnered so many testimonials in the year they've had their website. Typical of those testimonials are these words from Greg and Pat Case:

"We ended up with much more than we ever expected. Laurie helped throughout the project with color schemes and coordination of construction materials, as we were clueless. Jason was on the job daily checking things out and asking if everything was ok. Both are true professionals in their field. Our project was completed on a timely basis and we are so proud.



Full flush style glazed cabinets dominate the utility room providing ample storage for the homeowner. Platinum front loading stacking washer and dryer units are a signature of Platinum Homes. The full glass backsplash is made from recycled glass. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com



This versatile office, with customized upholstered message board which transforms into a Murphy bed, tucks away neatly for the perfect craft room/ office combination with custom wood cabinets, an antique farm table and pecan wood floors. Photos by Doug Dugas Photography.com





*The kitchen cabinets are custom, glazed raised panels with Thermador custom panel French doors concealing the refrigerator. The brick backsplash laid in a running bond is a signature of Laurie Huff Homes. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com*

We wanted the ‘wow’ factor when someone would step into the area and [we] truly have it now. They have been a pleasure to work with.”

Jason and Laurie seemed destined to become homebuilders. Jason got his start in construction right out of high school, primarily

doing framing for his uncle’s homebuilding company. Laurie learned homebuilding “by osmosis” from standing in the doorway listening and learning from her dad, who built production homes. “My dad encouraged Jason to open his own framing company. Then, after a while, Jason went to work for him,

as a supervisor. Jason was taught to run several jobs at one time. My dad was a great businessman and taught Jason how to run a business.”

Laurie worked for her dad’s company during her summers while she earned a degree in interior design. When she graduated in



*The master bath is a peaceful retreat. Metallic glazed maple cabinets, accent tile in pearl and glass mini brick glass tile and granite meld in soft hues. The floor is veincut travertine planks laid in a herringbone pattern. The shower’s floor is river stone. Photos by Doug Dugas Photography.com*







*Bright, bold colors against the white, custom designed maple cabinetry host the queen size bed. Draperies and bedding are adorned with rhinestones and the knobs are Swarovski crystal. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com*

1998, she joined the company full-time and learned even more. “Dad put me in charge of customers’ selections; he was building 80 homes a year.”

Additionally, “He made me do some hands-on construction work so I would understand how difficult it was. Little did I know, I had already learned the business side,” Laurie said. In time, Jason and Laurie started their own business, even though Laurie was pregnant at the time.

They chose the name Platinum Homes because the connotation for platinum was “the best of the best.” According to Laurie, they began building in the starter production homes market in 2003 because that’s the segment of homebuilding that they knew. After Laurie’s dad unexpectedly died a few months later, the couple soon realized how well he had trained them.

Recently, Platinum Homes segued into the custom home market, typically putting up homes between 1,700 and 3,500 sq. ft. “I

like building that size so I can use my design talent. This is where I’ve always wanted to be,” Laurie said. “Larger houses allow me to be more creative.” The company builds both pre-solds and spec homes. It has three employees: an office administrator, a construction supervisor and a site clean-up person.

Jason and Laurie have learned there’s a fine line to working and living successfully as partners. Laurie said she doesn’t actually see Jason very much during the day. “I’m here, he’s out there.” She admitted, “It would be a little hard to work side by side every day.”

However, she said they share the same work ethic and are both hard workers, which helps their partnership. While some business owners may think some tasks are beneath them, the Huffs will do what it takes to keep up, even if it means picking up trash from a job site or watering the grass. By controlling the number of houses they build, both she and Jason are able to get home by 5 p.m. to be with their kids every day.

Both their children claim they want to be builders. Some vendors’ sales representatives tell Laurie they remember her when she was “this tall.” She tells her kids that sales reps will tell them the same thing if they follow in the family business.

It wouldn’t be a surprise if yet another generation of Huffs puts roofs above the heads of Acadiana homebuyers, now would it?

*You may contact Platinum Homes by calling **337-993-5773** or mailing 3203 Kaliste Saloom Road, Lafayette, LA 70598.*

*You will find the company website at [www.platinumhomesla.com](http://www.platinumhomesla.com).*



*This grand outdoor living area, canopied by tongue and groove cypress ceiling, freshly painted pale blue compliments the rustic wood beams and California gold slate floor laid in a running bond pattern. Photo by Doug Dugas Photography.com*







# It Pays to be a NAHB Member



Categories: Builder Information, Consumer Information, Economy, General, Licensing

Since we last reported at the International Builders' Show, NAHB has been busy delivering value to you every day. Our top priority is to serve the needs of our members by providing educational opportunities, fighting for the housing industry on major issues to help your businesses thrive, and saving you money wherever possible.

Recently, we reported that NAHB's actions on the legislative, regulatory, codes and legal fronts ended up saving the typical home builder roughly \$7,250 per housing start in 2012.

NAHB has steadily built on that impressive achievement in the past few months to provide even more bang for your membership buck.

Below is a summary of action items that outline the steps that NAHB is taking to further save builders money and help with their day-to-day operations. Please review the entire article at <http://www.lhba.org/blog/2013/08/it-pays-to-be-an-nahb-member> to click on the links for a more detailed review.

NAHB-supported storm water court ruling could save Va. taxpayers \$300 million NAHB helped strike down another attempt at regulatory overreach in January when a U.S. District Court ruled that the Environmental Protection Agency cannot set limits on the amount of storm water allowed to run into a stream or other body of water. NAHB and two Virginia industry groups joined in the Commonwealth's lawsuit against the EPA, which had issued a Total Maximum Daily Load for the Accotink Creek, a Potomac River tributary. NAHB and its industry allies argued that the agency could

not use flow as a measure for TMDLs – especially when the flow is rainwater, which EPA doesn't have the authority to regulate. The judge agreed. Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli said the ruling could ultimately save Virginia small businesses and taxpayers more than \$300 million. The ruling will also discourage the agency from pursuing similar limits on storm water discharge in other areas of the country.

NAHB members saved more than \$1 million at the 2013 IBS Our members saved \$1.09 million on registration at the 2013 International Builders' Show over non-member pricing. In fact, for many of the approximately 17,000 of our members who attended the IBS and 5,000 who participated in the show's educational programming, the money they saved on registration fees easily surpassed the cost of their NAHB membership. That's just one of many ways that NAHB's membership pays for itself — and it doesn't even begin to factor in the

priceless networking opportunities that IBS attendees enjoy.

Illinois builders save \$6,300 per home with defeat of fire sprinkler mandate. NAHB provided financial and technical assistance to help Illinois home builders mount a quick and effective campaign last month to defeat the state fire marshal's plan to mandate fire sprinklers in new single-family homes. The effort saved the Prairie State home builders \$6,300 on the cost of each new home. NAHB argued for the use of smoke detectors, which is a safer and cost-effective alternative. HBA of Illinois EO Bill Ward was quick to credit NAHB Construction, Codes and Standards and State and Local Government staff for much-needed technical expertise and a grant to help fund a survey demonstrating that an overwhelming 83 percent of voters don't want fire sprinklers mandated in existing homes and 69 percent don't want them in new ones, either.

NAHB actions on 25C tax credit

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support 140,000 remodeling jobs. Thanks in large part to the efforts of NAHB, remodelers this year will be able to take advantage of the Existing Home Retrofit Tax Credit (25C). The 25C tax credit provides consumers a tax credit of up to \$500 for the purchase of qualifying energy-efficient products. The 25C tax credit supported almost 140,000 jobs in remodeling in 2009. Government data indicates that the tax credit will support an estimated \$4.08 billion of remodeling in 2013 with a typical energy-efficient remodeling project costing a little more than \$2,800. NAHB estimates that nearly 18 percent of these remodeling projects would not have occurred without the credit. Thus, the extension of the 25C credit for 2013 will result in an additional \$727 million in remodeling for the industry. Following a year-end push by NAHB, the 25C tax credit was retroactively renewed by Congress through 2012 and extended through the end of this year.

ICC building code wins could save builders more than \$42,000 on the cost of a new home. At the latest ICC Committee Action Hearings that pertained to the 2015 code editions, NAHB members and staff painstakingly examined more than 2,000 code proposals and their impact on building safety and cost effectiveness. Out of 750 code change proposals on which we took a stand, NAHB scored a successful outcome on 596 – for about an 80 percent success rate. Though the fight is far from over, this excellent work positions us very well for upcoming Final Action Hearings on the 2015 code change proposals this October. Here's what's at stake: If NAHB is successful on all the code change proposals that we either support or oppose, the total construction savings would be more than \$42,000 per house. To learn how you can help educate your local building code officials, you can access our builder action kit at [nahb.org/2015codes](http://nahb.org/2015codes).

NAHB designations can significantly boost a builder's

or remodeler's bottom line. Information from the most recent NAHB Builder Member Census reveals that members who have earned NAHB professional designations make more money than their counterparts in the business who haven't earned designations. According to the survey, members holding:

The Graduate Master Builder (GMB) designation had company revenues that averaged \$1.61

million more last year than those without an NAHB builder designation.

The Certified Graduate Builder (CGB) designation had company revenues that averaged \$990,189 more.

The Certified Green Professional™ (CGP) designation had company revenues that averaged \$824,124 more.

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"CONGRATULATIONS TO LAURIE AND THE PLATINUM TEAM"



The Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR) designation had company revenues that averaged \$506,414 more than those without an NAHB remodeler designation.

The Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation had company revenues that averaged \$110,838 more. (Note: These figures are based on the median 2012 revenue reported in the NAHB 2012 Builder Member Census.)

45L tax credit provides home builders \$77 million in tax savings. NAHB led the charge on Capitol Hill so that builders will be able to take advantage of the New Energy Efficiency Home Tax Credit (45L) in 2013. The 45L credit provides builders with a \$2,000 tax credit

for the sale of homes that achieve a 50 percent improvement in energy efficiency over the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code. Following a year-end lobbying blitz by NAHB, Congress acted to retroactively renew the 45L tax credit through 2012 and extend the credit through the end of this year. In 2013, home builders who are able to utilize the 45L tax credit will receive an aggregate of \$77 million in tax savings, according to estimates from the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation.

NAHB 20 Club members double their profits. A recent analysis by NAHB shows that on average, 20 Club members double their net profit in their third year of membership in this program.

Offering unparalleled networking opportunities, the NAHB 20 Clubs are comprised of similar type builders or remodelers from non-competing markets who meet several times a year to share their wisdom and learn from each other ways to improve their operations and increase their bottom lines. Statistics indicate that 20 Club members perform better than non-members in financial growth and long-term success.

Expert free legal advice saves members more than \$225,000. During the past six months, NAHB lawyers with years of Washington legal experience have fielded more than 450 calls from members seeking information on a variety of legal concerns, including contracts and liability, labor and subcontractor issues, trade association issues, mechanics liens, and more. A comparable one-hour session with a Washington attorney could cost a builder well over \$500 an hour. Looking at this another way, in just one hour of their time, NAHB members who took advantage of this free legal service more than offset the cost of their national annual dues. Other NAHB legal services designed exclusively for NAHB members include a free review of local ordinances and the Legal Action Fund, which helps members and HBAs to defray high litigation costs.

For full article log onto [www.lhba.org](http://www.lhba.org)



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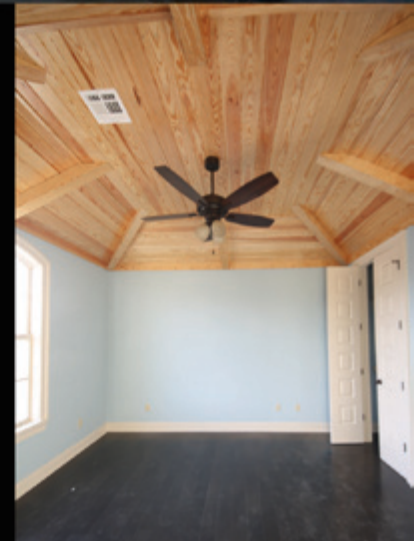
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