



ACADIANA BUILDER



**The Gen Group Construction
Brings New Perspective to Building**



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz - Photography by Virtual Showcase

If you're looking for a builder with a fresh, new perspective who challenges industry standards of quality and customer service, Charlie Genin of The Gen Group Construction fits the bill.

At age 28, Genin may be one of the youngest contractors in the greater Lafayette area. He finds his age to be an advantage when competing with other contractors who are likely to be a generation older than he. Genin believes that being part of a more technologically advanced generation

gives him an advantage in how his bids are designed and executed and in his ability to tailor his communication/management style to an individual client's preferences.

He's always looking for bigger and better products that push the envelope of design.

"I get a great deal of satisfaction from turning an empty patch of grass into a work of art for individuals, families and friends. My competitive nature and pursuit of perfection loves the challenges of this industry; it forces





us to continuously innovate and adapt to our changing environment. I love it when prospective clients say ‘Wow! This is nice! I haven’t seen this before.’” Genin believes there’s no such thing as monotony in construction, and if you’re not adapting, you’re getting left behind.

With a master’s degree in business administration (MBA) from the University of Louisiana – Lafayette (ULL) and experience as a financial analyst in the oil and gas industry in his background, Genin is a self-confessed “numbers guy” who believes in accuracy. He said he puts a lot of time and effort into his company’s bids, “nitpicking, and scrutinizing” his cost breakdowns.

His approach, with its emphasis on transparency of costs and attention to details, appeals to clients and develops trust. “We’ve won multiple projects because of



our breakdowns. We're not always the lowest bid, but the clients are more confident in our bids. People like to see the numbers – they want to know that you take this investment as seriously as they do," he stated. "We don't lowball bids and we don't take advantage of our clients."

Plus, those clients see his attention to detail in the bid and rightly presume it transfers to the building process, Charlie added. "We are focused on building a quality home and are driven to provide an unmatched level of honesty, integrity and customer satisfaction."

He wants to break the stigma that many homebuyers associate with contractors and new construction – that it will take longer than expected and will be over-budget. His approach for The Gen Group Construction is to under-promise and over-deliver.

"I'm trying to change the perspective that some have of contractors. I was raised on old-school moral values of honesty, integrity and ethical business practices. For me, my handshake is as good as my contract. I don't want to live in a world where it's ok for people to take advantage of



one another or look for chances to sue each other. A moral high ground in business is closer to the world I want to live in. Hopefully I can make a [ethical] difference” in the building industry.

Because he supports the organizations’ focus on an ethical work place, Genin serves on the board of directors of the Lafayette Better Business Bureau and is a member of the Acadian Home Builders Association.

He said some contractors have earned a bad reputation for dodging phone calls. But Genin made a pledge to himself to respond as quickly as possible to phone calls, emails or texts, usually in less than 24 hours. He admits that he isn’t perfect, but said he will never ignore a legitimate call, even if it’s someone calling to request a service his company doesn’t provide.

Genin also recognizes that homebuyers’ dissatisfaction with builders often comes from unrealistic expectations. “I like to sit every client down at the beginning of a project and tell them that the construction process isn’t a perfect one and there will sometimes be stressful events. In a process that has hundreds of moving parts, that process will not always follow the plans as expected. Problems will inevitably occur, but that’s why I’m here – this is the reason you hired me, and my goal is to fix it. I’m big about setting realistic expectations.”

After graduating from ULL with a degree in marketing, he worked as a financial analyst for Frank’s International N.V. (formerly Frank’s Casing Crew). Although he gained invaluable work experience, he eventually realized that sitting behind a desk all day wasn’t his life-long calling. He wanted to do something that connected him with people more directly and also let him work in the outdoors. At the same time he began working on his MBA and renovating his own house with his fiancée, Hailey Daigle, whom he met at ULL.

He shared his desire to make a career move with Hailey’s father, Robert Daigle, who had more than 20 years’ experience as a real estate developer. Robert and Charlie soon discovered their parallel passions for construction and decided to go into business together by starting The Gen Group Construction, L.L.C., in August 2014. (Charlie and Hailey married in March 2016.) Robert and Charlie continue to be partners.

Originally building only speculative homes, Genin said he adapted to the local market and now mixes custom



homes under contract and an occasional remodeling project into his production, with the company growing every year. His custom home projects typically range from 2,000 to 3,000+ sq. ft. of living area, although he has taken on smaller and larger projects. He will take on remodeling projects only when he feels he can provide a good value to the client. “We strive to deliver our best quality and price to our clients, regardless of project size,” he added.

Charlie earned his commercial contractor’s license in 2015 because he saw an opportunity to expand his scope of work into erecting small office buildings and live-work buildings. Although he anticipates his volume to continue to grow, he expects to construct one or two commercial buildings each year.

The Gen Group Construction usually has a handful of projects under construction at any given time, he noted.

Genin said he’d ultimately like his annual production to be at 40 percent spec homes, 40 percent custom homes and 20 percent commercial projects. He would continue to focus his personal attention on custom home projects, even if the company grows exponentially in the future.

Jeffrey Dubois was hired as a bids coordinator in 2017 to help the company’s increasing demand for project bidding, however, Genin said he is intimately involved in the bidding process to ensure they continue to deliver on their promise of fair and accurate project costing. With Dubois’ previous experience as a construction superintendent and developing home budgets, he is proving to be a valuable asset to The Gen Group’s growth, Charlie said.

Charlie also personally oversees all construction himself and isn’t sure he’d ever change that involvement. “I’ll never leave the field. I want to make sure I’m there to control the quality on the sites.” He added that his clients like knowing that throughout the build process, they’ll be talking with the same guy whom they met with at the initial interview. They like having direct contact with the builder.

He does get an assist from his wife Hailey, who is an accomplished realtor in Lafayette, he noted. Hailey does all of the interior designs on his spec homes. “She has an excellent eye; she gets that from her mother.” Hailey also sells some of the company’s spec homes.

The Genins are expecting their first child, a son, in mid-April. Just like with building, he knows parenting will be challenging and stressful and problems inevitably will arise

at the least convenient time. But he gets a huge amount of satisfaction from seeing the finished product. With parenting he will just have to wait longer!

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