

ENTREPRENEURS IN RESIDENCE: MAKING AUSTIN HOUSES FEEL LIKE HOME

WOMAN

austin

NOVEMBER 2018

DARCY BAYLIS

**BUILDING WOMEN-CENTRIC
HOMES WITH HEART**

**GETTING YOUR FINANCIAL
HOUSE IN ORDER**

**DESIGNER KELLY WYNNE
FERGUSON'S BABY NURSERY**

**CONCIERGE AUCTIONS'
HOME-GIVING PROGRAM**



CONTENTS

NOVEMBER

56

Photo courtesy of Wendy Conklin.

SAVVY WOMEN

- 20** COUNT US IN Women in Numbers
- 22** GIVE BACK Concierge Auctions
- 24** FROM THE DESK OF Emily Chenevert
- 26** PROFILE Sarah Evans of Well Beyond
- 28** START THE CONVO Flo Code

ATX WOMEN TO WATCH

- 32** DORIS BURSON
- 33** LARA BURNS
- 34** LANDER PEERMAN
- 35** MERRILL ALLEY
- 36** CHRISTEN ALES
- 37** LESLIE BLASIG
- 38** DEBBIE ADAMS
- 39** TRES EVENTS
- 40** DR. SHELLY SETHI
- 41** TAMIE GRANGER
- 42** AMAZING LASH STUDIO
- 44** MEL CHRISTINA

MUST LIST

- 46** DISCOVER Resorts With a Summertime Vibe
- STYLE + HOME**
- 49** THE LOOK Sneak Attack
- 52** BEAUTY Staff Secrets Revealed
- 54** MAKE ROOM Hearth & Soul
- 56** SEE HER WORK Wendy Conklin of Chair Whimsy
- 60** AT HOME WITH Kelly Wynne Ferguson
- 62** ON THE MONEY House-buying Tips

GOURMET

- 78** RECIPE REVEAL Il Brutto's Brunch Pizza
- 80** FOOD NEWS Nervous Charlie's
- 82** GIRL WALKS INTO A BAR She's Not Here

WELLNESS

- 84** WAITING ROOM Vitamins at Every Age
- 86** HER ROUTINE Jo Marie MacCoy

POINT OF VIEW

- 88** I AM AUSTIN WOMAN Ashley Wainscott



ON THE COVER

Photo by **Annie Ray**,
annieraycreative.com

Hair and makeup by **Tiffany Taylor**,
justbeyoutify.com

Theory relaxed V-neck pullover, \$385;
J Brand Sadey straight-leg jeans, \$228;
Common Projects Achilles sneakers,
\$411, available at Theory, 11624 Rock
Rose Ave., theory.com.



Laying a Foundation for Success

BY HANNAH J. PHILLIPS
PHOTOS BY ANNIE RAY
HAIR AND MAKEUP BY
TIFFANY TAYLOR
STYLED BY NIKI JONES

Woman-centric builder Darcy Baylis tells a story with each home.

Darcy Baylis never set out to build homes. Working as a teacher and single mother in 1999, the last thing on her mind was managing the enormous stress of creating something out of nothing. But that's exactly what Baylis did, first with a few houses and then with her business, Aubrey Homes Inc.

✓ Laying the Foundation

It all started with two empty lots on Hamilton Pool Road, a nudge from her dad and a how-to book. When Baylis purchased the lots for her first house, her father asked why she didn't just build it herself. But balancing her teaching career with the demands of being a single mom, Baylis opted to hire a builder.

"As I watched how it was done, I saw that it's really just about managing, like a puzzle," Baylis says. "I bought a book about how to build a house and it recommended interviewing three subcontractors for every category. So, that's where I started."

Together, Baylis and her father purchased three more lots across the street. She hired the contractors, while her father helped manage each project. When they advertised their first home in the *Austin American-Statesman* in 1999, it sold immediately. During another year of teaching, Baylis finished a second home with her father.

"We never really did it to start a business," she recalls. "But he invested in me. ... Without my dad, I wouldn't have been able to get into the industry."

Her father stayed involved in the next few projects, from clearing lots to selecting floor plans and colors. That foundation of financial and emotional support gave Baylis the courage to start building more than just homes. Soon, she wanted to build a business. After two years, she resigned from her teaching position and broke ground on Aubrey Homes.

"I just kept building year after year," she says.

✓ Building the Framework

The phrase Baylis uses to describe the vision of Aubrey Homes is "building frame-worthy homes," focusing on the moments and memories that make a house feel like home and are worth framing like fine art.

"This is where your children are born and raised," she says, "where you celebrate the relationships that make life worth living. Your home is your safe haven."

While building a house can be one of the more exciting and rewarding endeavors in life, the process is notoriously stress-inducing because of the sheer scale of such a project and its overwhelming demand for detailed decision-making. With that in mind, Baylis walks her clients step by step through the process. Her goal is to tell a story—her client's story—with each home.

"One of my favorite things about building is learning about people, learning the stories of the lots," she says. "It's hard for some people to envision the final product, but it's not as intimidating as it seems when you have someone to guide you."

Baylis believes that, like houses, we're all wired differently; everyone has a different idea of what home means, whether that's a place to store treasured possessions, a haven to de-stress and unwind, the perfect spot to entertain or a flexible living space for a home office. To help clients find the perfect design for each personality, the Aubrey Homes website includes color-coded floor plans that help narrow the search.

"You have to get inside someone's head and see what makes them tick," Baylis says.

The Livability at a Glance and Finally About Me quizzes on her website help do just that. The latter analyzes how a client's

Page 64: Theory silk classic shirt, \$245; Theory crepe trench coat, \$595, available at Theory, 11624 Rock Rose Ave., theory.com.

Page 67: Theory wool-cashmere hooded poncho, \$895; Theory cardinal trouser, \$375; Theory knit mock-neck shell, \$255, available at Theory, 11624 Rock Rose Ave., theory.com.

personality aligns with her view of home: Does she value private spaces to relax and read a good book, or will she focus on an open, practical kitchen to stay connected with family and friends as they're gathered in the great room? Does she want her home to make a statement or be a haven, or perhaps a combination of both?

The Livability at a Glance quiz really gets down to brass tacks, identifying which of four filters clients use to determine a home's sustainability: entertaining, storing, relaxing and flexible living. The results help Baylis and her clients prioritize their main goals in the homebuilding process and are part of why Baylis describes her approach as "woman-centric."

She first fell in love with the term when researching women in building, stumbling across color-coded woman-centric floor plans that bring different personalities to life.

"Research shows that the majority of home purchases and decisions are influenced by women," Baylis says. "I think the term 'woman-centric' draws some people to me, but in some ways, it's also just what I've always been doing. I've always put that little extra into my homes, two or three extra features that you normally wouldn't get, which sets them apart."

To Baylis, woman-centric simply means using thoughtful designs in all her homes, listening to client needs with a collaborative mindset. With a female-owned business in a male-dominated industry, this perspective sets her apart—but it doesn't mean her approach is just for women. Rather, it means her unique eye for detail allows Baylis to look beyond the cookie-cutter home with a personal touch you won't get with most builders.

Homebuyer Randy Cobbs describes how working with Baylis allowed him to focus on the more stressful task of moving back to Texas to care for his parents' declining health.

"This was my first home to build, so doing it remotely was definitely daunting," he says. "Working with Darcy put me at ease. We chose her for her incredible design eye, and I loved how she kept me involved throughout the process, even remotely."

The favorite feature of his home is the overall aesthetic, Cobbs says. From light fixtures and cedar posts to mirrors and rockwork, everything works together.

✓ **The Final Flourish**

Even in her spec homes, Baylis always has a trick up her sleeve, one or two details to add that final flourish.

"I have this arched piece with open wrought iron that will go from the hallway into the game room of one of the homes," she says. "When I do spec houses, these pieces play a key role in adding those extra features you'd expect in a custom home."

Often, this might be something as simple as a mirror, for which Baylis harbors a particular fetish. She especially loves using mirrors as a unique touch in a seemingly ordinary space, and is constantly on the lookout for mirrored items to add that last little flair.

"I'm currently hoarding six mirrors," she confesses. "I just bought two for this next house, and I have several hiding in my storage unit. When you find something, you have to grab it!"

For Cobbs, this special attention to detail was the best part of working with Baylis.

"I've lived in several places in my life," he says, "but this is the first house that felt like home from the day I moved in."

This is the impression Baylis leaves on her clients, the way she tells a frame-worthy story with each house. And in

DARCY BAYLIS' DOS AND DON'TS FOR A STRESS-FREE BUILD

1. Do your homework. "Learn everything you can about the construction process. Talk to a few different lenders about the types of loans and interest you might qualify for. The more knowledgeable you can become ahead of time, the less intimidating the process will be. Get educated in the area where you want to build too. Learn about the things that could drive your costs up: topography, access, for example, acreage with a super-long driveway, getting electricity to the house."

2. Work with a builder before you buy. "Sometimes people come in already having purchased a lot. Then they get bids from different builders and don't have enough money to build the home. In Austin and surrounding areas, it can be difficult to find an available lot that is flat, so foundation costs can skyrocket. Someone might think they'll have a flat backyard and discover they need to build stairs, so it's best to work with a builder first."

3. Choose a builder you can trust. "Before you find a builder, check their references and talk to other people that have worked with them. When you're interviewing builders, not every personality is going to fit. It doesn't mean they're a bad builder; it just means you're not going to work well together. A lot of the tension in homebuilding is the relational aspect. Choose someone you can communicate your concerns to without being confrontational. Then trust the process."

4. Give your builder as much info as possible. "Once I get to know my clients, we pick a lot, a floor plan, a construction loan. And before closing on the loan, we have all your features picked out, which saves both money—no change orders—and stress since it keeps you from second-guessing."

5. Keep your expectations realistic. "I work with my clients ahead of time to figure out what's most important to them. Is energy efficiency the most important to you? That affects the finish-out. The quizzes on our website help zero in on your priorities and show which sacrifices you might need to make for your budget and other factors."

the process, each project becomes a frame-worthy snapshot for Baylis herself.

"Each project reflects where I was in my life at the time, like a time capsule," she says. "I can look back and remember what I was going through at the time. It brings back those memories."

Her parents' home is perhaps the most poignant example. When her father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease a few years ago, Baylis saw the opportunity to build something more functional for what he would need. Their final project together brought them even closer.

"As the years passed and he got worse," Baylis says, "it meant a lot to me that he was still able to be part of the process, especially since he was the reason I started building in the first place."



“Research shows that the majority of home purchases and decisions are influenced by women.”

✓ Leaving a Legacy

For her own children, Baylis hopes to leave a similar legacy. She named the company after her oldest daughter, Aubrey, and loves the fact that running her own business means spending more time with her girls and involving them in the process.

“My kids are with me so much,” she says. “They come to the job site or help me pick out tiles. I ask their opinion a lot, so they get to see the various stages, and it means a lot to me for them to see that they can do what they want to do.”

Sharing her business with her kids is bigger than teaching them to build houses. She models the importance of giving back, donating a portion of profits from each project to “frame-worthy” causes, including The Last Well, which works to provide safe drinking water to

communities in the West African country of Liberia; local advocacy organization SAFE Alliance; and The Ferrari Kid, which provides celebrity-like adventures for children coping with cancer. Baylis does all this while proving women can define their own success.

One key lesson Baylis has learned during these past 19 years building houses and a sustainable business is to keep her head up, even when things don’t go as planned. The obstacles that arise in homebuilding are easier to overcome than a lot of other things life throws at you, she argues.

“In the whole scheme of things, everything works out; anything can be repaired or rescheduled,” she says. “It’s just about taking baby steps one at a time to achieve your goal.”



The Baylis family, left to right: Camryn, Aubrey, Darcy, Carly

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS: DARCY BAYLIS’ TAKE ON TODAY’S TRENDS

Materials

“Everything has changed, from the way we insulate to the surfaces in our [kitchens]. Today, I use a zip system I wasn’t using 19 years ago. It’s a more insulating sheeting. Or I might use a spray-foam insulation over batts in the walls.”

Floors

“A lot of people are still using laminate, especially this new waterproof laminate for functionality. Plus, it looks so much like real wood. I also work a lot with stained concrete, which is less expensive but leaves a great finish.”

Interiors

“I see lots of blue, lots of brushed gold. Much of the shift is that people’s expectations have changed from watching HGTV.”

Surfaces

“I primarily work on small to medium-size homes with higher-end touches like quartz counters and hard surfaces like Dekton. A lot of people want smaller houses but still with those luxury features.”

Size

“People are downsizing more today. Some clients are empty nesters, but some just like a cute and cozier home. It means less to manage and lower property taxes.”

Photo courtesy of Regan Morton Photography.

Jill Stuart V-neck velvet and lace gown, \$465, available at Neiman Marcus, 3400 Palm Way, 512.719.1200, neimanmarcus.com.