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Brothers' Teamwork Key to
Daybreak Custom Homes' Success

Daybreak Custom Homes | Fulshear, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Daybreak Custom Homes, established in 2000, offers a unique “brotherly team approach” in working with their clients. Brothers Ray Hurlbut, Jr., and Michael Hurlbut co-own the west-side business.

Clients tell us “it’s working with the two of us that really makes the difference,” according to Ray, the older brother by two years. Mike agreed. “We make a good team because we have different strengths and different approaches,” he said.

“We truly enjoy what we do and love coming to work every day. People like working with Mike and me because we’re easily relatable and they get two experienced, yet separate perspectives” he noted. “It’s one of the things that sets us apart [from other builders].”

Mike Hurlbut, who has a degree in accounting from Texas A&M, is the president of Daybreak. “Mike is more analytical and more disciplined with numbers. He’s also better at visualizing and laying out architectural plans” according to Ray. “He is easy to work with, and he’s more

reserved. Some clients gravitate toward Mike, while others gravitate towards me.”

Ray, who is vice president of operations, is more on the marketing side and is very personable and very optimistic, like their father, Ray Hurlbut, Sr., (“a walking Zig Zigar”) who is a retired builder and works as a consultant for his sons at Daybreak. “Ray has a way of connecting with people and making them feel valued. He’s good at understanding their needs and their vision for their homes,” said Mike.

“People think of us like the Property Brothers [of HGTV fame]. Together, with our different strengths, we create a pretty awesome team,” Ray said.

The brothers share a mutual focus on customer satisfaction. “Our top priority is that our clients walk away smiling with a good feeling at the end of the project. That’s very important to us. It’s huge,” Ray said.

The brothers pride themselves and their staff on being



easily accessible to their clients. “We try to answer every email by the end of each day, pick up the phone each time it rings and return messages in real time. We are willing to do whatever it takes to make the client feel well taken care of. It is our whole team’s approach. Our clients can talk to anyone on our team. We all give the clients the time and attention they need,” Ray stated.

Mike added, “Sitting down, listening and translating the clients’ needs is key. We stay in constant contact during the construction. Our goal is to be proactive versus reactive in communication.”

“We make it a goal to contact our clients at least once a week” to update the clients on the construction progress, even if it’s not visible, Ray said. “We consider our homeowners to be part of our team.”

Also on the team are two other family members. The brothers’ younger sister Rebecca is Daybreak Custom Homes’ office manager. “She’s the glue that keeps us together,” Ray said. Their mom Nancy is in charge of selections, which is critical to the team’s organization.

Other critical team members include Scott Terreo as vice president of construction and Jim LeRoux as project manager. “One of the things that sets us apart, aside from the construction expertise, is that they’re friendly, which can be unusual for the construction field,” Ray said. “Besides being personable, they’re both very organized and professional. Both are veterans, and their military training

is a big plus for the company,” he added.

Daybreak works with local architects Newberry Architecture and Garcia & Hernandez Designs depending on the clients’ needs and level of involvement. Shellaine’s Interior Designs provides about 40 hours of design work on each project. “Shellaine Henderson is a crucial part to ensuring a smooth construction process. She guides our clients in their color selections and custom finishes to stay ahead of the construction schedule. This keeps our homebuyers from feeling overwhelmed,” Mike noted.

Daybreak Custom Homes focuses its building from the Loop out to the west side of greater Houston. “Our business is booming right now. We’re grateful to be an approved builder in the very exclusive, high-end community of Fulbrook in the Fulshear area,” Ray stated. “We’ve built in Royal Oaks, Kingwood Greens, Cinco Ranch, the Inner Loop, and we just love building on acreage.”

They typically have seven to 15 projects underway at any given time with home sizes ranging from 3,500 to 10,000 sq. ft., although they will build whatever size the client wants. Their finished projects typically range from \$600,000 to \$10 million for larger, more elaborate homes.

Many of their clients work in the oil and gas industry, are engineers, or are commercial construction owners. Ray stated that Daybreak uses very conservative building methods, which appeals to engineers “who are attracted to our ultra-energy efficiency” or commercial builders “who





like the way we build the guts of the house.”

They learned those conservative building practices growing up, playing in, cleaning up and later working in construction sites for their dad, who has 40 years’ experience working for Newmark Homes. “He is a marketing expert in Houston and has trained many successful salespeople,” Ray said proudly.

They originally started Daybreak Custom Homes with their dad in 2000. “Construction has always been in our blood. We grew up going to PRISM award ceremonies [presented by the Greater Houston Builders Association] and saw our dad win many awards. We dreamed of winning those awards one day,” said Ray.

Ray explained that he knew he always wanted to become a builder. “Mike and I used to dream of building unique and very creative homes that had hidden passages, secure rooms and mega theaters. And now, we get to actually design and build them.”

During their almost 20 years in business, Ray and Mike have seen changes in the construction business. “Buyers have so many more ideas these days. They have more access to information and come to us with creative and innovative ideas,” Ray said.

Mike added, “Because of the information they get online, more people know what they want, which is a good thing. We are constantly learning, researching, and putting these ideas into application.”

“The more they know up front, the less changes throughout the process, which can save them both time and money” Ray noted.

The Hurlbut brothers expect strong but steady growth in Daybreak Custom Homes during the next few years. “Our goal is to have consistent, healthy growth over the next five years. We will continue to give our clients a higher level personal service,” they agreed.

Despite their lifetimes spent in the building industry, “We thoroughly enjoy every build. It’s a lot of fun for us and is such a gratifying profession,” Ray said.

The Hurlbutts prove that family togetherness can lead to success and happiness. Not only do they spend their days together at the office, they live near each other in homes they built in Weston Lakes, just minutes from their office in Fulshear. Ray is married to Jennifer and they have two boys and two girls. Mike is married to Kate and they have four girls.

If you’re out on the west side, look for the “Property Brothers of Fulshear.” They’re probably not far from each other. They’re a team that knows how to succeed.

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