



Home Builder: Southern Cottage  
Architect: LaBella  
Designer: StarrMiller Interior Design  
Photographer: Laurie Glenn

# Selecting a home builder

**OK, IT HAS BEEN A** minute since college. But this year, college has been one of my focus areas. Why? Well, I have had the great pleasure to work with my sorority sister, Bev, and her wife Kim on their new build in Alabama, and now I have been asked by my college roommate, Laura, to help with her build in Indiana. Doing a new build out of town takes a special skill, lots of communication, plenty of zoom calls, and most of all a great collaborative builder.

Laura is now at the point of interviewing builders and asked for my help. Having worked with MANY builders over the years this is the list that I am sending her to use in her interviews:

## REFERENCES:

- 1 One former Client
- 2 One current Client

*Ask the same questions from their point of view.*

*Ask if they would work with the builder again!*

## VISUAL:

### OFFICE VISIT

- Is the office organized? Is the builder explaining thoroughly their process?

**SITE VISIT** - Is the site organized and humming with activity? Is the project supervisor on site? Do you see safety issues?

Is the site secure? How knowledgeable is the builder about the specific project? What is the quality of the work?

## OBSERVATIONS:

- 1 Is the builder's communication style easy to follow?
- 2 Are they open and honest in the process?
- 3 Did they look over your plans with interest and ask questions?
- 4 Did they listen to you?
- 5 What is your gut telling you?

## BUILDER QUESTIONS:

- 1 How many years have you been in business? How many homes have you built?
- 2 What quality and style home do you typically build? Does it match your vision?
- 3 How closely do you work with my architect and interior designer? Collaboration is key. Ask for examples.
- 4 What does your project team look like? Who is involved? How many other projects do they work concurrently?
- 5 How does your estimating process work? What do the estimated costs vs actual costs run on your projects? How do you make sure your estimates are correct? How long does your estimating process take?
- 6 Do you have a core group of trades that only work for you, or do you bid each project out? How many bids do you obtain per trade?
- 7 How do you handle issues during the construction process? You will want examples. Do you use a program like Co-Construct that tracts communications and costs?
- 8 How long should our construction take? How close are your estimates?
- 9 Are your contracts cost plus or fixed cost? Many builders give you a choice. The main point of this question is to see if you can follow their train of thought easily and transparently.
- 10 Do you have specific materials that you prefer to use? Examples? Why?
- 11 What is your building warranty and how is it serviced?
- 12 What do you not do well?
- 13 How are you handling product delays in today's economy?

**Starr Miller**  
Founder and Principal,  
StarrMiller Interior Design

Allied ASID, IDS, CAPS



Our resident home-design expert, Starr Miller, has garnered local and national acclaim with more than 30 industry honors. An alumnus of the prestigious Parsons School of Design in New York, Starr has built a strong following as the principal of her sought-after design firm, located in Cornelius, NC.

She feels the composition of a space must originate with the client's unique perspective. Along with that perspective she brings together her team's collaboration, design skills and refined processes in a way which results in truly captivating homes for her clients.

StarrMiller Interior Design specializes in full-service interior design projects.

704.896.3321  
www.StarrMiller.com