



Paul and Mellanie Hildesheim stand in their kitchen showroom.

Gallery Homes LLC

Paul and Mellanie Hildesheim have built scores of homes for their clients at Gallery Homes over the past 10 years. The first one they built, however, was their own.

"Having been in commercial and industrial construction for many years, I developed a love of residential building when my wife and I decided to build our own home," Paul said. "Learning a great deal throughout that process, we started helping other people build their own dream homes."

Gallery Homes, the Chamber's Small Business of the Month, started with "a couple of remodeling and new construction jobs per year." Now the Hildesheims complete 15 to 20 projects annually. A true custom home builder, Gallery

walks its clients through each step of the process, essentially allowing them to design their own home room by room.

"I am focused on providing our clients with the most structurally sound home available in today's market and Mellanie is gifted with that eye for detail and design," Paul said. "Once the plans are complete, we build to their specifications and work with them to choose everything from paint color to fixtures."

Gallery Homes, members of the national and Mobile Home Builders Associations is committed to building efficient homes, as well, as it is a certified Energy Star Builder, Green Professional, Graduate Builder, and Earth Cents Builder. By meeting the more than 150

construction details necessary to earn the Energy Star designation, Gallery Homes can save homeowners up to 50 percent on their heating and cooling costs. Its designation as a Fortified Builder can help clients save up to 40 percent on homeowners' insurance.

The company's small size – it has only five full-time employees – helped it weather the recession, as the Hildesheims did much of the work themselves during the lean years, focusing on income-generating projects and relying on word of mouth to build their client base.

Now that the housing market is recovering, Hildesheim is bullish on the future of Gallery Homes and the Mobile market in general.

"Mobile is growing," he said. "With the state docks

expansions, Airbus and Austal, along with so many other new businesses, the need for new homes is growing. Our customer base tends to want features and designs that are unique to their needs. That being said, clients who purchase an existing home are asking for extensive remodeling to make it their own, and some want it to be their unique vision from the ground up. Either way, business looks good for Gallery Homes and we are excited to be doing what we love every day."

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