

# THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

Greater Houston Edition  
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## Dialogue with a Designer



 **BATHS**  
**OF AMERICA**  
FINE BATH & KITCHEN GALLERY

Lori Toups-Fenton,  
Sweetlake Interior Design, LLC



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Lori Toups-Fenton, Sweetlake Interior Design, LLC

*Baths of America opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. Baths of America focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, Baths of America now offers door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.*

*This month BATHS OF AMERICA. speaks with Lori Toups-Fenton, a professional, award-winning and published designer, is an allied member of ASID and 1996 graduate from the University of Houston in interior design. She has been providing some of Houston's most fabulous and elite properties with her unique custom designs since entering the field. Her talent is showcased by her ability to transform homes into elegant spaces and luxurious habitats complemented with 21st-century style and amenities. Lori and her Sweetlake Interior Design LLC (SLID) team specialize in high-end design and build projects with an emphasis on streamlining and modernizing interior spaces for residential and commercial projects throughout Houston and surrounding areas.*

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What motivated you to go into the interior design field?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** I admired my friend's mom, Paula Courtney, an Interior Designer here in Houston. She had a design studio close to our house growing up. I loved visiting her shop. I was always asking questions. I felt it back then and knew this would be my future. I was going to an Interior Designer.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** The most significant change is how we render in 3D. The renderings look so realistic people think it is an actual picture. This new technology has helped push our creativity to the next level.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Providing accurate plans and renderings that reflect the design.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What sets you apart from other designers?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** My true compassion for design and creativity.



**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What has been your most challenging project and why?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** My own home because I am constantly incorporating change.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** We usually start by asking the material allowance and work from there.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Not hiring an Interior Designer on a custom build.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Staying up to date with ASID and attending trade shows.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What is your favorite design style?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Modern.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** I love custom designing furniture and having it built locally for my clients.



**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How would you characterize your personal style?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Glam modern.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Get a feel for the budget and style they are trying to achieve.

**BATHS OF AMERICA:** *How to you keep yourself up to date with current design trends in the market?*

**Lori Toups-Fenton:** Reading vendor magazines and visiting trade shows.



**Lori Toups-Fenton**

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**Ciera Perkins, Associate ASID**

*Senior Designer | AutoCAD*

Ciera Perkins graduated from the University of Houston’s College of Architecture and Design in 2017 and obtained her bachelor’s degree in Interior Architecture. Her passion is to become LEED AP certified which will provide her the knowledge to design environmental-friendly and green spaces for a more sustainable world.

Her past experience includes but is not limited to, over 200 hours of volunteer work for her community and a sales associate and blogger for Peluche Décor, a design store with high end one-of-a-kind pieces from all over the world. She also held an internship that turned into full time employment with D. Claire Designs. D. Claire Designs introduced her to the great aspects of renovations and remodeling after experiencing challenging residential projects for hurricane Harvey victims. That tragic event allowed her to transform spaces from a harrowing situation into areas that were beautiful and uplifting. She loves working at a company where she could be mentored in various aspects of design and explore all the avenues in which she can project her creativity and talent.



**Payal P. Prabhu, Associate ASID**

*Senior Designer | AutoCAD*

Payal Prabhu with a Bachelor degree in Interior Design from Mumbai University, India. Payal has over a decade of experience designing High-End Residential & Commercial Interiors. A well trained eye for quality, craftsmanship, furnishings, textiles. She possesses an innate desire to create and design Interiors that exceed the client’s expectations.

Her mission is to assist both Residential & Commercial Clients in timeless spaces with a hint of edge. A superior sense of style & client-centered approach to business, Payal has proven herself as an innovative designer. She prides herself on her attention to detail, obsession with quality, and love for local craftspeople.



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