

MEET THE BUILDER :

TODD BRADLEY, OWNER / BUILDER OF LIVE OAK BUILDERS



Todd was born and raised in Pennsylvania. His interest in the Beaufort area began as a youth when his family camped at Hunting Island for many years. He moved to Beaufort with his wife Joni in 1999.

Todd worked as a construction superintendent for the ALCOA Company for 10 years. ALCOA is the original developer of Dataw Island. He established Live Oak Builders in 2007. His son, Nick, joined him shortly after as a project manager.

With a growing list of happy clients, Todd and Nick moved the operation, complete with a design and remodeling center, to its current location at 1402 Boundary Street in 2010. Other team members are Lisa Simmons, construction coordinator and Jason Price, construction superintendent.

1. WHAT IS THE COST PER SQUARE FOOT TO BUILD A HOUSE IN BEAUFORT AND THE SEA ISLANDS?

I get this question all the time and it's a hard one to answer. It could cost \$150, \$200 - \$250 and up. For a custom home, it all depends on where the house is, the style of the house, the material used, and the energy efficiency choices. A small house with wraparound porches and a three car garage can cost as much as a larger house that's just a box on top of a box.

2. WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO CUT COSTS?

Roofs – metal roofs may last longer but they can cost as much as three times more than a Foundation – slab on grade typically cost less than a raised foundation. Windows/Doors - styles and brands can vary significantly in cost. Keep the design simple, classic and timeless.

3. WHY DOES IT COST MORE TO BUILD IN THE LOWCOUNTRY THAN IN OTHER LOCATIONS?

The main reason is because the cost of materials is higher. This relates to the engineering for flood, wind and earthquake. Also, county building code requirements are very stringent. And, since Beaufort is a tourist community, we have a smaller labor pool.

4. WHEN CONSIDERING BUILDING A HOUSE, WHICH COMES FIRST –

A. BUYING THE LOT OR IDENTIFYING A HOUSE DESIGN?

It happens either way. However, it's good to have a house design in mind when choosing a lot because it's important that the house design will fit on the lot and will meet the community guidelines. It's a team effort between the realtor, the builder, the designer/architect and the landscape/hardscape contractor.

B. HIRING A BUILDER OR AN ARCHITECT?

Again, either way. When working with an architect, it is customary to get multiple bids on a project. With a design/build firm, interview several local builders and decide which one you would like to work with. Each builder will provide references for you to check. Also, go to local banks, real estate agencies and building suppliers and ask them their experience in working with the builders. Ask them pointed questions about the builder's reputation. In the community under consideration, ask the neighbors what they know about the builders.

5. WHAT ENERGY EFFICIENT MEASURES HAVE BEEN ADAPTED IN THE LOWCOUNTRY?

We tend to use short term pay-off products like tankless, on-demand hot water heaters, spray foam insulation, and high SEER HVAC

units. Longer term pay-off measures like geothermal heat pumps and solar power are also used.

6. WHAT COMMUNITIES HAVE YOU BUILT IN?

Live Oak Builders has built homes in the City of Beaufort, Lady's Island, Marsh Hawk, Newpoint, Coosaw Point, Dataw Island, St. Helena Island, Fripp Island, Cat Island, Polawana Island, Bull Point and Brays Island.

Each community has their own rules and regulations and an Architectural Review Board (ARB) or Property Owner Board (POA). We have been successful at working with all of them through building relationships and developing trust. A careful review and understanding of the regulations followed by a discussion with the Board is the key to positive interactions throughout the construction process.

7. WHO WORKS WITH THE OWNER ON HOUSE DESIGN AND CUSTOM WISHES?

We have our own in-house design and selection coordinator who works with the customer. Together, we work directly with local suppliers for cabinet design, plumbing, lighting and flooring selections. It's another team effort between the builder and local suppliers.

During construction, out-of-town clients are prompted for the best time to visit to make important decisions. When visits are not possible, we provide email and photo updates.

8. WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT BUILDING CUSTOM HOMES IN THE LOWCOUNTRY?

I enjoy working with newcomers to Beaufort who have a vision of their dream home in the lowcountry. Educating them on construction issues and materials specific to the area, helping them weigh the benefits vs. the cost of materials and then building them a quality, finished product is very gratifying. Many of Live Oak Builders' clients have become long-term friendships.

Todd invites you to call he and his team with interest or questions about building a custom home in Beaufort and the Sea Islands.



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Traditional Lowcountry or Custom Designs



Live Oak Builders, a family-owned and operated business, has been building custom homes in and around Beaufort for over a decade. Our Home Design and Remodeling Center offers in-house design and selection support. Live Oak Builders will have you in your dream home in no time at all.



"Our roots run deep in the Beaufort community."

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Architect - Allison Ramsey

