



Welcome
Home

Elegance at your Doorstep

From Gym Teacher to Master Builder



An interview with Larry Clay

Humble Beginnings

Larry Clay is the founder and president of Vancouver-based Clay Construction. He came to the world of quality custom homebuilding from a career in teaching. As any teacher knows, teaching is about relationship building. It is precisely this approach that is at the core of Clay Construction. A proud family man, Larry says about his company: "having run Clay Construction for almost 20 years, we find ourselves in a very unique position with having won some key awards and having some pretty cool leadership opportunities...we're surprised to find ourselves here, but we're loving it."

Larry's first love was teaching, something he was drawn to from a young age. He followed his instincts, became a teacher, and taught for 17 years. Married and with six children, money was always tight, so almost from the start of his teaching career, he would take jobs in construction to make extra money. From 1989 on, Larry was in construction, working evenings and weekends. During summers, he could be found building homes and as word started to spread amongst friends, he found himself building more and more homes and selling them. Though he loved teaching, there were many opportunities to be had in the area of homebuilding, so he decided to leave teaching and start his own homebuilding company. As Larry explains, "being a teacher has really helped my journey as a builder. One way in particular is by being a life-long learner. I have always learned, always studied, and I enjoy doing that. That was the first step in establishing a brand."

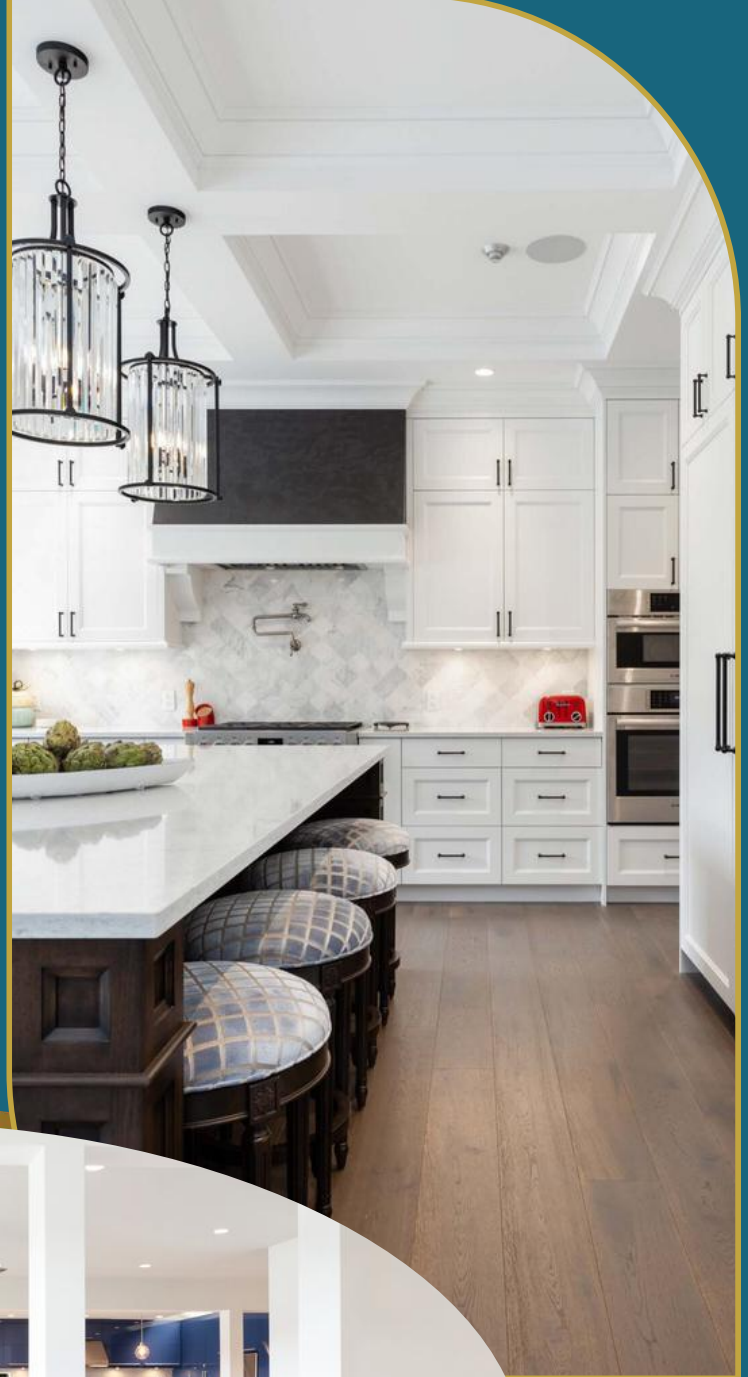


Refining Skills & Winning Awards

To successfully establish oneself as a homebuilder, Larry points to three things that helped Clay Construction. Number one is to become educated; when clients ask about better building practices: study and become an expert in the field. In other words, know your subject matter and know your craft. Clients want a healthy, comfortable, efficient, quiet home, so being prepared and being the most well-informed person they talk to is fundamental.

Number two is to win awards; going after awards establishes you as a credible, high-quality company. Awards, such as the Georgies, which Clay Construction has won twice for best custom homebuilder in the province of British Columbia, carry a lot of credibility.

Number three is leadership; as Larry says, "if you are a leader, there is a sense of accountability and people trust you." Chairing a committee, or chairing a board, or becoming president of your board – whether local, provincial, or national – all adds to the credibility and professionalism of a builder. To build a brand without involvement in the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) is next to impossible. It is important to get involved whether locally, provincially, or nationally. It is the quickest way to build a strong brand.



Quality, Integrity & Transparency

Clay Construction started in 2003 as a spec builder and by 2009 had transformed into a custom homebuilder. Larry says "if there are three words that sum up our business, they would be quality (we don't sacrifice on quality), integrity, and transparency. Integrity is another area that is really important to us; we're not going to compromise on integrity, we're going to always do what is right. Last is transparency; we show our clients all of the invoices, all the quotes, daily logs, pictures and videos; we have a very transparent process that helps them trust us, which is important to us."



Building Relationships

Over nearly 20 years as a quality custom homebuilder, what Larry Clay values the most are the relationships he has created with his clients. It does not matter whether he is working on a complicated build or a simple build, every home has people attached to it, and it is the relationship with those people that is of utmost importance.

As Larry says, "you're managing relationships through this project and, in the end, we end up with a home, but more importantly, I want to have a relationship with my clients."

Clay Construction's focus on relationship building extends even further through Night Shift Ministries, where, once a month, for the past eight years, they help to feed the homeless in Surrey, B.C.

Leading the Way in Energy Efficiency Builds

The province of B.C. is at the forefront of energy efficient builds with the newly required Energy Step Code. The Code presents a challenge to new homebuyers in terms of the added costs affecting affordability.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association, of which Larry is a recent past president, is doing a great job leading the way in achieving Net Zero affordability. One of the hardest things to do, and the one that requires the most skill, is achieving a high level of airtightness.

Clay Construction has set a goal of one air change cycle per hour (1.0 ACH 50) on all new homes. This focus on airtightness requires that drywallers, plumbers, framers, and almost everyone involved, know what changes are required of them in performing their part of every build to maintain the air control layer.



Outlook is Bright

What does the future hold for Clay Construction? More and more people are seeking them out to perform retrofits in order to achieve higher energy efficiency. They will continue to build custom homes of the highest quality.

Their team is also growing and becoming stronger with the addition of two of Larry's sons, Isaac and Adam, as well as well-known passive home builder, Shaun St-Amour, VP of Operations, and Daniel Preston, VP of Project Management. For Larry Clay, the future of Clay Construction is bright.



For more information on Clay Construction, visit their website at <https://clayconstruction.ca/>

For information on how to donate to Nightshift Ministries, visit their website at <https://nightshiftministries.org/>



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