

Imagine it Done Right

Keith and Chelli Webster, Owners of Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc., are making dreams come true with their stunning, contemporary creations.

His time in the horse business, designing and building “show” barns for his Arabian horses was a huge benefit in the construction business. He and his brother had built large, elegant structures for their horses with engineering input from his father, an engineer by degree. He had overseen the construction of his parents county estate as an Owner’s Representative, watching the builder for any “shortcuts” that might have slipped by. He developed an eye for detail. Using this hands-on experience and construction expertise, he began working with architects and discerning owners for the restoration of historic homes. His background and experience allowed him to deliver of expertly restored and superior quality projects demanded by his clients and their architects.

Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc. in Napa is owned by Keith Webster. He is often referred to as a renaissance man. Over the years he has been a professional equestrian, raising and training Arabian horses, a competitive sailor, a competitive sporting clays shooter, a chef trained at the Culinary Institute of America, and an artist whose work was shown in New York in SOHO.

Keith’s father graduated West Point with engineering degrees and had a career as a military intelligence officer. Growing up in the military, Keith lived all over the world, from Europe to Japan, and across the United States.

As a consummate entrepreneur, Keith started his first business at just ten years old, selling greeting cards door to door while living in Los Angeles. By age 15, he was buying, selling, and training horses in the St. Louis area, eventually moving the horse business to Texas.

The horse business led him to begin studying pre-veterinarian medicine at Texas A&M University. After a motorcycle accident and a long recovery from a broken neck, he became interested in healing people, leading him to apply to medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas.

“Then I had an epiphany,” says Keith. “I didn’t want to spend the next ten years in school.” He left school and began earning a living remodeling homes in the South Hampton and River Oaks areas of Houston, Texas.

Howard Barnstone, FAIA, one of Houston’s most notable architects of the time observed his work and recruited Keith to be his designated contractor for several of his more demanding clients. He became “Howard’s contractor.” Howard Barnstone may be best remembered as the architect commissioned by Dominique deMenil for the Rothko Chapel in Houston.

Late in 1979, Keith was commissioned to oversee the construction of several projects on Grand Cayman. This was an interesting challenge for both economic and logistical reasons. It was necessary to purchase the entire project’s material in the United States, containerize it, transport it via ship, deliver them to the site and constructed the project without having the benefit of “going around the corner” to the lumber yard. These structures were designed and engineered to withstand 180 mph wind loads, resisting Caribbean hurricanes. The first test was hurricane Allen which swept the island just as construction was beginning.

Upon his return to the States, Keith was commissioned to construct the first house on the Gulf Coast to be built to the then new, 140 mph Federal hurricane standard.

In 1998, Keith moved to Aspen, Colorado, and began building homes for clients there. He furthered his reputation as a high-quality contractor and his business prospered.

Keith moved to the Napa Valley in 2008. In 2011, he met Chelli. The two shared a myriad of interests, including,



food, travel, wine and winemaking. Chelli is not only his life partner, but also his business partner at Keith M. Webster Construction.

With over 45 years of experience, Keith is known for his attention to detail. “We don’t just slap things together,” says Keith. “I learned how to build from the ground up. I have gotten my hands dirty working in the trades—carpentry, concrete, plumbing, steel, roofing, drywall, cabinet building and painting—I learned how to do everything “hands on.” We specialize in very high-quality construction and strive for perfection. I love anything that requires incredible precision. We’re there

to make sure every joint, screw, tile, and shingle is exactly the way it should be. There are no unattended subcontractors “just doing what the plans say.” There are no endless layers of back office bureaucracy wasting your hard-earned money that should go into your home.

Keith M. Webster Construction can handle everything from a kitchen remodel to a custom-built home or small winery, all done with an eye for detail and perfection. He and his crews have built stunning, contemporary homes, completed historic restorations, constructed mountain retreats and traditional period homes.

“Keith knows if somebody is doing the job right, and if not, he steps in and corrects it,” says Chelli. “He was a fine-art painter and to him, building is like another art medium. His creativity is built into everything he does. Before starting a project, he can see the end product, and think backwards, like a good chess player who plans each move in advance, and that creates a cohesive workflow that heads off a lot of problems along the way.”

Keith and Chelli offer clients guidance throughout the design and permit process before starting any construction. Their process begins with their client’s vision, then shifts to determining the monetary feasibility of the construction. They encourage their clients to bring photos of homes they admire, so they will have a better idea of their dream. They work with the design to determine the economic feasibility of the project.

“We offer a variety of services in addition to just construction. One being pre-construction services,” says Chelli. “We’ll price everything out ahead of time, from the roof to the bathroom fixtures, so you don’t end up with a design that is out of your budget. According to Keith, this is extremely important, as often having a good grasp of the costs involved is elusive.

“We walk with our clients through each step,” adds Keith. “We work with architects and designers to make sure our clients’ ideas are possible, and within their budgets. If the plan is beyond their budget, we’ll help scale it back. One of our main tasks is expectation management. We can also handle all the permit paperwork, so they can be sure everything needed is included in the submittal for permit.”

Once construction begins, Keith and Chelli pride themselves on their continuous, transparent communication with their clients.

“We have cloud-based project management software that allows our clients to log in to their own portal and see the status of their project in real time,” says Chelli. “They can see photos, videos, and comments about their project, and they can message us directly through their portal and upload photos. We also have

regular project meetings with them to keep them abreast of everything that's happening, and answer any questions they may have."

"Another valuable service that we offer is that of an "Owner's Representative" Chelli adds. They act as an agent of the Owner, managing the day-to-day operations of a project. As an owner's rep they advise and represent the Owner from the earliest stage, beginning with preliminary design, permitting, pre-construction, bidding construction, commissioning, move-in and occupancy. They are watching the design and construction with the Owners position as

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their goal. The Owner maintains all decision-making authority and contractual relationship flows back to the owner. They enforce and are responsible for making sure there is clear and concise communication with the entire project team, along with accurate records and thorough documentation throughout all phases of the project.

"With this service we only represent the interest of the Owner, not the design team or contractors," says Chelli.

Keith and Chelli are truly a dynamic duo. Partners in business and life, they answer each other's questions, and finish each other's sentences. They are consummate professionals, but they are also very funny, and a meeting with the two of them is filled with banter and laughter. Planning a construction project can be daunting, but Keith and Chelli create a safe space, where questions are answered, possibilities explored, and concerns allayed. Knowledge is power, and Keith and Chelli make sure their clients have all the facts necessary to move forward with confidence and peace of mind.

Keith's eyes light up when he speaks about building. "I love to create something from nothing, and watch it grow from an idea to reality. I build everything like it's mine. I would say that we tend to over-deliver." (Chelli nods at this.)

"Sometimes our clients don't realize it, because the extra work is invisible, but I know "what lurks below." And when I see the smiles on our customer's face, when they light up and say, 'thank you,' then we know we've helped make their dream come true, and that makes everything worth it."

Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc. uses personnel that have been with them for many years, they have a dedicated project manager and on-site supervisor. All employees are given a thorough background checks, a physical, and a drug screening before being allowed to join their team, this assures their clients will always be comfortable with the people working in and around their home.

"We're fully insured and bonded," says Chelli. "And all of our sub-contractors are licensed and insured. We only work with the best; it's our name and reputation on the line, and we do everything possible to protect our clients and their property."

"We love to describe our projects with what we call 'Webster's Word of the Month,' says Chelli. "New fun words that describe what we do, who we are or what we can do. Our latest Webster's Word of the Month is 'Nidification': Noun: the act, process or technique of building a nest. Our goal is to make sure our clients' "nest" is just the way they had envisioned it when the project is finished."

Keith and Chelli love to travel, fly fish, sail, and visit museums and view historic architectural treasures. They are both "foodies," and love art. They have sponsored youth sport teams and programs and are deeply part of the Napa Valley Community.

Choosing the right contractor for your project is vital to its success. With their reputation for the highest quality work, and nearly half a century of experience, Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc. is an easy choice. "You need to feel comfortable with your contractor," says Keith. "You need to trust them because this is a relationship revolving around significant funds. You need to be sure they will communicate honestly and clearly throughout the project. We work hard to build that trust, and we always communicate with integrity and transparency. Our pricing is fair, and our work is the highest quality possible. If we accept your job, you will have our



full attention until it's finished and perfect." He pauses and adds, "We accept the projects where we feel we can do the best job, not the ones that will make us the most profit."

At Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc., every project is considered a work of art. They ask their clients to "Imagine getting it done right, the way you wanted." With Keith and Chelli on your team, you won't need to imagine. They'll take your dream and make it come true.

Keith M. Webster Construction, Inc.

1100 Lincoln Avenue, Suite 100
Napa, CA 94558
707-963-1705

info@kmwconstruction.com
www.kmwconstruction.com
Contractor's License # 956039