

Survey reveals more diversity in design tastes

By Associated Designs

Have you ever considered what your home would be like if you designed it yourself? Readers of this and other newspapers nationwide did just that a few months ago, when they participated in the 2004 Home from the Heart survey.

When the Associated Designs' staff tallied the results, they found a wider diversity of preferences than in recent years. Typically, upwards of 90 percent yearn for a fireplace, deck/patio, pantry, master suite walk-in closet, and extra storage space in the garage.

This year the highest level of agreement was 83 percent. The big winner was that perennial favorite, the master suite walk-in closet. Deck/patio, pantry, isolated master suite, and kitchen open to the family room all dropped in to the 70 percent range.

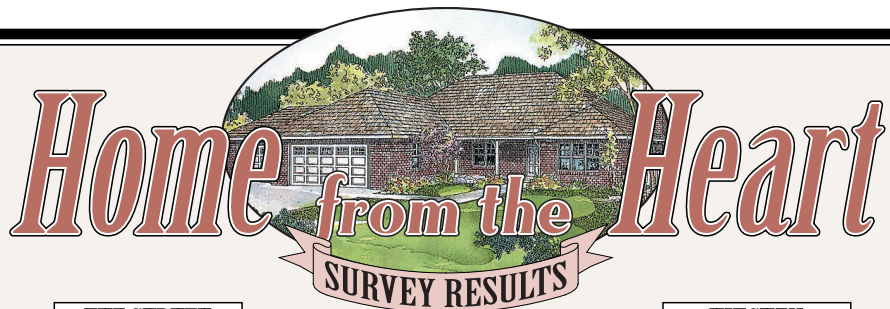
One-story homes were again the favorite. A preference for 2000-3000 sq. footage still reigns, even edging up a few percentage points higher this year. Almost 50 percent chose brick/stone exteriors, another similarity to 2003.

Votes for a formal living room continued to plummet, dropping to 25 percent from last year's 40. What most opted for instead, is a great room, combining the functions of living, dining and family rooms.

Seventy percent wanted the family room, whether separate or part of a great room, to be open to the kitchen. That's up a bit.

Similar to last year, more than 70 percent preferred an isolated master suite, and most wanted it on the main floor. The average number of desired bedrooms and bathrooms also held firm, at close to 3 and 2.5, respectively.

As usual, changes in most reader preferences were incremental, but over time those small changes evolve into trends that are well worth watching.



THE SURVEY

Every year in February, Associated Designs sends a survey to over 750 subscribing newspapers across the continent, to discover the public's current preferences in home design. This year's results are presented here. This information was also used to create a home design, the crowd-pleasing 2004 Home from the Heart.

BUILDING ISSUES

Green Building Materials:

Building materials are now available from sources that make a special effort to be environmentally friendly, but the cost is generally higher. How much extra are you willing to spend to utilize "green" building materials in your home?

- 20% Two percent
- 35% Five percent
- 9% Ten percent
- 28% Not a concern

Smaller Homes:

Larger homes usually have rooms dedicated to a single function, e.g., dining room, family room, study, or guest room. Smaller homes can be designed so that rooms have multiple functions, e.g., dining/family room or study/guest room. Assuming the building cost is about the same, which do you prefer?

- 39% A larger home with single-function rooms
- 58% A smaller home with multiple-function rooms

Indoor Air Quality:

Building materials are available which ensure good indoor air quality, but they generally cost more. How much extra are you willing to spend to maximize your home's indoor air quality?

- 16% Two percent
- 30% Five percent
- 28% Ten percent
- 20% Not a concern

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TYPE OF HOME

Size of Home:

- 10% less than 1500 sq. ft.
- 29% 1500-2000 sq. ft.
- 42% 2000-3000 sq. ft.
- 16% 3000 sq. ft. and up

Number of Floors:

- 65% 1 story
- 33% 2 stories
- 49% Basement
- 20% Wheelchair Accessible

Budget: \$222,586

Exterior Style:

- 30% Traditional
- 21% Country
- 21% Ranch
- 6% Cottage
- 13% New England
- 0% Southwestern
- 6% Mediterranean
- 8% Victorian
- 10% Craftsman
- 7% Other

Exterior Material:

- 20% Wood
- 49% Brick/Stone
- 14% Stucco
- 3% Vinyl/Aluminum
- 1% Other

LIVING AREAS

In addition to the kitchen I would like the following rooms in my home:

- Number of Bedrooms: 3.2
- Number of Baths: 2.5
- 46% Formal Entry
- 25% Formal Living
- 34% Formal Dining
- 65% Great Room (Open Living/Dining/Kitchen)
- 28% Family Room
- 18% Theater Room
- 22% Recreation Room
- 31% Guest Suite
- 39% Office
- 42% Den/Library
- 40% Sunroom
- 7% Other

UTILITY ROOM

- 63% Adjacent to Kitchen/Garage
- 23% Adjacent to Bedrooms
- 15% In Garage or Basement

KITCHEN

General Features:

- 70% Open to Family Room
- 60% Breakfast Nook
- 47% Adjacent to Garage
- 4% Other

Special Features:

- 75% Pantry
- 54% Eating Bar
- 66% Island
- 36% Appliance Center
- 31% Garden Window
- 25% Desk
- 39% Double Oven
- 26% Vegetable Sink
- 28% Trash Compactor
- 6% Other

MASTER SUITE

Best Location:

- 63% Main Floor
- 12% Upper Floor
- 71% Isolated from Other Bedrooms
- 10% Adjacent to Other Bedrooms

Suite Features:

- 83% Walk-in Closet
- 41% Outside Access
- 36% Sitting Room
- 2% Other

GARAGE

Number of Cars: 2.5

- 55% Storage
- 41% Shop
- 12% RV Parking

EXTRAS

Interior:

- 57% Fireplace/Woodstove
- 52% Vaulted Ceilings
- 40% Skylights
- 42% Computer Center
- 20% Wet/Service Bar
- 21% Swimming Pool
- 6% Other

Exterior:

- 66% Front Porch
- 74% Deck/Patio
- 41% Screened Porch
- 23% Courtyard
- 23% Fireplace
- 32% Spa/Hot Tub
- 25% Water Feature
- 4% Other

HOUSEHOLDS

- Number of People: 3.1
- Average Age: 44.4
- Plan to Build a Home: 74%