

Designer's Perspective: do buyers want green?



Years of research in custom home design, remodeling and home building has led Tony Weremeichik, Principal of Canin Associates' Architectural Design Studio, to be a strong advocate for home buyers and home owners to get the best design and construction value for their money. He leads clients and builders through a well-orchestrated design process that provides his clients with the utmost attention and creative design solutions. Tony can be reached at tweremeichik@canin.com or visit his company's website at www.canin.com.

Some do – but most buyers are not asking for green homes. Well, they say they WANT them, but repeatedly say they don't want to pay extra for "Green". What they DO ask for, however, is Energy Efficiency for lower monthly utility bills.

As reported recently at the International Builder's Show (IBS) from a Home Trends & Buyer Preferences survey by NAHB (the National Association of Home Builders), "The Most Wanted List" - Features of Respondents Rating "Must Have" or "Desirable" - includes (Top 3 listed only):

1. Energy-Star rated appliances: 94%
2. Laundry room: 93%
3. Energy-Star rating for whole home: 91%

MUST HAVE'S. As for the must-haves, energy efficiency was a top priority, nearly all (94 percent) buyers wanted Energy Star-rated appliances and windows and 91 percent said they were looking for a complete Energy Star home.

The NAHB preference survey results were also in line with survey results released by Better Homes & Gardens (BH&G), during the IBS. The BH&G survey reported three out of four respondents, who identified

themselves as prospective buyers, told the magazine that energy-efficient HVAC systems and appliances would be priority items in their next home.

DESIGN IT RIGHT. Start with a sensible home design that adequately meets your needs, with a right-sized floor plan and spaces with plenty of natural light and vegetation. Delve into the details - make good choices on the things hidden behind the walls that you really don't see that make a big impact on costs and energy.

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THINK STRATEGICALLY

with an upgraded thermal envelope - your floors, walls, doors, windows and roof:

- **Seal for Air Leaks** - Use Polysealant between your foundation and exterior walls and around your door and window frames to help prevent air infiltration.
- **Upgrade Your Insulation** - Instead of code-minimum blown insulation, upgrade to spray foam. Spray foam can carry a higher insulation value and expands into all the holes and gaps between building materials to stop air leaks.

■ Energy Efficient

Windows - Make careful choices on your window selections, especially in new construction. Consider spending the extra money on energy efficient windows - it will pay off in the long run.

SOLAR HOT WATER HEATERS

According to David Bessette of ALLSOLAR Service Company, this is the low-hanging fruit for going green. It is one of the best values - where you receive the quickest payback on your investment. Water heating is second only to air conditioning in your total energy cost, accounting for up to 25% of your average monthly bill!

SAVE WATER

A low flow shower head and faucet will save water and it doesn't take long to get used to them. They are also becoming part of building codes, so why not be ahead of the game? Toilets are required by code to be 1.6 gallon-per-minute flushes, and dual-flush toilets are growing in popularity. Remember you can also cut back on your lawn's irrigation by planting native species that require less water.

EFFICIENT A/C, APPLIANCES & LIGHT FIXTURES

Install an air conditioner with a rating of SEER 14 or better and have both the unit and the ductwork within air conditioned space. Buy only Energy Star rated appliances and lighting fixtures with compact fluorescent or LED bulbs.



about our firm

Canin Associates believes great ideas and great placemaking merge when connections are made to the regional context, vernacular architecture and the cultural heritage of a region. Our 24-person, 29-year old interdisciplinary firm of idea-based professionals is committed to creating sustainable resort and mixed-use communities that enrich the quality of life and are wonderful places to live, work or visit.

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