



# SHOPPING FOR A NEW HOME?

Of course **LOCATION** is the first consideration; **PRICE** is a close second. The third? **DESIGN**: both inside and out.

Economy and value is driving home sales right now. Right sized, functional rooms. No-wasted-space design. Practical. Buyers are choosing quality of space over quantity of space (well, they actually prefer both, if they can get both). They are willing to trade excess square footage of rarely used formal rooms for larger informal rooms they will use everyday.

For your home, it is one thing to follow general trends, but another to evaluate floor plans that work for your own lifestyle. Spend your dollars wisely on the square footage you will use the most. Consider smarter space though:

## Everyday Living Spaces

Consumer preference surveys of today's homebuyers reveal that Family Rooms and Dining Rooms are fused into one large Everyday Living Space. Evaluate space for function: Family rooms need to be the right size - large enough to accommodate furniture and to provide convenient circulation to walk around the furniture and through the room.

Giving me dirty nooks? Well sneer at this: Breakfast Nooks are evaporating from new floor plans as fast as our 401(k)'s. Formal Dining Rooms are disappearing too. The small area off the kitchen that used to be for the small table is now combined with one dining space and converted into one larger everyday eating area – open to the kitchen and the family room – right in the middle of it all. Extra bar seating at the kitchen island is replacing those old nooks.



## about the author

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## everyday living spaces



## Outdoor Living

Small concrete pads in the back of the house are insufficient for most buyers to sit out and enjoy. Trending now: Spacious outdoor living rooms. Outdoor covered patios/lanais are growing in popularity and are now a must-have for most buyers. These spaces are designed like living rooms - to accommodate a furniture setting and sheltered from the sun or rain. If the area is designed with posts, then screens can sometimes fit between them to block out pesky mosquitoes. Other enhancements: outdoor fireplaces/fire pits, outdoor TV's and outdoor kitchens rank high on consumer preference lists.

And where does the grill go? This is a good qualifying question to determine if the outdoor living or dining space was thoughtfully laid out to grill - and eat - outdoors...if that is on your priority list.



outdoor living



eliminate barriers



## Eliminate Barriers

When the indoor everyday living rooms combine with the outdoor living area, then your living area virtually expands. Eliminate barriers between the indoors and outdoors by providing sliding glass doors or large windows. The glass area opens up the rooms, allows for views out and brings natural light in.



storage

## Storage

One more thing to consider in selecting your new home: where does all your stuff go? Look at floor plans critically to see how much storage space the plan offers. It should have plenty of closets, nooks, cabinets, shelving, attic space or other opportunities to maximize needed storage spaces – especially in the garage with parked cars. ●

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