



What's trending in home design?

Open floor plans, bigger master suites, more storage top homebuyers' wish lists

ROCHELLE A. SHENK
LNP CORRESPONDENT

You can read about home design trends or get a feel for them by watching HGTV shows.

Area residents can also get a real feel by visiting the Building Industry Association of Lancaster County's annual Parade of Homes in June. Builders "put their best foot forward" in this annual showcase.

Two builders who have won awards for their Parade designs shared their view on design trends.

Custom Home Group designer Jared Erb said an open floor plan with wide plank and/or hand-scraped hard-



CUSTOM HOME GROUP

Spacious master bedroom with tray ceiling.

wood floors on the first floor is a key design trend, and over the past five years, great rooms have supplanted for-

mal living rooms.

"Even though it's an open floor plan, buyers are still looking for a grand entrance,

and that can include a vaulted ceiling and wrought-iron balusters on the staircase. We're also seeing a trend for gas fireplaces with built-in bookshelves," he said.

Janet Metzler of Metzler Home Builders agrees that an open floor plan is at the top of home buyers' wish list.

"It's great for families — a parent can be preparing a meal and keep an eye on kids as they're playing or doing homework. Empty nesters love it for the ease of entertaining," she said.

In the kitchen, the trend is for large islands. This multi-purpose space provides extra counter space for meal prep and a counter for informal

dining, as well as a serving area for entertaining.

"People tend to migrate to the kitchen when you entertain," Erb said.

He added that an increasing number of clients are seeking walk-in pantries or butler's pantries and adding a built-in desk area off to the side of the kitchen. Another trend is for a larger window over the sink.

The home that Custom Home Group is currently building for this year's Parade will feature a built-in desk tucked into a corner of the kitchen. Metzler said home buyers are getting away from laminate counter tops and

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choosing either granite or another type of hard surface. For kitchen cabinets, she said that the trend is for white, off-white or painted cabinets.

Although the open floor plan is popular, areas are still defined by the use of area rugs, different paint colors or wall treatments, crown molding, a coffered ceiling in

a dining area or even a half-wall with columns.

Jordan Metzler of Metzler Home Builders said that both interior and exterior columns have a more square "Craftsman" look rather than the rounded look popular a few years ago. Likewise, crown molding has the more simplified look rather than the more intricate dental molding. Windows and doors also take cues from the Craftsman style, with grilles only on the top sash of windows

and more of a square look in doors.

In addition to the more traditional double-sash windows, smaller casement windows are being placed higher in rooms.

"The smaller windows can be rectangular or a 24-inch square. They let in light, but in neighborhoods where houses are closer together, they help to ensure privacy. With an open floor plan, they help with furniture placement since there are not as

many walls to work with," Janet Metzler said.

Mud rooms are also on buyers' wish lists. They're now larger and can be open to the main living area.

"The mud room is a 'drop zone' for the entire family. There's often a bench with or without storage as well as shelves or cubbies," Erb said.

Master suites continue to be sought-after. Metzler said that first-floor masters tend to be more popular with people in their 50s and 60s. She

indicated that although most young families prefer to have all the bedrooms on the same floor, some buyers in their 30s and 40s do look ahead and gravitate to the first floor masters.

"We see empty-nesters looking for sitting areas and/or fireplaces in their master suite. A trend that crosses all age groups is to have a walk-in shower rather than a jetted tub or soaking tub," she said.

Erb agreed that master **HOME**, page 39

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suites seem to be getting bigger, and so, too, are the walk-

in showers.

“Large walk-in showers with multiple jets and heads create a spa-like effect,” he said.

For children’s rooms, Erb said Jack-and-Jill bathrooms that are more convenient and private are trending. Walk-in closets in children’s and guest

rooms are also popular.

“Standard 2-foot-deep closets just don’t have enough storage any more,” he said.

With regard to home style

itself, Metzler said two-story is popular, although the company also has requests to construct Cape Cod-style homes and ranchers.

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