

Survey respondents think smaller is better

People are thinking smaller this year, when it comes to the size of their dream home. Could it be a sign of the times? Nearly half of the participants in Associated Designs' Home from the Heart survey said they preferred a home in the 1400-1800 square foot range.

This is just one of the trends that emerged when the Associated Designs' staff tallied results from the survey. Newspaper readers like yourself from all over the United States had a chance to participate, and many sent in their preferences and comments.

As in many recent years, the ranch-style home is still the most popular, but not by as much. Last year 35 percent chose this as their favorite style; this year that percentage has dropped to 22 percent. A bigger change is seen in the second place. The Craftsman-style home has usurped the number two spot, displacing the country-style home, which has held a firm hold on that position for many years.

Eighty percent or more want a main floor owners' suite, isolated from secondary bedrooms. More than 60 percent prefer a single-level home, and nearly half want a basement. Very few participants asked for separately defined family living places – only 11 percent. The contemporary preference is for large informal gathering spaces, which could be in a great room configuration, or not. More than 60 percent opted for a full-function kitchen, open to a family room.

Reflecting the sentiments of many, an Oklahoma reader wrote, "Formal rooms are a waste. Put the square footage where it will be used every day!"

Other options chosen by more than 60 percent include a fireplace or woodstove, a shop with extra storage, a heat pump, and advanced insulation. The desire for more spending on "green" options, dropped slightly, from 76 percent last year to 72 percent this year.

One possible interpretation is this: readers opted for smaller homes because they've begun to realize that having less, often results in an increased quality of life. Cutting their carbon footprint by living more simply in itself is a way to live a more "green" lifestyle.



Home from the Heart

SURVEY RESULTS

TYPE OF HOME

Average size of home:
1790 sq.ft.

Range of responses:
1000-5000 sq.ft.

- 64% One story
- 34% Two story
- 2% More than two story
- 45% Basement
- 28% Wheelchair accessible

Average budget: \$280,989
Range of responses:
\$75,000-\$2,000,000

- Exterior style:
- 22% Ranch
 - 14% Craftsman
 - 9% Country
 - 8% Traditional
 - 6% Contemporary
 - 41% All other styles

LIVING AREAS

- 62% Informal great room with open living, kitchen & dining areas
- 11% Formally defined spaces with separation of functions
- 27% Combination of formal spaces and great room

Number of bedrooms: 3.2

Number of baths: 2.4

Number of "en-suites": 1.2
(bedrooms with private baths)

OWNERS' SUITE

Best location:

- 83% Main floor
- 17% Upper floor
- 82% Isolated from other bedrooms
- 18% Adjacent to other bedrooms

2010

KITCHEN

- 23% Gourmet style kitchen, rich in amenities
- 65% Full function kitchen with ample features
- 12% Efficient kitchen with focus on space saving and multiple functions
- 67% Open to family room
- 40% Adjacent to garage

UTILITY ROOM

- 67% Adjacent to kitchen/garage
- 17% Adjacent to bedrooms

GARAGE

Number of cars: 2.3

- 61% Storage/shop

EXTRAS

Interior:

- 61% Fireplace/woodstove
- 48% Vaulted ceilings
- 33% Skylights
- 42% Computer center
- 14% Wet/service bar
- 6% Swimming pool

Exterior:

- 58% Front porch
- 53% Deck/patio
- 33% Screened porch
- 22% Courtyard
- 20% Fireplace
- 11% Spa/hot tub
- 14% Water feature

GREEN BUILDING

Would you consider using the following "green building" techniques & products?

- 23% Site selection to minimize impact
 - 47% Design to minimize impact on trees, streams & slopes
 - 44% Advanced framing techniques to reduce materials & waste
 - 67% Advanced insulation to save energy
 - 39% Use of recycled or salvaged materials
 - 63% High efficiency heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, or solar space heating/cooling
 - 55% Water efficient faucets, showerheads & toilets
 - 44% Low VOC (volatile organic compound) paints, sealants & adhesives
- How much extra would you consider spending to reduce environmental impact or increase energy efficiency?
- 16% Would spend no extra, only use items with little or no extra cost
 - 23% Would spend 5% extra
 - 25% Would spend 10% extra
 - 4% Would spend 20% extra
 - 4% No budget constraints; use as many "green" techniques as practical

HOUSEHOLD

Number of people: 2.8
Age of respondent: 50

- 55% Plan to build a home
- 5% Plan to buy a home