

# KEY REALTORS

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**Better Homes & REAL ESTATE**

**GARY GREENE**

**T**here is no denying the profound impact that the recession has had on the real estate industry. For the last several years, the real estate market went from booming to one characterized by homes sitting on the market for months on end. New home sales also have been conservative, and builders are cutting back on some offerings that were once commonplace. The National Association of Realtors says that, despite fluctuating sales, there are fewer foreclosed homes available now than in recent years. Distressed homes – foreclosures and short sales and at steep discounts – accounted for 25 percent of home sales in May of 2012. That figure is down from 28 percent in April and 31 percent in May of 2011. While home sales have increased, money is still tight in the building industry and among home buyers. As such, instead of over-the-top features in homes that were once becoming the norm, builders are now focusing on more value-conscious designs and offerings. The list of add-ons also has been reduced, so what can buyers expect to live without when buying a newly constructed home? Here are a few of the common features that are falling by the wayside.

**Surrounds:** Although the “bring-the-outside-in” movement was once strong, builders are now focusing on home features that immediately add value and attract the eye of buyers. Therefore, they’re putting their resources into them closets and laundry rooms while de-emphasizing surrounds.

Extended calling heights. It can take a lot of energy to heat rooms with 10-foot ceilings. As a result, granite bench tops and two-story foyers are less attractive to buyers focused on saving money. Homeowners want spaces that are easier to heat and cool.

**Luxury bathrooms:** Many prime residential luxury bathrooms that those found at popular Astor hotels, but luxury bathrooms are being phased out in favor of less expensive, more practical options.

**Outdoor kitchens:** Although entertaining at home is one way to keep budgets in check, some homeowners have realized they don’t need a complete backyard kitchen with a pizza oven and built-in grill. Instead, in order to host guests, according to a survey from the National Association of Home Builders, outdoor kitchens are the second least-desired feature to be included in homes built in 2012.

**Media rooms:** Individuals certainly love their gadgets, but many of these gadgets have become smaller and more portable. That reduces the need for great home theaters and gaming spaces.

While certain features are disappearing, there are others that are growing more and more popular. Check out in-kitchen, walk-in closets, extra storage areas, and hidden charging stations for devices are likely to show up more and more in new home designs, more intimate spaces.

The design of new homes is changing to be more budget-friendly and also represent the changing priorities of home buyers. As a result, today’s newly designed homes will likely look much different from homes built just a few years ago.

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**A**ccording to Dr. Jay Gehl, an oral health professional and expert in extreme whitening treatments, couples should schedule a professional dental hygiene appointment and produce the whitening results. During these appointments, dentists can develop a regimen that or professional whitening may be included in the suggestions to dramatically change the appearance of teeth.

If your teeth aren't as white as they once were, you may be considering a whitening treatment. Many foods and beverages, such as coffee, tea, cola, dark berries, and other acidic drinks, are known to stain teeth. For instance, such a procedure is more controlled, all products. In addition, the dentist can help control discomfort for men and women with sensitive teeth.

"This whitening is always stronger than the at-home kits," says Dr. Gehl. In addition, an in-office whitening treatment may be customized and take less time. Couples should schedule a whitening appointment at least a month before their wedding for optimal results. All treatments are different, but generally the whitening procedure involves taking pictures of your teeth before treatment to show the "before" and "after" results. Your dentist may prescribe special.

If your teeth aren't as white as they once were, you may be considering a whitening treatment. Many foods and beverages, such as coffee, tea, cola, dark berries, and even chocolate, can stain the teeth over time. Certain medications also may contribute to changing the surface color of your teeth. While there are many whitening systems available at drug stores, there are benefits to getting a professional whitening treatment performed by a licensed dentist.

"People who wear dentures should bring the dentures in to the dental office," says Dr. Gehl. "A dentist can professionally clean the dentures and repair the dentures if there are any chips or missing teeth can send the dentures to the lab to see if a color change is possible."

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