

# DESIGN INNOVATION

Open floor plan, walk-in pantry, kitchen island, dual vanities, and laundry room near the master suite are the gotta-have-it amenities for new homes

By Mike Beirne, Senior Editor

Any builder, architect, or real estate agent knows that the kitchen and bathroom are where clients devote most of their design attention and dollars. The least important spaces for new-construction homes were the entry and outdoors, according to *Professional Builder's* Design Innovation survey. More than 46 percent of respondents also noted that their kitchens are bigger than what they designed and built two years ago. High-end bathroom amenities, such as wall-mounted commodes, are only catching on in a smattering of luxury homes, but more than half of respondents—which also includes members of Builder Partnerships—have used innovations such as dual-flush toilets, radiant floor heating, and tankless water heaters in most or some of their projects. Despite telecommuting and the flexible office making inroads, the home office, and even the informal office/computer nook, ended at the bottom of a list of 25 possible living spaces ranked for level of importance.

Adding more grab bars, zero-threshold showers, accessible drawers, or other aging-in-place and universal design features was mentioned most often as being the biggest design change respondents intend to make. Home automation also was mentioned multiple times. A Colorado custom home builder noted that his struggle is keeping up with the more contemporary, clean design aesthetic while executing that look and feel with warmth. For more Design Innovation survey results, see the charts that follow.

**METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT INFORMATION:** This survey was distributed between July 12, 2017, and Aug. 24, 2017, to a random sample of *Professional Builder's* print and digital readers and to members of Builder Partnerships. No incentive was offered. By closing date, a total of 153 eligible readers had returned surveys. Respondent breakdown by discipline: 38.2% custom home builder; 21.8% diversified builder/remodeler; 17.3% production builder for move-up/move-down buyer; 15.5% architect/designer engaged in home building; 4.5% production builder for first-time buyer; 0.9% luxury production builder; and 1.8% other. Approximately 41.8% sold one to five homes in 2016, and 13.6% sold more than 100 units.

## KITCHEN

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING VERY IMPORTANT, RATE THE IMPORTANCE TO YOUR HOMEBUYERS/CLIENTS OF THE FOLLOWING KITCHEN SPACES

Kitchen island: single island	4.03
Pantry (walk-in)	3.99
Breakfast bar	3.36
Breakfast nook	3.27
Kitchen island with integrated sink	3.23
Pantry (butler's pantry)	3.0
Food prep area/service kitchen	2.94
Dual sinks	2.79
Recycling center	2.59
Kitchen island: double island	2.59

BASE: 132; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

This year's top kitchen spaces rankings are nearly identical to results from last year's survey.

APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOUSES HAS YOUR COMPANY BUILT OR DESIGNED IN THE PAST 24 MONTHS WITH THE FOLLOWING KITCHEN FEATURES?

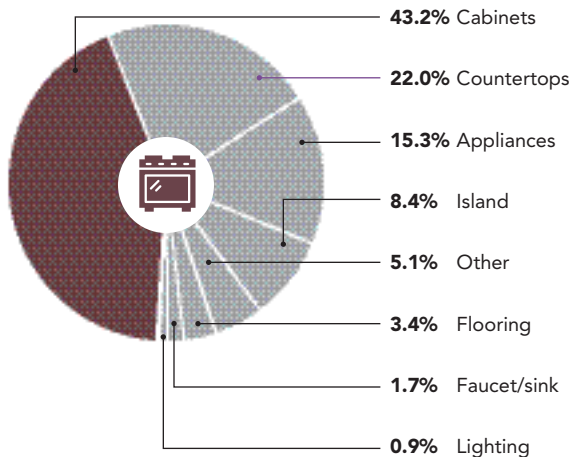
	ALL	MOST	SOME	NONE
Garbage disposal	70%	15.8%	9.2%	5%
Energy-efficient/Energy Star appliances	55%	30%	12.5%	2.5%
Granite/quartz countertops	51.7%	28.3%	15.8%	4.2%
Soft-close drawers	49.6%	32.2%	12.4%	5.8%
Island	48.4%	35%	14.2%	2.5%
Pantry	44.1%	37.3%	15.3%	3.4%
LED lights	40%	35.8%	20.8%	3.3%
Low-flow fixtures/faucet	36.7%	33.3%	23.3%	6.7%
42-inch/extended-height cabinets	25%	26.7%	38.8%	12.5%
Breakfast bar	18.2%	34.7%	34.7%	12.4%

BASE: 121; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Soft-close drawers and bigger cabinets cracked the top 10 list of kitchen features, while wall ovens just missed, as 53.3 percent of respondents indicated that that product is in all or most of their projects (17.5 percent have them in all projects).

# KITCHEN

WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR FEATURE WHEN IT COMES TO SELLING KITCHEN UPGRADES?

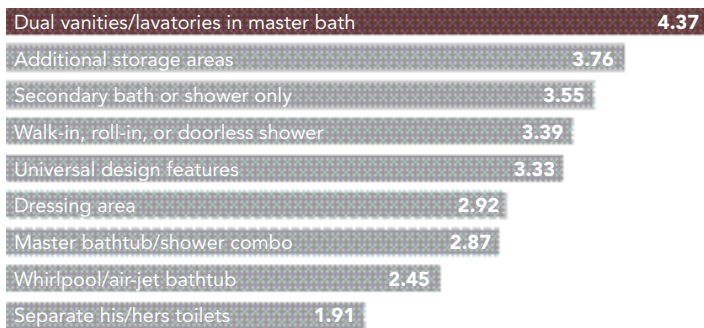


BASE: 118; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Cabinets have been the top-selling upgrade since the 2014 survey, and extended-height cabinets was the newest entry to make the top 10 list in the previous chart on page 19. As for kitchen countertops, 63.6 percent of survey respondents offer granite as a standard feature, and quartz was standard for one-third of respondents.

# BATH

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING VERY IMPORTANT, RATE THE IMPORTANCE TO YOUR HOMEBUYERS/CLIENTS OF THE FOLLOWING BATHROOM SPACES



BASE: 144; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Separate toilets are the least desirable use of bath space, while dual vanities and more storage are again the most popular.

# BATH

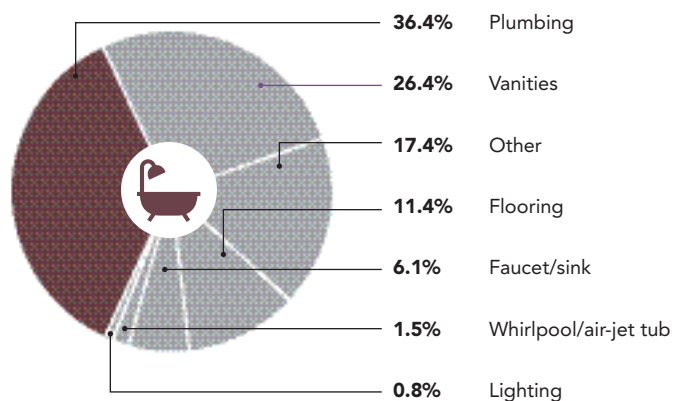
APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOUSES BUILT/DESIGNED BY YOUR COMPANY DURING THE PAST 24 MONTHS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING BATHROOM FEATURES?

	ALL	MOST	SOME	NONE
Accessories that match faucets/fixtures	51.1%	34.8%	11.1%	2.9%
Dual vanities/lavatories in master bath	58.5%	22.2%	13.3%	5.9%
Water-saving fixtures	47.4%	33.3%	17.0%	2.2%
Granite/quartz vanity top	34.1%	36.4%	26.5%	3.0%
Separate tub/shower combo in master bath	38.1%	29.1%	23.9%	8.9%
Decorative tiles	32.8%	35.1%	25.4%	6.7%
Additional storage areas	25.9%	41.5%	28.2%	4.4%
LED lights	31.1%	32.6%	26.7%	9.6%
Solid-surface vanity top	16.3%	33.3%	31.9%	18.5%
Multiple-head shower system	11.1%	28.2%	45.2%	15.6%

BASE: 135; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

The freestanding tub and tankless water heater just missed the top 10 list, while Internet-connected shower controls ranked slightly better than towel warmers and toilets with touchless flush control.

WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR FEATURE WHEN IT COMES TO SELLING BATHROOM UPGRADES?

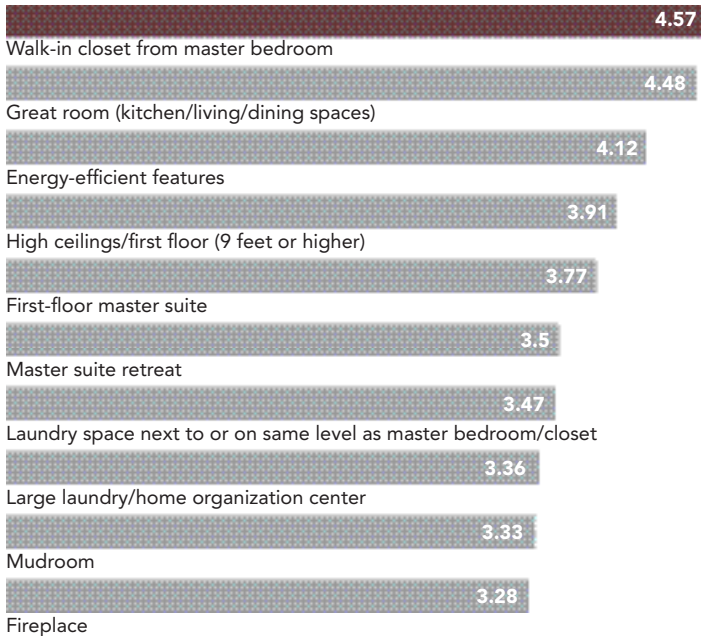


BASE: 132; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Tile shower walls and zero-threshold showers were the most frequently mentioned upgrades in the "other" category.

# LIVING SPACE

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING VERY IMPORTANT, RATE THE IMPORTANCE TO YOUR HOMEBUYERS/CLIENTS OF THE FOLLOWING LIVING SPACES

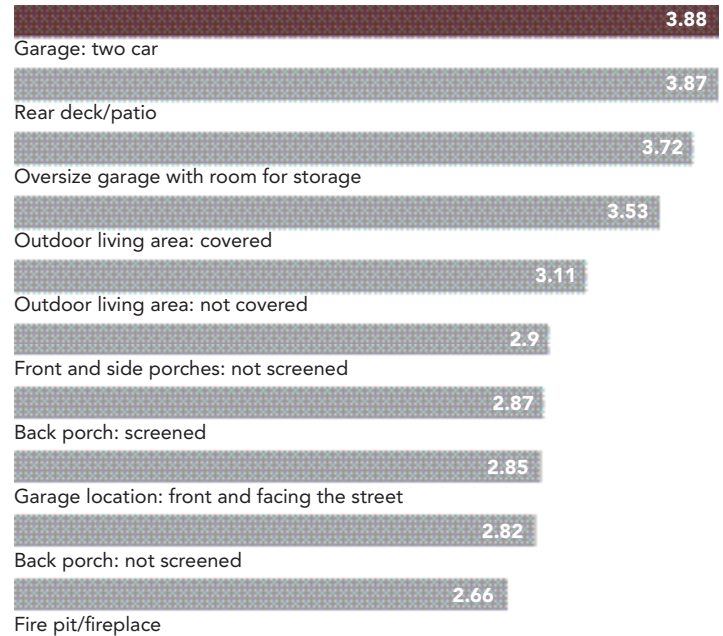


BASE: 153; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Laundry space next to or on the same floor as the master bedroom or closet was a new answer option introduced in this year's Design Innovation survey and it easily ranked in the top 10 important living spaces, pushing out bonus/flex room and smart technology.

# OUTDOOR SPACE

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WITH 5 BEING VERY IMPORTANT, RATE THE IMPORTANCE TO YOUR HOMEBUYERS/CLIENTS OF THE FOLLOWING OUTDOOR SPACES



BASE: 145; 2017 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER DESIGN INNOVATION SURVEY

Even though some designers and builders deride the "snout house" as a reflection of a car-centric culture, the garage door as part of the front elevation and facing the street for easy ingress and egress ranked among the top 10 very important features for outdoor design.

# BUYER PREFERENCES

LIST SOME OF THE POPULAR AMENITIES FOR THE BUYER GROUPS YOUR COMPANY SELLS TO

## YOUNG MILLENNIALS (21 TO 28 YEARS OLD)

- Open floor plan
- Smart-home features and connected appliances
- Simple, cheap, and ready to move in
- Smaller living area/tech alcove and extra closet for media equipment consolidation
- White hues and very low-maintenance finishes

## OLD MILLENNIALS (29 TO 33 YEARS OLD)

- Open floor plan
- Large pantry, fewer cabinets
- White, painted cabinets and finishes
- Technology, starting to buy better appliances
- Granite countertops

## GENERATION X (34 TO 51 YEARS OLD)

- Open floor plan
- Spaces for entertaining
- Large kitchen and island
- Higher-end finishes
- Granite/quartz countertops

## YOUNGER BABY BOOMERS (52 TO 57 YEARS OLD)

- Open floor plan
- Lots of storage
- Outdoor living
- Universal design
- Higher-end cabinets, flooring, appliances

## OLDER BABY BOOMERS (58 TO 68 YEARS OLD)

- Open floor plan
- First-floor master bed and bath
- Aging in place/universal design features
- Curbless showers
- Low-maintenance finishes and products

## TRADITIONALS (OLDER THAN 68)

- First-floor master bed and bath
- Aging in place/universal design features
- Minimal steps
- Extra space to accommodate family visitors
- Low-maintenance finishes and products