

Title: Wish List of Home Buyers This Year

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Home sellers looking to put their best foot forward in some tough housing markets would be well advised to bring their homes up to date.

When buyers have hundreds of similar properties to choose from, small details can make a big difference.

"New buyers, especially, want the house done in today's look," says Mark Nash, a Chicago-area Realtor and author of *Real Estate A-Z for Buying and Selling a Home*, who surveys more than 900 real estate agents and brokers every year to find out the home design trends of most interest to their clients.

Nash has put together a list of do's and don'ts for home sellers for the New Year. Many of the do's involve having your home make a big statement.

#### UPSCALE 6 HOT HOME DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2007

"I would say drama is making a big headway in home design," says Nash. That means using brighter colors, glossier finishes and grander statements.

"Big, tumbled stone fireplaces are in, oversized mantles too, and long, glass pendant chandeliers," he says. "Levittown is gone for good."

Many new homeowners mix natural, well-textured materials, according to Nash, to take away some of that mint-fresh look the home would otherwise have. That means floors of slate or terra cotta, recycled wood from old barns and weathered metal and glass.

Nash also points out a couple home amenities coming increasingly into vogue that are designed to meet the needs of changing lifestyles.

One is the luggage room, a place to keep your travel bags. As a people, we're going more places than ever and frequent business trips and vacations have made it desirable for harried travelers to have all their bags in one handy place rather than stowed away in the attic or stuffed into an already crowded closet.

Then there's the second laundry room, one right in the master suite. That became increasingly popular last year and seems bound to take off even more this year, according to Nash. For some people there'll be even less reason to ever leave the boudoir.

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## WHAT BUYERS DON'T WANT

Of course, in addition to the do's, there are also lots of don't's in home design trends.

Nash says:

Don't install bowl-type above counter bathroom sinks. They look cool, but they tend to need upkeep and the water often splashes out of them. They have developed a bad reputation.

Don't install too many glass-door kitchen cabinets. These have a great look in kitchen design magazines where all the items behind them are in perfect order. But in practice, few people have the time or inclination to keep their cupboard contents so neat. Plus, kitchen grease can make the glass look pretty messy unless you clean them regularly.

Don't minimize the breakfast bar overhang. Buyers don't want to knock their knees against the cabinet when they pull up a stool for a cup of coffee. Make sure your countertop extends out a full 12 inches.

Don't omit the window moldings. Plain drywall around the windows looks cheap.

Don't use concrete block exterior walls in construction. Not only do they look ugly, but they have to be properly sealed every three years or so or they leak and cause mold problems.

For more information, visit <http://www.CNNMoney.com>.

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