

# The Home of the Future is Here Today

The phrase “Home of the Future” evokes Jetsons-like surroundings, with every homeowner’s desire being fulfilled by the simple touch of a button or voice-commanded robots. While most episodes of the Jetsons were made in the 1960s and 1970s, the life depicted in the cartoon series took place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—modern life as we know it. And although the family’s Skypad Apartments and vacations to Venus may still be far off, the Home of the Future is right around the corner.

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## **Moving Upward and Outward**

Today’s homeowners are staying in their homes, on average, five-to-seven years. Consumers are looking more for unique features rather than for a long term residence. In 2005, the average size of a new-single family home was 2,400 square feet. In 2015, not much changed—the average size is 2,300-2,500 square feet. Ceiling heights are increasing, as they have for the past 10 years. It is not uncommon to find 9 foot ceilings on the first floor and some may even reach 10-12 feet, particularly in upscale homes. Doors are also widening. Three foot six inch doors are being used extensively in place of three foot doors.

## **Living Large**

In homes of less than 3,000 square feet, the living room will disappear and will be replaced by a den, parlor, retreat, library or music room. Entertainment continues to attract new home buyers. Features such as home theatres and wide-screen televisions are becoming more and more common. In many average-sized homes, the living room combines with family and dining areas to form a great room with an open floor plan. Areas are being defined not by walls but pillars, arches, ceiling treatments or floor coverings. In upscale homes (over 3,000 square feet), the living room will remain. Glass rear walls or a huge glass window will also become prominent in upscale family rooms.

## **Congregating and Cooking**

Kitchens remain the hub of the house and have upscale features in almost all home price ranges. A central island often serves as working or cooking space, and walk-in pantries, double sinks, lots of counter space and well-lighted areas are also present. In some new homes, wine storage racks will generally be included with upscale homes including built-in wine coolers. In addition to kitchens, utility areas are becoming more upscale. Utility rooms are expanding so homeowners can not only use them for laundry, but for also for hobbies and crafts.

## **Garages Grow**

In most mid-price range to upscale homes, garages are connected to the house through a mud room, although tandem garages remain popular in some areas

because of smaller lot size. Garages are often insulated and have more storage space, with average homes having a two-car garage and upscale homes having a three-to-four car garage. Garage door sizes are increasing from 7x9 feet to 8x10 feet and garage sizes themselves are increasing to 24x24 feet.

### **Separate and Equal**

Master bedrooms have areas of specific use, such as dressing, sleeping and sitting areas, and his and her's walk-in closets are frequently standard. For most master bathrooms, there are two vanities and even his and her's dressing areas. In mid-price to upscale homes both shower stalls and tubs will be present. Multiple shower heads are common in most upscale homes. Whirlpool tubs can also be found in upscale master baths. Master bedroom baths also include linen storage areas.

### **Bringing the Outdoors In**

New home buyers can expect an increase in outdoor living areas such as outdoor kitchens in upscale housing and indoor/outdoor fireplaces. Exterior wall material is shifting to maintenance-free types such as stucco and synthetic stone. In other material trends, engineered wood use is growing significantly and flooring is moving away from soft to hard surfaces. Bamboo flooring use is rising and kitchen counters continue with maintenance-free material trends seen in other areas of the home to include high definition laminate. Natural materials are also making their way indoors, as part of the cohesive interior/exterior trend.

### **Trends in Technology**

Unlike the Jetsons' technology reliant on elaborate robotic contraptions, holograms and whimsical inventions, home technology today is basic. In the average home, security systems, automatic lighting control and energy management systems are the main places basic technology are taking hold. The use of wireless technology is also entering the housing market in a big way.

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