

The Kitchen is Key When Shopping for a New Home

(NAPSA)—Home is where the heart is and the heart of most new homes is the kitchen. A recent study examining the key motivations of homebuyers found that the kitchen and the owner's suite ranked as the two most important rooms to new-home shoppers. Of the shoppers studied, only 3 percent indicated that they would return to the house for a second visit or consider purchasing the home if they didn't like the kitchen.

"The kitchen is the gathering place for special occasions, family functions and day-to-day activities, which is why it is so important to prospective buyers to ensure that the kitchen meets the need of their family from a design and functionality perspective," said Karen Strauss, vice president of marketing for Merillat, a leading manufacturer of cabinetry.

The kitchen has many aspects not always visible with a quick glance. By following two simple guidelines when home shopping, you'll be able to identify the most desirable characteristics of a kitchen.

Keep a checklist

Touring numerous homes can be a confusing experience, as well as a challenge to remember each homes' features. "Take notes and formulate a checklist of the things you like and dislike about each of the kitchens you visit," said Strauss. It is important to ask yourself questions like:

- Do I like the layout of the kitchen? (Consider the kitchen from an overall perspective, and keep in mind all the items you own that will require storage.)
- Does the kitchen look comfortable and make me feel good when I'm inside?
- Does the kitchen facilitate frequent casual interactions with family and friends? (Consider the views into the surrounding rooms, like living and dining areas. Do



When touring a home, make a checklist of the things you like and dislike about the kitchen.

the spaces enable you to associate with family and friends?)

- Is the cabinetry durable and well built? Is the finish on the cabinetry smooth and consistent?

- Does the kitchen have visual impact or a good focal point such as an island, cooking grotto or other unique feature? (Islands are a useful feature that many homeowners desire.)

Test drive the kitchen

"Test driving" the kitchen allows you to get a feel of how day-to-day life may be in that kitchen.

- Open and close the drawers several times to be sure they roll in and out smoothly and quietly.

- Open the wall and base cabinets because you may discover a unique storage solution inside like roll-out trays.

- Pretend you're making a meal and role-play the necessary steps involved to see if the space is laid out as efficiently as possible.

- Examine the thickness of the wood on the drawer fronts and sides, as well as the cabinet doors.

Most importantly, when shopping for a new home, it is key to take your time and analyze all aspects of the home to ensure that it is perfect for you and your family.

For more information, visit www.merillat.com.