



# Hints For Homeowners

## Tips From The Pros On Designing Your Dream Home

(NAPSA)—When picturing your dream house, you may envision a professional kitchen, a grand master bedroom and a sweeping staircase, while someone else is envisioning an indoor swimming pool and wine cellar. And as different as tastes may be, something just about everyone can agree on is that there are few things more personal than designing your home.

Before you get wrapped up in the details, however, architects will tell you to focus your attention. By following these tips from the pros, you can help ensure your dream home becomes reality:

### Choose a good architect

Designing a home is often a collaborative process between the homeowner and the architect, so it's important to find someone you're compatible with. One of your first conversations when interviewing architects should be to ask them about their working style as it should be similar to your own. You should also feel like you can communicate freely with your architect.

"Many people find it's hard to articulate their style and tastes," says Helen Hald, owner of Helen Hald Architecture in the Seattle area. "One way to make communication easier is to collect images from magazines that speak to you. This is a great way to translate your vision and it also opens up a dialogue."

### Find a location you love and take advantage of it

Homeowners often start their dream home process by finding the right location and for good reason. Where you build will often dictate your home's style, construction materials and much more.

For example, whether it's majestic mountains or sunny surf, one of the main reasons to choose a location is because of the view. If you find a view you love, enjoy it. This tends to start with the windows, and one way to maximize the



**Beautiful windows can help frame the vision of your dream home.**

view is to go big. Newer custom windows, such as Majesta double hung windows from Kolbe, are available in sizes as large as 12 feet tall.

"Most people want to feel connected to the outdoors, especially if their home is sitting on a location they love," explains Hald. "From natural light to seeing nature, this just makes people feel better."

She went on to explain that another way to enjoy your surroundings is to create easy access to outdoor living spaces. To accommodate, she recommends using products such as Kolbe's TerraSpan lift and slide door. The door can pocket away into the wall, creating an expansive opening of up to 60 feet, excellent for flowing seamlessly from inside to outside.

### Design for your lifestyle

When planning your home, you may have a wish list a mile long that includes granite countertops and a four-car garage, but architects will tell you to go deeper. They'll tell you to start by envisioning your dream life—not your dream house.

"How you plan to live in your home should be the basis of creating your dream home," says Hald. "A home shouldn't be a container that's just filled with stuff; it should be a space that's designed for how you live today and how you will live in the future."

Think about your daily life in your current house, suggests Hald, and figure out what you like and

don't like. If there's a challenge you face every day, like carrying laundry up and down from the basement, this is an opportunity for improvement in the new house. Discuss these problems with your architects; they are there to help with a solution.

Furthermore, if you have specific requirements, let them know. For example, if you see mobility being an issue in your future, consider universal design. Many window and door designs can enhance ease of operation, making living in your home more comfortable for years to come.

### Splurge wisely

According to Hald, whatever's put in a house should be added because it has a purpose that's in line with the overall design concept or philosophy. "For example, don't just add an expensive chandelier because you saw it somewhere and liked it," she says. "Ask yourself if it supports the concept and will enhance your daily life."

Making a decision for the greater design concept should also include spending more on elements that are the backbone of your house. You'll want to choose materials and products that are made to last and have good warranties. "Investing in high-quality, durable products offers peace of mind throughout the lifetime of the house and will pay off in the long run," adds Hald.

"Windows and doors are elements you should consider when investing in quality. Not only do they add aesthetic value, but they are a practical need that should be a priority when establishing the overall construction budget," urges Hald. "If you have to, borrow from another budget before you downgrade your windows and doors, as you don't want to have to replace them down the road."

For more information about beautiful and customizable windows and doors, visit [www.KolbeWindows.com](http://www.KolbeWindows.com).