

Homes with All the Trimmings

Boost the WOW Factor in Your Homes with Interior Detailing BY WENDY A. JORDAN

It's not enough to keep up with the Joneses anymore. Homeowners, as well as home builders, are looking for that extra something to make their homes stand out. For many of them, the answer is in the trimmings—the interior trim details that turn basic rooms into jewel boxes.

Homeowners are choosing elaborate decorative trim packages for their remodeled or custom homes. And buyers shopping for new homes gravitate to models that builders have dressed up with door and window casing, crown molding, chair rails, ceiling medallions and other elegant trim.

A typical 3,000-square-foot house built in New England today has some 3,000 linear feet of moldings, 30 percent more than a comparable house built 10 or 15 years ago, according to Jon Van, president of Van Millwork, Bellingham, Mass. Why the focus on decorative trim? Eye-catching trim adds "perceived value" to homes, Jon says.

Chris Bougie, millwork products manager for Scherer Brothers Lumber Company, Minneapolis, agrees, adding that his company has identified an "emerging need to help set our [builder] customers apart from their competitors" through use of distinctive interior trim. "We're seeing higher end builders say we have to do this to differentiate ourselves."

Interior trim works magic in mid-priced houses too; Sherrie Towne, marketing specialist for manufacturer Focal Point Architectural Products, says some builders of smaller, less expensive houses are attracting buyers by embellishing their models with trim pieces that are smaller, simpler and more affordable.

"Interior trim makes a big difference in the feel of a home," says Van. But

until recently it's been treated by many homeowners as an afterthought. People spend weeks, months, going to kitchen showrooms, but little time choosing trim. Now that's changing. "While decisions on trim still are usually at the end of the trail," Jon says, "clients are setting aside more money for trim or finding the money in their budget to pay for a distinctive, well-planned trim package."

That package needs to jibe with both the architectural style of the house and market preferences, which vary considerably by region. The Twin Cities, says Chris, is solidly a "stain market," with red oak commanding more than 50 percent of Scherer sales. Other stained woods are gaining popularity in the area, he says, and Scherer Brothers introduced a rustic, knotty alder a few years ago that in Minnesota "people just love." By contrast, Bougie says, "Chicago is almost all paint" trim.

Kent Eberle of Eberle Remodeling says painted trim pieces, including picture rails and beadboard walls, are the best fit for the 1920s-1940s houses he remodels in Sacramento, Calif. Painted wood trim also is the product of choice in New England, where homes in Cape Cod, colonial and classical styles such as Georgian and Greek Revival are prevalent.

"People are always asking, 'Does this go with this?'" says Van. To help builders, remodelers and their clients compose rooms with stylistically compatible elements—doors, molding, hardware, wall covering, flooring, furniture—Van Millwork opened a design center in Needham, Mass., this January that features nine fully decorated room vignettes, each representing a different architectural style. On each wall the vignettes display different trim options that work with the style; customers can



Photo Courtesy of Fypon®

mix and match the choices and come away with drawings and specs for their projects.

To serve the diverse market, trim manufacturers offer hundreds of stock products in a wide assortment of styles, materials and prices. Many builders and remodelers choose larger-than-standard sizes for a more substantial look. Others build up or stack stock trim pieces, or create custom trim profiles in their millwork shops. On occasion Kevin Barr of Barr Construction and Restoration, Twain Harte, Calif., goes even further: When trees need to be removed from a client's property to make way for construction, Barr uses the wood to create custom millwork for the project.

Interiors around the country are being dressed up with...

- **Baseboard.** Protective and decorative trim where floor and wall meet. Large sizes, such as 5/8" x 5", are popular.
- **Casing.** Decorative trim to cover the seam around doors and windows. Again, large sizes make these areas look more important.
- **Chair rail.** Molding about 32" above the floor. This can be a single band of trim or multiple pieces built up using casing or band molding.
- **Ceiling trim.** A ceiling medallion can decorate the center of the ceiling in a formal room. Panel moldings and chair rails also are being used to outline or pattern ceilings.
- **Crown molding.** The band of trim where ceiling and walls meet. In rooms with high ceilings, large and built-up crowns add elegance and scale.
- **Panel molding.** Wall trim, including wainscoting. Panel molding pieces now are being used to add dimension and pattern to doors as well. ■

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THANK A HERO

Most of us will never know the harsh realities of war. But there are those among us - veterans of combat - who understand its horrors all too well. They have bravely risked their lives in the heat of battle, only to return home to their families bearing unimaginable wounds. Often, these life-altering injuries require extensive modifications to their homes, just to allow for day-to-day living.

Homes for Our Troops is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that builds and renovates homes for war veterans who have lost limbs, are blind, deaf, or paralyzed; or have other severe injuries sustained while serving our country.

To date, Homes for Our Troops has constructed dozens of homes for wounded veterans - homes suited to their difficult physical needs. All of this has been accomplished through the help of volunteers on job sites, as well as through monetary donations from concerned individuals, businesses and a variety of organizations.

The Garlinghouse Company is committed to supporting the mission of Homes for Our Troops. We invite you to provide your support as well. To learn more about Homes for Our Troops and to discover ways in which you can make a positive difference in the lives of these wounded veterans, visit www.homesforourtroops.org.



ABOVE: Sgt Peter Damon, of Middleboro, MA lost both arms when one of the tires of the Blackhawk Helicopter on which he was working, exploded. Here, Homes for Our Troops founder John Gonsalves, shares a hug with Peter after handing over the keys to his specially adapted new home.

LEFT: Peter Damon and his family at the construction site of their new home.

