

Garage Makeovers? Women inspire garage door industry facelift

One of the hottest trends in today's home improvement market is garage makeovers. Once considered just a parking spot or catch-all for storage overflow, the garage is fast emerging as a livable addition to the home. The image of the garage is changing and women are leading the way. In a recent survey, commissioned by realty brokers Century 21, homebuyers were asked what they believed to be the most important amenity in the home-buying decision. An unbelievable 74 percent listed the garage. Garages are also becoming bigger, and two thirds of new homes built today have two-car garages. It's no wonder women are now a key player in the decision making when it comes to replacing or

purchasing a new garage door. According to J-F Morin, marketing manager at Garaga Inc., a leading garage door manufacturer, women frequently tell their door specialists: "If I am going to have something that big attached to my home, you bet I want it to look fabulous and add value to the neighborhood."

With today's new stylish models, making the right selection on garage doors is more challenging. One must now consider door style, color, window designs and decorative hardware.

Manufacturers such as Garaga have simplified the process by catering to women in the way they sell; present their product in the showroom and with product literature and aes-

thetics in a floral theme. "Our products vary from simple non-insulated doors for sheds or a boat house to very energy efficient insulated doors that stop air infiltration and keep in the heat," says Morin. "With sky rocketing fuel costs, energy efficiency is on everyone's mind, especially women who see the utility bills come in."

He also notes that female customers are looking for product quality, curb appeal and a wide selection. "We made sure to answer this need by updating our Web site and online Design Center (www.garaga.com) where you can create your own garage door in five quick and easy steps, print it out and take it to the nearest door specialists for an esti-

mate," he added. Garaga also ensures their dealers use a consultative approach and for Morin this is much welcomed in the male dominated industry. "The best advice I can give men for serving female customers is simple: listen to their needs and sell them what they are asking for. Most importantly, make your showroom inviting, clutter free and pleasing to the eye." Men and women are so different emotionally, mentally and physically yet salespeople continue to sell their products to women the same old way they have always sold them to men, he adds. "A rule of thumb to keep in mind is: Men go to buy while women go



to shop," he smiled. According to the Wall Street Journal, women are involved in the purchase of 61 percent of major home improvement products. And one out of three women are the sole decision-maker in these projects, it's no wonder that manufacturers, distributors and vendors are capitalizing on this and paying attention to female customers and making sure they're meeting their needs.

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