



HOUSECALLS

First-time homebuyers are getting 'more house' than they expected

Couples and families who have been renting are in for a pleasant surprise when they go house hunting. They won't have to settle for a starter home.

Half of all home sales last year were to people who never owned a home before, according to the National Association of Realtors. A recent survey shows that they were in for some surprises when they sealed a deal:

67 percent said they had the opportunity to buy a home sooner than they expected

50 percent said they found a home in a more desirable neighborhood than expected



61 percent got a better price than they expected to pay
40 percent got a larger house than they expected to get
43 percent locked in a lower interest rate than expected, according to the Coldwell Banker survey.

Of course, a similar degree of satisfaction among all home buyers today is industry wide.

As with most house hunters, the first-timers looked at about 11 homes before making a decision. Buyers are looking for features that appeal to them, and they have a good selection to choose from.

Here's a tip for sellers: First-timers are busy people. They want a home that is ready to live in right now with no repairs required.

Though buyers say they want a nice location, the fact is that almost any location can be just right for someone.

It might be closer to their employment or closer to where parents, other family members or friends live.

In areas that have many rental properties, a young buyer could be thinking of turning a larger home into a duplex for added income.



Peekaboo!

More homeowners installing glass walls

Today's homeowners want more than a room with a view. Some want a view from every room.

It might not be practical in each case, but bringing the outdoors inside with a beautiful glass wall is becoming a very popular home-updating choice.

For modern and traditional homes, technology is making large windows more practical. Nearly all windows installed in new homes have invisible coatings that block heat and keep ultraviolet rays from fading furniture.

Many new windows have triple panes filled with argon or krypton gas sandwiched in them for insulation.

A titanium dioxide coating sold by Anderson Windows sheds dirt and virtually eliminates water spots.

Some windows can tint and untint with the push of a button. If you want window shades, companies such as Lutron Electronics sell shades that can be controlled with an iPhone app.