

housing Trends

Now You Can Have Your Porch Swing and Internet Access, Too

Yesterday...

In 1900, less than half of all Americans owned houses. Candles and oil lamps dimly lighted most homes, so people set their schedules by the sun. Homeowners had to chop wood, stoke fires and stock iceboxes. But it wasn't long before electricity illuminated their homes and lifestyles. Families gathered around a single radio or chatted on a telephone "party line."

Over time, homesteads included one-car garages to accommodate the "horseless carriage." America's love affair with cars, as well as the development of interstate highways, influenced housing trends, too. Tract housing, suburban developments and long-term amortized mortgages made homeownership more affordable and accessible. Longer commutes, bigger garages and smaller yards typified the burgeoning suburban lifestyle.

Today...

After years of suburban sprawl, many road-weary Americans want out of the fast lane. A popular concept called "neotraditionalism" seeks to slow the pace. Builders and urban planners are trying to enhance efficiency and style. Inviting features, such as front porches and tall, narrow windows, are back. Narrower streets and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks encourage a leisurely pace. Some even have "corner store" shopping reminiscent of earlier times.

Housing trends will continue to reflect changes in our lifestyles and culture. But changes will incorporate the newest conveniences, too. High-tech innovations, such as integrated wiring, smart security and even heated floor tiles, are here to stay. So as you sip lemonade on that nostalgic front porch, you can check e-mail messages on your laptop computer!

It's still the American dream. Homeownership evokes images of a green lawn and a white picket fence. But in today's global economy, communities extend beyond the proverbial picket fence. In this "high-wire" world, just how well-connected are we? Will our sense of community survive in a world of satellite dishes and high-speed data lines? That's up to us! From gated communities to meandering boulevards, we can be as remote or connected as we want to be. New housing trends give us more choices than ever before ... and the opportunity to combine the best of yesterday and today.

