

An Article of Interest Right Paint Choices Are Key To Resale

If people stop dead in their tracks to admire your residence, your house has curb appeal. According to the National Association of Realtors, curb appeal sells more than half of all houses that go on the market. At the very least, it makes buyers take notice, gets them across the sidewalk or yard and inside the front door.

When you couple curb appeal with pricing the house, that figure climbs to 90 percent. What kind of property it is has a bearing on how it is perceived, but generally, the tidier, fresher and cleaner it looks, the more curb appeal it has. Painting is key. Choices and tints can vary from region to region, but a spanking-new paint job that's crisp and fresh can really reel them in no matter where you live.

Painting can be very expensive, but it is the least expensive way to get the biggest return on your investment. The expense of painting definitely will be reflected in the quality of the buyer's offer.

In the new-home market, exterior coloration is both art and science. For years, builders felt comfortable choosing exterior colors. However, in the last 10 years, the architect/designer and, in some cases, the land-planner, are brought in early on in the process to choose exterior coloration. While this kind of input consumes time and money, the rewards are huge. The new-home market is highly competitive. If the colors strike a chord with buyers, customers will beat a path to the builder's door.

Sometimes, the type of construction can limit the choice of paints and the surfaces to be painted. For example, townhouse communities don't give buyers much flexibility in exterior coloration. Generally, the builder determines the color of the siding and the trim, in consultation with the designer and architect. Buyers are given a few front-door colors to select.

Single homes have much more flexibility in color, but there are also limits. Builders tend to limit choices, and homeowners associations and civic groups tend to enforce those limits long after the builder has sold out and moved on. And for good reason; how other houses in a neighborhood are painted has a real impact on how the value of a house is perceived by a buyer. If the house next door is loud and unpleasant-looking, it will affect both sale ability and price of yours.

Do-it-yourself guru Bob Vila said he always tries to encourage consumers to, "be kind to their neighbors when picking color schemes. If you aren't sure what color to paint your house, hire a consultant. It will save you money and aggravation in the long run." Even when no one is telling you what color to paint your house, the colors you choose will elicit an emotional response in the buyer.

What color turns a buyer on? Most buyers only see what is in front of their faces. They can't see one color and change it in their mind's eye to something they might want. Then there is the 5 percent who can see past years of neglect.

What colors do the people find appealing? According to a national survey by Sears, more than 37 percent of all Americans (23 million households) choose white as the primary color in painting the exterior of their houses. In order of preference, the choices are white, gray, blue, tan and brown, cream, beige, green, yellow and, red.

If choosing a color for resale, go conservative. Still, lighter colors work better. In older neighborhoods, choose what is appropriate for the neighborhood. People want the feel of the old, and traditional colors are nice and soothing. In newer houses, the move is toward the neutral. Off-whites and clays are popular for trim. Front doors seem to be the focus of colors, even in houses other than townhouses.

Whatever your personal preference, you should always keep resale in mind. If you're a procrastinator, you can try not painting your house and pray that prospective buyers will see past it. If you go off the deep end of the color spectrum, you could affect the value of your house and the entire neighborhood in a negative way.

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