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FOR THREE JAM-PACKED days last October, 100 housewives from 93 different U. S. cities gathered in Washington to tell a group of housing experts about the house they live in, and the one they’d like to live in.

As might be expected, the make believe house won the contest hands down, but in the process, sponsoring contractors and building materials manufacturers got some valuable information, some of which will surely show up in tomorrow’s houses.

The women, 93% of them homeowners and averaging 31.3 years of age, were divided into ten tables and plied with questions by a panel of experts. Some surprising results occurred. For example, the women felt a garage was essential — but not for the car. Most needed the space for storage of bicycles, lawn mowers, storm windows and other bulky items. The reason: in the basementless houses, there simply isn’t enough room, and the skimpy “utility room” isn’t large enough to accommodate these household effects.

The first thing the women would look for in a new home is privacy. “A place where the children aren’t,” said one. And what room would they add to their present home? Another bathroom was the number one choice. Two king-sized bathrooms are a must in every home the ladies feel. One of these should be decorated in a masculine style with shower, and the other fitted out in feminine style with a dressing table. In addition, they recommend that these two king-sized bathrooms contain king-sized tubs — the average tub is too small.

When asked whether they preferred one or two-storied homes, opinion was divided, but a surprising number said they would like their next home to be a split-level. The reason: this type of home combines many of the best features of single and two-storied living, and there are not as many stairs to climb.

When asked where they would look and what would they look for in a new home, the ladies again surprised the experts by saying they’d rather not look. They felt they knew exactly what should go into their new home, and given the chance, would turn to an architect to put their ideas onto paper and into being. They wanted more individuality in their homes, and most felt this was obtainable only in the finest, most expensive subdivisions and developments.

The women said their dream house would be built on a rolling lot, a minimum of 100 x 150 feet in size, preferably larger, on a dead end street, with plenty of trees, a view, near public transportation, schools, parks and museums, but not near a shopping center. (Most of the women had use of the family car, and many were two-car families).

Other prerequisites of their dream house included a family room, a light, dry and airy basement with good ventilation — “the cheapest way to get more space.” On air conditioning, the women from areas where air conditioning is needed through hot summer months wanted it and were willing to pay for it above almost anything else; in the central and northern areas opinion was divided.

What other ingredients would this dream home have? High-ceilinged living rooms with exposed beams; durable, well insulated exterior walls; bigger, better equipped kitchens; variety and texture on interior walls and floors; easy maintenance (nearly all women reported that they at one time or another have cleaned or painted rooms in their homes, and the less of this, the better!); overhead lighting, except in bedrooms; more electrical outlets in all rooms.

And the women were extremely astute when asked about home financing. Observers found that in most homes it is the little lady who handles the monthly payments and budgeting. She is also the one who has the most to say about improvements to their present home and the design and selection of a new house.

In all matters, relating to the house, the women reported they first discussed them with their husbands, and decisions were jointly made.

These are some of the ideas expressed by 100 housewives who attended the “Congress for Better Living,” sponsored by the Women’s Housing Congress, Inc., a federation of national associations of building manufacturers and contractors, in collaboration with McCall’s magazine. It is safe to assume that many of these ideas will be incorporated in your home of tomorrow.
Today, just as a century ago, the kitchen is the focal point in most homes. Although today's kitchen is graced with work-saving, step-saving devices to make household chores more pleasant and easier, the fact still remains that the kitchen has not changed in its importance.

Back in 1830, the kitchen was one end of a one-room sod house or log cabin commonly built in the midwestern prairies. Not by choice, but by necessity, the kitchen served practically every purpose, from dining, heating and laundry to bath and parlor. The opposite end of the room was reserved for sleeping quarters.

At Thanksgiving and Christmas, then as now, the kitchen was the hub of activity. It was there that family and visitors alike congregated for holiday festivities.

But it is here that the similarity ends between the 1830 kitchen and the kitchen of today. Imagine cooking over a fireplace with only a copper kettle, iron teakettle and iron cooking pots as utensils.

Progressing to 1860, such "new" items as a Franklin woodburning stove, and by 1890, a cook stove with oven doors on each side plus a tin icebox with Lazy Susan shelves lighten the work of the housewife.

The 1910 kitchen features a reservoir in the cook stove, a wall coffee grinder; pressure cooker and a wooden icebox with porcelain lining.

By 1930, the "modern" housewife had a stove that burned a natural gas flame; the iron and toaster were now electric and so was the icebox. Copper electric washing machines were available, and so was an enclosed sink with hot and cold running water.

But, today even this "modern" 1930 kitchen is outmoded and old fashioned. Styling, color and convenience highlight the 1958 kitchen, and transformed it into a room of beauty as well as utility.

A cavalcade of kitchens, dating from 1830 to 1930 can be seen at Pioneer Village at Minden, Nebraska. Set around an old fashioned village green, some 20,000 different items of historical interest are displayed in 20 buildings. This exhibit traces a century of progress, and if nothing else, will make you appreciate the modern, stream-lined kitchen of today.
Landscaping contributes to the relaxation and pleasure of outdoor living. Proper planning can make your outdoor living area as attractive as the one pictured above.

The private or “gracious living” area is the part of the property which most expresses your personality and dreams of beautiful, relaxed living. Start with a focal point, which may be a terrace, a doorway or some other vantage point at the immediate rear of your house, from which you want the loveliest view.

Once you have your starting point, stand at that point and look toward your rear property line. Select a point on the rear property line which is most natural to look at. Here you plant what is known as the “terminal feature” of your living area. It may be a rose arbor surrounded by rose plants, with a bench to sit inside; a particularly striking specimen plant, or something similar.

Next, measure the distance from the focal point to the terminal point. Get out a piece of paper and using the scale: 1 inch equals 2 feet, draw a line from the focal point to the terminal point.

Now draw an oval with the top and bottom of the oval respectively running through the focal and the terminal points. Your oval can be thin or fat, depending on how much lawn space you have and what is best for you.

Inside the oval you will have lawn. Outside the oval to the edge of your property line plant shrubs and evergreens, usually graduated in height from inside to outside to provide a pleasing picture.

If you have a fine aesthetic and gardening sense, you will be able to landscape your own outdoor living area. If not, advice from your local nurseryman will prevent you from making costly mistakes in plant choices, etc.

Landscaping is like the frosting on the cake — it is the finishing touch which adds glamor and beauty to your home. And, with a little planning, landscaping can contribute to your whole mode of outdoor living.

Now is the time to plan for the hours of living out of doors, with the idea that this area will be as permanent as possible, as you would do if you were furnishing your living room indoors.

The first step is to divide your property into three theoretical divisions: the public area, the service area and the private or “gracious living” area.

The public area is that which makes its first impression on friend and neighbor, the area forever on display, facing the street. Here you use trees, shrubs and grass to provide a lovely framework for your home.

The service area is in the backyard. Neatly enclosed by a hedge, this is the place for strawberry beds, vegetables, family fruit trees, children’s sand box — whatever is necessary to service your household.
If you would like to give your bathroom a more spacious look as well as increase its efficiency, perhaps mirrors can do the trick. It’s a known fact that today’s larger families require not only more bathroom facilities and space but also more elbow room and less confusion.

Modern designers have a suggestion to solve this problem. Install a vanity lavatory with a wall-to-wall glass mirror or a large medicine cabinet with sizable mirror area. The additional storage area of the vanity lavatory can be used in many ways. Why not assign a drawer for each member of your family to keep their personal bathroom needs. The children will love having a space all their own, and it will eliminate those frequent picking up chores.

And think what it will do for those busy mornings when Dad is getting ready for work and the children are preparing for school! The additional work space of the vanity will enable the kids to brush their teeth while Dad shaves. If yours is a particularly large family, perhaps you will need a twin basin vanity with plenty of storage space for medicines, cosmetics, shaving gear and beauty equipment.

Large mirror areas also contribute to the efficiency of your bathroom. No more peering over the shoulder when the bathroom is being shared!

The use of mirrors is also an easy and inexpensive way to modernize the appearance of your bathroom. They visually “push back the walls,” making the room appear more spacious and brighter.
It's the finishing touches that make a house a home, and perhaps you've overlooked one of the most important areas for decoration — your walls. Carefully chosen, wall accessories can add color, warmth and beauty to almost every room in the house.

First and foremost, your wall decorations should complement the style and decor of your home. For example, if your furniture is traditional in style, your wall accessories should reflect this same style.

Wall ornamentation is particularly important for the home with modern furniture because this lower, smaller-scale furniture exposes more wall space than ever before. Decoration can take many guises — wall clocks, planters, sconces, plaques and mirrors, to name a few.

For modern decor, choose simple accessories, such as those pictured on this page. To accent this simplicity, touches of the primary colors — vivid yellow, red and blue — have been added.

Such wall accessories can be used in nearly every room in the house. Use them to add elegance to the dining foyer, living room, bedroom, den or kitchen. Attractive finishes, such as metal gold and antique black, further increase the versatility of these decorations.

Whether your home be modern, traditional or Oriental in decor, there are wall accessories designed just for you. And it's an easy way to add glamor and individuality to your home.

Photos: Syracuse Ornamental Co., Inc.

Above, left: This living room wall clock complements the modern furniture and adds unusual decoration.

Above: A stairway is enhanced by sconces and matching wall plaques arranged to balance the step formation.

Above: If your home is Oriental in decor, this sconce and companion plaque will catch your eye. Here, it complements the bar.

Below: A seven-candle sconce, enhanced by random rectangles filled in with vivid yellow, red and blue, adds drama to a wall.
Here is a sample of the variety of shapes, sizes and materials in 1958 door hardware. Note the use of woods and ceramics for unusual door knob design.

Individual doorknob Photos: American Hardware Corp.

Fashion comes to the Door

Photo: Yale & Towne Manufacturing Co.
If you're accustomed to using the expression "deader than a doorknob," you'd better mark it passé and think of a new one, because the 1958 doorknobs are very much "alive." And you can thank Mrs. Homemaker, whose insistent pleas for more attractive door hardware brought about this revolution in design and styling.

Unusual shapes and finishes in a variety of materials will set the style for this year's doorknobs. And the artistically inclined housewife will be able to match or accent drapes, furniture, walls and rugs. And manufacturers have not overlooked the many decorating styles. Door hardware has been designed to complement every style, from the traditional to the modern.

Knobs of exotic rare woods, each with a different grain pattern, have been introduced to add distinction to paneled rooms. For gayer, more feminine rooms, beautiful hand decorated porcelain knobs fill the bill.

Appearance isn't the only change in 1958 door hardware. Even the shape is new, designed to fit the hand better and provide more turning leverage. There are chalice-shaped knobs with a grip that resembles a concave rose, anchored to a metal disk; rectangular knobs for positive grip, small barrel-like shapes and many more.

Color has been added to the doorknob, as well as exciting new finishes. Even the classic lever-handled hardware has been restyled with wooden handles, with the rest of the fixture fashioned of metal. And there are a variety of brass, bronze and aluminum doorknobs in new shapes and sizes.

Rosettes and escutcheons (those decorative plates which are placed between the knob and the door) have also been drastically restyled. The larger ones, intended for front doors, range from colorful basket-type designs to shallow-bowl shapes. The smaller plates, used indoors, have been designed in such unusual shapes as to resemble flowers — an especially smart touch for milady's boudoir.

With this virtual revolution in styling and design of door hardware, it might be a good idea to examine your home to see if it doesn't need a new look at the door level. Today's decorative styles may be just what you've been waiting for.
Is Your Attic Going to Waste?

If your attic is serving no other purpose than to collect dust and dirt, here's an idea that will interest you. Why not convert it into attractive, modern living quarters through use of design features that give new houses their appeal of openness and light?

Like a new home, an attic can be made to look more spacious than it actually is by "borrowing" space. Expanses of window walls "borrow" space from the outdoors, while "see-through" room dividers, instead of full-height partitions let one interior area "borrow" from another.

A striking effect is achieved when the end walls of an attic are completely devoted to glass, with windows following the sloping roof lines and reaching from floor to ceiling. This admits maximum daylight and provides a maximum view of the outdoors.

The room divider that lets the eye range into an adjacent area can contribute more than just the illusion of space. In the form of a cabinet or shelving, the room divider can provide bonus storage that would not be available with a partition there.

Wall and ceiling decoration also has a part in making the converted attic look big and roomy. Expanses of clear, light colors seem to enlarge a room's dimensions. If pattern is desired, the grain of a light-colored hard wood is especially suitable for spacious effect.

A quick and easy way to decorate an attic appropriately and distinctively is to cover the walls and ceilings with a predecorated hardboard paneling. Airy, pastel colors and light wood grain patterns, such as birch, golden mahogany and natural prima vera are among the finishes available in this paneling.

Putting your attic to good use is certainly worthwhile, and if your family doesn't need the extra living quarters, why not rent it to supplement the family income? Such an area would be ideal for a bachelor apartment.
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