

NEW HOME WISH LIST

In today's climate the notion of 'living the dream' and anything vaguely flash appear somewhat tasteless and dated.



A recession makes a government less popular, but a depression does much to undermine government and thus create political and social change that can be revolutionary. 2009 is about re-thinking old values, and re-invention. In the next couple of years expect to see a rise in the number of social entrepreneurs (or what might be deemed social capitalists), i.e. organisations such as 'The Big Issue' or 'Spruce carpets' who redistribute good condition carpets to low income households. Companies will have to think harder about their offer, and the smart ones will buck the trend. For fashion think Primark, and cars Mini or Fiat. Times are changing, and so are the British buying public, and this applies to all areas of consumption, be it fashion, cars or home buying.

Post bargain hunting, the British home buying public will also redefine their new home wish list. For astute property developers, here are some predictions. Firstly, when it comes to spec, brands per se will become less important, the overall look and feel of the property will become more significant and quality paramount. Secondly, bland and undifferentiated homes will no longer be acceptable (and will be heavily price led). This will mean well conceived designs that take into consideration the external fabric of the building (be it environmental and/or architectural), internal space and the interior canvas. Whilst historically home buyers

may not have expected to achieve this at different price points, the bar has been raised, and more ticks in boxes will be required to make a sale.

A good example of a property that achieves this is Towncourt Home's recently completed home in Canford Cliffs, 'Sienna'. Here, the external fabric of the building has been constructed using recyclable Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF) - and as such delivers superior thermal performance and better sound insulation compared to conventional methods of construction, therefore providing lower running costs for heating and cooling. A key consideration for recession spent consumers. Though this isn't the only point of difference. Architecturally, whilst the industrial feel of the copper and sharp contours infer a 1950's influence reminiscent of the Bauhaus era, it doesn't replicate it. It also draws on other southern hemisphere influences making for an interesting design concept. Importantly, careful consideration has been given to how you would actually occupy this home. For example, the Lutron lighting system allows the occupier to set scenes to reflect a mood or desired room use, be it entertaining, cooking or relaxing.

When it comes to interiors, neutral implies bland, however, at Sienna, neutrals have been used to good effect to create sharp contrasts and to echo the warm tones of the copper and oak

cladding externally. Each of the reception rooms and 4 bedrooms have their own distinct style, employing light reflective and/or textured materials that make a bold statement. For instance, the retro wallpaper in bedroom 3 is flamboyant when contrast against pinstripe silk curtains and black textured bedroom furniture. In the study, the chic mirrored leather desk, when set against the minimalist white high gloss shelving and dark walls, is both light reflective and slightly quirky. The Bauhaus inspired architecture is also not forgotten inside with some sinuous 1950's pieces such as the Charles Eames lounge chair and ottoman in the study and the Harry Bertoia wire chair.

Perhaps it is no surprise that 'Slumdog millionaire', the humanitarian film, cleaned up at this year's Oscars. Arguably political unrest and economic downturn mean we are living less conspicuously. Glossy magazines with starchy looking interiors are no longer à la mode. Consumers want homes with heart and soul. Revisit Piers Morgan's Sandbanks programme last summer and the Bentley Continental GT's have all but disappeared. Pastiche perhaps? Arguably so is a £5m budget.

Mel cox, Towncourt Homes. For further information regarding Sienna telephone sole Selling agents Mays (01202) 709888. Priced at £1,175,000.