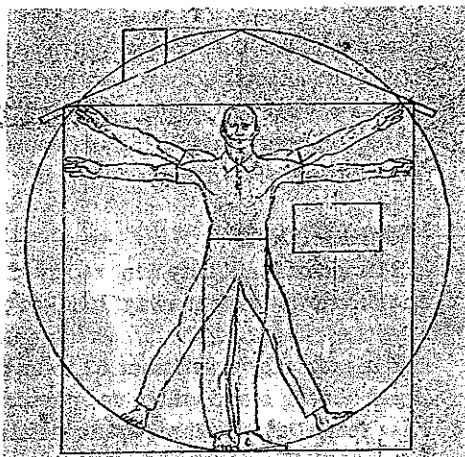


Dec 2007
AARP Bulletin

New Houses Built With Changes for Tomorrow

Architects and builders are betting that the next big thing for boomers will be designs that let them live longer in their homes. ■ An American Institute of Architects survey of residential architecture firms found that homebuyers are increasingly requesting homes built with features that will appeal to them as they age. Of 500 firms, 74 percent reported that "greater accessibility" was a growing trend in home design, up from 66 percent in 2006. ■ "We have a huge segment of our population that is aging and growing in wealth," says AIA chief economist Kermit Baker. "I don't see this trend reverting or stopping over the next decade."

■ Americans age 55-plus will buy one in every five new homes this year, according to the National Association of Home Builders. Though boomers might not yet need accessibility features such as single-floor design, builders are hoping consumers see the benefit in buying a home now that will be ready for the future.



■ It's not just for older consumers: Level entrances and wide doorways accommodate baby carriages as well as walkers. That's the thinking behind the EasyLiving Home program, which started in Georgia and has spread to New Hampshire, Texas and West Virginia. It's a voluntary certification process for builders committed to construction that makes a home cost-effective, accessible and convenient for all ages. ■ "The builders that are using [the program] the most are chasing the older adult market," says Tony Perry, CEO of Oakwood Homes, an EasyLiving Home builder in Woodstock, Ga. "But we have customers that are in their 40s too." ■ See homes that won the first Livable Community Awards, presented by AARP and the National Association of Home Builders, at www.aarp.org/homedesign. —Jade Olubayo and Elizabeth N. Brown

Words From the Wise

For six years, cyber-grandparents with names such as Treefrog and Rosebud have counseled younger generations online about sex, siblings, careers and more through the Elder Wisdom Circle (www.elderwisdomcircle.org). The group has grown to 600 advisers ages 60 to 105 who answer about 4,000 questions a month. Now their years of experience have been gathered into a new book, *The Elder Wisdom Circle Guide for a Meaningful Life* (Plume, \$14) by EWC founder Doug Meckelson and *Los Angeles Times* reporter Diane Haithman. "The book format allows several Elders to share their insight on a situation," says Meckelson, "plus you get to know a little bit about them." —Cathie Gandel

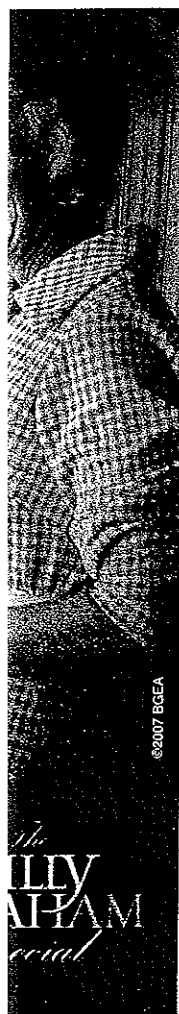
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