



The Plan Collection Reveals Top Home Design and House Plans Trends for 2014

–Leading online house plan provider reports more consumers are searching for and purchasing house plans online today revealing the home design trends for the New Year–

STAMFORD, CT–(Dec.12, 2013)–The Plan Collection (TPC), the leading online house plan provider, reports that since more Americans are searching for and choosing to purchase [house plans online](#) for new homes or renovations, this activity is an excellent indicator of [developing trends in home designs](#). The company reports that the recovering economy, aging baby boomers and evolving lifestyle needs are driving trends in residential architecture for smartly designed homes with open floor plans, flex space, gourmet kitchens and outdoor living areas.

According to the [First American Leading Markets Index \(LMI\)](#) released on December 5, 2013 from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), markets in 52 out of the approximately 350 metro areas nationwide returned to or exceeded their last normal levels of economic and housing activity. The index's nationwide score of .86 indicates that, based on current permits, prices and employment data, the nationwide market is running at 86 percent of normal economic and housing activity. The association also notes that the aging of the American population has created unique opportunities for the housing industry as this segment of the population makes housing choices that are based on consumers' longer life expectancy.

"Home buyers today are purchasing homes as investments for the future, but they are also economically conscientious, and online house plans from the vast selection of homes available satisfy both demands," said James McNair, president and chief operating officer, The Plan Collection. "Economists expect residential investments to bolster economic growth. The new year of 2014 will bring new technologies and materials into the home building industry along with exciting new designs and floor plans that are changing to accommodate our transitioning lives."

As home buyers head into 2014, Americans are consolidating multiple family members into one larger home, so they are looking at house plans with flex space and open floor plans. Flex spaces can be transformed to accommodate a range of family members – from young children to elderly family members and even older children still living at home. Flex spaces can also be transformed into a variety of other purposes – from a den to a hobby room or home office. Designing with flex space in mind enables a home owner to make a longer-term investment and live in the home throughout life's stages. Homes designed with sliding doors and open floor plans or movable partitions for flexible living arrangements are proving more popular. Such architectural elements make it easier to get around for people of all abilities and ages. As a result, home designs including spiral staircases, formal dining rooms, and sunken rooms are on the way out.

Aging baby boomers are driving changes in the master bedroom suite. Statistics from Master Builders Association (MBA) show that more than 40 percent of new homes have master suites downstairs, a 15 percent increase over a decade ago. Bedrooms are also bigger, with dressing rooms, larger walk-in

closets and bathrooms that have a soaking tub, walk-in shower and dual sinks. These suites are being built or remodeled with wide hallways and doors to accommodate wheelchair access.

Trends in plan search data also show more attention to the kitchen and main living area layout. Spacious, open floor plans with luxury gourmet kitchens combined with living spaces for the family are trending for 2014. This **modern large and open [kitchen design](#) (House Plan 161-1042) features high ceilings, plenty of cabinets for storage, and a large kitchen island and a relaxed dining area for extended family time.** Low-hanging lights are a decorative accent along with darker cabinets against lighter walls. Wood grain and textured finishes, finished with brushed chrome appliances are trending. Overlooking the kitchen area is a large family area.

As for exterior construction trends in home design, home owners are looking more to brick and stucco, which now account for almost 50 percent of construction. While data from the Census Bureau's [Survey of Construction](#) (SOC) indicates the single most popular exterior wall material is vinyl siding, used on 32 percent of the new homes started in 2012, brick was used on 25 percent of homes, followed by stucco, used on about 20 percent of the homes started. In fact, in response to the hurricanes, tornados and earthquakes that have devastated homes in communities nationwide materials that are more resistant to damage as well as stormproof architecture are on the rise.

Finally, healthier homes are being constructed with attention to organic or green living. This means not just avoiding plastics or chemicals in construction, but also re-thinking how the property around the home is used to facilitate more enjoyable outdoor living. Homes with covered or screened-in outdoor seating areas are proving popular in searches for house plans. Including an outdoor kitchen or bar-b-q cooking area in the overall home design rather than as an afterthought is anticipated to be strong trend well into 2014 as home construction builds momentum.

About The Plan Collection (<http://www.theplancollection.com/product-ideas>)

The Plan Collection is driven by the simple idea that great house design should be affordable and readily accessible to everyone. The company provides homeowners, prospective homeowners and builders with more than 20,000 house plans selected from the nation's leading designers and architects along with tens of thousands of instructional images and inspirational photos.

From the days of printed house plan books to PCs, the Internet, social media, and now tablets – [The Plan Collection](#) and its founders have been dedicated to providing users with a better, more convenient and more valuable home building experience. Customers enjoy the benefits of a broad selection of high quality home plans and detailed how-to information, an easy-to-search site and knowledgeable customer service. TPC understands what homeowners are looking for, and delivers better search results to its users. As a result, thousands of houses have been built at a lower cost using pre-drawn house plans that meet homeowners' specific needs and desires.

House photo to accompany release:

Caption: House Plan # 161-1042 features this **large open [kitchen floor plan](#)** with easy access to the living areas, outdoor decks and a covered BBQ porch.

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