

On the House

With the Carey Brothers
Tips of the Month



TRENDS IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME

One of the best parts of our jobs as home improvement journalists is the opportunity to attend building industry trade shows across the country for a look at the latest and greatest in building products and technology. Manufacturers are continually seeking ways to improve tools, technology and materials that will create an increasingly more safe, comfortable and energy efficient American home. And this year's shows are shaping up to be no exception.

Water purification systems, synthetic stone, easy-to-install leak-proof showers, walls of windows, electronic home management systems, energy efficient appliances, composite exterior trim, and soundproofing materials are product categories showing the biggest growth.

Consumers are trending away from tap and by-the-bottle water and toward point-of-use water purification systems such as reverse osmosis. And water quality isn't just about health. There is an uptick in whole-house filters and softeners that reduce contaminants and prevent buildup of hard water on plumbing fixtures and shower doors.

The verdict may still be out on a better-built mousetrap, but not when it comes to your shower. The craze is prefabricated or easy-to-assemble materials that produce a leak-free environment at a fraction of the cost of a traditional mortar-in-place "mud" tile shower. These systems are geared toward both pros and diyers and boast reliability and cost savings.

Feel the need for "tech" speed around your house? A growing number of companies have product offerings that monitor your home—security, access, climate and energy usage—using your smart phone, tablet or computer. These systems offer an increasing number of features and prices continue to drop allowing this technology to be available to the masses.

Dual icemakers, an in-door hot water dispenser, an auto-fill, sensor-controlled water dispenser and "French doors" are some of the cutting-edge features in refrigeration. Washing machines use less water than ever; automatically dispense the appropriate dose of laundry detergent and fabric softener and "talk" to the dryer—communicating how long to dry that particular load of clothes. Steam is becoming an increasingly popular feature in both clothes washers and dryers as a means of stain removal and less ironing.

New "cooked wood"—thermo-treated to produce a pest resistant and naturally beautiful finish, weather resistant outdoor cabinets—to go with the rage in outdoor kitchens and cooking appliances, decorative cable rails and glass panels—to improve the view from balconies and decks, and ornamental iron entry doors bring it all home—so to speak.

Composite decking and siding products continue to improve in appearance and quality, windows are increasingly more energy efficient and more maintenance free, and manufactured fireplaces are more beautiful and efficient than ever.

Building product designers and manufacturers have set the bar high in response to consumer demand for products that perform. In today's cost conscious building and remodeling environment, a product must be durable, efficient, sustainable, AND affordable.

With an economy in recovery and aggressive innovation in building products and technology, 2013 promises to be a banner year for builders and consumers ready to pull the trigger on a building, remodeling or home maintenance project.

Ask the Carey Brothers a home improvement or remodeling question on their live radio broadcast every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Call toll-free at 1-800-737-2474 to ask your question.

Visit their website at OnTheHouse.com for recaps of the show & other helpful info.

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