

Building Your Dream Home...Together

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I want to wake up in the morning and sit on my veranda and enjoy the view of a beautiful city as the sun comes up over the mountains every morning. Oh, I'm sorry, I was just basking in the thought of my dream home. So, what thoughts go through your mind when you imagine the home of your dreams?

What is it about a house that gives it that special design, drawing people to it? I guess it all depends on the person. Everyone has their own unique style that reflects their particular taste. Of course, when more than one person is brought into the equation, the formula takes an interesting twist.

To find a house that is exactly what you always wanted is nearly impossible. Finding a house that both you and your significant other can agree on is, well, a miracle. Most likely than not, the results usually lie in designing a custom home. The first question that should come up is, "Who will design and build the place that I always have dreamed about?" This decision will probably be the most important in the process of constructing your custom-built home.

To start, find a licensed architect that you feel you can be on the same wavelength with and that you feel you can trust. Then, spend some time with your significant other to compose a list that consists of the following topics: IDEAS AND WANTS for our new home, QUESTIONS for the

two lists into one.

The architect/designer you both choose will charge between eight and fifteen percent of the construction cost. If you want him/her to be a part of the process in selecting a builder or landscaper then it may cost more. These "Dream

Weavers" will produce drawings and design the house while you both lead in the direction you want to go. Some builder organizations have an in-house architect/designer who works with the construction staff and you. A firm such as this allows one budget to be followed from the first step to the last step. If money is an issue, don't worry nor take out your stress on the ones closest to you. There are many ways to cut back on cost without sacrificing too much of what you both want. Don't forget...ask many questions!

Research different builders, and inquire on a quote to you for an estimated flat price. These fees can vary, but keep in mind that part of the cost is the materials and fixtures. So, the lowest bid might not have a high level in the quality of products. Remember, do your homework! Ask



architect/designer, and CONCERNS about the building process. Once you and your partner come up with your own lists, compare the lists and communicate, adjust and combine the

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around and make sure you're dealing with a reputable company. Find out if the builder has a record of past clients that will allow you to "interview" them and ask questions regarding the builder's communication style, strengths and weaknesses and commitment level. In the least, make an effort to drive by some of the previous homes that were built by the firm you are considering to construct this important piece of property.

When signing your name to any document, always know exactly what it is that you are signing before the pen hits the paper. Communication is the key to a healthy relationship, talk to your significant partner and even it is even a good idea to seek legal guidance before signing anything.

Another way to cut on costs is have the architect do the initial design and then take it to a draftsman who will work on the project for a lower price. A building designer can also be hired instead of an architect for a lower price. They are usually self-taught professionals but are not licensed. Keep in mind that if you do take this route, you will not have help from the architect to determine if the drawings are a reflection of the home and he or she will not be responsible if errors occur. Since the architect will not be the escape-goat it might be easy to blame the one you once betrothed. Try to resist the temptation; it probably isn't their fault either.

A house can be more economical by eliminated features that are unwanted and wasted space (don't forget to refer to the list you made on what your wants are,

so that you do not allow expensive features that really aren't necessary). An option you can take to save on money is to have your home custom built but not custom designed. Many builders will build one of their "already designed" homes on your lot. This would allow for the fixtures, materials and colors to be specified by you, the customer, but it is considered a stock house, and is a cheaper alternative. Most builders will allow you to alter the design to fit you and your family's needs but if everything needs alteration (especially if both of you can't come to an agreement on a similar floor plan) then you are better off sticking with a custom home.

After the initial decisions are agreed upon, you must now determine where the house is going to be located. Some people prefer to find a lot, and then design their dream home. Now and again, people can visit a custom community, pick a lot with their personality, and BOOM! The creative ideas are flowing for what they envision for their dream home!

Of course, more needs to come into account than just choosing an area you want your house. You must apply for a water tap or obtain a permit for a water well; apply for building permits with the county building department; have a Septic Engineer submit documentation to the health department and contact your local electricity company to determine where the power poles are located. Yes, whomever you choose to help you with the building process will provide you with a checklist, or even submit the documents for you!

Finally (and briefly), there are just a few items to take care of before the process begins. After the technical matters are out of the way, take into consideration that you still have this wonderful partner that you chose, and you both will soon see your dreams becoming a beautiful reality. Follow your dreams to the road to happiness by building the home you always wanted with the person you always wanted.

