



# Constructive Insights

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DOORS

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### Homeowners Demanding Fine Details

If you haven't noticed, there's a mini architectural renaissance happening among your customers. Today's home buyers and homeowners are keenly aware of design styles and are demanding the intricate details from Victorian, Arts and Crafts, Greek Revival, Federal, Georgian, Tudor and other genres. Much of the consumer design demand stems from higher education compliments of HGTV, glossy home magazines, consumer-oriented home design books and a plethora of online articles. And the enlightenment is putting the charm and diversity back into old and new neighborhoods alike. For home builders and remodelers, this mini renaissance is reinforcing how important it is to understand design styles and follow the rules of that particular style throughout a project.

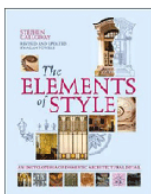
Tony Crasi, CEO of Crasi Company, a residential design/build firm based in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, says, "When you're designing an individual home, it's crucial to select an architectural style. Once you adopt a style, whether it's traditional or contemporary, you also adopt a set of guidelines that make the design process much easier. You wouldn't put a Gothic fireplace in a sleek contemporary home. It just wouldn't feel right." In order of importance in terms of exterior architectural elements, Crasi says, "A home's entry is number one. It sets the stage for the rest of the experience."

Crasi says in most cases the average home buyer doesn't understand the difference between Gothic or Victorian architectural styles, but what they do notice is when an inexperienced designer starts blending the styles and the pieces don't feel right. "Everything starts with the basic shape of the home," says Crasi. "A Tudor home has a distinctly different shape than a Georgian. Yet I've seen builders take a typical box colonial home and attempt to pass it off as a Tudor because they added a few rough-sawn cedar details."

### Know Design Elements, Era by Era

One of the best ways for builders, remodelers and their customers to be consistent with architectural detailing is to really know historic and modern design styles. There are dozens of great books that dissect the different styles and show how the elements – columns, dormers, doors, windows and basic building shapes – relate to that style. Dominick Tringali, AIA, CEO and founder of Dominick Tringali Architects, a residential architectural firm says he has at least 1,000 design books in his Bloomfield Hills, Mich., firm's library. "We may lay out 30 books in just one client meeting to begin to get the style right," says Tringali. He also frequently takes clients to his construction sites and finished homes to show them specific design styles and details.

**"The Elements of Style: An Encyclopedia of Domestic Architectural Detail"**  
 by Stephen Calloway, Elizabeth Cromley and Alan Powers is one of residential design/builder Tony Crasi's top picks for researching style elements within a particular historical time period.



### Design Trend: Charm Over Square Footage

One strong design trend among Tringali's clients: they want warm and charming homes instead of large, overbearing structures. He says they're asking for more intricate and interesting design details to provide the curb appeal instead of the home's size. This trend, however, is not limited to just the exterior. Many clients are

### The Ugliest Door in America



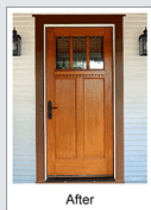
On May 1, Therma-Tru Doors kicked off its 4th annual "Ugliest Door in America Contest" in conjunction with National Home Improvement Month. Whether it's peeling paint, warped wood, dreadful colors, rotting locks or broken glass, it's all fair game in this door-to-door competition, where homeowners submit their own entryway eyesores. Two winners will be selected this year, one in a video category and the other in a written essay category, and will be announced this summer by Tom Kraeutler of the syndicated, call-in radio show "The Money Pit." Winners will receive a Therma-Tru door system valued at up to \$5000.

Last year, judges sifted through more than 200 entries, but in the end it was a warped wood door that hardly held on to its hinges that claimed the grand prize (see before-and-after photos below). The winners, Merle and Marsha Hall of Granger, Iowa, received a new Classic-Craft® American Style Therma-Tru door system.

To see winners from previous years and to learn about the 2008 Ugliest Door in America Contest, visit:  
[www.myuglydoor.com](http://www.myuglydoor.com).



Before



After

### Therma-Tru Doors— Styled to Fit All Budgets and Entryways

Achieving the charm of yesteryear doesn't need to break the budget, thanks to so many window, door, roofing,

he adds, started with his custom home designs and is hitting into his semi-custom and production homes.

J. Carson Looney, FAIA, founding principal of Looney Ricks Kiss Architects in Memphis, Tenn., echoes the sentiment that less is more. “McMansions are not styles that are requested or desired in the marketplace,” he says, noting that low-maintenance housing is a growing trend among his client base. Looney, who won the prestigious Best in American Living Award’s “Home of the Year” designation in 2007, took home the top prize for his cottage-style modular home with space-saving built-ins sprinkled throughout the charmer. His win further emphasizes scaled back yet highly detailed design times.

## Good Design Starts With A Grand Entrance

The front door is one of the most important design elements of a home’s exterior, and for many reasons. A home’s front door is the first thing you touch before you enter a home. “You only have one shot at making a first impression, and this is where I tell homeowners not to cut costs,” says Crasi. “If the front door looks and feels cheap, your first impression is that the rest of the home is going to be the same.” For builders trying to sell a spec home, the front door has the power to welcome prospective buyers or turn them away at the curb.

From Arts and Crafts to Cottage to Contemporary, Therma-Tru Doors has a door design to fit any home’s architectural style.

Browse Therma-Tru Doors’ entire line of doors at: [www.thermatru.com](http://www.thermatru.com).

Match a door style to the architectural style of your home by using [Therma-Tru Door Designer](#).

The front door is also an American icon. We decorate our entryways with wreaths and lights at Christmastime, cornstalks and pumpkins in the fall, and then embellish them with flowerpots in spring and summer. As builders and remodelers, we photograph our beloved front doors and publish them in coffee-table books. Front doors reflect homeowners’ personalities, design style, holiday traditions and even their favorite colors. With so much value a front door brings to a home and its homeowners – and with so many door styles now available at varying price points – investing the time in the selection process is a no-brainer.



lighting and other manufacturers now offering interesting architectural design details at all price points within their product lines.

Therma-Tru Doors recently expanded two of its leading fiberglass door lines – the Classic-Craft® Rustic Collection™ and value-priced Smooth-Star® – so builders and homeowners have more choices at every price point and doors to fit every home’s architectural style. New decorative accent hardware and glass is also part of the door manufacturer’s line expansion, bringing a more authentic, handcrafted look to its doors [www.thermatru.com](http://www.thermatru.com).



Therma-Tru’s new Classic-Craft® Rustic Collection™ door with strap hinges and clavos adds character to Southwestern or European country architecture.

## Better Entryways Boost Home Values

In a [study](#) commissioned by Therma-Tru Doors and conducted by the independent research organization TNS, more than 2,400 consumers from across the United States were asked to estimate home prices based on the homes’ exterior appearance. The study found that an enhanced entryway can add up to \$24,000 or 6.6% to a home’s perceived value. The added value was as much as five times the cost of the entry system.