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Custom homebuilders see demand for high-end finishes, unique designs

by Gabby Christensen

There are many unique ways to customize a home to fit an owner's individual style, according to local experts, who have seen a variety of custom home trends in recent years.

Brian Falcone, owner/builder at Falcone Homes, said urban modern designs have been fairly popular recently.

Among other trends he's seen are floating metal staircases, clean burning ethanol burners instead of traditional fireplaces, and outdoor living to include: decks with fire pits, electronic screens, and radiant heaters in outdoor ceilings.

"Modern is really in right now — clean lines and open spaces," Falcone said. "And outdoor living becomes an extension of the house that can be used well into the fall season."

Falcone Homes will be featured in this year's Street of Dreams where many of these current trends are incorporated.

When it comes to current custom home trends, Michael Maley, sales associate at CBSHOME Real Estate, said Widhalm Custom Homes said that the shiplap, barn doors, and rustic "vibe" are still in.

Maley said he predicts upcoming trends to be blue cabinets, rose gold accents and pink.

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Howarth



Custom home design. (courtesy H3 Custom Homes)

"In every other market that I have researched lately, both in person and via websites, those are the hottest trends coming our way," Maley said.

Maley also said wine is becoming a bigger part of the Midwest and he's started to see oversized pantries with second kitchens, a 'wine' element in the house somewhere, whether that is a wine cellar, wine rack in kitchen or wine refrigerators.

"I think most trends are popular right now because potential homebuyers have become frustrated or bored with the same look, white cabinets, stained cabinets — they want some fun and flare to their new home," Maley said. "Style is playing a bigger key to more average price

point new construction homes than ever before."

Dan Howarth, co-owner of H3 Custom Homes, said 'nostalgic farmhouse styling' has become increasingly popular. He's seen use of metal roofs, barn doors and other elements relating to the style.

"That's the trend and that's really the style we're building in," Howarth said. "We believe it leads to a cohesive design."

Reclaimed wood being used as an accent is also a current trend, according to Howarth.

He said many manufacturers are actually creating a designer series of shiplap.

"Additionally, we're seeing a move back to custom sand in place of hardwood flooring

rather than pre-finished engineered hardwood flooring," Howarth said. "Red Oak used to be standard, but now — trend-wise — hickory is in."

"The simplicity of the farmhouse design is what makes it so popular. It's a design that can easily move from a casual atmosphere to a more elegant atmosphere. That's kind of what we look for — a comfortable luxury, which also lends to a lot of design options."

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