

How-To - Home Lifestyle News

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Tips and Tactics to Finding the Right Exterior Door

(ARA) - "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Believe it or not, this sound advice - attributed to American humorist Will Rogers - also applies to your home and the exterior door that welcomes visitors.

A beautiful entryway can make a memorable first impression; it is after all one of the first things people see. It is also essential in boosting the curb appeal of a home when it's for sale, and can help add value through heating and cooling efficiencies. But when it comes to exterior doors, how do you know which one is the best for your home?

"Not all entry door products are created equal," says Shirley Wang, CEO of Plastpro, Inc., a producer of fiberglass door products. "Because some are more durable, attractive or insulate better, homeowners need to familiarize themselves with what's available and choose what best suits their needs."

More than ever before the perfect door is one that combines optimal insulation, easy maintenance, and great design. Take a closer look at your front door. Does it represent your personal taste, is it low-maintenance, and does it maximize your home's energy efficiency? If not, it might be time for a change.

Technological advances and evolving designs mean there are more types of exterior doors available than ever before. Here are some tips for finding a door that is right for your home:

Material

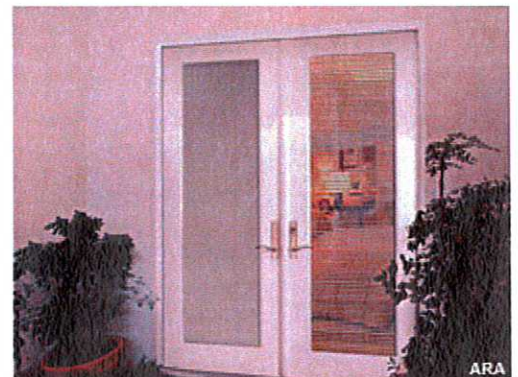
Wood doors represent about 30 percent of the total market, according to industry insiders.

Metal doors are very durable, but often are less visually pleasing. Fiberglass doors are an alternative option that combines the best of both worlds by offering a look similar to wood and the strength of steel, but with less overall maintenance.

Wood doors have long been favored in older homes for their aesthetic appeal. However, wood is porous and can allow cold to seep into the home. Wood doors also tend to warp, rot, chip, and splinter, and need to be replaced more frequently.

While metal doors are a durable alternative, they tend to hold in the cold. Additionally, they can ding and dent easily, causing the door's exterior paint to chip off, leaving the unattractive metal core exposed.

Fiberglass doors have become a popular alternative to steel and wood because of their



aesthetic appeal and easy maintenance. Indeed, new technologies and manufacturing techniques allow fiberglass doors to simulate the warmth and texture of real wood but without its inherent problems such as cracking and warping. They also have many of the same durable qualities as metal, yet are more resistant to damage. Finally, fiberglass doors provide excellent insulation, and expand or contract very little with weather changes.

Glass

Whether you want to protect against solar heat gain, prevent heat loss, or simply create a more decorative effect with your door, there's a type of glass available to suit every situation. Insulating, tinted, noise-deadening, tempered, distortion-free, impact-resistant, opaque, and translucent glass are just some of the possibilities.

Companies like Plastpro are also manufacturing entry doors with built-in mini-blinds. Sealed between tempered glass, the pre-installed mini-blinds can be tilted as well as raised completely up and down to provide as much or as little light and privacy as desired.

Color and Style

In addition to realistic graining that makes them difficult to distinguish from wood once they're stained, fiberglass doors also come in a wide range of styles and wood textures including smooth skin, oak, mahogany, or fir grain.

While door styles often vary by region, a basic four or six panel design is generally the most popular style in both Smooth Skin and Woodgrain. Regionally, a Rustic design is very popular in the Southwest and California, while a Craftsman style door is preferred in the Northwest. Plastpro has also developed a True White Oak door which features a completely white skin that hides scrapes and scratches - that are often visible on wood and metal doors - with a color guarantee of 10 years.

Frames

While doors are often blamed for air leakage and related energy losses, it's often door frames that are in poor condition (or just very old) that are the culprit.

"When replacing an exterior door, homeowners should also consider replacing their frames," says Shirley Wang. She adds that while door frames are often made with the same materials as the door itself (i.e. wood or metal), companies like Plastpro now manufacture frames made of a fully composite "poly fiber" material that resist moisture, rot, rust and insects. "These frames are more durable, require minimal maintenance and are less expensive than other frames over the lifetime of your home," said Wang.

No matter what door you choose, remember that it is an important representation of your home. When making an impression, the first one matters most.

For more information on doors, visit www.plastproinc.com.

Article available at:

<http://www.homelifestylenews.com/article-6425-432-5694.html>