

Buyers choose add-ons to personalize homes

By **DIANE HUGHES**
Tennessean Advertising Services

When it comes to buying a new home, today's consumers aren't settling for the standard package.

No plain countertops or average appliances for these buyers. After working hard for their money, today's homebuyers are willing to spend a little cold, hard cash to make their everyday lives more comfortable and enjoyable.

It's called upgrades. Better flooring, appliances, countertops and other amenities are available from most builders, and more buyers are electing to add them to their homes.

According to David McGowan, president of Regent Homes in Nashville, homebuyers are adding everything from bay windows to state-of-the-art microwave systems. At Lenox Village in South Nashville, where Regent Homes is the exclusive builder, one of the most popular add-on items may come as a surprise. It's a porch.

"Porches are a very popular item, because the porch has become an outdoor room," says McGowan. "People can go outside, enjoy the outdoors and talk to the neighbors."

He adds that many homeowners will upgrade their porch with ceiling fans and then decorate it with drapes, truly giving it a

"room" atmosphere.

Another popular upgrade at Lenox Village is what McGowan refers to as the "bounce-back" room. Built over the garage, plans for these spaces start at 400 square feet and go up. Some include a kitchenette, and all of the plans include a bathroom.

"One of our market surveys showed that a large number of people buying new homes have kids at home who are over age 18," McGowan says. "Families are staying together and living together longer. Because of that, people are looking for ways to accommodate the size of their family."

The bounce-back room is

ideal for kids who return home (or never left) or for an older parent who prefers not to live alone but doesn't need the care of a nursing home. Some buyers add the room for office space.

Other popular add-ons show up in the kitchen. "A big package of interest is stainless steel appliances. Many people also add the solid-surface countertops," McGowan says.

As a complement to the solid-surface counters, many buyers also opt for an under-mount sink, giving the kitchen a smooth and streamlined look.

Other favored options among buyers are recessed



This classically styled home in Nashville's Lenox Village features a wrap-around porch and "bounce-back" room as added options to the original house design.

Photo by Darla Jackson

lighting, fireplaces and distressed hardwood floors.

"People like the weathered look of the distressed hardwood, because little marks and scuffs are not as noticeable," McGowan says.

When asked why people are willing to add these extras, McGowan sums it up this way: "Basically, I

think people want to put their personal touch on their home. They want to customize it to fit their dream."

If you're interested in learning more about the homes and options offered at Lenox Village, call (615) 445-8888 or visit www.lenoxvillage.com. ■