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Arthur Simon



# WHAT MAKES A GOOD FLOORPLAN

New generation of homes unleash masters-on-the-main and mortgage helpers

by JANINE MACKIE

**OPEN-CONCEPT? A BASEMENT REC-ROOM? ENOUGH bedrooms for all the kids upstairs? What about the piano, where will it go?** While finding the perfect floor plan for many families is more of an aspiration than reality, there’s new hope to this eminent quest.

Designers, developers and marketing experts are teaming together in Greater Vancouver with a common goal to create new homes that have “real life” factored into them.

“Buyers today want a more open, modern floor plan,” says

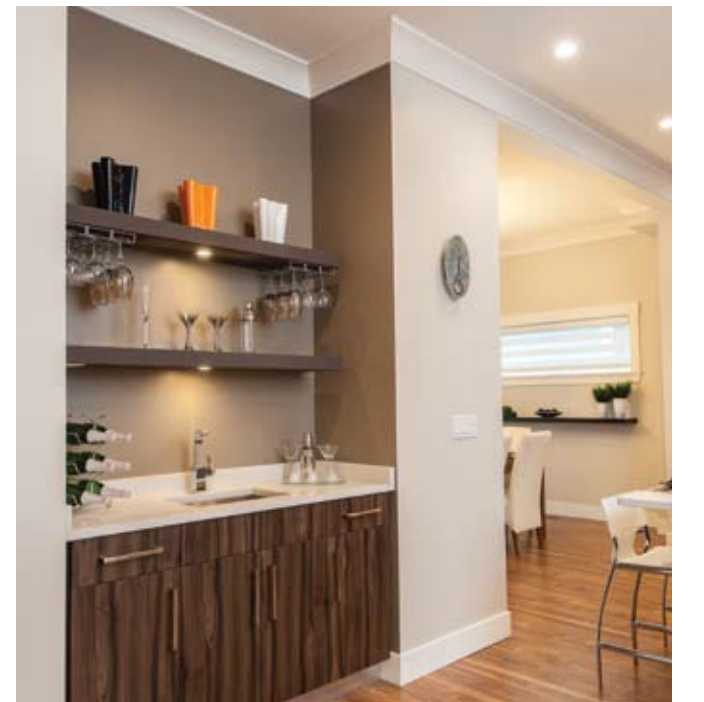
Arthur Simon, a Surrey realtor with Royal LePage. “I encourage homebuyers to look for homes that meet their specific family needs, to think about the future and whether they tend to have a casual or more formal approach to entertaining.”

Based on his experience selling homes and raising his own five kids, Simon recently worked alongside developer The Maskeen Group to fine-tune a couple six-bedroom floor plans for their new built-green certified community called CADENCE on 184A St. in Cloverdale.

“I usually look at a floor plan and see if it’s functional and has a nice flow,” explains Simon. “Simplicity is important, with minimal hallways and corridors which really aren’t usable living space. Rooms should also be easily accessible.”

**\* FIRST IMPRESSION: ENTRY PROVIDES PLENTY OF SPACE TO UNLOAD GROCERIES OR WELCOME GUESTS**

Feedback has been outstanding, with the 3691 sq.ft. “Braemore” floorplan at Cadence especially well received. From the front





porch the entrance creates a clear sense of arrival. Unlike garage-prominent homes, this floorplan parks cars in back, and chooses rather to make a great first impression with a foyer that's large enough to remove and store coats with plenty of elbow room to spare. The home evokes an open and welcoming feel achieved by removing interior doors and walls, integrating columns and boosting ceiling heights to ten feet!

When assessing an entry plan, it's important to also imagine yourself hosting a party and deciding where you'll eat dinner, where the kids will study without being distracted by the TV and how furniture will be arranged in each room.

"I loved it from the very first moment my eyes saw the floorplan," says an enthusiastic Carol Gibson who was among the first to buy a home at Cadence, and will be moving in this April.

While selling a townhome and moving into a six-bedroom detached single-family home seems more of a step-up in the world of real estate, Gibson describes this strategic housing move as "downsizing." A quick explanation reveals she's joining the ranks of other homebuyers who are pooling funds with family members to co-own a home. Her three kids are now grown with families of their own, yet when the opportunity presented itself to share an abode with her son and his family, the numbers just made sense.

For over a year they searched for a home with a suite so that Gibson could live independently, yet also be active in her grandchildren's lives. Searching for suited homes on MLS proved near impossible, and those suites they did view were dark and poorly designed.

An act of serendipity, Gibson found herself overseeing the printing of promotional material for a new home development in Surrey. On paper it looked like everything she'd been searching for. There were four bedrooms upstairs, a well-planned main floor with a den to house the family's heirloom piano and a fully-finished lower level with legal two-bedroom self-contained suite and playroom.

"Not everyone can visualize from a floorplan, so I took my son and his family and visited the new furnished showhome," says Gibson. "That's when the floorplan really came to life."



## Canada's Baby Boomers entering their golden years also have their unique ideas of what makes a house a home.



**\* OPEN CONCEPT:** Promotes family interaction and great when entertaining

Right away the parents could visualize their kids growing up with their own bedrooms, as well as themselves unwinding in the sumptuous adult retreat complete with ensuite, window-seat and walk-in closet. Being a teacher, Gibson's daughter-in-law could imagine herself marking papers in the den and everyone gathering in the kitchen, defined by a large quartz-top island and accentuated with glass backsplash and stunning stainless steel appliances. The culinary space emanates with practicality and features a walk-in pantry with solid wood built-in shelves, as well as a mudroom off the double garage complete with coat closet and full-size washer and dryer. The home packs a lot of extras into the plan as well, boasting an outdoor living area with fireplace, full wet bar, main floor powder room and upstairs loft.

Canada's Baby Boomers entering their golden years also have their unique ideas of what makes a house a home. Real estate developers like Vesta Properties in the Fraser Valley are in tune with this market and have made it a priority to translate wish lists into tangible floor plans.

"There has been increasing demand for master-on-main plans from active mature couples, older families where their children have left the nest, and retirees that want to downsize their home but not their lifestyle," explains Curt Woodhall who heads up Vesta's marketing department. "They want to move into a new home with less maintenance and the latest in design and interior finishing, but still want to be close to the best amenities."

**\* VANTAGE DELIVERS MAIN FLOOR BEDROOMS AND WELL DEFINED SPACES**

Vesta responded to this segment of the population by creating a signature 1816 sq.ft. two-bedroom "E-PLAN" for homebuyers at its Vantage townhome community, perched above the picturesque Willow's Nine Course at the Surrey Golf Club. The kitchen is located just off the entrance, making grocery day a breeze, and the master-bedroom suite is on the first level. The top floor can be closed off and used as a rancher, or easily accommodate out-of-town guests.

"I love how open the floorplan is," says interior designer Carolyn Stewart of Concept to Design who styled the display home. "The Empty Nester may be downsizing but with a modern floorplan, they may feel they have more space than their previous traditional house. Also having the master bedroom accessible from the open area and facing out to the golf course is impressive and lets the feeling be consistent throughout."

Sales have been strong at Vantage with less than ten of these E-Plans left. Those who've bought here love the spacious master bedrooms measuring 12' X 14, having a double car garage, small fenced yet, and the upscale finishes like granite countertops and Carrara interior doors.

Visit these fine-tuned showhomes in living colour. CADENCE is open daily from 1 to 5p.m. daily (except Fridays), at 5920 184th St. in Surrey, and VANTAGE is open Saturday through Wednesday from 1 to 5p.m. at #8 - 7848 170 St. in Surrey.



## POP OF COLOUR DELIVERS WOW-FACTOR

WHEN THE BACKDROP IS PRIMARILY NEUTRALS AND TAUPES WITH CHOCOLATE, CAROLYN STEWART OF CONCEPT TO DESIGN SUGGESTS, "A POP OF COLOUR!" THE TEAL BLUE ACCENTS GIVE THIS VANTAGE SHOWHOME A SOPHISTICATED YET CONTEMPORARY FEEL.

Love the look? Here's where to find it:

**UPHOLSTERED BED:** Custom by Tiffany Upholstery

**WINDOW COVERINGS/TOSS CUSHIONS:** Custom by Window Works

**DINING ROOM TABLE:** The Brick

**DINING ROOM CHAIRS:** Stylus

**PAINT COLOUR MAIN FLOOR:** Sherwin Williams / Natural Tan SW7567 7.

**WALLPAPER MASTER BEDROOM:** Vibrant Trees, Crown Wallpaper