



■ The Madison, by Harasym Developments Inc., combines brick and detailed stucco to capture its two-storey elevation and stately architecture.

Exceeding exterior expectations

Examining current elements of exterior design

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RACHEL VEIRA

While our mothers may have told us not to judge a book by its cover, judging a house by its exterior can reveal a lot about the interior, the builder and more. Long gone are the days of unnecessary embellishments, uniform design and cookie-cutter construction. With advances in construction technology, building materials and developers' expertise, the sky is the

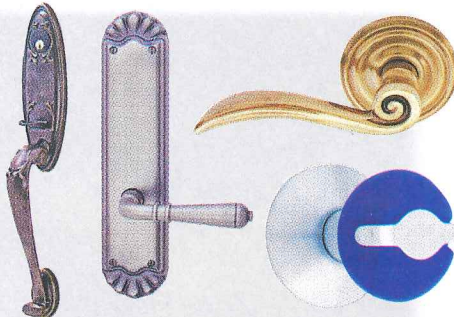
limit when maximizing curb appeal.

Environmental concerns have led to advances in energy efficient materials and building techniques that are popular throughout the Forest City. Thanks to developers like Harasym Developments Inc., Rawlings Homes and Reid's Heritage Homes in London, consumers are becoming more aware of and educated about their design options and, as a result, the design of homes

has become increasingly customized. The personal touch not only turns a house into a home but it often adds interest and value.

Although Londoners tend to seek more traditional exteriors, architectural design has become more of a personal statement than a trend to follow. Think of a home's exterior as the builder and home owner's effort at putting their

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best foot forward. What impression are you trying to make?

Perhaps you want to express your appreciation for the environment with imitation building materials to conserve natural resources. Or, perhaps you are an artist who chooses to express yourself in colour. Even conservative homeowners are abandoning yesterday's safe trends for modern style.

According to Mike and Milena Harasym of Harasym Developments Inc., "Designing a home is like creating a piece of art." And just like art, the current trend in exterior design is subjective, allowing the building and homeowner to work towards exceeding everyone's exterior expectations.

Just as bellbottom pants and platform shoes returned, history repeats itself in the exterior design of homes. The trick for builders, however, is making the old look new again. Rawlings Homes is renowned for drawing from established styles such as French



■ This custom built home by Rawlings Homes is personalized with complementary colours, textures and architecture.

Country or Georgian with round top windows and elegant columns. With advances in building materials, the custom homes made by Rawlings Homes combine elements from the Old World with technology of the New World. As a certified R-2000 builder, Rawlings Homes is always looking to bring energy efficient ideas to their exclusive designs.

Rawlings Homes is an avid user of IntegraSpec Insulated Concrete Form technology. This innovative construction method combines high insulation with

the strength of concrete to make each home exceptionally energy efficient. ICF technology is only one example of advanced building materials. "My job as a builder is to make buyers aware of these options and to make them available," says Paul Rawlings, owner of Rawlings Homes.

Reid's Heritage Homes has also become more environmentally conscious in the design of their homes.

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■ Peaks of perfection – this model by Harasym Developments Inc. called the Cypress is built with tinted yellow stucco for a refreshingly clean Mediterranean look.

EnviroWise is their exclusive approach to new home construction that gives consumers more information and choice about the energy efficiency and air quality in their new home.

Talbot Village, one of Reid's most architecturally distinct subdivisions, features Craftsman style fronts. "I think this is a style that will be here for awhile," asserts Jim Vanderhoeven, construction manager for Reid's Heritage Homes. Along with its energy efficiency, models like the Wheatley feature boxed out Craftsman windows and maintenance free materials. "People seem to be attracted to these finer details," claims Vanderhoeven.

The fine details of a home's exterior can really make a home stand out from the rest. Mike and Milena Harasym of Harasym Development Inc. work closely with homeowners until even the final detail is perfect. They encourage clients to look at a variety of styles to create a home that combines their favourite elements. "We like to do things differently," says Milena Harasym.

Harasym Developments Inc. continually pushes the boundaries of exceptional exterior design with the use of stucco and stone – materials that range from 40 percent and more in price than brick. Despite the increase in cost, these materials add interest, texture and appeal to many homes.

Stucco is available in a wide range of colours and can be used as detailed accents as seen in their Madison model or to create a Mediterranean feel as seen in their Cypress model. Imitation or cultured stone is another material frequently used by Harasym Developments Inc. as well as other builders. "It is more economical and the look is very close to real stone," informs Mike Harasym.

At the end of the day, it is important that your home appeals mostly to you. Whether the appeal comes from energy efficient materials or splurging on stucco accents, having the exterior edge will exceed your expectations.

"It's nice to see your hard work has paid off," says Mike Harasym. "You deserve a home built by Harasym Developments Inc."

Today's trends in exterior design are all-encompassing and more tailored to each homeowner's individual needs, both practical and indulgent. And despite London's traditional tendencies in home design, developers and homeowners are saying goodbye to standard design while they welcome cutting edge advances in environmental consciousness and building basics.

Fortunately, home buyers no longer need to sacrifice quality for efficiency, style for economy or luxury for environmental-friendliness. Developers are increasingly knowledgeable and encouraging of matching curb appeal with home owner's appeal.

So, the next time you are in a subdivision, see what you can discover a home just by examining its exterior elements. ■