

POINTS OF ENTRY

Patio doors are bigger and better, and stylish sliders are coming on strong—and there's more. Here are the door trends you need to know about now

By Jean Dimeo

A door helps set a home's style, contributes to curb appeal, influences energy efficiency, and separates public from private. As with other important design trends, what's new in doors has trickled down from the custom sector. The biggest news is a multitude of offerings in patio doors, but other design shifts are taking place, too: barn doors, bigger doors, and darker-colored doors. The trends worth noting will help you stay current on what buyers are looking for and also help you stand out in your market.

INSIDE OUT, ALL OVER

Expansive multi-panel door systems with floor-to-ceiling glass, once seen only in luxury production and custom homes, are now moving into moderately priced homes as manufacturers offer new and stylish products at a variety of price points. Some multi-panel units, available in sliding, folding, bifold, and pocket-door styles, are massive by production standards, measuring as many as 50 or 60 feet wide by 12 feet high.

"Large doors provide a perfect way to bring the outdoors inside," says Christine Marvin, director of marketing for manufacturer Marvin Windows and Doors. "It's an across-the-country trend—from Cape Cod to California." Erick Flesch, Western Window Systems' volume program national accounts manager who works with production builders, agrees, noting that even when multi-panel doors are closed, "homeowners are happy to have window wall systems."

LaCantina offers a wide variety of expansive doors, including this energy-efficient multi-slide aluminum system. The door's design allows for different exterior and interior colors.



Window and door manufacturers are seizing on consumer demand for outdoor living, turning out gigantic wall systems that are suitable even in locations where weather conditions such as hurricanes pose serious challenges at certain times of year. Ply Gem's new Mira Premium Impact Series sliding doors, for example, meet impact requirements in U.S. Zones 2 and 3—the doors are rated for wind speeds of up to 140 miles per hour.

Some door and window companies have expanded their offerings by acquiring leading multi-door system producers. Weiland Sliding Doors and Windows has been part of Andersen since 2013, and Jeld-Wen purchased LaCantina Doors in 2015.

New vinyl-frame products, such as Western Window Systems' Series 360 multi-slide door, are helping broaden the trend for colossal door systems. "Builders at the entry level

and move-up price points can now incorporate outdoor living into their homes without breaking the bank," Flesch says.

Even traditional patio doors are beefing up. "Patio doors are just going to keep getting larger," says Chad Martinez, manager of the Essence Series for Milgard Windows & Doors. "They're becoming more efficient, more durable, and more beautiful. You're seeing more decorative hardware, nice warm-wood interiors, and more colors. A lot of [manufacturers are] doing it now and doing it well."

But manufacturers are also cognizant of how all that glass affects a home's energy efficiency and are offering products with enhanced glazing and frame technologies. For instance, Western Window Systems' Series 360, which features dual-pane, argon-filled, low-E glass, and warm-edge thermoplastic spacer technology, sports a low 0.30 U-value and a 0.20 solar heat gain coefficient.



Therma-Tru's Classic Craft American Style fiberglass door measures 8 feet tall.



The Pivot Door Company offers contemporary doors hung on pivots in an array of woods and sizes.

GRAND ENTRANCE

Entry door manufacturers are crafting an ever-growing selection of attractive 8- and 9-foot-tall doors as homebuyers at all price points increasingly want to make a statement at the home's entryway.

UrbanVibe, a single- and multi-family builder and developer in the Washington, D.C., area, typically installs the tallest door that works with the ceiling. "Our home designs offer ceiling heights of 9 to 10 feet, so the 8-foot entry door works beautifully," company president and CEO Joseph Shieh says. "It's all about the approach as one walks toward the entry of a home. And as a builder ... the decision is an easy one. Blow their mind before they even step inside."

Donna Contat, director of brand management for Therma-Tru, notes that 8-foot-tall doors work well on smaller homes, too. And not only are doors taller, they're also growing wider as entryways increase in size. For instance, Therma-Tru now offers a 3-foot 6-inch-wide, 8-foot-tall unit.

Another overarching theme is simplicity, which Contat says allows for versatility and transitional styling. And entry doors in dark hues—shades of blue, gray, and black—are popular in many regions because those colors offer sophisticated, enduring looks, manufacturers and builders say.

PIVOT POINT

The pivot door is a custom product that hasn't yet moved into production housing, but that could soon change. The design makes a strong impression and accommodates a wider unit. Pivot doors can reach the height of the ceiling and also allow for a smooth transition from the indoors to outside. Manufacturers say that pivot doors can be made of metal, stone, or materials that are too heavy to be used in traditional swing doors. They claim that a pivot door's hefty weight doesn't hamper functionality.

At the International Builders' Show in January, LaCantina Doors previewed a 10-foot-by-5-foot aluminum, thermally controlled pivot entry door that a company spokesperson said "got tremendous response," adding that it's a perfect match to the company's folding, multi-slide, swing, and pocket doors. The LaCantina pivot unit will be available in late 2016 or early 2017, according to the manufacturer.

In the long run, price may be the deciding factor in whether pivot doors go mainstream. "Certain buyers like them because they offer a more edgy look that allows the owner to incorporate different materials," Shieh says, adding, "The popularity and longevity of this look will be proportional to the cost premium versus visual statement analysis."

[PRODUCT TRENDS]



Barn doors, such as this model from TruStile, add pizzazz and save space.



Known for its garage doors, Clopay offers a matching entry door for a cohesive look.

SPACE SAVER

Moving inside the home, sliding barn doors in a variety of woods and metals, different designs, and featuring interesting hardware are becoming more common with the growing emphasis on small spaces and flex rooms. “We don’t get a lot of trends in doors, but this one took off quickly,” says Chel Crook Barban, brand marketing director for Masonite. “They’re great if you don’t have room for an in-swing or out-swing door. It’s almost like the new pocket door, but it’s on the outside so it’s much more stylish looking.”

Sliding barn doors can serve as a temporary partition to divide a living space or to open a room for entertaining. They also can be used along a wall to mask shelves, cabinets, entertainment systems, or storage while adding visual interest and helping pull together the look of a room.

“We continue to see rising demand for this style of door in homes of almost every shape and size,” says Jim Parelo, vice president of marketing for Jeld-Wen. Mike Nesladek, director of marketing for TruStile, says that barn doors work well in open floor plans because those that include glass close off rooms while still providing privacy. “They offer a creative way to create separation,” he says, in both traditional and modern home designs.

MATCHED SET

Garage doors have a significant impact on a home’s curb appeal, especially if they face the street. Manufacturers are once again taking a page from the custom builder’s playbook, with companies such as Pella, Clopay, and Designer Doors offering coordinated entry and garage doors.

Clopay recently expanded its range of products with contemporary entry door designs to complement its Avante and new Modern Steel Collection garage doors—and traditional styles are available as well. “[Now] builders and homeowners can coordinate the two main entrances of the home to make a stunning design statement,” says Pat Lohse, Clopay’s vice president of marketing, who points out that homeowners continue to demand exterior products that are both energy efficient and made with materials that are low maintenance, as well as being functional, good looking, and able to be customized. **PB**

Jean Dimeo has been writing about building products and technologies for more than 20 years.