

# A SHOWCASE INNOVATION





# FOR



## [SHOW VILLAGE]

Professional Builder's Show Village homes offered ideas for Millennials and Boomers and kitchens and baths, plus easy-to-use smart home technology

By Teresa Burney

Photographs by David Brown/Brown Photography

**B**arometer of the latest trends, source for fresh design ideas, showplace for new products, materials, and technology. The Professional Builder Show Village at the 2017 NAHB International Builders' Show was all that and more. This year's Show Village models—the 55+ Home, Millennial Home, Ultimate Kitchen & Bath, and the Nest Home—addressed topics that are top of mind throughout the home building industry: buyer groups and trends, focusing on Baby Boomers, Millennials, and smart home technology.

### BUILT FOR BOOMERS

This year, the largest number of Baby Boomers born in one year—75.8 million—will turn 60, and they're starting to think about the next phase of life. Builder confidence in the single-family 55+ housing market remains strong, up 8 points to 67, the highest reading since the 2009 inception of the NAHB's 55+ Housing Market Index, underscoring the importance of knowing just what Boomers are looking for in a home.

The 55+ Home at IBS offered a tried-and-true design to attract this demographic—it was built and sold more than 400 times, says Jim Chapman, last year's president of NAHB's 55+ Housing Industry Council.

Designed by Atlanta builder Jim Chapman Communities, and built by Nationwide Custom Homes, in Martinsville, Va., the 1,871-square-foot Craftsman-inspired house could easily appeal to buyers of all

- Large windows for indoor-outdoor feel and abundant natural light
- Wide doorways, hard floors, and accessible, yet attractive, showers
- Low- or no-maintenance materials
- A balance of open plan and private space

**The 55+ Home plan is open, yet has outdoor space, private spaces in the main living area, and a flex room.**

## [SHOW VILLAGE]

ages, with an added perk: aging in place. Here, most of those features are subtle. Hallways that are 32 inches and wider not only make the spaces look more open, they also allow easy access for those who use a walker or wheelchair. Similarly, wood floors can be easily traversed by those who use walking aids as well. Many large windows admit abundant light for failing eyes and provide a dose of sunlight to improve mood.

The 55+ Home's luxurious master bathroom is essentially a wet room with no threshold and a seat in the shower—as handy for bathing activities as for accessibility. There are no grab bars in the master shower, but wood blocking in the walls provides for easy installation later, if needed. The second generously sized bath has a bath-and-shower combination with a seat in the shower and an extendable showerhead. Also, it gives a homeowner with mobility challenges an accessible bathroom that's close to the kitchen and other living areas.

Built with low-maintenance materials, the 55+ Home's metal roof is sprinkled with asphalt for a traditional appearance that also offers long-term durability, and the vinyl siding has a wood look but is guaranteed not to rot or warp and requires no painting.

## MADE FOR MILLENNIALS

The children of Baby Boomers are at the age when they traditionally should be buying homes, yet many are renters. Their early adulthood was interrupted by the home building recession, leaving some fearful of purchasing homes and some unable to buy due to job loss and student debt. This group is moving into its baby-making prime, a traditional trigger for homeownership.

- Neutrals such as gray still rule, offering first-time buyers flexibility to make low-budget changes with pillows and throws
- Contemporary is popular, but salvaged wood and "Shabby Chic" touches add warmth and appeal
- For every generation, the kitchen remains the home's core
- Outdoor space, such as decks and porches, is especially important for smaller homes

But before the bambini arrive, the Millennials are a lot like their Baby Boomer parents and grandparents: a social group that enjoys informal entertaining. To that end, the Millennial Home at IBS reflected a contemporary look with plenty of entertaining areas sandwiching the ever-popular gathering spot of any party—the kitchen. And, as was evidenced by show crowds standing around the quartz-clad island, the kitchen is the heart of the Millennial Home.

Built by Palm Harbor Homes, in Plant City, Fla., the 1,704-square-foot house is augmented with an additional 200



**Barn doors with a distressed finish soften the modern vibe of the Millennial Home.**

square feet of porches. There's a living room at the front, and a family room at the back connects to a back porch where the homeowners and their friends can gather and hang out in good weather. The model is built so the home could be reversed on a lot and continue the interior flow.

The home's sliding barn-style doors were the stars of the show, their deliberately worn look admired by visitors who constantly ran their hands over the wood, which had been distressed with three layers of paint and a wire brush, adding a rough-hewn beachy vibe to the home's sleek white and gray contemporary elements. The wood was also used to accent other areas of the home, with trim and casings along prominent archways.

## KITCHEN + BATH

Also built by Palm Harbor Homes, the Ultimate Kitchen & Bath provided design ideas that speak to a range of buyers. The kitchen's custom cabinetry has deep drawers for pots and pans, plenty of storage for pantry items, and panels that conceal appliances for the finished look necessary for kitchens open to living spaces. A generously sized island offers plenty of cooking prep space, plus a gleaming, bar-height shelf for drinks and snacks for family or guests looking on while the meal is prepared.

In both kitchen and bath, a variety of sources of light provide ambient and task lighting. In the bath, this is achieved by setting LED lights under floating cabinetry, which reduces glare for aging eyes. Spa-like indulgences such as a vertical fire feature and a TV within view of the tub offer luxurious touches that serve as memory points for buyers touring multiple models.

- LED lighting under floating cabinetry provides ambient light that boosts visibility and helps ensure safety
- Stainless finishes remain popular, as do cabinet panels that conceal appliances
- There's an even split between big tubs and big showers
- While the kitchen is the gathering space, the bath is a refuge





Buyers are drawn to kitchens and baths that feel customized. For many, aging in place is top of mind.

## TECH TARGETED

Fire alarms, burglar warnings, a garage door left open, your daughter's boyfriend camped out on the couch, whether your Blue Apron order was delivered ... IBS Show Village visitors this year flocked to the Nest Home, which showed off technology that helps calm the leaving-home worries.

Among the most reassuring devices were the Nest cameras, which can be installed anywhere inside or outside the house, so that, wherever you are, you can view a live stream via smartphone of what's happening at home, from your living room to your front door to the baby's crib—if you just want to get a calming fix of your little one napping. And, to offer additional peace of mind, the Nest Home included the Nest Protect alarm, which senses carbon monoxide as well as fast- and slow-burning fires and can be silenced using your phone.



The invisible benefits of a smart home include convenience, security, and energy savings.

In an energy-wise play, Nest showed off a thermostat that is smart enough to learn your temperature preferences. And, if you forgot to turn down the home's thermostat when you left on vacation, you can log onto the Nest app from your smartphone to remotely adjust the temperature.

"Last year builders were asking us *why* they should invest in smart home products," says Gene LaNois, head of Nest Labs' professional channel. "But this year they were most interested in *how* they can invest in smart home technology. As demand for the smart home grows, it's important for builders to make it a part of their business. The Nest Home at IBS helped people see smart home products in a more natural home environment—a fact that many appreciated." **PB**

- Offering systems that provide a sense of safety helps sell homes
- With a hectic pace of life, technology options that offer convenience are highly desirable
- Leaving for extended work or pleasure trips can be stressful; keeping an eye on home from a distance is reassuring
- Smart thermostats help save energy and money

*Teresa Burney writes about business, home building, design, real estate, and development.*

For more information about this year's IBS Show Village, visit [showvillage.probuilder.com/2017](http://showvillage.probuilder.com/2017) online.