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10 Home Features Buyers Want

Home designers and builders speaking at the recent International Builders Show in Las Vegas say that buyers are seeking cost-effective features and rejecting things that don't have lasting value.

"It's all about family togetherness – casual living, entertaining and flexible spaces," says Carol Lavender, president of the Lavender Design Group in San Antonio.

Paul Cardis, CEO of Avid Ratings, which conducts an annual survey of buyer preferences, identified these must-haves in new homes:

1. Large kitchens with islands
2. Energy efficiency, including energy-efficient appliances, super insulation, and high-efficiency windows.
3. Home offices
4. Main-floor master suite
5. Outdoor living space
6. Ceiling fans
7. Soaking tub in the master suite and/or an oversize shower with a seating area
8. Stone and brick exteriors rather than stucco or vinyl
9. Community walking paths and playgrounds
10. Two-car garages, but three-car garages are even more desirable