

BUILDING A LIFESTYLE

BY RENEE DEE

BEFORE YOU TALK with a builder or architect, it's important to think about what you want your home to be. Will it be grand or intimate? Contemporary or traditional? Designed for entertaining or privacy?

Building a home is an evolution – there will be questions you can't immediately answer, issues the budget takes care of and aspects that may change as you design it. Don't stray from your priorities, and

keep that vision in front of you to achieve your goal. Remember, builders and architects are designers, so don't try to create a floor plan before you begin.

Instead, complete this pre-building questionnaire, and bring it to your first meeting with your builder or architect. Keep referring to it throughout the building process, so you have an idea of what you want in and from your home.

GENERAL

- What do you like about your current home? _____

- What frustrates you about your current home(s)? _____

- Which architectural styles are you attracted to? _____

- Do you want your new home to be one story or two? _____
- How many years do you plan to live in it? _____
- Will you live in this home full-time or part-time? _____
- Are there views you need to consider? For example, if your home will be located on a golf course, which side will face it?

- Describe what you would like visitors to see as they approach your home. _____

- What kind of roof do you want? _____

- What should the front door look like? _____

- What roles should fresh air and daylight play? _____

- Do you want balconies, window seats or patios? _____

- Will your ceilings be high or low? _____

- What kinds of flooring materials will you use? _____

- Will you entertain? If so, how often and for how many guests? Will you entertain indoors, outdoors or both? _____

- Do you collect and display art? Do you have other collections that you want to display? _____

- Do you want a safe for valuables? _____
- What are your hobbies? Do they require special spaces, accommodations or storage? _____

- How important are fireplaces to you? Where do you want them? _____

- Where do you like to read? _____

- Is energy conservation a priority? _____

- If you're building in a master-planned community, what limitations does your Homeowner's Association pose? _____

INHABITANTS

- Who will live in this home? _____

- Will children be regular guests? If so, how many? _____

- Do you have a nanny or in-home assistance? What kinds of spaces do you want for this person? _____

- Do any of the inhabitants have special needs that require ramps, wider hallways and door entries, an elevator, special door handles or provisions in the tub or shower? _____

- Does an older relative live with you? _____
- Will you have regular houseguests? If so, how long will they stay? _____

- Do you have pets? If so, what are their needs? _____

DEFINING ROOMS

DINING

- Do you cook? How many people cook at one time? _____

- What kinds of appliances do you want in the kitchen? Do you want to be able to hide small ones or see them all? _____

- How many sinks, ovens, microwaves and dishwashers do you want? _____

- Do you want a kitchen island? _____
- Where will you eat? How many people will sit around the kitchen table? _____

- Do you want a food pantry or a butler's pantry? _____
- Where will you store entertaining items? _____

- How will you handle trash and recycling? _____

- Do you have any special food-preparation needs? _____

- Do you have wine-storage needs? Do you want a wet bar or a temperature-controlled humidor? _____

- Do you work with caterers? What special amenities do you want for storage, access and service? _____

- Do you want the kitchen to be separate from or part of the living space? Specifically, would you like to see the family room from the kitchen?

- How will you use your dining room? How many people should be able to sit around the table? _____

• Do you want a formal dining room? _____

• Do you have special furniture that you want to accommodate? _____

LIVING SPACES

• What activities will the family room need to accommodate? Do you want toy storage? Do you want a built-in unit for electronics? _____

• Will you use a living room? What should this room feel like? _____

• Do you want a coat closet or a powder room? _____

• Do you want a game room or a home theater? _____

MASTER SUITE

• What do you want the master suite to feel like? _____

• Do you want bookshelves or space for a desk? _____

• Do you want a fireplace, sitting area or outside patio? _____

• Will you store all your clothes in the closet? How large or small do you want your closet to be? _____

• What amenities do you want in the master bathroom? A tub with jets? A steam shower? A make-up table? Linen storage or a laundry hamper?

BEDROOMS

- If you have children, how many children's bedrooms do you want? Do you want those bedrooms near or far from the master suite? _____

- Depending on your children's ages, will they want play space, homework space or entertaining space? _____

- Will you provide space for guests? If so, will it be a room, an attached suite or detached casita? _____

- What amenities will the guest space have? Will it have a garage, patio or spa? _____

FUNCTIONAL SPACES

- Where will you organize family schedules, bills and lists? Will you want a desk in that area? _____

- Do you want an office? What kind of equipment and furniture will be in it? _____

- Do you work from home? Do you want a separate entrance for clients? _____

- Do you want additional storage in your laundry room? Do you want a built-in ironing station, a sink or a drip-dry hanging area? _____

- Do you want rooms for other activities like crafts, reading, mediation or exercise? _____

TECHNOLOGY

- Do you want automation in your home? If so, what functions do you want to automate? Audio/Video? Lighting? Draperies?

Awnings/Sunscreens? Fireplaces? Security? Gates? Air-conditioning and heating? _____

- What kind of lighting do you want in your home? _____

- How do you want to control the lighting? Do you want one-button control for pre-established settings? _____

- In which rooms will you watch television? What are your viewing habits in each space? _____

- Do you listen to music in certain rooms? Do you want to be able to listen to it throughout the house? What about outside? _____

- Do you want a communication or intercom system? _____

- Do you want a central-vacuum system? _____

- What kind of security system do you want? _____

- Do you want filtered or purified water throughout the house? _____

- How many phone lines will you have? Do they need to be able to handle high-speed Internet connections? _____

- Do you need special outlets or ceiling fans? _____

OUTDOOR LIVING

- Do you dine outside? Do you grill? _____

- Do you want a pool or spa? _____

- Do you want access to a bathroom from outdoors? _____

- If you have children, what kinds of outdoor amenities would they enjoy? _____

- What safety precautions are necessary for children around the pool? _____

- Do you play lawn games? Do you want a putting green? _____

- Do you want an Arizona room? _____
- What kinds of amenities do you want for outdoor entertaining? _____

- What kind of outdoor furniture will you have? _____

- Do you want outdoor heaters? _____
- What kind of landscaping will you have? Will there be a water feature? How much grass, if any, will you have? _____

- Are you a gardener? Do you want a potting area or a tool shed? Do you want a composting station? _____

- What type of outdoor lighting do you want? What about landscape lighting? _____

- Do you want outdoor electrical outlets for holiday or special-event lighting? _____

- Will your pets need special provisions outdoors? _____

GARAGE

- How many garages do you want? Where will the garage(s) be situated? _____

- What kinds of vehicles do you own? Are any oversized? _____

- Would you like workspace in the garage? _____

- How much storage do you want? _____

- Do you want your garage to be air-conditioned? _____

- Where will you keep garbage cans? _____
