

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Lifestyle Trends Driving Home Design

(NAPSA)—Time—it's a precious commodity, and one that continues to be in increasingly short supply. Between junior's soccer game, dry cleaning, work, groceries, meetings, dance lessons, haircuts, homework...our list of things to do each day gets longer and longer.

"Contemporary Americans complain of unprecedented levels of busyness in everyday life. They worry about frenetic schedules," reports the major U.S./Canadian organization Take Back Your Time. "Americans are putting in longer hours on the job now than we did in the 1950s and average a little over two weeks vacation per year, while Europeans average five to six weeks." It seems impossible to fit in everything we need to do.

Understanding that time is at a premium, home designers are incorporating time-savers into new home designs. Rather than getting the entire family dressed and loaded up to go to the local theater, it's just a short walk to the family room where the latest blockbuster can be enjoyed on the built-in home theater system. No more time-consuming trips to the local gym when a home workout room may be just down the hall. Socializing and entertaining can once again be an in-home activity with spacious open-plan kitchens, large islands, high-tech appliances and even individual beverage dispensers.

The latest lifestyle design trend, officially identified by the American Institute of Architects



in a recent survey, is a spa bath, such as the Suite Retreat by Champion Homes. As spacious as many bedrooms, it combines a large ceramic shower, complete with a soothing rainmaker-style showerhead, full-width ceramic seat, and a modern glass enclosure with an oversized soaking tub, built-in electric fireplace and an electronics niche, ideal for a TV and DVD player. "We wanted the bath to have the warm, relaxing atmosphere of a spa," said Roberto Kritzer, award-winning architect and vice president of corporate design for Champion Homes. "The design gives homeowners a place to relax, unwind and refresh without the added expense and time of a spa visit. With its adjustable lighting scheme, variable flame fireplace and plantation shutters for privacy, the homeowner can create the ideal environment for total relaxation."

Luxurious and spacious, a spa bath is the next evolution in home design being dictated by today's busy lifestyles. And for many people, escaping to the soothing tranquility of a spa may be as simple as retreating to a room in their own home.