

HINTS FOR HOMEBUYERS

Wood—The Best Investment For New Homebuyers

(NAPSA)—Record low mortgage rates continue to keep the housing market hot. But for prospective homebuyers contemplating building or purchasing a new home, the process can be daunting. Builder, author and *Today* show correspondent, Lou “Mr. Fix-It” Manfredini, says it’s easy when homebuyers arm themselves with a simple checklist of spots to look to assure they’re looking past model-home frills to find real value hidden underneath the showy finishes.



“For most people, a new home is not only their most important purchase, but also their most important financial investment,” says Manfredini. “Home-

buyers should make their purchase decision based on fundamentals because the foundation and framing are forever.”

To help homeowners make the right decision, Manfredini has developed a booklet of 10 tips for touring new homes. Among Lou’s top items are:

Start With A Solid Foundation—“The foundation is the rock on which your home is built—it may even provide the walls of a future living area,” says Manfredini. “Make a visual check to see that walls and floors are true and straight, with no waves. Ask the developer about waterproofing, drainage tiles and backfill—elements that help keep the foundation dry.”

Ensure A Strong Framework—“Framing homes with wood is recommended for unsurpassed strength, durability, affordability

and flexibility, and for wood’s environmental edge compared to other materials,” says Manfredini. “Wood is the only renewable and sustainable building material, and manufacturing wood uses less energy and produces far fewer greenhouse emissions than manufacturing steel or concrete. It’s also a superior sound-proofing material.”

Ask About Energy Efficiency—“Ask developers about any special energy-saving measures,” says Manfredini. “If they’re building with wood, you’re ahead of the game—wood is the best natural insulator against cold and heat, which can actually help keep utility bills in check. Radiant barrier panels reduce attic temperatures by as much as 30 degrees thereby significantly lowering air-conditioning costs.”

Look Behind Window Treatments—“Energy-efficient thermal pane windows drastically reduce energy bills,” says Manfredini. “As an insulator against heat and cold, solid wood windows will have less draft around the window edges. Recent studies also show that wood windows consume less energy and generate about half as much waste as vinyl in comparative life cycles from manufacturing through their use in a home.”

“Insulated glass is usually standard, but upgrading to low E glass can help reduce UV rays and increase the energy efficiency of your new home,” says Manfredini. “Heat mirror glass is an even better idea.”

Walk About—“Floors are the most heavily used surface in a house,” says Manfredini. “Hardwood flooring is not only durable,



but an elegant way to add value and beauty to your home. And in five to seven years if the floor needs maintenance, it can be refinished for around \$2 per square foot—about a quarter of the cost of replacing carpet or other flooring options. An added benefit of hardwood flooring is that those with allergies should suffer less because, unlike carpeting, wood does not trap mold spores and dust that cause many household allergies.”

To obtain a free copy of Manfredini’s *Home, New Home: Touring New Homes—10 Tips to Smarter Touring* or for additional information and tips for new homebuyers, log onto the special Lou Manfredini section of www.beconstructive.com or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Home New Home, c/o Wood Promotion Network, 676 North St. Clair, Chicago, Illinois, 60611.