

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Larger Kitchens, Better Appliances Stir Up Home Entertainers

(NAPS)—They say home is where the heart is—and increasingly, the heart of today's home is the kitchen. Today's kitchens are larger than ever. According to the National Kitchen and Bath Association, 69 percent of the kitchens remodeled in 1998 were more than 150 square feet compared to 36 percent in 1996.

Barbara Stowers, vice president of sales and marketing for Taylor Woodrow Homes, upscale homebuilders in California, said she has seen the kitchen play an increasingly important role in selling homes.

"Ten years ago our clients said the most important room in their home was the living room," she explained. "Now, they say the room where they spend the most time is the kitchen. They are asking for larger kitchens with premium, professional style appliances. We also know high-end appliances increase the resale value of a home. That's why our kitchen size has increased and we are including Viking premium appliances in our homes."

James Beard Award-winning Chef Bobby Flay, host of The Food Network's *Hot Off the Grill with Bobby Flay* and *Grillin' and Chillin'*, said that people are entertaining in the home more because they are becoming more interested in proper cooking techniques and equipment.

"With the popularity of today's television cooking shows, people can watch how to prepare something instead of just reading about it," comments Flay. "People are translating that into home enter-



Since cooking for family and friends has become a form of entertaining, "weekend chefs" now have larger kitchens with premium appliances.

taining. They want their friends to see how they prepare the meal."

Nathalie Dupree, host of the PBS show *Nathalie Dupree's Comfortable Entertaining* and award-winning author of *Comfortable Entertaining*, says people are realizing the process of preparing a meal is as much fun as serving it.

Many new kitchens feature party prep areas, including a bar sink, an undercounter refrigerator, a wine cooler, a dishwasher and a storage area for extra food and dishes. Dupree says these extras make for easier home entertaining.

"My two Viking dishwashers allow me to load one after prep work, while leaving the second one free for after dinner cleanup," says Dupree. "This gives me time to enjoy my guests and it keeps my sink and countertops clutter-free."

If the kitchen is indeed the heart of the home, today many homeowners have a lot more heart to come home to.