

Overview

By Ali Morris, WGSN-homebuilddlife, 23 May 2012

Urban migration

The global response to the current financial climate has resulted in evolving consumer patterns. In developing nations, people are moving from rural areas in search of jobs and opportunities to improve their lives, while in more advanced economies, larger business centres have fared better than the suburbs and smaller cities. In the countries hardest hit by the recession and the ensuing housing crisis, many people have become hesitant to move to bigger houses or into new communities.



New York

* KEY TRENDS

- Living spaces are becoming smaller and more personalised
- Smaller homes, open floor-plans and multifunctional rooms are top preferences
- In home design, functionality, practicality, energy efficiency and multiple use rule
- With smaller spaces, new organisation systems, multipurpose furniture and versatile objects will flourish
- There is a general mix and match of high-low aesthetic influences to create something unique

Tailored lifestyles

This in turn has had huge implications on the way cities will grow and develop over the next century.

When it comes to purchasing products for the home, today's consumers are faced with endless choice. They are more empowered, informed and in control of how they want to consume than ever before. They demand the best of both worlds – the convenience and cultural benefits of living in a city, with the lifestyle benefits that are typically connected to a rural or suburban lifestyle – open green space, healthy food and a social, interactive community.

In order to satisfy their diverse and complicated needs, city-dwellers are attracted by products and experiences that will help them fulfill their goals in an uncomplicated way.



Compact kitchen

* FACT FILE

- 3.3 billion people – more than half the world’s population – live in cities
- 60% of all people will live in cities by 2030. (In 1800, only 2% of people lived in cities and towns. In 1950, only 30% of the world population was urban)
- Almost 180,000 people move into cities each day
- 60 million people move into cities each year in developing countries. This rate of movement will continue for the next 30 years
- Over the next 15 to 20 years, many cities in Africa and Asia will double in size

Smaller & simpler

As travel becomes more costly and time-consuming, home buyers are looking to buy smaller homes that are closer to their place of work, with local transport options, green public space and everyday local conveniences. Everything points to an urban design movement that promotes walkable neighborhoods that contain a range of housing and job options.

A Brookings Institution article published in November 2010 titled The Next Real Estate Boom highlighted a fundamental change in what consumers want: homes in central cities and closer-in suburbs where one can walk to stores and mass transit.

In general, there are two kinds of urban dwellers: those who live in their homes and those who live out of them. For those who live in their homes, their home is their sanctuary, their place of self-expression. These consumers spend a lot of time and thought on home decoration.

For those who live out of their homes, the home is a place to come back to and recharge their batteries for a life lived



“MANY NEW IN-CITY CONDO AND APARTMENT BUILDINGS ARE OFFERING SMALLER FOOTPRINTS TO SATISFY NOT ONLY DOWNSIZING BABY BOOMERS BUT, ESPECIALLY, MEMBERS OF GENERATION Y WHO ARE MOVING OUT OF DORMS AND PARENTS’ PLACES AND SETTING UP THEIR OWN HOUSEHOLDS. GENERATION Y VIEWS A HOME’ S LOCATION AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ITS SIZE. THEY MAY ALSO SEE LIVING SMALL AND IN-CITY AS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE LIFESTYLE. FOR GEN Y, THE HOME IS A PLACE TO LIVE OUT OF, NOT TO LIVE IN. THEY DON’ T THINK OF THIS AS A SACRIFICE. IT’ S JUST THEIR LIFESTYLE. ”

John McIlwain, senior fellow for housing at The Urban Land Institute, Washington DC

mostly in work and entertainment. These consumers spend less time, though often just as much money, on home decor. They want their home to be welcoming and functional, but not time-consuming.

This new lifestyle demand is challenging architects and designers to rethink the way they design for the 21st century city, and the products and experiences with which we surround ourselves.