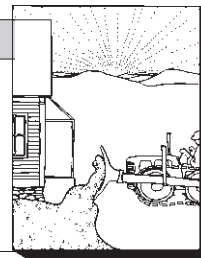


Too Hot To Handle

by John D. Wagner



Today's building and remodeling clients, we've all heard, are tougher to please than ever. Keeping up with their desires takes a keen eye toward the latest trends and styles. And these change with dizzying speed. This year's hot home amenity is next year's avocado refrigerator or backyard fallout shelter. But worry not. To remove some of the guesswork and help you put the sizzle back in your steak, the JLC editors have scoured the marketplace to round up their picks* for the hottest Hot Buttons for the home of the '90s. Here are the winners.

Cocooning Chic

Japan already has micro-hotel rooms—with every electronic luxury, but room only to lie down, sit up, and roll over. The residential version is just around the corner. These tiny chambers will come equipped with high-res TV, negative-ion generator, rowing machine, digital/audio stereo, magic fingers mattress, and induction hot plate. When the going gets tough, the smart will slink away into their private cubicles for a couple of hours of quality time. Special security system screens out children, in-laws, and federal security agents.

It Does Windows

Good help was hard to find until the advent of KleenWindow. Today's busy two-career couple barely has time to open the mini-blinds, never mind wash the windows. With that in mind, SmartWindow Technologies has introduced the cleverest glazing system ever. When the window's microchip sensors detect the buildup of dirt on the surface, the frame emits ultrasound vibrations that quietly rattles the dirt away. The deep vibes also deter rodents and insects and reportedly promote relaxation for stressed out homeowners.

Bath Plus



You may have read about complete bath environments with phone, stereo and home computer. These are luxuries that few can afford, but few fast-trackers can afford to be without the new Bath Processor. Using the same technology popularized with French food processors, the Bathinart cleanses your body while it prepares your dinner—all with a single motor. This fully integrated appliance chops, blends, and heats up tasty food combinations in its meal module, while the bath side folds, blends, or whips the bather with delightful water massage. The professional model comes in stainless and does mousse—either the dessert or the hair conditioner.

Microwave Carpet



Radiant heating is much touted for its comfort and convenience. But until now, its installation has been expensive and complicated. The new HotFoot Radiant Carpet solves all that with one simple floorcovering. Tiny wires in its backing emit a cozy microwave that heats you, not the air. And for rooms without carpets, there's HotHead microwave ceiling heat. This instantly warms you—or your hot tub—the same way your microwave oven revives frozen dinners or last night's coffee. One caution: Remove loose change and metal belts before entering the room.

Crazy Over Granite

Tired of tinny appliances and fake finishes? Then think granite for '90. It's hard and permanent—a good antidote to the uncertainty of modern times. Some new uses to look for: For the serious chef, there's the Stonewares Ensemble featuring solid granite refrigerator, oven, and dishwasher. For the fresh seafood lover—the granite sushi pond is a must, easily installed just off the pantry. And finally, for hard-mattress fans, you can't beat the Here-to-Eternity stone slab bed. It's not cheap, but unlike other furnishings, you can take it with you.

Soft Kitchen

Soft tubs—oversized baths with squishy sides—were hot last year, but now the soft touch has moved to the kitchen. With soft cabinets, no longer will your customers ram their midriff into a corner of that island or peninsula or conk their heads on a badly placed wall cabinet. For counters, soft kitchen provides an easy landing for any fine china that takes a spill. Can soft floors be far behind? Currently available finishes include black, mauve, and NY Newsprint (actual pages from old Wall Street Journal articles). ■

*Note: These products will be available April 1, only from the April Fools Building Group.