Empty nest from page 1F

"Twenty percent of buyers now want three-car garages, It's an additional holding area for a beat, work shop, golf cart, children's bluyeles. It's a terrific value for \$5,000.

Square footage in and of itself isn't as important to this buying aggment as quality amenitles, whitefield satue walk-in closets maybe with some built-ins in the master sulte, a luxurious bath, a whitipool, perhaps a separate show-whitipool, perhaps a separate show-

whirlpool, perhaps a separate show-

"Maybe they want a library where they can do some work. They're not looking for just a big dining room, looking for just a mg unnun-but one large enough to accommo-date the family for holiday

date the family for holiday dinners," she said. Volume space — something other than a flat, eight-foot high ceiling — sells in this market, Robertson

semed like everybody was contemporally as this market, Robertson soid.

"They're looking for lots of windows, a very nice master bath with tub and shower, room for two sink their lives easier," she added. "Recycling has prompted some variations in kitchen plans." and a big, walk-in closet," he said. "They're willing to compromise on bedrooms and they'll give up square footage if you give them high ceilings."

Lifestyle is more important the investment possibilities in this buy, Robertson said. Goff courses, lakes, what yield to for me? Will it sowe me money, time?"

The change I've seen is people aren't buying more house than they

About 35 percent of Selective's buyers in this category have no children living at home. Lifestyle, rather than financial investment, becomes a prime purchasing the notivator, Whitefield sald.

But that's not to say that value appreciation is ignored. Many builders are willing to deal with special requests.

builders are willing to deal with special requests.

"We would design houses for that market (double income, no kids) exactly the same as houses for children," Silverman sald. "They may be thinking about having children or the home may have to be sold to people with children."

people with children.

Tastes constantly evolve.

"I can see the buyer has become a little more traditional," Whitefield said. "They've gone back to some basics — wood cabinets, dark wood floors, wood trim. In the mid '80s, it seemed like everybody was contem-

FEATURES EMPTY NESTER AND SINGLE BUYERS WANT

Here's the features these buyers want and the percentage who think they should be standard.

Percent
86%
84%
80%
80%
76%
73%
69%
68%
63%
54%
52%
51%
51%
49%
38%
35%

need," Robertson said. "They'll give up a bedroom and other things as long as they have volume space and feel good about the space they

live in.
"Everybody wants to own real estate but nobody wants to own tear es-tate but nobody wants to maintain it any more because they don't have time for it," he said. "I see more arrangements being of-

August a building bonanza

AP — Construction of new homes and spartments posted the steepest advance in 18 months in August, the government reported, but analysts predicted that activity will level off for the rest of the year.

The Commerce Department sold housing starts surged 10.4 percent, to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.24 million, up from 1.12 million in July.

in July.
Except for the Northeast, all re-Except for the Northeast, all re-gions reported gains including the South, where some analysts had ex-pected construction to be curbed in areas drenched by Hurricane An-drew late in the month.

Analysis said the big increase was due to mortgoge rates that dropped below 8 percent in August for the first time in two decades. "It seemed to unleash some people who were waiting in the wings," said economist David F. Selders of the National Association of Home Builders.

Builders.
But Seiders contended the weak labor market will restrain housing activity during the remainder of 1992. "We certainly won't see 10 percent increases month after month," he said.

■ The August increase was the largest since starts shot up 19 percent in February 1991 and the first since a 10.1 percent gain last May. They had fallen 2.4 percent in July and 4.1 percent in June, a decline that was attributed to wet weather. In addition to lower rates, the August rebound was helped by builders trying to catch up with rain-delayed construction.

He pointed to a slight decline in August in the number of building permits, which often are a barom-citer of future activity. They dipped 1.6 percent, to a 1.70 of million annuaries, after a 4.7 percent advance in July.

Lenard Mills, an economist with the Federal National Mortgage Association, agreed the August advance cannot be sustained, even with continued low mortgage rates. "Missing still is job growth," he said.

sid. Still, the August increase was the largest since starts shot up 19 per-cent in February 1991 and the first since a 10.1 percent gain last May. They had fallen 2.4 percent in July

Seiders said there appears to be little speculative construction and little speculative construction and that builders "are apparently trying to build right to the demand side of the market."

up with rain-delayed construction, he said.

Starts in August also rose to the highest level since reaching a 1.34 million annual rate in March. The increase helped boost new construction 20.2 percent above that of the first eight months of 1991. Single-family starts, which dropped 2.7 percent in July, jumped 8.5 percent a month later, to a 1.06 million annual rate. Apartment construction soared 30 percent, to 148,000, after remaining unchanged in July. Analysts, said the pace in this volatile sector could not be sustained. Starts in August also rose to the

Regionally, starts rose 15.2 per-cent in the West, to a 311,000 annu-al rate; 14.5 percent in the Midwest, to 308,000, and 9.8 percent in the South, to 506,000. But building ac-tivity fell 6.7 percent in the North-east, to a 112,000 rate.

Kitchens: where the heart is

AP — For many families the kitchen is the heart of the home. It's the place where the family gathers to eat, to talk, and to share experiences. But creating a warm, welcoming kitchen involves more than the right look.

You must create feelings of coziness, comfort, and security. That may sound difficult, but it's not. Kitchen and Bath Ideas magazine suggests the following ways to put "heart" into your kitchen:

If it furnishings to people. One measure of homeyness is hospitality, the ability of a kitchen to be physically accommodating. Physical comfort promotes psychological comfort, Sting areas should be furnished with an easy chair or two, so guests can vary their positions to maintain comfort. Arrange cockatil tables so your guests can retrieve a glass or coffee and ing for large kitchens, there is such a thing as too much space. All the properties of the prope

and laminate are often regarded as cold, formal, even glamo-

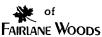
■ Enclose for comfort. It's no accident that large windows and sliding glass patio doors are being supplanted by divided windows and sets of Frent-hoors. Architects, designers, and homeowners are coming to the realization that large, undivide expanses of glass produce a feeling of being exposed. On the other hand, large windows and doors that feature muntins (narrow framing membors that divide the panes of glass) seem to provide a reassuring sense of enclosure.

Those divided windows and French doors also create cottage-caliber charm.

■ Highlight your interests. A kitchen, no matter how grand and styllah or how efficiently designed, is not likely to feel money if it's devoid of signs of life. What gives a kitchen, character and identity are telltate signs that real people — with their own tastes and preferences, interests, and eccentricities — actually live there.

Heirlooms, collections, souvenirs, family photographs, and other objects that are personally meaningful need to be on exhibit, where they can be seen and appreciated every day.

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