

## COVER STORY

## Doors open up new look

## Front line

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What's the first thing visitors notice when entering your home? The front door. Installing a new entry door is one of the simplest home improvements for rejuvenating a tired exterior.

When the wooden entry door on Ed and Valerie Sinnamon's Livonia home began cracking, the couple decided it was time for a change. Built in 1987, the brick home needed freshening. Out went the old white door, replaced by a fiberglass door stained to look like mahogany.

"The door was out of fashion. It had sidelights with bottle glass. The new door with frosted glass in a tulip design gives the house quite a bit of curb appeal," Ed Sinnamon said.

In addition to painting the siding and shutters, Diane and Sam Williams updated the front of their Livonia colonial by replacing a double wood door with a single and two sidelights.

"I think the new door added to the value of our home. We got so many compliments," Diane Williams said.

Improving the looks of a home from the street seems to be on a lot of folks' minds these days. Entry door sales for existing homes are booming all over Wayne and Oakland counties, including at Empire Doors and Windows in Redford.

Sales representative Phillip Ben-Ezra says purchases of doors for homes 10 to 60 years old account for 95 percent of his business. Although not the only reason, beautification is the number one reason for increasing sales.

"People want to beautify their homes. It adds value to the home. A new entry door is the next step in home improvement, like an interior design update outdoors," Ben-Ezra said.

Having on heating and cooling bills remains a strong second to beautification. Empire builds its steel entry doors with a solid polyurethane core ensuring a R-15 insulating value, which makes it up to five times more energy efficient than wood doors and approximately 30 percent more than steel doors with polystyrene insulation.

"The old wooden doors are warping and they're los-

ing a lot of energy. The fiberglass and steel doors will not shrink, swell, warp, split or crack," Ben-Ezra said.

Harold and Rox Kohn replaced their double entrance doors on their 11-year-old West Bloomfield ranch to create an airy atmosphere in their dark foyer after plans to add a skylight failed.

"We wanted to get some light in the house. The new door added to the beauty both inside and out," Rox Kohn said.

What styles are popular with people buying entry doors? According to Ben-Ezra, it varies.

Since Empire manufactures its own doors, the company is able to offer one-of-a-kind custom looks to please just about anyone.

According to Henry Tarnow of Tarnow Doors Inc. in Farmington Hills, his customers, who are "choosing to invest in their homes (instead of moving)," are opting to dress up exteriors with less expensive steel doors incorporating fancy glass.

"People are fixing up their homes with doors that are more decorative with leaded glass. The steel doors are lower in price," Tarnow said.

"They're buying fiberglass doors because they can be stained to look like wood and are a very attractive low-maintenance door."

As for as adding a storm door, some people think it detracts from a beautiful door. Tarnow says no. Aluminum dulled by weather and time is simply a sign of a door past its prime.

"Storm doors are more attractive today. Many people like them because they allow for cross ventilation as well as daylight. You add a brass plate and lock and you have an asset, what I like to refer to as kind of an entrance to the world," Tarnow said.

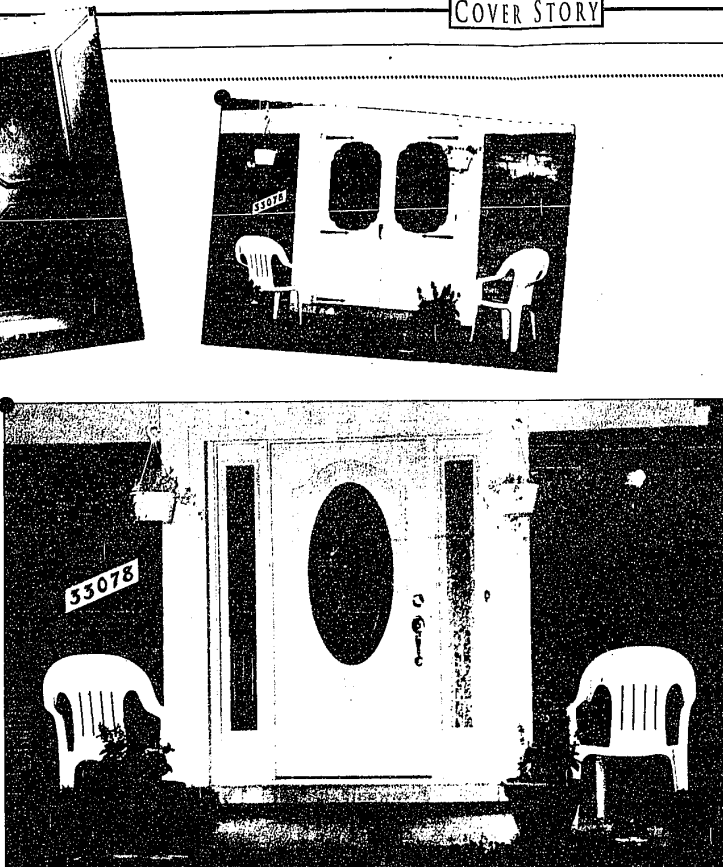
What should homeowners look for when shopping for a door? Both Tarnow and Ben-Ezra agree buyers should spend a little extra time searching for a reputable company because, as Ben-Ezra says, "a door is not just a door."

"Installation of a door is 90 percent of it," Tarnow cautioned. "If it's not hung plumb and square, it won't seal well."

Before: Double wooden doors made the Williams' Livonia home look old-fashioned.

After: A new single door with sidelights from Empire Doors and Windows gave Diane and Sam Williams' home a new look.

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## On the cover:

Edward and Valerie Sinnamon's Livonia home makes an attractive first impression with a new fiberglass door and sidelights from Empire Doors and Windows.

