

REAL ESTATE

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THE HOME FRONT

Design Tech Homes to hold a seminar

Design Tech Homes, a Houston-based home builder that also builds in San Antonio, is hosting a free seminar from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday for prospective home buyers to learn about everything that's involved in building a custom home.

Design Tech, which builds with sustainability and energy efficiency in mind, will discuss how to find a lot and how to evaluate your property and to test the soil. Guests also can learn about green construction techniques, builder warranties and the latest in financing options.

Mike Feigin, CEO of Design Tech Homes, will lead the discussion.

The event is at the Design Tech information center at 24170 U.S. 281 near Marshall Road.

For information and reservations, visit www.dth.com/seminar or call (830) 980-5558.

— Creighton A. Welch

National survey says: Buyers want space

What do home buyers want? A new national survey from Move Inc. has the answer: more space.

Although home buyers are interested in energy-efficient building techniques, what they want most from their new homes is more square footage, according to a new national survey from Realtor.com and Move.com.

The survey found that homeowners value more space by a slight margin, 10 percent, over other options, including energy-saving features (6.8 percent), a bigger or nicer yard (6.1 percent), a better location (4.2 percent) or updated amenities (3.4 percent).

But there's a new attitude about owning a home. More than 62 percent consider their home primarily a place to live as opposed to an investment.

People earning up to \$39,900 are significantly more likely to feel strongly that a home is more of a place to live than an investment, while those earning \$50,000 are more inclined to view a house as an investment.

— Jennifer Hiller

NestFest Real Estate Blog

Hopelessly addicted to HGTV? Does your ideal date include checking out the latest open house or home tour? Is the Real Estate section the first part of the paper you turn to on weekends? Then check out the launch of the new real estate blog, NestFest, the blog that covers real estate goings-on in San Antonio, on the Real Estate section at MySA.com



Stop No. 3 on the Homes of Distinction tour in Stone Creek Ranch features a home built by John Merritt Homes. This Energy Star-certified four-bedroom home features a three-car garage and a second-floor balcony. Its green features include a xeriscaped lawn and framing techniques that reduce the amount of wood used.



PHOTOS BY HELEN L. MONTOYA/hmontoya@express-news.net

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Stop No. 2 features a four-bedroom home by JB Smith Homes. Stone Creek Ranch at Fair Oaks and Boyssville Texas are hosting a luxury-home tour showcasing the latest building products and design trends, including green features, such as the radiant barrier roof decking in this home.



Homes of Distinction Green design

Tour of luxury houses in Stone Creek Ranch showcases the latest building trends and promotes efficiency.

BY CREIGHTON A. WELCH
cwelch@express-news.net

In order to drum up awareness for the new Stone Creek Ranch community in Fair Oaks Ranch, the developer is holding a Homes of Distinction tour where guests can visit six luxury homes, each on at least an acre of land.

The homes all have green features, and one even has achieved Leadership in Ener-

gy and Environmental Design Gold certification. Common green features include foam insulation, tankless water heaters, materials with low volatile organic compounds, efficient air and heating systems and low-flow water fixtures.

Stone Creek is a 358-acre development with 1- to 3-acre lots.

The development has 250 lots and an amenity center that will have a swimming pool, lazy river, fitness center and spa once completed this summer. The development is also near the Fair Oaks Ranch Golf & Country Club.

The six homes that are part

See STONE CREEK/3G



This home by Trinity Custom Builders is Stop No. 7 and the only one-story home raising funds for Boyssville Texas. It uses recycled materials and a Sola Skylight natural lighting system.

HIGHLIGHTS: VA-VA-VOOM VINTAGE!

LOOP 410 AND BROADWAY

U.S. 281 AND ST. MARY'S STREET

MCCULLOUGH AND HILDEBRAND

of the property showing only my name? And if so, how long does it take for them to complete the update? Will they mail a copy of the new deed to me or is the filing notice all the paperwork I need?

I'm wondering if I can terminate my lawyer's services or if I have to wait for any other updates.

A: You now know it was a mistake to retitle your house before you were married. But once you got married, you still might not have had to change the title to the property because it was an asset you purchased prior to your marriage. You simply could have changed your will to reflect your wishes that your wife in-

you will find a long chain of documents that will trace ownership of your home: from each seller to each buyer. In your case, when you purchased your home, you would see the document that transferred title from your seller to you.

Among other documents, you would find the deed that placed your ex-spouse on title. You even may be able to access this information online since many documents filed with the recorder of deeds office are now available to the public through Web sites maintained by recorders of deeds or other offices responsible for recording these documents.

Since you now have an ex-spouse, I assume you were di-

um because I don't want to worry about yard upkeep and I live alone. Should I contact a developer or FHA to inquire about purchasing a property?

A: Neither. You need to figure out what neighborhood you want to live in and then find a great real estate agent who understands what is happening with home values there.

The agent you choose to work with should be a great listener and work with people who are around your age and earn what you do. Your agent should be your eyes and ears in the neighborhood, so look for someone who has been working in your neighborhood of choice for some time, who

mean that you also will pay a higher interest rate on the loan.

You might want to try to figure out why your credit score is so low and work to improve it. Once the score is higher, you might find that the costs of owning the condominium — should you decide to finance your purchase — will be lower.

Start by checking your credit report at www.annualcreditreport.com and trying to figure out why your credit score is low. If you have too much debt, too many outstanding bills, missed payments, collection issues or bills that you are paying over time, you should try to clean some of

of the furniture? **A:** The furniture is not part of the house. It is considered to be the home's "contents" or "personal property" (as opposed to real property, which is the property). His children would be entitled to remove their father's furniture and any other belongings stored in the house if he left it to them in his will.

Personal property gets distributed to heirs in the manner provided by state law or as designated by a will. If your friend has a will, he can designate what items of personal property will be yours and what items of personal property will go to his children. If there is no will, state law may

pieces. But if a valuable or me them, be prepare turn you down There are qu ways to handle but only a proj will can achiev and your wish Follow-up: I from the write she was going friend write ar that would giv right of refusal ture.

You can write to ters Syndicate, E coe, IL 60022 or through her We glink.com.



ABOVE LEFT: Stop No. 6 on the Homes of Distinction tour was built by Kannon Homes. This five-bedroom home is the tour's priciest at \$1.25 million and has green features such as tankless water heaters and roofing products. **ABOVE RIGHT:** This home by John Merritt Homes is Stop No. 5 on the tour of six luxury homes and the community's amenity center and pool. The 3,971-square-foot home, which is under construction, has a wall of windows overlooking the back garden area. Its green features include foam under the roof that creates a semi-air-conditioned attic and longer overhangs to provide shade for the

Stone Creek Ranch holding tour to showcase its green luxury homes

CONTINUED FROM 1G

of this tour also are the first homes in the neighborhood.

"We kind of set a precedent at the entrance of the neighborhood with a really nice product that showcases the property," said Dana Green, the neighborhood's developer.

The parade will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday. It also will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 2 through 4 and noon to 6 p.m. April 5.

To get to Stone Creek Ranch from San Antonio, take Interstate 10 West, exit onto Ralph Fair Road and travel north for six miles and turn left on Ammann Road. The neighborhood will be on your left.

Tickets cost \$10, and all proceeds will go toward Boysville Texas.

Here's a look at the homes featured on the tour:

STOP NO. 1

This is the pool and amenity center, which will be finished in June. Liquid Assets is building the pool, complete with a lazy river and water features for the kids. Summit Homes is building the amenity center.

STOP NO. 2

Builder: JB Smith Homes, www.jbsmithhomes.com

The look: Tuscan

Yours for: \$848,000
What it's got: 4,685 square feet on 1.41 acres, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, three-car garage, study and 600 square feet of outdoor covered patio. The high ceilings make the rooms seem very open and large. The home also features cedar doors, stainless steel appliances, granite countertops and a tile roof.

Green features: Two tankless gas water heaters, radiant barrier roof decking and 100 percent masonry exterior.



PHOTOS BY HELEN L. MONTOYA/hmontoya@express-news.net

Mattern & Fitzgerald Custom Builders achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification with this home at Stop No. 4. The builder oriented the home based on sun exposure.

STOP NO. 3

Builder: John Merritt Homes, www.johnmerrithomes.com

The look: Tuscan, Old World

Yours for: \$859,000

What it's got: 3,972 square feet on 1.47 acres, four bedrooms, 4 1/2 bathrooms, game room, office, three-car garage, covered outdoor living area, barrel-tile roof, 9-foot-tall front door. The master bathroom comes with a coffee bar and minifridge. The second floor has a balcony.

Green features: Energy Star-certified, xeriscaped lawn, framing techniques that reduce the amount of wood needed, foam insulation under the roof that creates a semi-air-conditioned attic, longer overhangs to provide shade for windows, efficient air conditioner and tankless water heaters.

STOP NO. 4

Builder: Mattern & Fitzgerald

Custom Builders, www.matternandfitzgerald.com

The look: Tuscan

Yours for: \$899,900

What it's got: 4,363 square feet on 1.23 acres, four bedrooms, 3 1/2 bathrooms, three-car garage, game room, study, mini kitchen upstairs, covered outdoor living area and kitchen. The home has a barrel-tile roof, wrought iron accents, granite countertops and travertine floors.

Green features: This home has achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification. It has exhaust fans in the garage that remove carbon monoxide, Energy Star-certified windows and lights, tankless water heaters and low-flow water fixtures. The builder also recycled construction waste, built the home so it was oriented based on sun exposure, tested the home's envelope, and planted native and

drought resistant plants.

STOP NO. 5

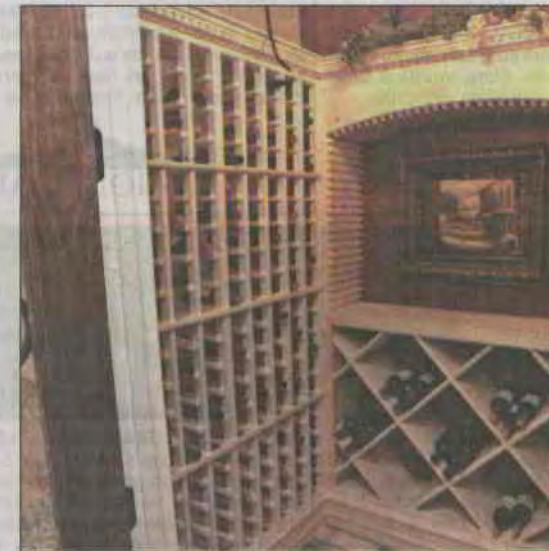
Builder: John Merritt Homes, www.johnmerrithomes.com

The look: Hill Country Rustic

Yours for: \$799,000

What it's got: 3,971 square feet on 1.12 acres, four bedrooms, four bathrooms, media and game room, study. The entry opens to a wall of windows overlooking the back garden area. The home has reclaimed rustic wood beams. The home is still under construction and should be complete in May.

Green features: Energy Star-certified, xeriscaped lawn, framing techniques that reduce the amount of wood needed, foam under the roof that creates a semi-air-conditioned attic, longer overhangs to provide shade for windows, efficient air conditioner and tankless water heaters.



Stop No. 6 offers a temperature-controlled wine closet, wooden beams and travertine floors. The 5,000-square-foot home has a large outdoor living area and a small covered patio off the



We kind of set a precedent at the entrance of the neighborhood."

DANA GREEN

neighborhood developer

water features

Green features: insulation, tankless water heaters, high-efficiency air conditioner, energy-efficient fixtures, recycled roofing products

STOP NO. 7

Builder: Trinity City Builders, www.trinitycitybuilders.com

The look: European

Yours for: \$948,000

What it's got: 5,000 square feet on 1.63 acres, five bedrooms, four bathrooms, three-car garage, covered outdoor living area, exposed timber beams, stone fireplace, and tile floors. The living area features an expansive glass wall overlooking the back garden area. It's also the home on the tour with the most green features.

Green features: Energy Star-certified insulation, tankless water heaters, and cooling equipment, recycled roofing products, pet-friendly flooring, and a Solar Shield daylight system.

STOP NO. 6

Builder: Kannon Homes, www.kannonhomes.com

The look: Spanish, Hill Country

Yours for: \$1.25 million

What it's got: 5,000 square feet on 1.5 acres, five bedrooms, 4 1/2 bathrooms, a temperature-controlled wine closet, outdoor living area, three-car garage and game room. The master bedroom has a small covered patio. The home has exposed wood beams, wood-frame windows, travertine floors and several