

A Reprint from *Tierra Grande*

Living the Dream

Ultimate Family Home Has Something for Everyone

By David S. Jones



Challenged to build the Ultimate Family Home, where does a builder begin? In the months leading up to the 2004 International Builders Show, Pardee Homes faced that dilemma. The house they unveiled at the show was the result of many ideas taken from focus groups with parents and children aged eight to 16.

One child, Aaron, envisioned a house with a spare room for guests and a stairway leading to a submarine base. Sara wanted a secret room that her parents don't know about and an underground pathway to the back yard.

"From their responses, it's clear that families today are looking for a much different home than they were even five years ago," says Joyce Mason, Pardee vice president for marketing. "Today's buyers are more discriminating, looking for ways to balance the need for family interaction and individual pursuit. Clearly they want, and need, a home that will help them organize what's become a very hectic, sometimes chaotic, lifestyle."

Respondents said they want a home that is "fun" to help offset the stress of work and school. They want a one-of-a-kind house with character. And they want it to be practical — where rooms serve dual purposes. They want it computer-ready and with low operating costs. Their dream home changes as the family grows and matures.

While not every focus group idea made it into the finished 5,300-square-foot home, Aaron's guest suite and a version of

Sara's hideaway are there. Architects from Bassenian/Lagoni Architects say they got the best ideas from the children, probably because they tend to think more outside the residential box.

The home has four bedrooms, 5½ baths and a three-bay garage. Built on a half-acre lot, the home features products from some 35 national sponsors.

"Around every corner, inside and out, we've created a home that addresses how families live, work, play, rest and entertain," says Boyce Thompson, editorial director for *Builder* magazine, one of the home's media sponsors.

This year's Ultimate Family Home is a tri-level, Spanish-style dwelling built in a Las Vegas master-planned community. It has a main-level guest suite with an adjacent office-study that can be converted to a master suite so adults can age in place when it is no longer practical to use the upstairs master suite.

Kim (13 to 16-year-olds) asked for "a computer room so I can go online and chat with friends." It's there; a home management center adjacent to the kitchen provides a dedicated space for homework and family Internet access within sight and earshot of adults, as well as energy-use monitoring and family scheduling technology.

One of the three bays in the garage is air-conditioned and outfitted as a workshop; it can be closed off by sliding glass partitions. Dan (eight to 12-year-olds) asked for a "TV in the

garage." The family garage workshop center has both a sound system and a plasma television.

The Ultimate Family Home has several spaces for family time and private pursuits. A third-story loft has a plasma TV, nostalgic board games and the latest interactive video entertainment. It's a space designed for sleepovers, game night or quiet time alone. There is a 1,030-square-foot gathering area encompassing the kitchen, an adjacent kid's kitchen area, family media room, eating nook and the management center mentioned earlier.

There's also an open-air pavilion and fantasy pool area, complete with plasma-screen television and outdoor kitchen facilities. Mindy

MANY AMENITIES in this showcase home were suggested by focus group participants. The pool comes complete with a waterslide through faux rock formations. A large central gathering area includes the kitchen, homework-home management area with Internet access (below, left) and informal dining area (bottom).



This is a house a technogeek would love. It's wired for every conceivable technology homeowners desire. At the front door, a web-enabled touch screen keypad controls lights, garage doors and security. Each family member has a separate profile and pin, and there is an integrated home theater-music system.

A backyard tree house was identified as a priority by kids in the focus group. Colton (eight to 12-year-olds) asked for "a clubhouse in a tree." His request was granted, although Pardee Homes had to plant a large palm tree and hassle with the city over a separate building permit for the "jungle" tree house.

From the tree house, kids can take a water slide through faux rock formations into the pool. The design also fits the dream of focus group parent

(13 to 16-year-olds) asked for "an open space to hang out with friends," and designers listened. And who knows? Mom and dad might occasionally get to use the covered outdoor entertainment space as well.

The ideal home includes a "beverage center" set into the kitchen island that provides quick and convenient kid-level access to refreshments. There is even a microwave oven accessible to children.

Jay (parent group) envisioned "an area where kids can drop off their things." He got it. A locker room — also referred to as the mud room — is just inside the garage and has individual cubbyholes for outdoor gear and a family message board. Thanks to Kelsi (eight to 12-year-olds), who asked for a "special place just for our dog," the locker room has a recessed place in one wall for "Spot."





needed. On most sunny days, the electric meter may actually run backwards.

The home is part of a Zero Energy Home pilot program sponsored by the Department of Energy and includes many other environmentally friendly features. It has fluorescent lighting throughout, low-voltage halogen accent lighting, a solar water heater with tankless water heater backup, formaldehyde-free insulation and maximum thermal insulation.

Other notable features include a radiant roof barrier, reflective roof tile color, wood from managed forests, decks from recycled wood and plastic, high-efficiency heating and cooling, an electronic air filter, drought-tolerant landscaping, artificial turf in lieu of natural grass (remember this is Las Vegas), carpet made from recycled soft drink bottles and flow-restricted bath fixtures.

So what's the asking price for the Ultimate Family Home? At the time this was written, Pardee Homes had not yet placed a price on it, but reporters were told that \$3 million in materials had gone into it.

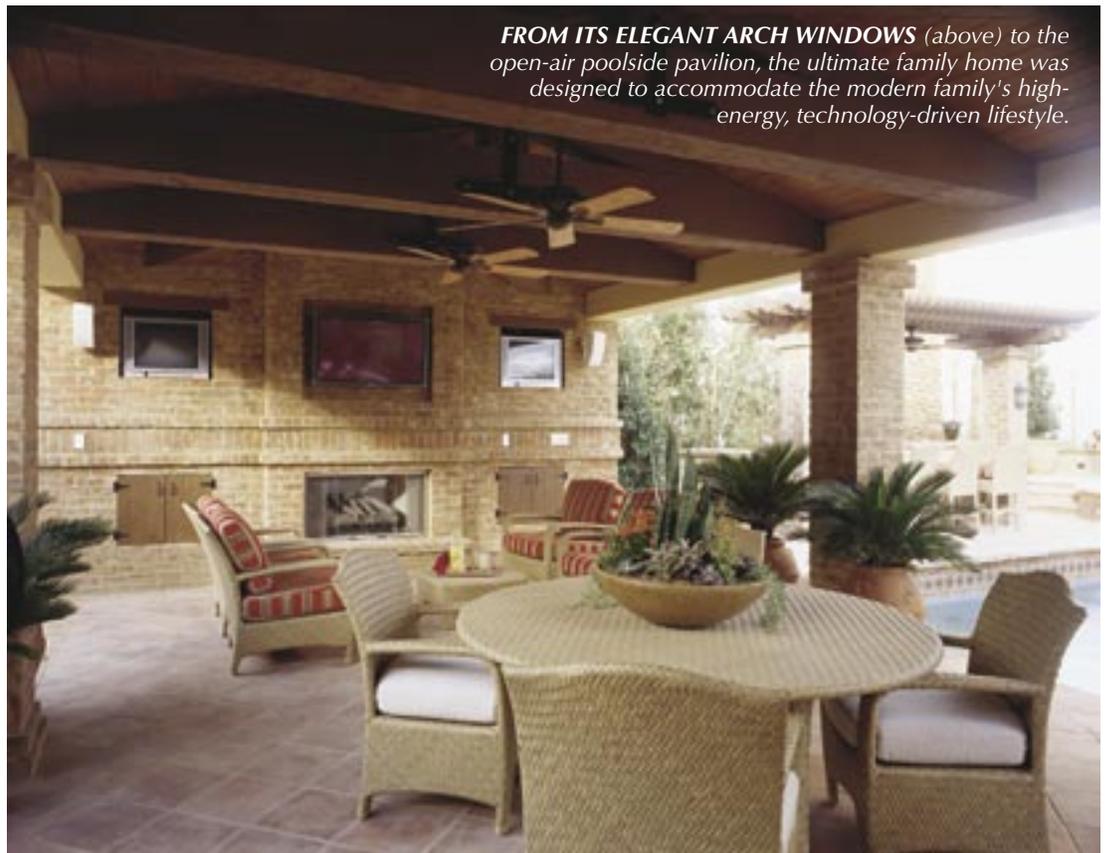
For a more complete look at the 2004 Ultimate Family Home get a copy of the January issue of *Builder* magazine. More information, including floor plans, is on the Pardee Home's website at www.pardeehomes.com.

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Kathryn, who envisioned a "backyard that lives like a playroom."

When price is no object, it's a lot easier to design the ultimate house. That's one reason this home features the ultimate in energy efficiency. Photovoltaic cells generate enough electricity to serve the home's needs and have energy to spare. The solar power alone added \$50,000 to the home's price. The home also has energy-saving appliances, airtight duct work, energy efficient windows and deep eaves. Utilities for this house cost \$5,000 a year less than a comparable conventional home.

Surplus electricity generated by the home can be "sold back" to the local utility in the form of energy credits the homeowner can use, if



FROM ITS ELEGANT ARCH WINDOWS (above) to the open-air poolside pavilion, the ultimate family home was designed to accommodate the modern family's high-energy, technology-driven lifestyle.



What Kind of Home Does Today's Family Want?

This year's Ultimate Family Home embraces the wants, needs and fantasies of today's homebuyer. While most Texas real estate agents do not sell many \$3 million homes, they do show many homes that include some of the same features. Knowing what consumers want is the key to a sale — in any price range.

When showing a home, remember what today's family longs for:

- a home that's distinctive,
- functional rooms,
- state-of-the-art technology that provides fun or automates daily needs,
- master bedroom retreat,
- kid's hideaway,
- study,
- guest suite,
- downstairs master suite or a place that can be converted to one,
- lots of bathrooms,
- home management center near kitchen,
- formal dining room,
- private retreats,
- areas for entertaining
- family-media room,
- three-bay garage with workshop,
- locker or mud room,
- outdoor recreation areas and
- all manner of energy-efficient devices and design.



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Tierra Grande (ISSN 1070-0234), formerly *Real Estate Center Journal*, is published quarterly by the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-2115. Subscriptions are free to Texas real estate licensees. Other subscribers, \$20 per year.

Views expressed are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement by the Real Estate Center, Mays Business School or Texas A&M University.