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A HOME IMPROVEMENT IDEA THAT IMPRESSES

(ARA) - What is the most dramatic, eye-catching home improvement project you can launch into this year? It's an exterior upgrade that adds style and curb appeal to one-third or more of the front of homes: the garage door.

Chances are, if your home is 10 years old or older, you've been living with a good old-fashioned raised-panel steel door – just like every other home on your street. And they probably all look pretty much the same.

A Stylish Statement

You're probably thinking, "How much difference can a garage door really make? It goes up, it goes down; what does style have to do with it?"

The non-commercial Web site – GarageWowNow.com – features before and after garage door photos that show the effect that a replacement has on a home. All the major garage door manufacturers are producing dramatic new styles and you can review them and decide what's best for your home.

Hot Trend: Carriage Doors

The industry's hottest trend is the carriage house door. The look that was popular on carriage houses and stables a century ago is today's new chic in garage doors. The styles, windows, accessories and colors vary so widely, there's little chance the garage door on your home will look like another one down the block.

For homes with more modern or Southwestern looks, there are sleek, contemporary styles in a variety of materials. Opaque panels and copper cladding provide a modern look that will update the entire appearance of your home.

The Latest Features

What else is new in garage doors? How about energy savings? Many of today's garage doors feature insulation that helps reduce heat loss in winter and helps your home stay cooler in the summer. And as energy bills continue to rise, a new door begins to pay for itself soon after installation.

If you're thinking about a new garage door, think about a new opener, too. Today's garage door openers are quieter and provide more convenience and safety features than ever before. Yes, garage door openers have gone high tech.



After photo: Garage doors as a fashion statement? Absolutely. Consider this home's added curb appeal after a garage door update. To see more new garage door styles visit GarageWowNow.com.



Before Photo: The same home before a new garage door.

Keypad Kids

Homeowners with keypad entry consider it a necessity, not an option. Yesterday's "latchkey kids" have become today's "keypad kids."

But even the keypad has taken a step up the technology ladder. How about fingerprint-activated entry? It is here and available today. Only those who have scanned their fingerprint into the system can open the door with the pad.

Another modern tech update is laser-aided parking accessories that tell you exactly when to stop in the garage. Battery back-up systems mean that your door will open every time, even when the power goes out. There's even an in-house monitor that tells you when your garage door is open, a handy tool for those of us who forget to close the garage door at night.

Not a DIY Job

Garage door installation is something best left to the pros. A garage door is the largest and heaviest moving piece of equipment on your home. Garage door springs are under a remarkable amount of tension, and these can cause serious injury to even the handiest weekend warriors.

To find the nearest garage door professional, as well as the best range of products available, simply enter your zip code on GarageWowNow.com. A handy search feature will identify the professional installing dealers nearest your home.

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