

Santa Fe REAL ESTATE Guide

Artisan/craftsman/**builder**

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National norms quite different from ours

by Kurt Faust

I came across an interesting list from the *Annual Builder Practices Survey* produced by the National Association of Homebuilders Research Center. It is a list of the most common building practices in America:

80 percent of all exterior walls are 2x4 construction. 50 percent are only 8 feet high. 72 percent of all interior walls are 2x4 construction. 70 percent of all ceilings are sheetrock.

80 percent of all windows are aluminum or vinyl, as are most of the patio doors. 90 percent of all interior walls are sheetrock and paint. 90 percent use metal fireplace inserts. 88 percent of living rooms and family rooms have carpet.

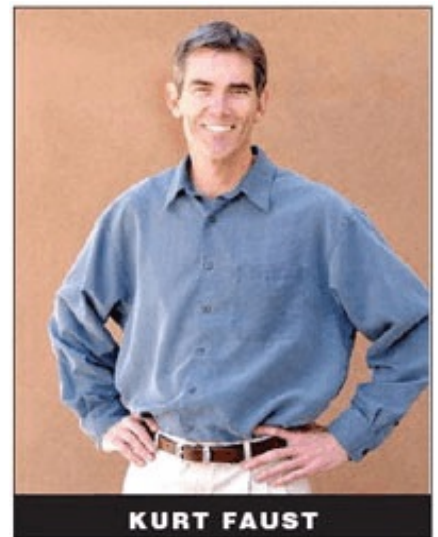
60 percent of kitchens have vinyl sheet flooring. 73 percent of kitchen countertops are plastic laminate. 86 percent of bathroom vanity tops are cultured marble or laminate.

The average house has 60 square feet of patio and 38 square feet of front porch, 90 percent of which is poured concrete. Only 3% use radiant heat and only 10% have a yard wall.

Compare all that to the thick walls of an authentic adobe Santa Fe home with its wood ceilings, vigas, beams and the solid wood decking above. Even our frame homes have a predominance of walls greater than eight inches thick and solid wood windows with divided lights and expansive glass area to take in the views. Most floors are stone or ceramic tile, carpet often used only in bedrooms.

One of our unique stylistic requirements is the absence of baseboards at the floor and no casing on the doors and windows. This detail demands a higher level of craftsmanship and a longer building sequence because the doors must be installed prior to installing drywall.

Our custom cabinetry and doors contrast with particle board, embossed metal exterior doors, and hollow-core interior doors of even some "high end" homes I have seen in other big cities. And let us not forget about our beautiful, hard-troweled plaster interior walls, which also represents a significant amount of labor and material for



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our homes.

Hydronic radiant in-floor heat is de rigueur in our marketplace, as are multiple, woodburning masonry fireplaces with massive foundations which require a great deal of time and effort for construction.

The tile installations in bathrooms here are far more demanding, using prodigious amounts of handmade ceramic and stone tile and solid surface counters. In a high-end home in a nearby state I saw cultured-marble vanity tops in the guest bathroom with six-foot-tall, cultured-marble panels glued to the sheetrock to form the tub/shower enclosure. The difference between using real tile to create a masonry shower pan and using a plastic or fiberglass pan is enormous.

Many of our homes have portales measuring in the hundreds of square feet with vigas-corbels ceilings and brick floors - quite a difference from your average small, poured-concrete patio.

When you compare our Santa Fe homes to homes in other places you begin to see the tremendous value. I am convinced that we offer more features and craftsmanship than you get anywhere else.

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