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REGIONAL ROUND UP

The latest new homes from the north of the country to the south

MAIN PICTURE, TOP: THE FOUR NEW SHOW APARTMENTS IN BERKELEY HOMES' THE TOWER AT TABARD SQUARE LONDON SE1 (020 7403 7503), SHOWCASE THEIR METROSEXUAL CREDENTIALS. EASY TIGER!



SEXUAL ATTRACTION VIVRE LE DIFFERENCE!

WORDS: MARK LOVE

How does it go again? Men are from Marston, Women are from Peterborough? Something like that. Acres of print has been devoted to the differences between the sexes. Not just in the dangly, tan-free bits department either, but also in our tastes, our desires and our fascinations. So how do our gender differences translate into our home buying habits?

Barratt Homes (Cardiff) sales manager, Isobel Drew, has noticed general style differences between men and women when buying a new home:

"Certainly with regard to first-time buyers, men are more aggressive with their bargaining skills. Women are much more influenced by a feeling/instinct, going with their heart not their head - as in life! Women, I feel, will ultimately make the decision but let their men believe it was their choice all along - again as in life!"

What? Women using psychological tactics to help their men make the right decision? Surely not! We suspect even the hairiest knuckle scraper would quickly see the appeal of Barratt's Crymlyn Gardens in the Skewen, Neath (01792 323 756). Crymlyn Gardens is a collection of three-, four- and

five-bedroom homes, some ready to move in and others still at the construction stage and all oozing with appeal for any discerning buyer - whichever way you zip your trousers.

Differences between the sexes tend to become magnified when couples walk into a show home, as Asit Thakrar, sales manager at Try Homes comments: "You often hear married couples joking about who makes all the decisions in the household but of course buying a house is a joint decision. That doesn't mean that couples have the same priorities though. Much as I hate to admit it men are far more likely to be swayed by tech-y gadgets in a show home. They do, however, redeem themselves by thinking practically about the garden and the garage. Is there an outside tap? Is there lighting in the garage?"

"Women do rely on a gut feeling - does this feel like home? But they're also concerned with practicalities. For example is there enough storage? Is the kitchen practical? And of course they factor in concerns about the safety of the area."

Obviously the best way to ensure that both men and women like a property is to get the overall design right in the first place.



TOP LEFT: NOW THERE'S SEXY. DART MARINA IS AN ELEGANT AND SOPHISTICATED WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT OF 33 RIVERSIDE APARTMENTS AND HOUSES WITH BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF THE RIVER DART.

TOP RIGHT: THE NEW PHASE OF THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING ABODE DEVELOPMENT IN NEWHALL

RIGHT: MIDAS HOMES' GUNWHARF AWARD WINNING DEVELOPMENT IN DEVONPORT, PLYMOUTH. WWW.MIDASHOMES.COM



director Dawn Kitchener makes it her business to bridge the sexual divide:

"Generally, we have to target both men and women equally with our show homes. But, it has to be said that male purchasers are very much attracted to a 'hotel chic' bedroom that is simply but tastefully styled as it's a haven where they can get away from the stresses of the day.

"Women, on the other hand are more driven by useable spaces. They tend to be more emotional in their purchases and picture themselves living in the space, while men are keener to take up furniture packages as everything is done for them. Our skill is to carefully research the target demographics, identify aspirational dreams and focus on these areas."

That includes picking up on the differences within the gender division.

"Living requirements are also varied, for example there are two distinct types of women when it comes to buying a house - those who want the sleek smart kitchen which is more for entertaining than cooking and those who want a flexible family space for living and eating."

Dawn sees Britain's changing sociological environment beginning to blur the gender divide. "It's a level playing field now as there are just as many single men as single women buying their own properties. Women are often just as eager to get the high spec and luxury add-ons as their male counterparts."

Redrow Homes cater for the increasingly 'metrosexual' tastes of buyers of both sex by offering a wide array of choices with which to customise the home. The company's

new Signature range also offers opportunities to upgrade kitchen and bathroom choices for a touch of added luxury.

Gary Anderson, regional sales manager for McInerney North East (01740 621 989) recognises the differences between the genders, but reckons we're all essentially looking for the same things. "It's a bit of a cliché but I still believe that location is key. Certainly from my experience and from talking to home buyers, I feel that younger men in particular, will look more favourably on a new home that is close to their friends, their local pub, even to their mother. Although I think that women are prepared to be more independent and 'self-sufficient', their decision is heavily influenced by the ease with which they can travel to and from work and to leisure activities. Also most buyers, be they male or female, are busy, hard-working people, who want to make the most of their precious leisure time, so high maintenance homes are no longer an option, hence the uncluttered, easy-to-clean look that is so much in favour at present."

McInerney Homes is one of the largest housebuilders in the UK and Ireland and has recently launched a division in the South Midlands. The company is already targeting sites in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.

As any parent of young children will know, the quickest way to perplex a pensioner is to dress your new born in a colour other than pink or blue. But under the clothes, and ignoring the dangly (or not so dangly) bits modern buyers of new homes are surprisingly similar in what they demand from their homes - quality, good design, and if there's a little va va voom then so much the better. ■YNH