

MORE NATURAL LIGHT USED IN GREEN REMODELING

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"The only way to bring green into 120 million existing households is through remodeling," says NAHB Remodelers Chair Mike Nagel, CGR, CAPS, a remodeler from Chicago, in an Association release. "Americans spent over \$230 billion in 2006 in home remodeling, with energy efficient and sustainable products representing an increasing share of the market," he says.

And the U.S. Green Building Council cites a 2007 McGraw-Hill report that shows a growing market for green homebuilding and green renovation, even amid a downturn in the housing market at large - and maybe even largely because of that downturn.

Many remodelers today say that their clients are expressing more interest in options and upgrades that address indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

Steve Alfaro, trade business development manager with VELUX America, says that kitchens and bathrooms, always high on homeowner remodeling lists, are logical candidates for natural lighting and ventilation upgrades. "They, along with laundry rooms, have higher moisture and humidity levels than other areas of the home and are among the most popular locations for venting skylights. And more natural light is always welcomed where clothes are being sorted by color," he says.

Alfaro says that energy-efficient skylights are being utilized to a greater degree in remodeling, as well as in new construction, to provide more natural light and ventilation.

"ENERGY STAR® qualified skylights, in concert with vertical windows, can cost-effectively provide better natural lighting in all areas of the home, helping to reduce power bills," he says. "And venting skylights in kitchens, baths and laundry areas remove stale, heated air quickly and quietly with no added energy costs. Plus," Alfaro says, "remodeling dollars spent in kitchens and baths bring the best return on your investment for personal use as well as when you're ready to sell."

In areas where traditional skylights aren't needed or won't fit, VELUX Sun Tunnel skylights bring can passive natural light into hallways, closets, smaller interior baths and other areas of the home. Less expensive in many cases than traditional skylights, they can be installed in a morning by a handy DIYer and are used extensively in areas of the home where a view to the outside is not required but more natural light is desired. Optional light kits turn these units into 24-hour sources of light.

And more natural light isn't the only growing trend in green remodeling. Advances in technology, coupled with rising energy prices, is resulting in more interest in solar water

heating systems when green-minded homeowners upgrade, and in new construction, as well. â€œItâ€™s yet another green use of an unlimited resource, the energy from the sun,â€ Al says.

For free information on the benefits of natural light and skylight selection, or for free house plans incorporating skylights, call 1-800-283-2831 or visit veluxusa.com. For government information on window and skylight energy efficiency visit energystar.gov, and for independent agency information visit nfr.org or efficientwindows.org. For remodeling information visit nahb.org/remodel or greenhomeguide.org.

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