



# Men vs. Women

*What do they want in a renovation?*

By Francie Healy

## What do women want in a home?

They want open-concept kitchens. They want great appliances. They want everything nicely organized. They want to be able to find things. And they want their home to please the eye.

## What do men want?

Simple, says Carolyn Munro of Carolyn Munro Designs.

They want gadgets.

When it comes right down to it, she says, men are most likely to want “a remote control for everything and anything”.

They also want a room of their own (preferably with gadgets) for hobbies or as a workshop or theatre area.

Women, on the other hand, are still the heart of domestic life, she says, just as they have been through the generations.

They want the kitchen (as the hub of activity), and the laundry area, to be organized and efficient, she adds.

“Women still run the home,” she says. In her experience, men will offer a bit of interest in the renovation of a kitchen, but it’s a kind of “sideways input”. She adds: “And they don’t really care about closets, ‘as long as I have a place to hang my pants’.”

Men like to have a TV in the bedroom, and sometimes a gym-area so they can work out.

Both men and women have an interest in colours, says Carolyn, but in the Ottawa area, they’re not going to choose anything outrageous.

“In cities like Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal,” she says, “people often want the latest in fashion and ultra-modern looks. In Ottawa, people are more down-to-earth and traditional.”

You might think a garage would be strictly a male thing. But not so, according to Al Gauvin. He should know. He’s the owner of Garage Guyz, and he speaks to couples all the time about what they want for their home – or, more specifically, their garage.

Women love organization, he says. And men love the fancy cabinets you can have in a garage.

“Men also love the gleam of the fancy flooring” in a great garage, but women love it too. For one thing it means no dust in the house, and such a floor is “moppable”.

A superb garage can be a mother’s best friend, with hooks and baskets and shelves for everything imaginable, from tennis rackets to toys, strollers and skateboards. It can be a mud room. It can have sinks and ceiling storage and everything off the floor. It’s where you can store out-of-season clothing and sports equipment and seasonal decorations.

A great garage almost cleans and sorts itself. Al says it even saves arguments and frustration. (He has a buddy, he says, who’s been trying to

organize his old traditional garage for eight years.)

Although women naturally gravitate towards a state-of-the-art garage, Al says, both want a place for their “stuff” that isn’t something they trip over every time they come home.

“It can actually change mood and morale,” he says. “The garage is the last thing people see when they leave and the first thing they see when they come home. If they see it organized, tidy, spotless, it makes them feel great. It makes them happy.”

Women might like the order a new garage (with endless cabinets, shelves, baskets and hooks) can give them. But men might use it, as Mike Dion of Oak Ridge Construction suggests, for their own space. Men do like garages, he says. They also like fancy garden sheds and recreation rooms with an entertainment area.

He finds that women’s priorities are bathrooms and kitchens. They like walk-in closets and heated floors. And lighting – lots of great lighting. They like space on a vanity, and functional medicine cabinets.

They like whirlpool tubs. But men like simple walk-in showers.

Men are functional, he says. Women on the other hand, like beautiful things. They’re interested in the “curb appeal” of their home.

Men tend to look at the bottom line, at the value of the project, explains Mike. Women like the “add-ons” and things that make a house a home.

Women are interested in ways to control the messes a family makes, especially if there are little children. They like mud rooms with cubbyholes at a child’s level – where children can have their own departments within the room and can be taught to put things away. Oak Ridge Construction does a lot of rooms like that.





## Equal but different

If you put them together, do you get the perfect house?

### Top 12 things men want:

1. gadgets
2. lots of remote controls
3. a room of their own
4. a workshop or theatre area
5. TV in the bedroom
6. a gym room
7. shiny garage floors
8. fancy garden sheds
9. recreation room with entertainment area.
10. simple walk-in showers
11. a place for the stereo, hot tub, and pool table
12. a happy wife

### Top 12 things women want:

1. great kitchens
2. latest appliances
3. organization
4. attractiveness
5. efficiency
6. colour
7. superb garages
8. tidiness and cleanliness
9. walk-in closets
10. heated floors
11. whirlpool tubs
12. mud rooms



But men usually aren't the least bit interested in the fine details of a mud room, according to Mike.

"As long as they have a place to throw their boots, they're fine," he says.

At first, men tend to worry about any "extras" in renovation.

"They'll say, 'Holy cow, that's too much money!'," he says. "But then, once it's done, they'll say, 'That's kinda neat. It's not that bad after all.' They warm up to it afterwards."

He says men tend to "wing it" more than women do when it comes to renovating a house. Women like to plan. But if there's a whole addition going on the house, a man "gets into the whole picture", says Mike. "That's when he says where the stereo goes, or the hot tub, or pool table."

Some Oak Ridge Construction clients – the men – will just tell Mike to give their wives "whatever she wants, whatever makes her happy," he says. He points out that this is not just because they're nice guys. They know "a happy wife makes a happy life".

And besides, if she has a kitchen exactly as she wants it, she's not as likely to balk when his eyes

light up at the gleaming new motorcycle or four-wheeler down the street.



He says women love sensual, pretty things like a beautiful bathroom and a whirlpool tub.

"But men don't want to get into a bathtub full of scented bubbles, have candles burning and all that," he says. "They'd rather have a TV and comfortable chair in the garage, where they can watch Nascar races."