CURB APPEAL EXTRA

Iron Entry Doors Answer to Desires for Individuality, Architectural Accuracy and Security

Elegante Iron's entry doors are planned at the onset of the home design, serving as a centerpiece for the entire home design, inside and out.

It's a well-established fact that homebuyers have a passion for the one-of-a-kind. Just like a custom home buyer doesn't expect to see their home duplicated down the street, neither should they find a duplication of their home's exterior centerpiece—its front door. It's been said that as much as 40 percent of the buying decision is based on the overall impression made at the front door. Buyer expectation for things individual and unique, combined with the passion for Mediterranean, Old World and French Country styling, have made custom designed iron doors popular in our marketplace.

Understanding architectural styling and the role that the entry door will play is key. Jenny Sandlin of Elegante Iron in Dallas stresses that the entry door selection should be made at the very beginning of the home design stage. "If it's Mediterranean, the glass will go all the way down to the ground—no footboard. It should be quite ornate with lots of scrolling. When French Country is the feel for the home, the door should always have a footboard, vertical bars and simpler scrolling at the top and bottom of the bars," she explained.

The front door selection sets the stage for other iron accents used on the home exterior, such as balconies and gates. Iron doors are also popular for side entrances, on the home's rear elevation, and on upper floor balconies. Sandlin recommends consulting with the interior designer so that the iron used inside the home— on stairways, for interior balconies or on a wine room door—coordinates with the exterior selections. A source such as Elegante Iron, which offers design and fabrication of a full spectrum of iron products for outside and inside the home, assures total design coordination. The choice of finish is also important. Finishes can be coordinated with the lighting and hardware selections inside and outside the home or be influenced by colors in the exterior siding or roofing materials, said Sandlin.

Sandlin also sells a lot of custom designed doors to remodelers. "Changing a door on a home as part of a remodel can make a 200 percent difference," she said. "It's absolutely amazing what a new door can do to update an older home."

Researching different styles of iron in the various architectural books that she collects is a challenge that Sandlin relishes. Once all the iron selections are made and the finishes are specified, Elegante Iron's products are forged by hand in Monterrey, Mexico.

"Oftentimes my builder customers love a certain door so much that they want us to make them the same door again. But each of our doors is individual. We might begin with a similar style and design idea, but we always change it up so that each door is a one-of-a-kind," said Sandlin.

Besides their beauty, iron doors can also offer another benefit. When the glass behind the iron is hinged so that it can be opened, customers can answer their door without unlocking it or just leave it open to enjoy fresh air without compromising security.

An average price for Elegante Iron's single doors is $3,500 to $4,500, and double door designs average $6,500 to $7,500—a worthy investment with so much hinging on the ability of the entry to make the first impression. ■

Jenny Sandlin of Elegante Iron works one-on-one with custom homebuilders and their customers, who trust her expertise in finding the perfect iron pattern for doors ranging in style from Italian to Moroccan, and everything in between.

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