

ABC's "Desperate Housewives": What Their Homes Say About Them!

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Special to the Palisadian-Post

If you were a prospective buyer eyeing homes on Wisteria Lane, the seemingly perfect American suburb where ABC's fictional "Desperate Housewives" live, what would your impressions be of the houses you visit? What do they say about the people who live in them?

Take the perfectionist Bree van de Kamp (actress Marcia Cross), for example. She lives in a picture book house, the exterior painted Philipsburg Blue. Inside, the house is furnished with tasteful objets d'art, antiques and fine furniture. Everything is color-coordinated. Her kitchen features stainless steel appliances, granite work surfaces, hanging pots and pans, and everything is in its place. Cups and glasses are carefully placed on coasters and she has been known to scrub down the street in front of her house with extra-strength detergent. What does that say about her? That she's a neatnik, a prim and proper person with a keen sense of what her neighbors might think. You can bet she will have cookies in the oven when visitors come over, to show just how perfect her home life is. But the drapes are half-closed? Does this mean she has something to hide?

While Lynette Scavo's (Felicity Huffman) house has a contemporary feel—a casual mix of Ikea and Pottery Barn with the requisite wood floors—her décor is an obvious attempt to provide a calm backdrop to the whirlwind she lives in and the clutter that inevitably piles up when you have a young family—especially four out-of-control children. It would appear, though, that she's having a hard time staying on top of everything, even as a high achiever and successful career woman. The message here? This is the home of a woman who desperately wants a sanctuary, which she obviously has little time to enjoy. Housekeeping is definitely not her priority.

In the case of 40-something single mom Susan Mayer (Teri Hatcher), her modest home and its style are a reflection of her romantic nature, which can be seen even in her folk art. A work-at-home children's book illustrator, she collects trinkets, curios and is into "shabby chic": antique pine, beveled mirrors and flower prints on the walls. However, the clothes hanging over the doors indicate she lacks closet space. Her home

is rather messy, not helped by having a teenage daughter living at home. Clearly, this is the home of a woman who is a bit distracted and has better things to do with her time than tidy up. There are no signs of a man living here at all.

On the other hand, Gabrielle Solis (Eva Longoria) and her husband Carlos are clearly out to prove something to the neighbors. Their house is the most imposing on the street—a dark beige Hispanic mansion with covered porches and balconies. Inside, the grandiose theme continues, with an impressive religious painting in an antique gilded frame hanging over the mansion-sized black marble fireplace, and expensive faux-plaster paint effects on the walls. There is a Warhol knock-off of the former model, whose tastes run from throne-like chairs to overstuffed sofas to church-size candles. On the face of it, Gabrielle appears to have everything she wants, but she's not fulfilled. As Carlos says to his wife, "We're shallow people. Can our lives ever have any meaning if all we do is buy stuff?" To which Gabrielle replies, "That depends on what we buy."

Now what about Edie Britt (Nicollette Sheridan), who lives in a house painted Rose Bisque? Well, if anyone should know the neighbor's secrets, it's her. After all, she's a real estate agent. But would you buy a home from this woman? She does not appear to be the most sympathetic individual. And as a client, wouldn't you worry that she would give away all your secrets?

The style of house we live in, the way it's decorated and cared for, as well as the way we furnish it is as much a reflection of who we are as the way we dress. And when it comes to selling the home, these "hidden" messages can be all important. Next time you're viewing homes, take a closer look and see what you can discern about the owners. If the living room furniture is covered in plastic and the toilet tissue roll is disguised as a



ABC's *Desperate Housewives*, who live on the fictional Wisteria Lane. Left to right: Alfre Woodward ("Betty"), Teri Hatcher ("Susan"), Brenda Strong ("Mañ Alice," who died in the first episode and whose voice now narrates each show), Felicity Huffman ("Lynette"), Marcia Cross ("Bree"), Eva Longoria ("Gabrielle"), and Nicollette Sheridan ("Edie").

Photo courtesy of ABC/Andrew Eccles.

doll, perhaps the owner is obsessive, which means that they probably change the batteries in the smoke alarm often enough. If the home is carpeted from wall to wall and the kitchen has its original vinyl work surfaces, the owners are probably elderly. They will have taken care of the house, but will you need to re-do all the plumbing?

If every surface is piled high with papers and the closets are full to bursting, not only are the owners desperate for more space, they are obviously very busy people with little time for the home's upkeep. If the place looks as if it needs a good cleaning, none of the furniture matches and there are piles of

pennies on the bedroom night stand, you may be in the home of a single person! Obviously, home repair and maintenance are not on his or her list of priorities. And if all the trees and bushes outside are overgrown, it's a safe bet that the owners shun the outside world.

What does your home say about you? What messages are you giving to prospective buyers? You probably have nothing to worry about, unless you, too, keep the drapes closed during the day!

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