

FABULOUS FACADES CREATE CURB APPEAL

The cladding on a home's exterior is its calling card

We are taught not to judge a book by its cover. But real estate agents tell us that this maxim does not apply to houses. The outdoor facade of a home is its curb appeal. That's why the right choice of cladding is so essential. There are many new materials available for a home's facade. Toronto Home asked builder Rose Barroso of Barroso Homes to weigh in with her expertise on how to choose the right cladding for your home.

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Q: Rose, what new exterior cladding materials are on the market now?

A: I would not classify them as new, but simply underused. I have used Öko Skin, Fibre C, a material in line with the trend toward natural, environmentally friendly, sustainable material, which achieves a modern effect, and Prodema, panels that have a Bakelite core covered with a natural wood veneer that's treated to ensure resistance to UV rays. However, we do not see these products used widely, so some people would regard them as new. I call them innovative.

Q: Are there particular exterior cladding materials that you love working with?

A: I love the look of Öko Skin. It requires no maintenance, and individual elements can be replaced easily. Panels are 100 per cent non-combustible and are available in a range of colours, which would suit a modern facade as well as traditional architecture. The natural colours of Öko Skin fit well in landscapes, blending with the natural environment. The surface of Öko Skin is sandblasted with varied pressure, creating a vivid surface.

Q: Are homebuyers seeking out organic materials such as wood, clay bricks and cedar shakes, or do these materials require too much maintenance?

A: Mainly homeowners request materials that require little or no maintenance. Most clients I've worked with don't want to worry about their house's exterior maintenance. Once a rarity sourced at a considerable premium, Forest Stewardship Council of Canada (FSC)-certified wood options are now widely available across the country. These woods cost more though and homeowners often do not opt for them.



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Q: Which facade materials would you recommend for contemporary architecture; which for traditional styles?

A: For a contemporary look, I would choose such materials as Öko Skin, Fibre C, stucco and reclaimed barn wood. For a traditional look, I suggest brick, stone or Prodema, a no-maintenance product.

Q: Is there a limited number of different materials you would use on a home's facade? How many and why?

A: I would limit to two the number of materials on a facade. On the other hand, I have used three on several occasions: stone, Öko Skin and reclaimed barn wood. There really is no rule or limit to the number of materials that should be used; the house's look dictates the facade.

Q: What exterior materials have fallen out of favour? Why?

A: In the past, siding was made from wood and it was called clapboard, which is just painted wood cladding; it's still around today. But wood requires maintenance. Clapboard must be painted every couple of years. Even stained wood such as cedar siding needs periodic staining. Today's building designs are sophisticated and unique, and call for innovative options that are dramatic, durable and functional and will last a lifetime. ☛

