

around the HOUSE

{ GOOD TO KNOW }

This month in 1867, Frank Lloyd Wright, dubbed "the greatest American architect" by the American Institute of Architects, was born.

Single, Female, House-Proud

Unmarried women are buying houses in record numbers

A WOMAN'S PLACE is in the home of her own. That's right. A place that she bought with her—not his—hard-earned dollars. At least, that's what a recent survey from the National Association of Realtors is telling us.

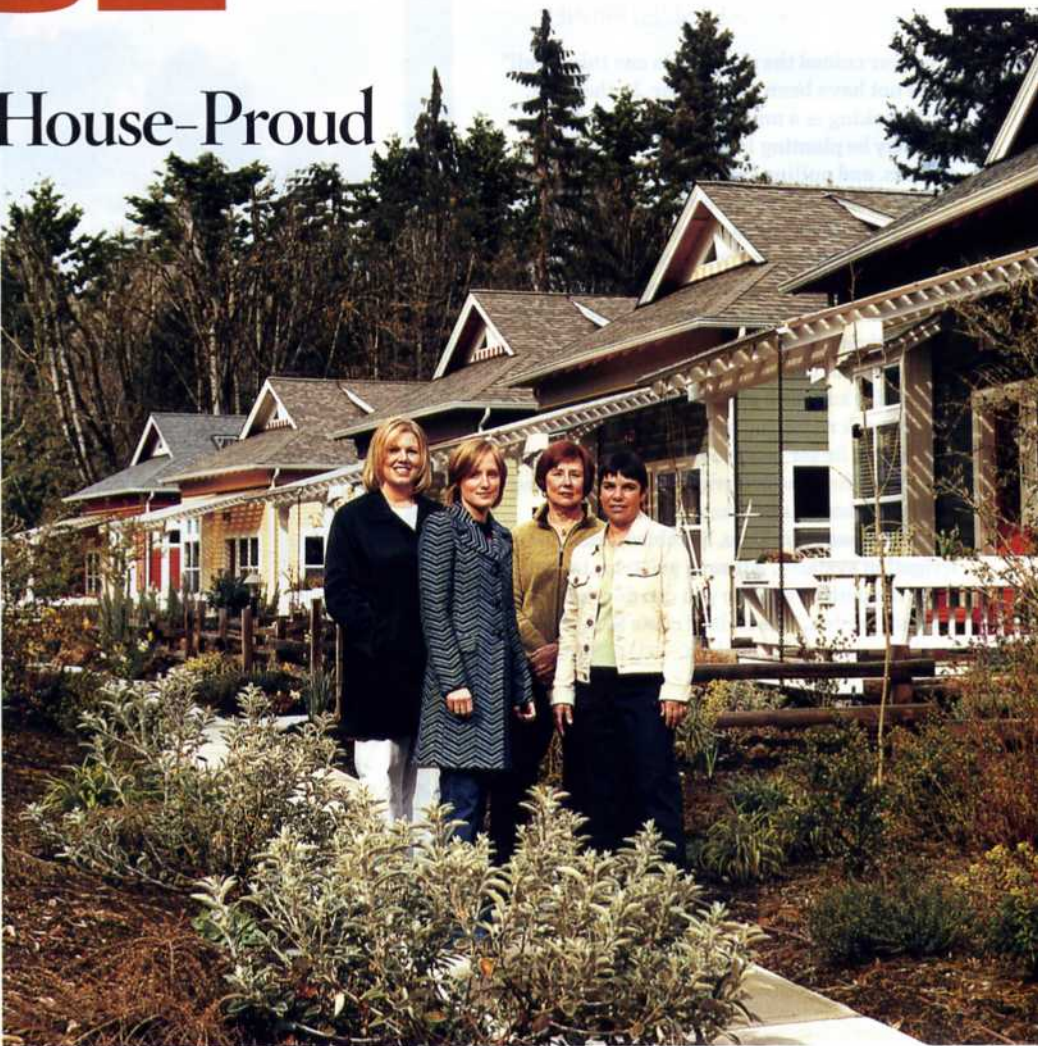
Last year single women became homeowners at more than twice the rate of single men and made up 21 percent of all buyers.

The explanations are simple. "Women marry later and make more money than they used to," says Terre Coffman, a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Swilley-Hudson in Houston, Texas. Packed women-only repair clinics at home centers show they are also more confident in their abilities to tackle improvement projects by themselves.

Such independence, coupled with low mortgage interest rates, makes real estate an attractive place to sock away savings. "I didn't want to wait until I got married to have a home," explains Debbie Childers, a 37-year-old oil industry executive, who bought a house through Coffman.

Linda Pruitt, a builder with the Cottage Company in Seattle, is meeting the trend with designs based on what women want. Those who've yet to master power tools seek smaller homes requiring less maintenance, she says. Singles are also looking for safety in numbers. In one of Pruitt's new developments, which has bungalows clustered around a central courtyard, about 75 percent of the houses are owned by single women. "They like the sense of security and community in our designs," she says.

Going it alone has never been easier, but that doesn't mean all these women plan to do it forever. "If I were to get married, my house would be big enough to move him in," says Childers. —LISA SELIN DAVIS



Homeowners gather in the central courtyard of the Conover Commons Cottages development in Redmond, Washington.

SPEAKING OF WOMEN HOMEBUYERS...



BUSTING BARRIERS

In 1974, Congress amended the Fair Housing Act, making it easier for single women to get mortgages and credit cards in their own names.



FAILURE TO LAUNCH

Of the 4.3 million Americans aged 25 to 34 who are still living at home with their parents, about 63% are men, according to the U.S. Census.



ALL BY HERSELF

About 85% of women have been, are, or expect to be solely responsible for a house within their lifetime, according to a Sears study.