

'It's a key attraction'
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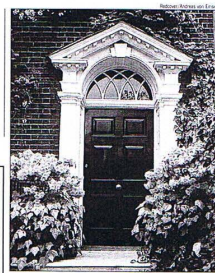
Most homeowners work on getting their interior looking perfect, but a front door also says a lot about your scene of style to the outside world. 'First impressions do count especially if you are selling a property,' says Anthony Kerrigan, chairman of Kerrigans estate agency in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. 'A clean, new front door gives the impression of a well-maintained property.' His view is backed by a new survey from the portal propertyfinder.com, which reveals that 38% of buyers are put off by a house exterior that is in poor condition.

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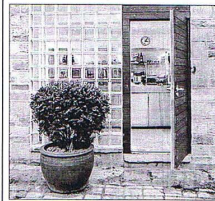
With a new front door, whether contemporary, repro or reclaimed, plus great fittings, you can't fail to make the right entrance, says **Sarah Smith**

The phrase 'new front door' may conjure up images of white-PVC horrors with mock stained-glass windows, but it doesn't have to be that way. Nabil and Elizabeth Assaf set up Urban Front, which sells modern solid wooden doors, about a year ago. 'We couldn't find a suitable front door for our 1960s house, so we designed our own,' says Elizabeth.

'Passers-by asked where it was from, so we realized there was a niche in the market, and set up the company.' The firm has 15 designs, in a choice of six woods. Prices start at £700. The most popular is the Sorrento in cedar with stainless steel – you can even buy garage doors to match.



Try salvage yards for period doors or have a new one made to order



When fitting a door, keep the door furniture and surrounds in style

into the structure of the door.' For more information, visit www.reclaimedbydesign.com. Once you are happy with the door itself, you will want to choose fittings that complement it. Urban Front sells hip, contemporary Danish door furniture, including pull handles and letter boxes. For something more traditional, turn to Cox's range of knockers includes a bronze brass head knocker like the one on 10 Downing Street, at £38, and a brass door's doorknocker – used to identify where medals are – for £45. Architectural Salvage's well-used traditional and contemporary range is also worth considering.

If you don't want the hassle of fitting a new door, changing the style of the number or intercom is an easy way to spruce up an entrance. Do-it-yourself kits for modern brass plaques, its bespoke Perspex products are available in 17 different colours, with prices starting at £19.99, rising to £39.99 if you want the most beautiful. For an ultra-contemporary look, go for the Decore, Glaze or Sorrento ranges, which use translucent Perspex plaques, with lettering available in three different fonts.

For something unusual, check out Flame, which evokes French-style plaques with a blue background, from £19.95. It also has a range of art nouveau-style designs inspired by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, from £17.95.

Now you have given your front door a face-lift, you may be wondering about reworking your sleepy doorknob. Well, there is such a thing as a designer doorknob. Jacob Jensen, whose work is housed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, has designed a sleek, wireless doorknob (about £100, from www.comptondesign.com) that has five polyphonic ring tones, including Jensen knocking on an old wooden door and a rather new-age number.

All that's left for you to do is invite stylish people round to appreciate it all. ■ Architectural Salvage, 020 7581 2461, www.doorhandle.com ■ Cox's Architectural Salvage, 01608 652 505, www.coxsarchitecturalsalvage.co.uk ■ Ek design, 01709 700 306, www.ekdesign.co.uk ■ Flame, 01423 479 409, www.flamedesign.com ■ The London Door Company, 01753 6777, www.londondoor.com ■ Urban Front, 01709 609 1525, www.urbanfront.co.uk

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The phrase 'new front door' may conjure up images of white PVC horrors with mock stained-glass windows, but it doesn't have to be that way. Nabil and Elizabeth Assaf set up Urban Front, which sells modern solid wooden doors, about a year ago. 'We couldn't find a suitable front door for our 1960's house, so we designed our own', says Elizabeth.

'Passers-by asked where it was from, so we realized there was a niche in the market, and set up the company.' The firm has 15 designs, in a choice of six woods. Prices start at £700. The most popular is the Sorrento in cedar with stainless steel – you can even buy garage doors to match.

The London Door company has smart, individually made doors that are compatible with Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian architecture. Prices start at £1050, which includes locks and fitting. The firm plans to open branches nationwide soon.

Another option is to buy a refurbished period door from a salvage yard. Cox's Architectural Salvage has a good selection that ranges from ranges from 1920s pine with original art deco glass, at £325, to an ancient studded castle-style oak door, at £1700; it also makes doors to order out of reclaimed wood; prices start at £650.

Security is an important issue to take into account when choosing a front door. ' They should be solid and fitted with mortice deadlocks that comply with British Standards (BS3621), or a multi-locking system, plus three large hinges and door viewer', advises Tony Ellis, an Essex Police crime prevention officer.

'The door and frame should be strong enough to take the force of a large body. Avoid large glass panels, and any glass should be laminated, so it won't shatter and should be set into the structure of the door.' For more information visit www.securedbydesign.com.

Once you are happy with the door itself, you will want to choose fittings that complement it. Urban Front sells hip, contemporary Danish door furniture, including pull handles and letter boxes. For something more traditional, turn to Cox's. It's range of knockers includes a bronze lion's head knocker like the one on 10 Downing Street, at £35, and a brass doctor's doorknocker – used to identify where medics lived – for £45.

Architectural Components' well-chosen traditional and contemporary range is also worth considering.

If you don't want the hassle of fitting a new door, changing the style of the number or nameplate is an easy way to spruce up an entrance. De-signage is the place for modern house plaques. It's bespoke Perspex products are available in 17 different colours, with prices starting at £19.99, rising to £39.99 if you want the road name included. For an uber-contemporary look opt for the Oceanic, Glaze or Serene ranges, which are translucent Perspex plaques with lettering available in three different fonts.

For something continental, check out Filante, which stocks French-style plaques with a white number and border on a blue background, from £19.99. It also has a range of art nouveau style designs inspired by Charles Rennie Mackintosh from £17.95.

Now you have given your front door a face lift, you may be wondering about revamping your dreary doorbell. Well there is such a thing as a designer doorbell. Jacob Jensen, whose work is exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, has designed a sleek, wireless doorbell (about £100, from www.completelymodern.com) that has five polyphonic ring tones, including Jensen knocking on an old wooden door and a rather new age number.

All that's left is for you to invite suitably stylish people round to appreciate it all.