One out of every five residential garage doors sold today in North America is a carriage-style door. That is one of the findings of a new nationwide survey of door dealers conducted in early August by Door & Access Systems newsmagazine.

The survey also revealed (1) the most popular carriage door styles and (2) a demographic description of the homeowner who is most likely to pay more for a carriage-style garage door.

Sales Triple Since 2005
According to the survey, carriage house doors now account for 19 percent of the typical North American door dealer’s residential garage door sales. In 2005, our first survey revealed that 6.4 percent of dealers’ residential garage door sales were carriage doors. That number has been continually increasing and has tripled to 18.8 percent in 2013. (See survey methodology at the end of this story.)

“I believe the increased popularity of the carriage house design is due to the closing of the price difference between them and traditional doors,” said Wayne Pawlowski of Garage Door Guy in Barnegat, N.J. “Homeowners are also tired of the plain-vanilla look of traditional doors.”

The Secret Is Steel
Our survey asked dealers, “Of all the carriage-style doors you sell, what door-section material do you sell most often?”
About six out of 10 dealers (59 percent) checked the box that said, “steel sections with a stamped design,” while three out of 10 (31 percent) checked “steel sections with overlays.” Together, 89 percent of dealers said that steel was the most common material for the door sections, while 9 percent said wood and 1 percent said aluminum sections with overlays.

“My customers like the upscale look and the affordability of the stamped steel carriage house doors,” said Lynne Gramling of Overhead Door Company of Johnstown, Pa. “A variety of colors, window designs, and decorative hardware make these doors very desirable.”

### The Likely Carriage House Door Customer

Of all the demographic categories below, which one describes the customer who is most likely to pay more for a carriage-style door? (Check all that apply.)

![Chart showing the likely carriage house door customer demographics.](chart.png)

### The Most Popular Styles

Seeking to learn whether homeowners are attracted to a particular look, we then asked dealers, “What is the most popular upscale carriage-style door model you sell?” Not wanting to lead them to identify a particular model, we asked the dealer to type the door manufacturer and the door model.

Remarkably, 27 different manufacturers and 63 different models were mentioned by dealers. This wide range of manufacturers and models identified demonstrates the abundance of carriage house doors available today. Virtually every manufacturer has a carriage style that will meet any customer’s need.

Yet, in this long list of models, it was clear that five particular models were mentioned more than all the others. Not surprisingly, they come from five of the largest manufacturers.

It’s noteworthy that all five doors are made of steel. Several wood door manufacturers were also mentioned, but less frequently than the makers of steel doors.

The top five models, listed in alphabetical order, are: Amarr Classica, C.H.I. 5200 Series, Clopay Gallery Collection, Overhead Door Courtyard 160/370 Series, and Wayne Dalton Model 9700. Noting that each of these models are offered in dozens of styles and configurations, we present them here to give dealers and manufacturers a visual image of the most popular models in today’s market.

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Amarr Classica
Launched in January of 2004, Amarr’s Classica features a unique three-section design with many optional patterns that are pressed into the steel without the use of overlays. All Classica doors are 2” thick and come uninsulated or with polystyrene or polyurethane insulation. Now 10 years old, the expanding Classica Collection continues to add new designs, colors, and options.

C.H.I. 5200 Series
C.H.I. unveiled its 5200 Series Carriage House Doors in 2004. This steel door is typically four sections high in a short- (5200) or long-stamped (5900) steel design with a vertical beadboard look. The door is 2” thick and comes with polystyrene or polyurethane insulation and a variety of decorative hardware, decorative windows, and colors, including the new Accents Woodtones and Images.

Clopay Gallery
In 2005, Clopay launched the Gallery Collection as an entry-level addition to its line of steel carriage house garage doors. These 24-gauge steel doors are available in three thicknesses, 1-5/16”, 1-3/8”, and 2”, insulated with polyurethane or polystyrene, and in a variety of colors and options.

Overhead Door Courtyard 160/370 Series
In 2008, Overhead Door introduced its new Courtyard Collection of carriage house garage doors. The Courtyard Collection features polyurethane insulation and many styles and options, but its distinctive features include its overlays and thicknesses: 1” for the 370 Series and 1-3/8” for the 160 Series.

Wayne Dalton 9700
Wayne Dalton launched its Model 9700 Series of steel carriage house doors in 2004. A polyurethane-insulated steel door with overlays, the 1.57”-thick 9700 comes in three sections on 7’-high doors and four sections on 8’-high doors. It is available in a wide variety of carriage house designs with many window, paint, and stain options.
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SURVEY DETAILS

• The 2013 online survey was conducted Aug. 3-13, 2013. Email invitations were sent to 1,996 garage door dealers throughout the United States and Canada. A total of 225 dealers (11%) responded, which is consistent with the 2011 study.

• The survey defined a carriage house door as “any sectional garage door that appears to swing open via side hinges. It can be made of steel, wood, aluminum, vinyl, fiberglass, or any composite material.”

• The survey’s final averages (2005 = 6.1%, 2007 = 10.8%, 2009 = 13.0%, 2011 = 15.1%, 2013 = 18.8%) were calculated by taking the average percentage of each range offered in the survey. For example, when dealers said their carriage house door sales were “1-3%,” we assigned each of those dealers a sales percentage of 2%. When they checked “7-10%,” we assigned them a percentage of 8.5%. If “16-20%,” then we assigned them 18%, and so on.

As a general rule, all manufacturers offer carriage house doors in a multitude of styles, configurations, and price points, giving customers an almost endless range of choices. “I like the fact that there is a carriage house door for every budget, and it does not cost a lot to enhance it,” said Rob Jones of Best Overhead Door, Tualatin, Ore.

The Most Likely Customers

For the first time, our survey asked dealers, “Of all the demographic categories below, which ones describe the customer who is most likely to pay more for a carriage-style garage door?” Listed were various customer characteristics pertaining to age, sex, and population type.

Dealers identified women as much more likely to pay more than men, as 65 percent of respondents said women were more likely, while only 21 percent said men were.

When it comes to age, the most likely carriage house door customer is someone in the 40-49 age bracket (67 percent) followed by 50-59-year-olds (48 percent).

We also asked if the likely carriage customer lived in an urban, suburban, or rural area. Almost half of dealers (46 percent) identified the suburban customer as the most likely to pay more for a carriage door. Rural customers were checked by 19 percent of dealers, while urban customers collected 16 percent of the vote.

Thus, a 40- to 60-year-old suburban woman is a top prospect for an upscale carriage house-style door.

Other Key Findings

Survey responses to the question, “Why do customers buy a carriage-style door?” were consistent with the 2011 survey. The top reasons continue to be, “They love the look” (80 percent), “They like having something different than other homes in their area” (69 percent), and “It increases the curb appeal of their home” (62 percent).

As in 2011, we also asked, “Why don’t you sell more carriage-style garage doors?” The 2013 responses were remarkably consistent with those from 2011, with one notable exception. In 2011, 41 percent of dealers said, “The bad economy discourages customers from upgrading to a carriage house door,” but in 2013, that number dropped to 24 percent.

Other than that response, the top three reasons for not selling these doors are the same:

• Steel raised-panel doors are cheaper. (45 percent)
• Carriage house doors are too expensive. (37 percent)
• A few dealers added a comment about problems caused by delayed delivery. George Chandler’s response (Chandler Garage Door Service, Fremont, Calif.) summarized this point: “Steel door manufacturers need to stock more doors. Most installations take place in a few days, and customers do not want to wait a few weeks for their door to arrive.”

An Easy Sell

On the whole, dealers continue to increase their sales of carriage house-style doors. Most dealers have embraced them wholeheartedly as they seek to find the right door solution for each customer.

“I always talk about carriage-type doors, depending on home location, style of house, neighborhood, and if the door would add curb appeal to the home,” said Randy Schmitt of All Purpose Door, St. Louis, Mo. “It is usually an easy sell once these factors are answered.”

To comment on this story, send an email to the editor at trw@tomwadsworth.com.