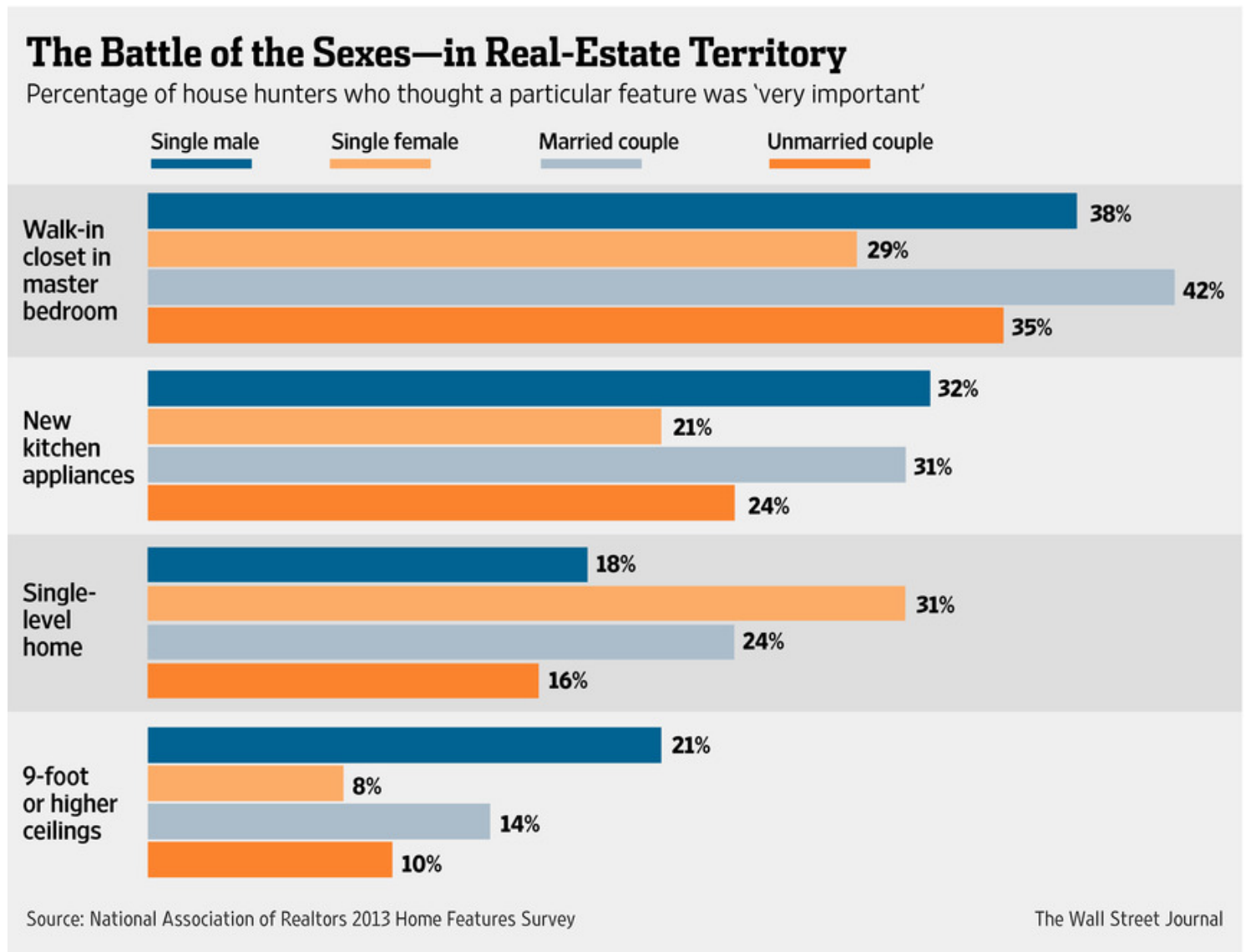


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A Gender Gap in Real Estate

By Adam Bonislawski



ENLARGE

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What do men want? When it comes to real estate, they want granite countertops, kitchen islands and walk-in closets, according to surveys. Women, on the other hand, seem primarily concerned about stairs.

Numbers from the National Association of Realtors 2013 Home Features Survey suggest gender plays a role in how real estate is perceived. Some of the findings upend traditional real-estate wisdom: that women are looking for great kitchens while men prize man-cave spots like the basement.

When asked what features were “very important” in the survey, 32% of single men, compared with 21% of single women cited new kitchen appliances. Similarly, granite countertops were a must-have for 24% of men, but only 11% of women, and 19% of men wanted a kitchen island, compared with 8% of women.

Another perhaps unexpected finding: 38% of men said a walk-in closet was very important vs. 29% of women.

Meanwhile, basements, traditional redoubts of male noodling, drew roughly equal interest, with 16% of men and 13% of women calling them essential. Men seem to have an attachment to attics, however—13% cited them as key, compared with 7% of women.

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One strong female preference was for single-level homes; 31% identified them as crucial, versus 18% of men.

Another NAR survey, however, does seem to support one oft-cited male stereotype—a fear of commitment. The 2014 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers shows that while 24% of single female home buyers say they plan to stay in their current home forever, only 15% of single men say the same.

(News Corp, owner of The Wall Street Journal, also owns Move Inc., which operates a website and mobile products for NAR.)

Some agents say they still often see traditional gender roles when it comes to buying real estate. Nancy Malone, managing broker of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Woodmont Realty in Nashville, Tenn., says her male and female clients approach homes differently.

“Women are mostly interested in kitchens and the flow of the floor plan for entertaining. Men are mostly interested in garages, attics and crawl spaces,” she says. “Even hearing the words come out of my mouth, I feel like it’s so stereotypical,” she says.

But, she adds, after 24 years as an agent, she is convinced that despite a shift among younger buyers, “it’s just true.”

Corrections & Amplifications

The name of Nancy Malone’s company is Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Woodmont Realty. An early version of this article omitted HomeService from the name.

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