

The building inspection

A smart investment...

A quality home inspection can provide some exceptional peace of mind to individuals considering a specific home on the market. Home inspectors can give you the kind of once over you'd give your own automobile before going on vacation: checking under the hood, so to speak, to see if everything is in good working order.

What makes a home inspector especially valuable to you is that he or she is by nature an independent, neutral third party. That is, they have no stake in the outcome of any sale or non sale. By being independent, they can offer an unbiased view of the home's structure and mechanicals, indifferent to which side (buyer or seller) might be affected by the results.

You should select a home inspector the same way you'd select a company installing new windows or siding: Check their references and get more than one estimate of price. Keep in mind though that a high price isn't a guarantee of high quality work.

Also keep in mind that once you've selected an inspector and he or she goes to work, things will be found wanting! They will find areas requiring improvement or repair. Why? Because that's why you hired them and unless this is a newly constructed house, every home needs some kind of work. (I'd be far more concerned if they didn't find anything wrong.)

In addition to actually checking out the home inspectors can also be great teachers: They can educate you on the inner workings of the home, explain how and why certain things work and point out areas that might not need repair or improvement today, but will down the road. Call it preventive maintenance rather than repair. (Just like getting your car ready for that trip).

One last word about home inspectors, though. They are not licensed electricians, plumbers or heating and cooling specialists. As an example, if they or you suspect there may be something going on with the wiring or the furnace, contact a licensed contractor and have them do an inspection. Again, the entire process of home inspection is to give you peace of mind so don't leave anything hanging out there that's going to bother you months later.

Also, keep in mind that just because an inspector has pointed out some area of the home that needs repairing, that doesn't make the home a questionable purchase. Take into consideration the home's age, its price range and its overall condition and make an appropriate decision. If it's an older home that's been well-maintained, but the carpeting looks a little worn then keep that in mind. You can always replace the carpeting. If the roof is sagging however, there might be trouble brewing that you don't want to deal with.



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