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A Modest Home Remains National Norm

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The anatomy of the average American home, whether it is owned or rented, hasn't changed much in recent years, considering only 12% of the nation's 112 million occupied housing units were built after the year 2000. But data released by the U.S. Census Bureau from the American Community Survey (ACS) offers some insight into how the average Joe lives, and what new home builders are competing against in the resale market, which currently includes nearly 4.7 million units of existing inventory—an 11.2 month supply.

Currently, more than 69% of U.S. households reside in single-family homes, the Census reports, compared with 24.6% in attached units (multifamily), and 6.3% in mobile homes or other structures. Slightly more than two-thirds (67.2%) of homes are owner-occupied, whereas 32.8% are rental units.

Big houses may have constituted the bread and butter of the housing boom, but they are not the norm in the bigger picture. In fact, the majority of U.S. residences (70.3%) contain just four to seven rooms, with a median overall room count of 5.5. Less than one in five housing units (17.4%) feature eight or more rooms.

Some 67.3% of housing units contain two or three bedrooms. The number of housing units with four or more bedrooms stands at 20.8%.

Roughly one-third (33.1%) of households have one car, whereas a slightly larger share (38.1%) have two cars. Only one in five households has three or more cars.

The average owner-occupied residence is home to 2.7 people (for rentals, that number is slightly lower, at 2.42). Only 33.9% of U.S. households now include children under the age of 18—a reflection, no doubt, of an aging population with a larger percentage of Americans entering retirement age.

