

Ranch House Amazes British

LONDON (AP) — Something new to be seen in England is an American ranch house.

British who visit it at a big exhibition here have been conditioned by many Westerns, so they are surprised to observe there are no coiled lariats hanging from a spike on the porch. Visitors are also learning that air conditioning and electric dishwashers have become standard equipment on the prairie, and that a sputtering barbecue dinner may be made indoors.

It is a full scale, one-story, six-room house erected inside London's vast Olympia exhibition hall. The strange house from overseas is, so to speak, a guest of a lot of British houses also set up in an Ideal Home show.

There is, in this surprising New World house, an electric organ, in case any cowboy is talented musically, some British viewers suggest. There's also something which is appreciated in moist Britain—a mud room with plenty of hot running water where the young rascals of the family have to clean up before stepping to the tidy living room.

The house was brought to the London show by the National Assn. of the Home Builders of the U.S.A. Cooperating with the association are the National Housing Center of Washington, D.C., the National Design Center of New York, and numerous manufacturers.

Many thousands are tramping through the rooms, pressing buttons in the kitchen, and marveling at the door which is for the exclusive use of the dog. He can get from an outside dog house to the inside without yelping to attract attention.

The house is of wooden construction, roofed with asphalt shingles. Compressed wood panels, Roman brick and glass figure in the exterior decoration. There are a carport, an entrance porch and a paved, enclosed terrace.

Inside, walls are plastered and paneled in wood. Sliding, plastic screens may cover windows. The layout is an open plan, to give an impression of spaciousness. There are three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms, a large living room and, well to one side, the dining space. But lively youngsters can make a shambles of a living room, so there is also a "family room" where behavior need not be so decorous.

The family room is the headquarters of the television, the organ and the record player. By manipulating a control panel radio programs and music may be piped into any room.

The kitchen surprises the British housewife the most. It is strategically located, so that Mother has a pretty good view of the whole interior. There is an area for informal family eating.

But that stove! It's a stainless steel island in the center of the room. Walk all around it freely, but not to go to the oven. That's built into a wall. There is no end of cabinets.

There are food mixers, juicers, grinders, refrigeration which controls temperatures from deep-freeze to cool, dishwashing machine and waste disposer.

At one side of the electric stove which is an island is a grate which takes charcoal, where the barbecue dinner is made. Electrical apparatus purifies the air and powerful exhausts, two of them, expel the smells.

The whole thing, from carport to mud room, would cost about \$17,000 in an American suburb, the sponsors estimate.

The great majority of British housewives visiting the ranch house is most favorably impressed.

"That yummy shower, and that whizz of a washing machine right between the baths where it belongs!" is a typical comment.

But, while it may fit into the American scene, the total ranch house, as displayed here, is not for Britain, many conclude sadly.

Carl T. Mitnick of the National Assn. of Home Builders, and Norman E. Ginsberg of the National Design Center, who were here to open the exhibition, got tired of hearing only praise, and asked visitors to explain, on forms provided, what is wrong with a ranch house in Britain. Here are some of the objections they heard: "We don't have space in Britain for one-story dwellings."

"That stove which is an island alarms me, positively dangerous."

"One can see too much at a glance. This openness is for extroverts."

"Don't need air conditioning in this climate."

"We want more privacy. Ought to be curtains at the windows."

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