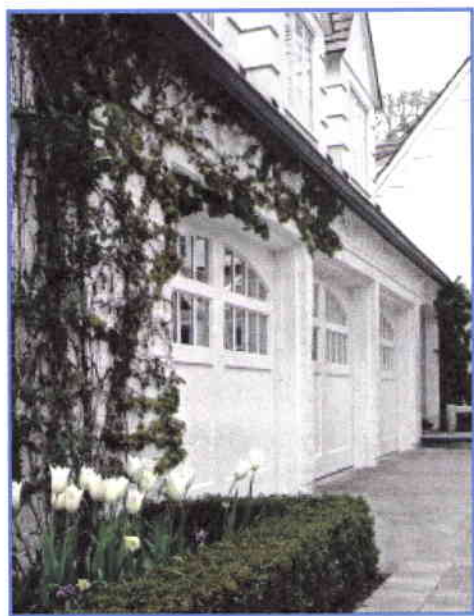


## How to Choose a Garage Door

*Finding a garage door that blends in with your house and enhances your curb appeal is all about playing the matching game.*

By [Clare Martin](#)



Large banks of divided top lights with unique shapes, such as the arched profile shown here, reflect historic architectural details.

(Photo: Designer Doors)

The garage presents one of those frustrating “only in an old house” conundrums: The automobile—and a place to put it—has become a necessity of modern life, but that wasn’t the case when most historic homes were built. Creating a garage that offers the amenities you want without disrupting the period character of your home can be a tall order. The good news? Today, there are more options than ever to ease the burden.

Since doors are the “face” of your garage, choosing them is one of the most important design decisions you’ll have to make. If your garage is prominently placed in relation to your house, the style of the doors can have a major impact on your curb appeal. Pulling architectural elements from your house and replicating them on garage doors will go a long way toward striking a harmonious balance between garage and house.

### Copy siding & trim colors

The easiest way to blend house and garage is to match up their color schemes. If the design of your garage door isn’t a great fit for the age of your home, a complementary color scheme can at least help it blend in. Conversely, if you have a gorgeous traditional-style door to highlight, creative coloring (for example, painting the bracing elements on a carriage-house door the same color as your home’s trim) can give it a huge boost. Paint isn’t the only option—if your house has a handsome solid-wood entry door, choose a garage door with a similar stain.



If you select all-wood garage doors, you'll be able to completely customize paint and stain colors to match your house, but cost and maintenance are the trade-offs: Wood doors can be twice as expensive as steel ones, and they need to be repainted or recoated every few years. Steel doors typically come pre-painted, but today's manufacturers tend to have a good basic range of color choices. If you don't like any of the options, it is possible to custom-paint steel garage doors yourself using acrylic latex exterior paint.

### Match door & window details

For full integration between the garage and the house, you'll need to go beyond just color. The next step? Look to your home's windows and doors. Many traditional-style garage doors on the market today feature a row of top lights, and coordinating those windows to the ones already on your house will create a strong connection. If your windows are classic six-over-six double-hungs, for example, choose a door with multi-paned top lights. Also consider the shape of the windows—if your windows have arched upper sash, replicate that shape in the top lights.

When it comes to copying doors, construction and hardware are the key details. Board-and-batten, raised-panel, and rail-and-stile door profiles are all available in garage-friendly forms; the right stain can make the garage door a carbon copy of the entry door. And don't forget the hardware—while purely



decorative, details like hefty ring pulls or forged strap hinges can confer instant period style.

### Take a cue from history

If all else fails, replicate the kind of door that would have appeared on outbuildings during the period when your house was built. For most historic homes (especially those dating to the 19th century), the go-to template for garage doors is the carriage house. Carriage houses typically featured swing-out wooden doors, often with a diagonal brace on the bottom half. For older or more primitive houses, you might take another step back to stable doors, distinguished by cross-bucks on the bottom.



It's still possible to get carriage house and stable-style doors that swing out, and today these open by remote for the sake of convenience. Overhead folding doors that replicate the appearance of carriage house and stable doors are also out there, for homeowners who want all the modern conveniences wrapped in a period package.

**Online exclusive:** [See our recommendations for the best online garage-door design tools.](#)

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