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Transforming rooms into
beautiful and efficient spaces *page 27*

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How to plan your best outdoor space *page 25*



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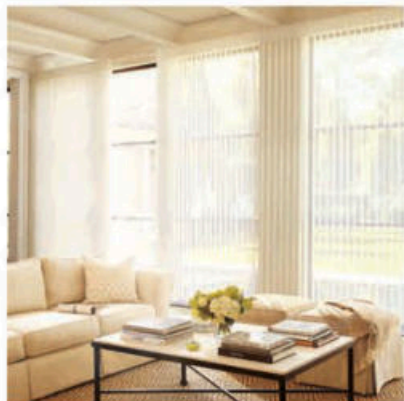
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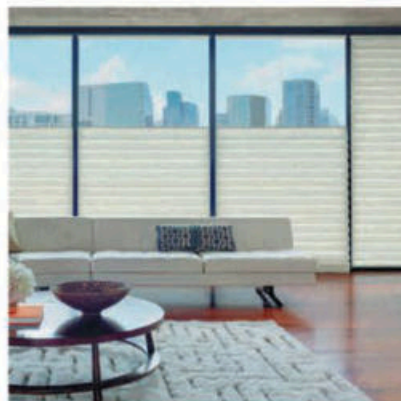
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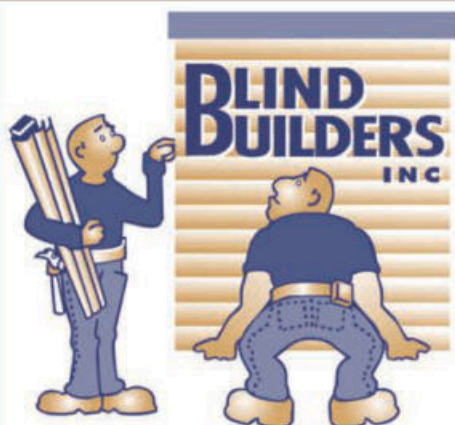
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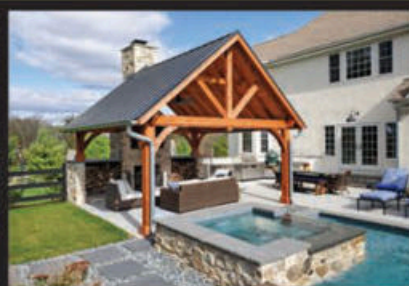
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With people spending more time at home than ever before, Fascella Construction Corporation helps transform their rooms into beautiful and efficient spaces

On the cover:

Fascella Construction Corporation is a full-service general contracting firm licensed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Under the leadership of founder Chris Fascella, FCC has been in business for more than two decades and handles all aspects of the job from design to completion and is happy to bring clients the luxurious and functional spaces they desire. Turn to page 27 to find out more about their commitment to clients and how they can transform your home.

Cover image courtesy of Fascella Construction Corporation



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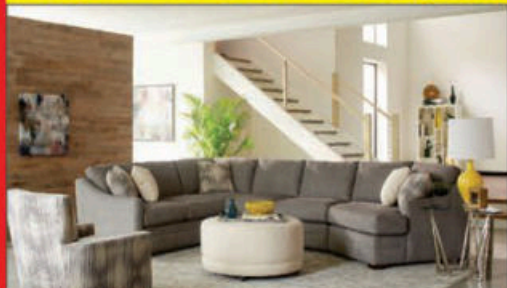
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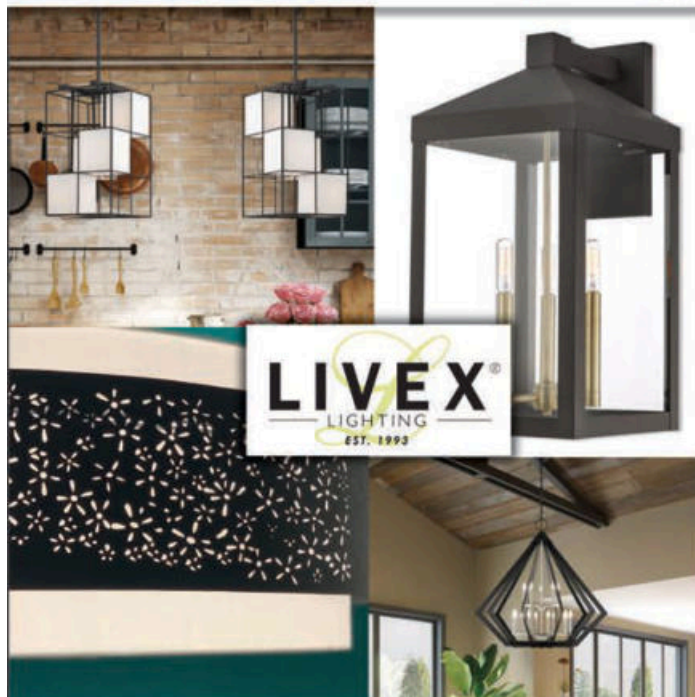
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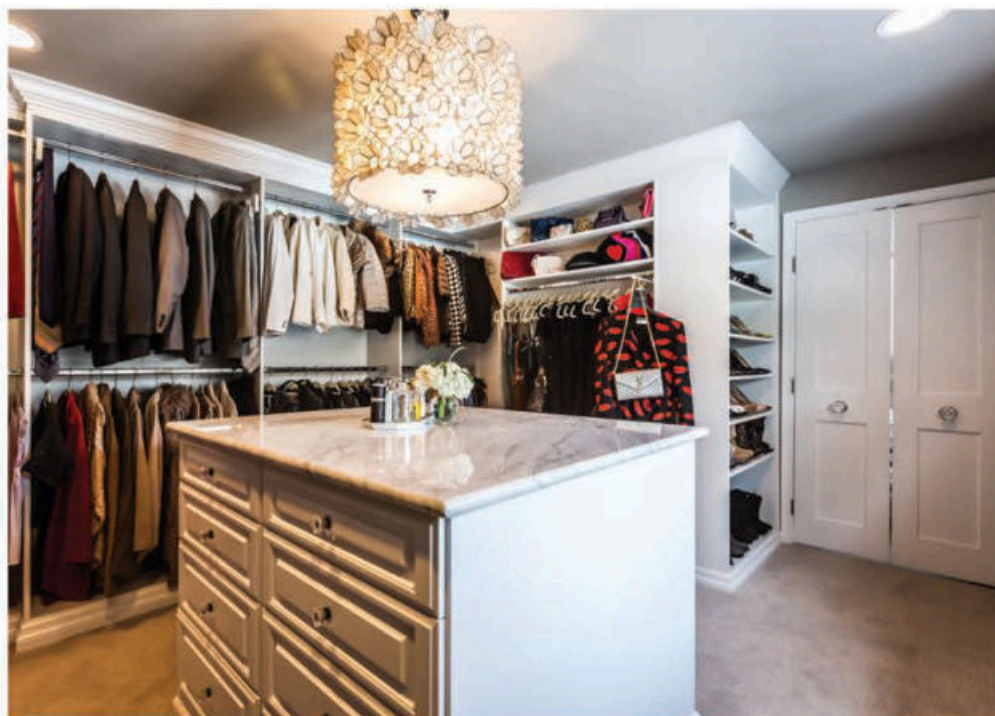
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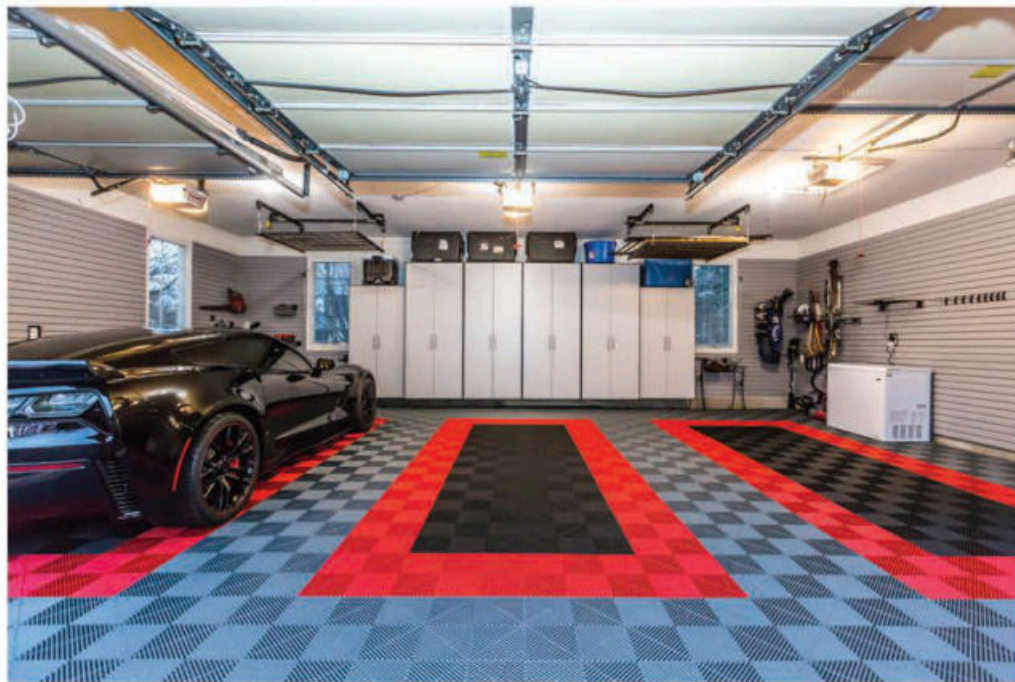
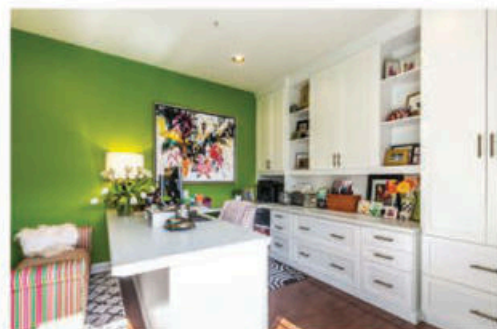
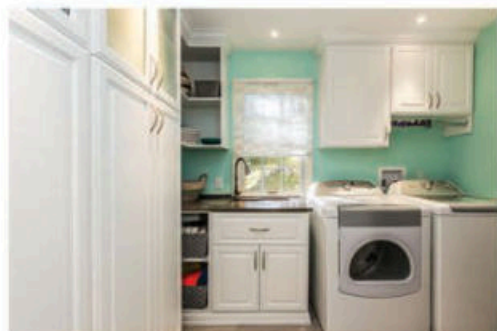
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As voted by our readers, the following companies and professionals are being recognized for their quality products, expertise, top-notch customer service and reliability. We're also featuring a closer look at these companies in informative spotlights that shed some light on their dedication. For your next home project, there is no one better than these winners.





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How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We truly appreciate being recognized. *House & Home* does a wonderful job providing its readers with relatable and useful content. It's a wealth of resources, ideas and advice from trusted local businesses.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

Finding balance between our professional life and personal life can be tricky. However, Brett (my husband) and I have a fantastic team that cares about us, our business and customers as much as we do. I think we naturally all motivate and appreciate each other and all really want to be here.



Nikki Rieber, Owner
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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in: *Building & Remodeling Supplies*



EMPIRE
Moulding & Millwork

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

Shelly's has been serving our customers since 1923. In 2013 we became a part of US LBM and have leveraged that position to grow in our ability to exceed our customers' needs with product, selection and service. Our Shelly's Design Center in Perkasio would be an excellent example of that.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

At the risk of sounding cliché, it really is all about our people. Our associates are the best in the industry. Their dedication and hard work never cease to amaze me.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

Accolades are not the reason we do what we do, but I must admit it feels great to be recognized by *House & Home*.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

This industry has been built around people and relationships, maybe more so than any other industry. I believe that everyone at Shelly's would say that building long-lasting relationships is the most rewarding aspect of this industry.

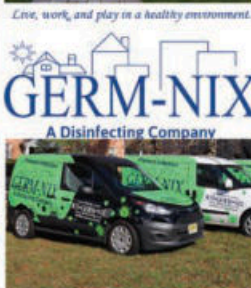
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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in:

Disinfecting



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How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

Germ-Nix is a premier disinfecting company led by industry experts with over 35 years of professional experience in the health care industry. Along with our parent company, Legion Building Services, we work with hospitals, operating rooms and various health care systems on the East Coast.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating yourself from your competitors?

We are a company based on the values and expectations required by the health care industry. Our passion for hospital-grade disinfection is reflected by having an infection preventionist and registered nurses as key personnel on staff.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

Germ-Nix is motivated to educate and help those in need. We have a growing demand for the residential community not just for immunocompromised individuals, but with the pandemic, we are busy assisting clients who have family that have had to quarantine and or had the virus. We not only apply treatments but educate on how to keep disinfection at its peak performance. Having the peace of mind to disinfect properly and stop the spread at home with family members is vital. Disinfection at home goes beyond the current crisis and is being adapted by homeowners and businesses for seasonal flus, germs and bacteria.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in:

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How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

It feels great to be recognized for the years of excellence and the thousands of satisfied customers!

What makes you the best in your industry while separating yourself from competitors?

In addition to having the most experienced staff of highly skilled installers and a lifetime guarantee, we can offer an almost unlimited variety of styles and materials. If someone has a vision, we can make it happen.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

It's easy to stay motivated when you have such happy customers! I always joke that I'm only about 10 percent less excited about the finished product than they are.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

It's really rewarding to be able to give people such beautiful, updated kitchens at an affordable price.

—Beth Soldwisch,
Sales Consultant



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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in: *Bath Design*



Tim McHale, owner

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

We have been in business for 70 years and I have been running the family business for 25 years.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

Humbling. We strive on a daily basis to be better than we were the day before. My grandfather started this business with the philosophy that "We do what we say we are going to do" and 70 years later that is what we continue to do.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

The smile and the pure joy you see on a customer's face when the project is complete. Most of our customers save for years to be able to redo a kitchen or a bathroom. We are lucky enough to help that dream come true.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

Last year we started a community give back program, McHalesCares.com. This program gives away \$1,000 every month to a local charity that helps the community. We urge everyone to go to the website every day and vote. Learn about these charities and help us help them!

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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in: *Hardscaping*



How many years have you been in business?

Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete is a family-owned business, established in 1943.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We're very proud to be acknowledged by the people who read the magazine.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

Helping people achieve their objectives and making them happy.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

There is always a new challenge, things are always changing. Keeping up with the quick pace of change, and staying on the cutting edge is exciting.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

We have a new tile made of porcelain for indoor and outdoor applications. It looks like Pennsylvania Blue Stone; it's really beautiful and versatile.

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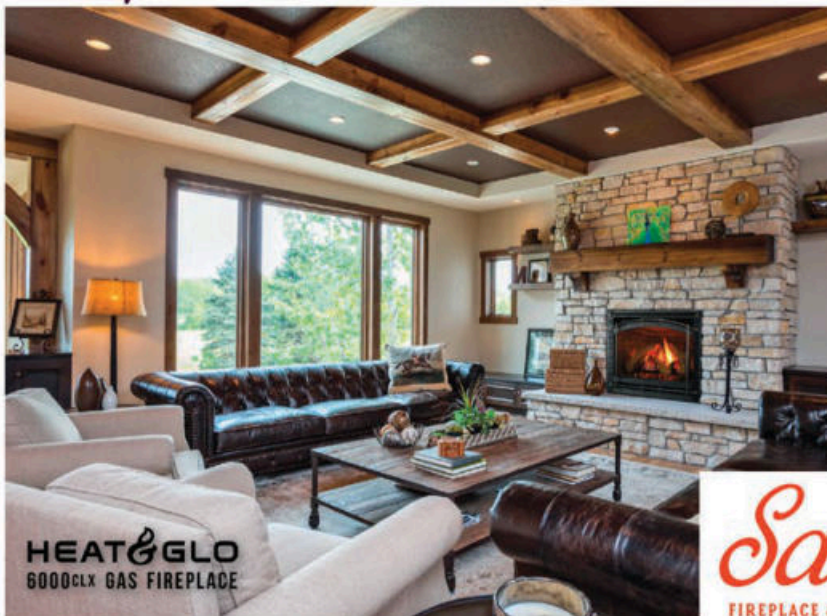
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BEST of HOUSE & HOME in:

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How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We are truly grateful to be honored in this way by a community that has been with us for so many years. Thank you to the readers of House & Home!

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

Providing warmth and comfort is our mission. There is something about sitting in front of a warm fire, curled up in a blanket with your family that seems to make all the trouble in the world melt away. It's something to cherish during these times. Fire seems to bring people together—that is what is most rewarding about our industry.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

We have been taking the past few months to renovate the iconic Hatfield firehouse located on 56 E. Broad Street and are excited for it to finally open! Our new showroom is over 8,600 square feet and features all of the finest fireplaces, inserts, stoves as well as outdoor living products like patio furniture, spas, grills and outdoor kitchen products. We also have a roof terrace featuring a wide selection of products like patio heaters, grills and more. —Jay Stong, Owner

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What Lies Beneath

A finished basement can enhance your living space and add great value to your home.

BY PETER PROKO

One could argue that the home improvement industry has never been hotter than it has been these past several months. With the pandemic causing more and more folks to spend increased amounts of time at home, interest in projects has spiked significantly as working and schooling remotely have become the norm for the foreseeable future. And as homeowners look to transform their space into something better suited for their current needs and desires, they are doing so by prioritizing functionality and return on investment.

One of the best ways to address both is with a finished basement.

Basements can often be seen as an afterthought. A place to stow away holiday decorations, mementos from the past or that dusty treadmill you swore would never collect dust. But the truth is, a well-designed finished basement not only offers more ways to enjoy yourself at home, it can also add some serious property value. It's a much cheaper alternative than building an addition onto your home while also providing the personal benefit of the increased living space.

Dennis Gehman knows a thing or two about the matter, having founded Gehman Design Remodeling in 1990 in the basement office of his home. Since then, he's helped countless homeowners realize a basement's full potential by taking advantage of the extra square footage in a variety of ways.





“People want a workout space, a play area for the children or maybe an entertainment area with a large flat screen and stadium seating,” says Gehman. “They want to make their house feel like a resort ... like a place where they want to go.”

If finishing a basement is on your home improvement list, you can expect to wait at least a few months before any work to begin given the current demand for home remodeling. If a contractor isn’t booked up with jobs, you may question why that’s the case. That’s why it’s important to do your homework before moving forward with any project, let alone one of this magnitude.

As many homeowners readily know, finding the right contractor is a big piece of the puzzle.

“Check contractor references and verify that they are licensed and registered with the state. And ask for an insurance certificate,” Gehman advises.

“When looking into contractors, you want to know how many years of experience they have. Better Business Bureau ratings are always good indicators and, of course, referrals,” adds Tom Meier, owner of Basement Living Systems.

Meier has more than 30 years of experience in the home

What Lies Beneath

remodeling industry and has worked on more than 250 basements in the past 15 years alone. He says the days of the grandiose bar areas or larger-than-life media rooms have taken a back seat to more practical needs like home office areas and space for children to play.

“I’ve done the media rooms with projectors and staged floors where it’s like you are inside a theater,” says Meier, “but right now, people just want to finish the



space” so it can be better utilized during the pandemic.

One of the biggest concerns with a basement, finished or unfinished, is moisture. That’s why a vital first step to making your basement dreams become reality is to ensure that the space is properly waterproofed. If ignored, mold and water damage can lead to repairs that could amount to triple the cost of the initial investment. And even after the basement is finished, issues can arise and homeowners need to pay close attention for any tell-tale signs of a failing foundation or crawl space.

“The easiest one is if there is visible water on the ground or walls. Try to diagnose where the water is coming from. It may just be a leaky pipe or washing machine. Other times it could be coming up from the floors or through the walls since concrete is porous,” says

Jesse Cecola of Dry Guys Basement Systems. “Another indicator that your below-ground space needs help is how your home feels or smells, especially in your basement or crawl space. Humidity and musty odors are signs that your home is suffering from a mold problem; that can affect the air quality of the entire house.”

Lately, a lot of homeowners have been trying to “seal out” the water with waterproofing paint and other similar products, which is problematic according to Cecola.

“The truth is that you are fighting against mother nature and she will always win. Fixes that try to directly stop water are doomed to fail eventually. The best solution is to always direct the water through a system and away from the home. Extending downspouts are a great start to this and there are a dozen other solutions and systems that can help,” he says.

When it comes to creating the finished space, Gehman says it’s important to take the necessary steps to make your basement feel like an extension of the rest of the home. “Don’t cheap out,” he says. “Spend the

money for finishes that look like they belong on the first floor.”

Meier agrees, saying he prefers to blend the two levels together as seamlessly as possible. “I’ll use the same trim the homeowner has upstairs, the same door styles. ... I’ll carry that whole theme downstairs.”

Adding a bathroom and adequate lighting along with proper heating and cooling are further ways to make the lower level feel less like a basement.

When it comes to choosing flooring, carpet provides a certain warmth and comfortability, but it can be a concern for any space where moisture levels could be high. As an alternative, luxury vinyl plank flooring has become quite popular. Available in a variety of colors from rustic-looking grays to glossy mahogany,

Images courtesy of Egress Solutions

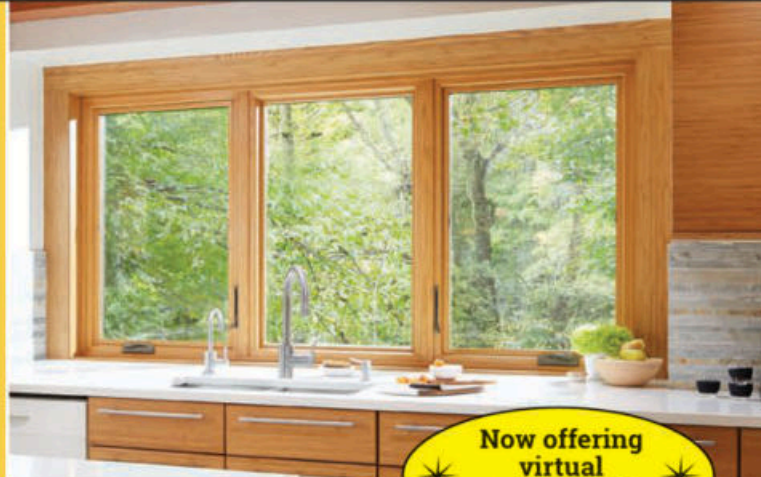
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What Lies Beneath

they say “vinyl is final” because the flooring is waterproof and often carries a lifetime warranty.

Another big decision in the basement finishing process is what type of ceiling is best. A drywall ceiling can make the space look more uniform with the rest of the house, but a suspended ceiling can sometimes offer better acoustics and provide easy access to pipes and other valves in case of emergency.

In addition to customizing the space to your liking, you have to also consider egress requirements. In most cases, a basement is required to have at least two forms of egress, which means that there are at least two options for a person to safely escape to the outside in case of a fire or other emergency.

“What an egress system does is, No. 1 it allows for a safe escape if, God forbid, there’s a fire. I believe somewhere around 90% of basement stairs exit into a kitchen area. Typically, when a house fire breaks out, it’s going to happen in the kitchen. Someone could potentially be trapped in the basement with no way out if those stairs are their only way in and out of that space,” says Trae Lamborne, of Egress Solutions.

Though egress windows are often added out of necessity, there are other benefits besides the added safety measure, like allowing for more natural light and ventilation. What’s more is that a quality egress system can also boost your resale value and in the current red-hot real estate market, that can go a long way.

“Your realtor can market that space as livable space,” Lamborne says. “Having livable space versus just a finished basement is going to be a huge

jump on the resale end.”

With so much to think about, you’re going to want to do plenty of advance planning. Think about how or what you want to use the space for and what kind of amenities you want for certain and which ones would be nice to add if your budget allows.

“There may be a difference in the level of finishes and money you invest in finishing a basement depending on whether this will be a play space for your kids, a family space or a place you’ll spend time with guests,” says Gehman. “Invest a good amount of time in designing and planning your project. Depending on the size and scope of the project and how quickly you make decisions, design could take a minimum of two months, but it will go so much smoother once construction starts in your house.” **H&H**



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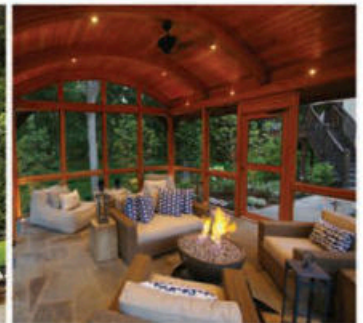
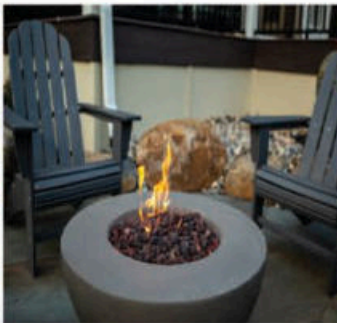
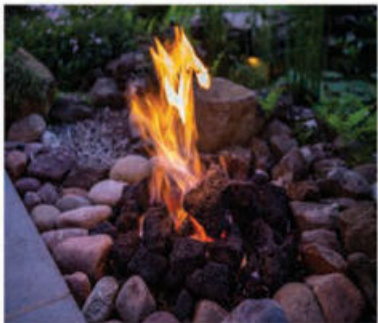
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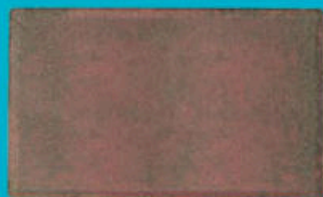
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Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete

by **Liz Hunter**

There is something to be said about a family-owned business celebrating its 76th anniversary. Now in its third generation, Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete has two locations—Souderton and Lansdale—and more than 50 employees. It is one of the area's largest suppliers of brick, pavers, landscape materials, stucco and cultured stone products.

The company's experience and range of materials make it a quality resource for home improvement projects. "Our staff works with our customers to help them with their home improvement project, [figuring] out if they can do it, or if the job is too big for them," says Jarrod Nyce, vice president. Then the company assists the homeowner in connecting with qualified contractors, ones Nyce says have proven over the years to be reputable and trustworthy.

House & Home spoke with Nyce about why homeowners may be pleasantly surprised by their experience with his company.

How does the level of service you provide differ from others?

We are able to provide just about everything for any type of job. For contractors, we can deliver to all construction situations. We provide concrete pumping service, front discharge trucks and theme conveyor trucks. This makes our fleet versatile to handle all job sites, so we can service our customers. We also have piggyback fork trucks to deliver materials and get the material close to the job site.



We consider our shop as a one-stop shop. Our staff is educated in all areas of construction including codes, installation techniques and hands-on knowledge of our products. We are here to help you figure out what is possible. We have a no-hassle approach; there's no pressure. Our staff doesn't get paid on sales so we keep it real and ask all the questions you need to be happy. That's what we do!

Is an appointment necessary for homeowners to browse your selection of products?

We are open six days a week, no appointment necessary. Just because we are a contractor service company doesn't mean we don't deal with average people. We try to help everyone make the best decision for their project.

What are the best things a homeowner should do during the winter months to plan their outdoor living spaces?

It's a matter of space, time and budget. It's really simple—we can help any customer figure out what they are capable of doing. We have lots of ideas but doing your research is always best. Once you have an idea of what you want to do, we'll help you get there.

Outdoor living spaces are so much more than patios now. How do I know what's possible for me?

What goes into making a luxurious backyard is up to many different definitions. It depends on what your vision is. We can help in many different areas. Pictures and displays are a good start and we have a lot of both. Whatever you want is limited only by your imagination and budget. Whether it's an outdoor kitchen, fire pit or outdoor fireplace, an outdoor grill area or a beautiful hardscaped/paver backyard, it's all about going to the next level and we can help you create just about anything you would like to do. It's all up to your imagination.

What types of products do you have to help create these spaces?

One of our partners, Cambridge Pavers, has a full line of outdoor kits from pergolas and pavilions to bistro tables and waterfalls. We also have a ceramic paver that looks like flagstone. It's really cool and can be used in all kinds of applications. It looks like the real thing.

We stand behind all of the materials that we sell. Let's face it, things happen, but we will do our best to make sure a happy solution is found.

H&H

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Kitchen remodels

Homeowners are not frequenting restaurants as much and takeout can become boring after a while, so they are spending more time than ever in the kitchen preparing meals and gathering as a family. FCC will assist in transforming the heart of the home to make it not only more efficient but also aesthetically pleasing.

Old barn wood and other reclaimed materials are a great way to create an “elegant country” look, which is a popular trend.

People prefer the clean lines of the cabinetry, white or gray painted cabinets with rustic metal and wood accents. Specialty features include barn beam floating shelves and wall coverings in reclaimed barn siding to create an inviting space around the TV or home office.

Living in Comfort and Style

With people spending more time at home than ever before, **Fascella Construction Corporation** helps transform their rooms into beautiful and efficient spaces. *by Joseph K. Michaels*

Between meeting work deadlines, shuffling the kids to and from their various activities and handling the stress of a hectic daily schedule, it can be easy for necessary improvements around the house to get overlooked. But when life

slows down and we end up spending more time at home than usual, we may start to notice that the outdated kitchen could use a makeover or the unfinished basement could be remodeled to add much-needed usable space.

With residential construction on the rise this year and showing no signs of slowing down, many homeowners have decided now is the time to begin the projects they have long dreamed of, and their first call is to Fascella Construction Corporation (FCC). A full-service general contracting firm licensed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, FCC has been in business for more

than two decades under the leadership of founder Chris Fascella.

FCC handles all aspects of the job from design to completion and is happy to bring clients the luxurious and functional spaces they desire.

“Now that people are spending more time at home they’re noticing some details that need upgrading or updating,” Fascella says. “They need their spaces to be more organized and comfortable. Finished basements are becoming classrooms for kids and home offices for both husband and wife. People are also cooking more so they want remodeled kitchens.”

No matter which part of the house a homeowner needs to address, FCC will obtain all of the building permits, oversee inspections and coordinate the daily schedule while keeping the client informed and providing expert guidance on design elements and trendy materials.

Home offices

Since many people have transitioned to working from home and children are learning remotely, home offices have been in big demand. FCC excels at modifying little-used spaces into rooms that have all of the amenities of a normal office or classroom.

The basement is another area that is being utilized more. FCC designs and builds new living spaces for entertaining, and home offices that provide quiet areas to conduct business remotely. Custom-built cabinetry complements the specific needs of your family.

Other popular renovations

FCC can also turn a master bathroom into a spa-like retreat or create an exercise room for those who are wary of going to the gym. FCC provides closet design and built-in cabinetry for specific organizational needs. A recent project includes a playroom with cabinetry for the children’s art supplies and games so they’re all out of the way but still accessible. The doors have corkboard for the kids’ artwork to be displayed and the focal point is a reclaimed chalkboard from an old schoolhouse.

Respecting the home

For all of these projects, FCC’s team members have a reputation for treating customers’ homes like their own. They are always courteous and make sure to seal the construction area off from the rest of the house, so daily living is not interrupted. The dignity and professionalism they display is why homeowners usually become clients for life.

“We have many customers who come back to us years after the initial job when they’re ready to move on to the next project,” Fascella says. “Or we hear from people with family members who had a great experience with us and they hope we can do the same for them. If you need something now or down the road, we’re here for you. All you have to do is give us a call.” **H&H**



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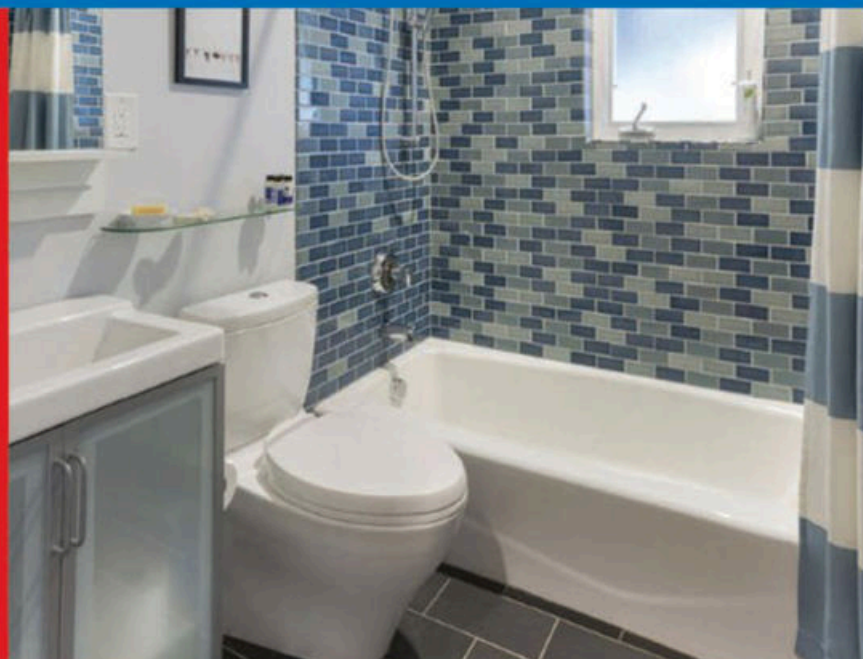
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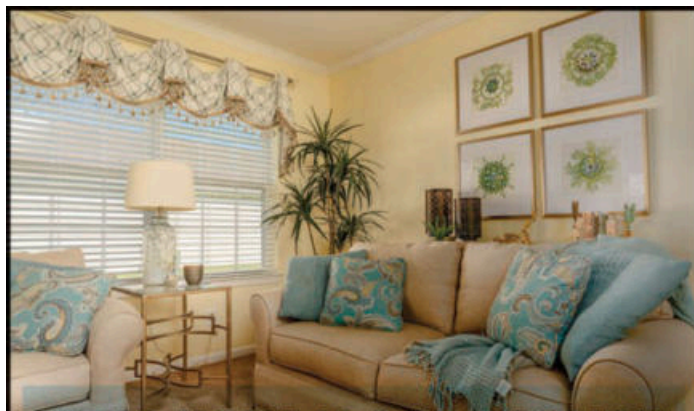
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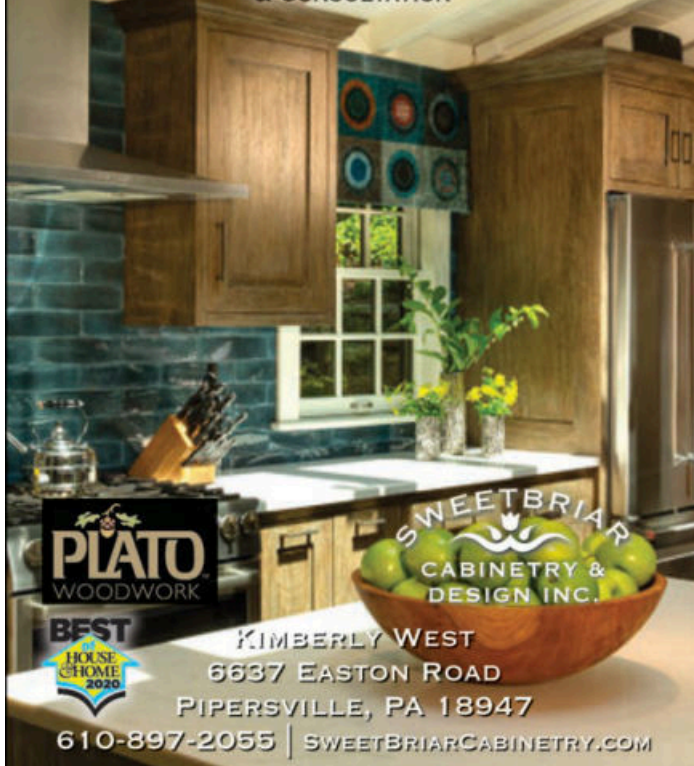
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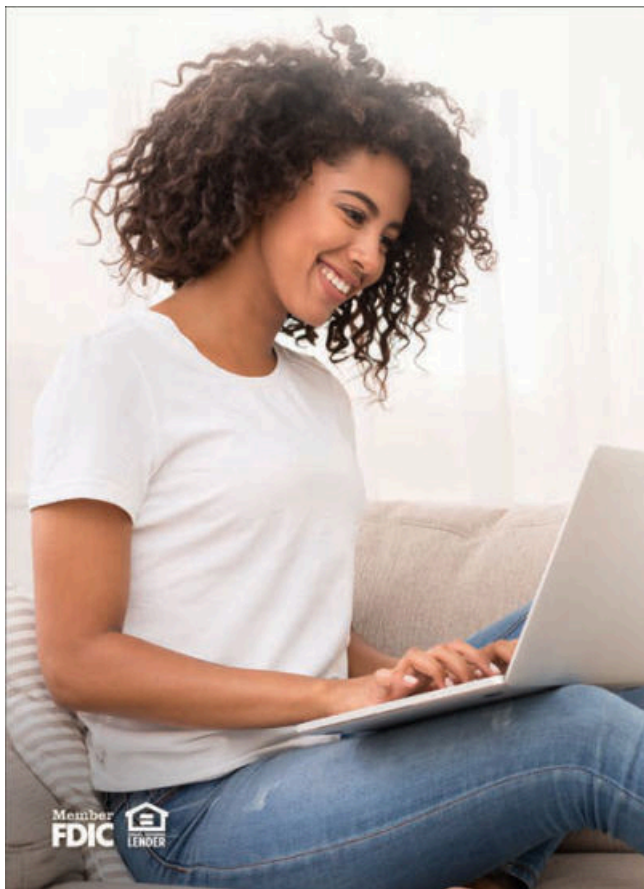
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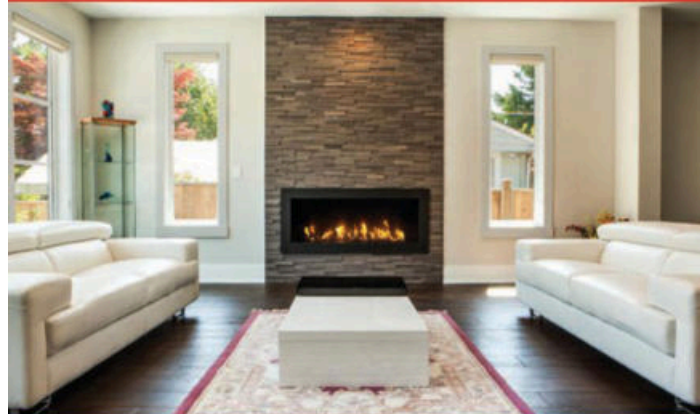
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