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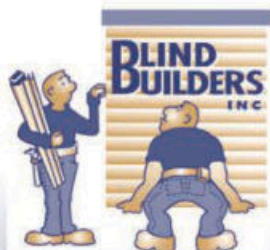
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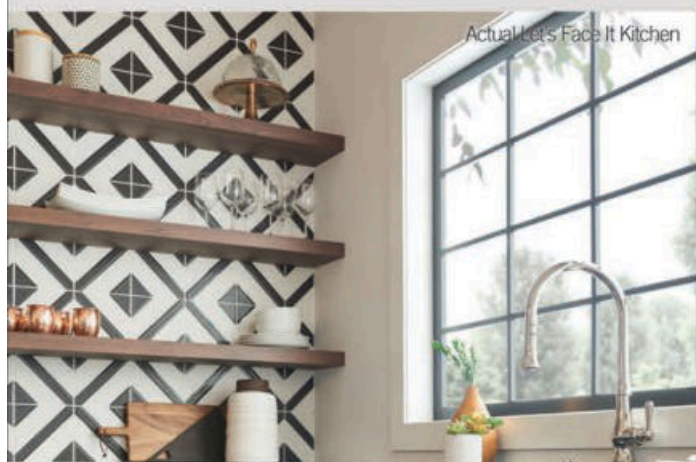
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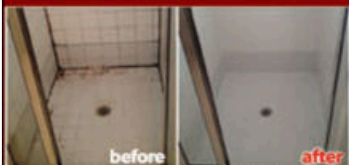
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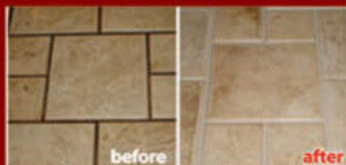
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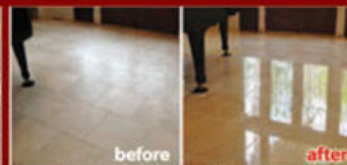
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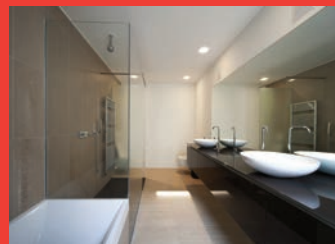
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McHales Kitchen & Bath

by **Liz Hunter**

“We do what we say we are going to do”—this is the simple philosophy on which McHales Kitchen & Bath was founded in 1950. Now in its third generation of ownership, the company is run by the founder’s grandson, Tim McHale, and has two divisions—one dedicated to kitchen and bath remodeling, another for residential plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical and drain cleaning. McHales has been recognized with awards by industry organizations such as the National Kitchen & Bath Association and the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, but those don’t compare to the support of customers and the community.

To show its appreciation, McHales involves itself in the Bucks County community, whether it’s sponsoring teams, entering a parade or wearing pink in October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. *House & Home* spoke to McHale about this dedication to giving back and why the company launched its own charitable arm called McHales Cares.

What does the Bucks County community mean to you and your business?

Over the last 70 years, our customers have made us who we are. Customers have told their children, grandchildren and neighbors



Tim McHale, Head Coach

about our services. We have continued to grow and serve them. Without our community, there is no McHales. It is because of them that we are here.

Why do you make it a priority to give back to this community?

Without our community McHales wouldn’t be here today. It is vital to give back to the community that has allowed us to stay in business for so long. We are just “good people helping good people.”

What is the mission of McHales Cares and how does it work?

McHales Cares is a community give-back program. Our goal is to find well-deserving charities in our backyard that could use a little help. We will donate \$1,000 each month, so the winning charity can continue to give back to the same community that McHales has been a part of for over 69

years. You can go to McHalesCares.com and vote every day. Whichever charity gets the most votes at the end of the month wins \$1,000. You can also nominate new charities on the site as well. Past winners include Neshaminy’s Change it up Club, Boy Scout Troop #121, Needle Work Guild of America-Warminster, Special Teens and Bingo’s Foundation.

What do you hope to accomplish through these monthly votes and ultimately, for Bucks County?

We want to bring awareness to the different charities that are here in Bucks County and the amazing things that they do. In such a short time it has been mind-blowing to learn so much about so many deserving organizations and meet so many wonderful people. I only wish we would have done this sooner.

H&H

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Levittown, Pa. | (215) 493-3399 | McHales.net

ANTONELLA AND ALEX T. knew what they wanted in their bathroom renovation. They've lived in their Newtown, Pa., home since 2005 and had spent the past five years dreaming about the improvements they'd make when the time finally came for an update.

"The bathroom really needed work,"

Antonella says. "The tub was falling apart, and we had an enclosed shower that we really wanted to change."

A native of Canada, Antonella says one design element that especially appealed to her was a zero-threshold entry shower, which she had seen in her native country and in Europe. So, when it finally came time for the couple to approach the renovation project, they had their expectations set, and they knew what they were looking for. The problem was finding a contractor willing to complete the project.

"We've been thinking about [the renovation] for the last five years, but it took a while to select the right designer to do this," Antonella explains. "It was over a year or two that we looked, because we kept getting a lot of 'nos.'"

Antonella says it was the nature of their desired lip-less and door-less shower that turned designers off from the project.

"We did our homework and asked quite a few designers about their capabilities of doing a walk-in shower," she says. "A lot of them didn't like the idea of not having a lip,

making it happen

Beco, Inc., helps homeowners take their home renovation projects to the next level.



but I know it works. I had seen it.

"We were almost going to give up [looking for someone who would do it]," Antonella continues. "And then Beco said 'yes' right away."

A staple in the remodeling community since 1956, Morrisville, Pa.-based Beco, Inc., has years of experience when it comes to meeting customer expectations and desires. So when Antonella and Alex came to them hoping to have a specific project completed, President Tim Pesce says he knew he could make it happen.

"It is a common request from many clients—a shower that has no curb to step over," he says. "It works out quite nicely and easily in terms of someone aging in place, since they don't have to worry about that threshold. Plus, it's a cleaner look."

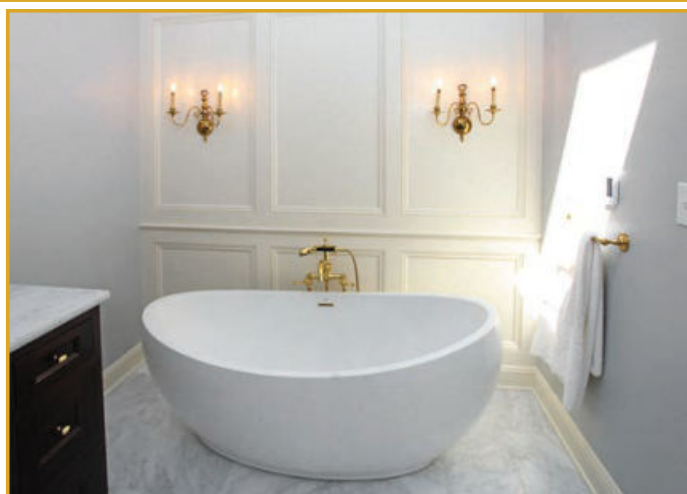
Pesce says additional consideration needs to be taken during installation so that water does not impact the bathroom floor outside the shower area. As it is something Beco has done numerous times, it is a design element Pesce is happy to incorporate for clients.

And so, it was with Pesce, and Beco, that Antonella and Alex began the process of creating the bathroom of their dreams. Antonella says she was happy Beco was able to work within their budget and accommodate the inevitable setbacks that happen with most home renovation projects.

"When it came time to order the tub, it turns out the one I wanted was special order, so it took a long time to come in," she explains. "Then, [the tub manufacturer] was closed around Christmas so the timeline was pushed back even further. But [Pesce] said, 'It's OK, we can still make it work, we just need to get the dimensions.'"

Antonella adds that not only is Pesce meticulous about his work, but the men who work with him on the renovations are as well.

"I trusted the workers so much," she says. "They were A-No. 1."



Pesce has been working on home renovation projects like the one for Antonella and Alex for 35 years. Though this specific project was a bathroom, he also works on kitchens and other upgrades around the home. He says one of the best parts about working with his clients on such projects is knowing the impact the completion of the project will have on their daily lives.

"The bathroom is usually the first room they're going to see in the morning and the last

one they're going to see at night," Pesce says. "The kitchen is pretty close to the last, or first, room they see as well. Knowing we can positively impact someone's life in a way to make them happier at the start of the day or at the end of the day, makes it all worth it."

Pesce says working with clients like Antonella and Alex, who knew what they wanted coming into the renovation, can make the job easier, but working with clients who basically come in with a blank slate can be just as rewarding.

"It's all about asking the right questions," he explains. "It's about finding out what and how the homeowners want to use the room."

"You don't have to come in feeling like you have to design the project," Pesce continues. "If you have things you want, that helps me with the design, but telling me, 'Look, my husband and I have to get ready for work at the same time each morning' or, conversely, 'My wife likes to sleep in while I get up to get the kids ready for school'—that is going to help me even more. We know the cabinetry limitations and designs, but we don't know what your daily routine is and knowing that can help us create a space that works for you."

With the completion of their bathroom renovation, though Antonella says she is not ready for another project any time soon, she would certainly be ready to work with Pesce and Beco again at any time.

"It was great working with [Pesce]," she says. "He was awesome. I would recommend him for other projects." **H&H**

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The More you Know

Planning a kitchen and bath remodel

BY DANIEL SEAN KAYE

There's a lot to keep straight when you're beginning a renovation. From budget to preferences to where to begin, this is a whole new world for many homeowners. That's why asking some questions of professionals is such a help. Their knowledge and experience can save you countless hours and tons of money. Here are some of our experts responding to questions about these major projects.

Q: *I want to hire a professional for my renovation but don't know where to begin. What are important things to be aware of when looking to hire someone?*

"When you're looking to hire a professional to redo the space, I suggest people focus on what I call 'the Five Ps:'

- **People:** Make sure you like them, that you feel they listen to you and that you can work with them.
- **Process:** Ask them, 'What's your start to finish plan? Who'll be the contact? Who'll get permits?'
- **Portfolio:** See if they've done projects like yours. Not just that they've done many kitchens but what sort of quality is the work?
- **Past clients:** You should be able to talk to those people to get their feedback and insight. And to see the projects the professional did for them.
- **Price:** Make sure they fit your budget. Free estimates can dupe you, and you'll find yourself saying, 'That wasn't included!' Approach it as if it's you, the customer, working WITH the firm versus a budget. Look for the firm that can do the most with your budget. Tell them your budget and ask, 'What can you do for us?'

NICK KORNEA, *Owner*
LUXURY BATH & KITCHENS
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LuxuryBathAndKitchens.com



Image courtesy of Amiano and Son Design-Build

Q: *My kitchen renovation hasn't gotten beyond the wishes phase but I know budget is really important. How do I know if I have the right budget for what I want?*

"For any renovation, what a client should consider first and be comfortable with is their budget. Cabinetry is really affected by budget—you can go with stock, semi-custom or custom lines and all have different ranges of costs. Stock might limit you on things like door styles. Choosing a unique door style or finish—or maybe adding special storage for things like cutlery—might be upgrades, but upgrading can be good. The best thing to do is to do your research. Look at what's out there in the market. Look into styles, colors, components. If you show your professional a backsplash or aspects of another job you like, it will help them better understand. They can work off your inspiration."

JOSEPH CLYMER, *Design-Build Specialist*
AMIANO & SON DESIGN-BUILD, LLC
 Southampton, N.J. | (609) 268-5923
AmianoAndSon.com

Q: *I am beginning a renovation and am not sure I am thinking right about where to begin. If I don't know what I want, how can the contractor?*

"When you work directly with customers, you need to find out what they want in their renovation. That's the main object. If clients seem vague, it's important to have some measurements, some idea of the budget and to know the things they might want, such as appliances. I suggest putting together a wish list, but to also tell the client that there are always trade-offs. If you want a 48-inch Wolf range, you might need to give up counter space in order to stay within budget. What's the most important thing to them? Is this their forever home? Have them look at magazines, Pinterest and online. They should ask themselves: Why do I like this? What do I not want? What draws my attention?"

MEREDITH SCOTT, *Lead Designer and Showroom Manager*
EAST COAST KITCHEN & BATH
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Image courtesy of East Coast Kitchen & Bath



Image courtesy of Kohler

Q: *What are some cool, new tech ideas I should know when it comes to my renovations?*

“The kitchen and bath industry has put a real emphasis on developing technology-forward products in the past couple of years to appeal to a new generation of home buyers and renters. New ways to interact with your kitchen faucet include touch activation, hands-free activation and even voice control. You can also activate shower presets by voice, or an app, or even ask your Alexa-enabled mirror what the weather forecast is while you’re getting ready. This trend ensures our kitchens and bathrooms won’t be left behind as our homes get smarter and smarter.”

JACK MONAHAN, *Manager*
WEINSTEIN’S BATH AND KITCHEN
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Q: *What are some sensible questions to ask myself when it comes to a kitchen renovation?*

“When taking on a major home renovation project like a kitchen or bathroom, there are a seemingly infinite number of factors that can go into the decisions. One area that doesn’t get talked about enough is the functionality of the kitchen. Unless you are immediately selling your home, this should be your main focus. Any designer worth their salt can design something that looks good.

“Most people aren’t just looking for a pretty kitchen. They want one that works in an efficient way given their situation and/or lifestyle. Beyond just the aesthetic look of the kitchen, does it give you that extra storage you wanted to avoid the clutter? Have we been able to increase your countertop space so that it makes cooking, and especially prepping to cook, easier and more efficient? Are the new doorways/openings in the best places to maximize the flow and movement in the kitchen? The questions only get more specific from there.

“The point is—make sure you go into this process with specific goals and identified areas you want to see improve. This is where the designer should be the most help. It is our job to think of the things you haven’t thought of and help implement the ones you find useful to you and your family.”

DARYL HOLCOMB, *General Manager*
HOLCOMB CABINETRY
 Claymont, Del. | (302) 478-5000
HolcombCabinetry.com



Image courtesy of Holcomb Cabinetry

Q: *I am excited by the potential of my kitchen renovation. Can you suggest one area to really think about, maybe one that most people don’t consider?*

“You can’t build a good kitchen without a good floor. You need a strong and attractive base to remodel on. It can be a good inspiration. A fifth wall, so to speak. Throughout the first floor, if you have all the same type of flooring (generally hardwood) it opens up the space. You can ease through the area. Having different floors in rooms really makes the spaces feel cut off from each other. Hardwood adds warmth. In kitchens it plays off wood cabinetry, as well as stone for countertops and backsplashes. And with the same flooring, you can change colors, furniture, etc., and still keep it all connected.”

CHRISSY SABOL, *Co-owner*
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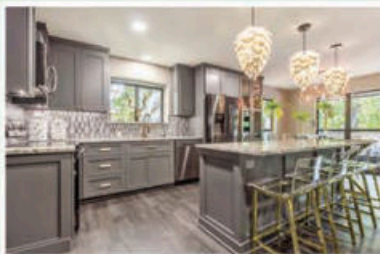


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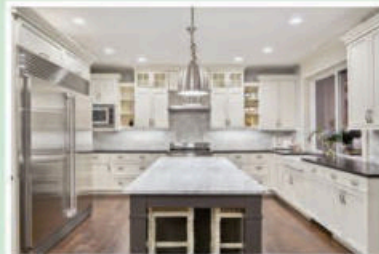
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Q: *I expect my bathroom renovation to give me everything I want. What is one thing that is outdated, that I know I do not want for the space?*



Image courtesy of Hometech Renovations

“For bathrooms, you want to be sure not to over or under design. This can start with your wish list and a professional can offer ideas on the perceived value of the items. For example, for a while master baths had large builder-grade tubs. But in all my years in the business I have put in maybe one or two of these as a new installation. People never use them. They take forever to fill. The water gets cold

quickly and there’s no easy way to clean them. So we look for real value of items and see that people want larger showers—a human car wash—with hand-held body sprays and digital controls that are like programming a water feature. You can add worthwhile amenities—storage seating, radiant heating, whatever truly adds to their enjoyment of the space.”

DAVE CERAMI, *Owner* | **HOMETECH RENOVATIONS**
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Q: *I don’t really have a vision for my kitchen renovation. I want to be open-minded to design ideas but still want the area to represent me and be functional. How do I know I’ll have the room for everything I want?*

“Space is a luxury in most kitchen designs, and convincing clients that they’ll have enough room for everything can be a challenge. Most clients are used to doing things a certain way and believe it’s the only way to get things done. By trusting a design professional and not dictating every detail of the kitchen, the creative process remains open and creative solutions that take into consideration a higher style tend to emerge (and not particularly at a higher budget). Our Sewell, N.J., client took a leap of faith by not surrounding her cooking area with upper cabinets. We were able to show her through measurements that she would gain storage with the design. She opted for an impressive tile focal point, putting the bulk of her storage into three pantry closets. Everyday plates and glasses sit right next to the sink, along with a garage area for the coffee maker and toaster. The result is a wide-open kitchen with high design, plenty of storage and exactly in the budget dictated.”

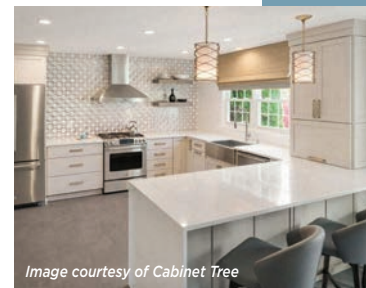


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By Lindsey Getz



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RECENT RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT “SMART HOME” TECHNOLOGY IS TAKING OVER—and it’s really no surprise. Technology makes our lives easier in so many areas—from banking and billing, to making purchases and even everyday driving—there’s no reason why we wouldn’t want to incorporate more technology into our homes for the same reasons. With smart home technology, homeowners are finding that life at home is more convenient and more comfortable. Today’s connected homes have everything from automated lighting to automated thermostat controls and more.





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I feel the benefit of installing a smart thermostat is that you are able to monitor your HVAC system via WiFi connection.

— George Watts,
C&C Heating & Air Conditioning

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Potential Uses

“This past year we have installed a lot of multi-room music systems, lighting automation and whole-house WiFi systems,” says Scott Leonard, owner of Valley Automation, which specializes in system integration for smart home technology. “There are a lot of frustrated homeowners who can’t use their phone or iPad in certain areas of their home. So, making sure there is good coverage throughout the house is an important aspect of home technology.”

Leonard says that some other home technology items they’ve been installing for homeowners are smart TVs and surround sound systems, handheld remotes, automated window shades, smart thermostats and door locks. Homeowners are looking for ease-of-use when it comes to these types of products.

“Home automation can make life easier—from keeping an eye on your home when you are not there to playing your favorite music when you walk in the door,” says Leonard. “Home automation can do things for you that you won’t have to think about anymore. For example, setting the lighting levels for entertaining, instead of adjusting each dimmer to the

right setting each time, can be programmed and recalled anytime with just one touch of a button.”

While everyone can benefit from these types of technologies, those who are looking to “age in place” and stay in their homes as they get older are also finding great benefit from what smart homes have to offer.

“Home automation, especially voice control, can be really helpful for homeowners who have challenges moving around the home, unlocking the door, adjusting the lighting or connecting with loved ones,” adds Leonard. “Voice control probably has the greatest potential for homeowners going forward.”

Smart Thermostats

Homeowners are also loving the smart thermostat options that are out there. Nick Van Horn of Binsky Home Service says that there is a rising tier of options, some more complex and more capable than others. While there’s the ecobee, which is a more affordable option, there are other options, such as Nest, which are capable of doing more.

“One of the top-tier options is the Lennox thermostat,” explains Van Horn. “While Nest will notice that something is wrong and alert you there’s a problem, it won’t diagnose. But Lennox will note that something is wrong, email us and alert

you where the failure is.”

Van Horn also likes the allergy setting on the Lennox.

“If there is someone in the house who suffers from allergies, this is a great feature,” he says.

According to Lennox’s website, its “Allergen Defender feature” monitors your home’s air quality automatically. When it detects poor air quality caused by high levels of allergens, the system will increase fan speed to create more filtration, so you get cleaner and healthier indoor air.

Automatic controls are also a welcomed feature. Van Horn says that most people assume these are set only by time, but they can also be set by location.

“You can set up an area—perhaps five miles from home—where when you cross that range, your AC or heating will automatically start up,” Van Horn explains. “By the time you get home, it’s right where you want it. Most people think you can only set a time but since people come home at different times, this isn’t as useful. Setting it up based on location makes sure the timing is just right.”

Remote monitoring of the temperature of your home is beneficial for so many reasons. George Watts, service manager for C&C Heating & Air Conditioning, says that his clients love the ability to “check in” on their home, even when they’re not there.



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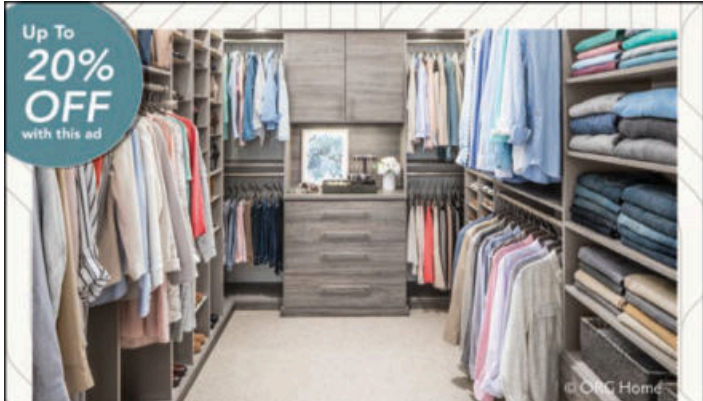
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"I feel the benefit of installing a smart thermostat is that you are able to monitor your HVAC system via WiFi connection," he says. "You can adjust temperature settings remotely and even verify if your heat and/or air conditioning system is working while you are at work or on vacation. This capability is especially important to the 'snowbirds' that fly south to enjoy warmer weather during the winter months."

Watts adds that most smart thermostats offer seven-day programming with four options per day. And some even come with a remote sensor to help balance out areas of the home that may be too cold or too warm. Homeowners who decide to go this route may be pleasantly surprised by the savings—not just long-term, but some instantaneous.

"You may be eligible for a rebate from your utility company for installing an energy saver thermostat," advises Watts. "Check with your electrical supplier for details."

Return on Investment vs. Return on Enjoyment

At the end of the day, incorporating smart home technology into your house is not just about saving money, it's about making life easier. That

may make the "return on enjoyment"—that is, how much you enjoy your home—even better than the literal return on investment.

"Home automation's return on investment is not something you can really calculate," says Valley Automation's Leonard. "Sure, you will save energy by dimming lights or adjusting the thermostat. But you can't really put a price tag on comfort, convenience and ambiance—and on the way that smart home technology improves your overall quality of life."

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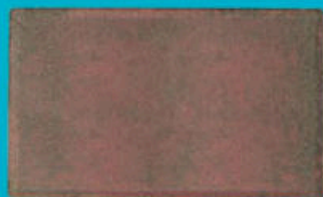
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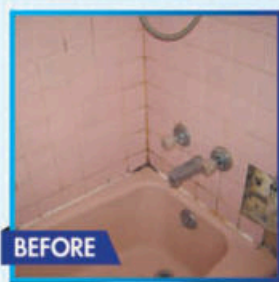


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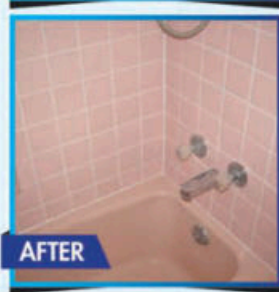


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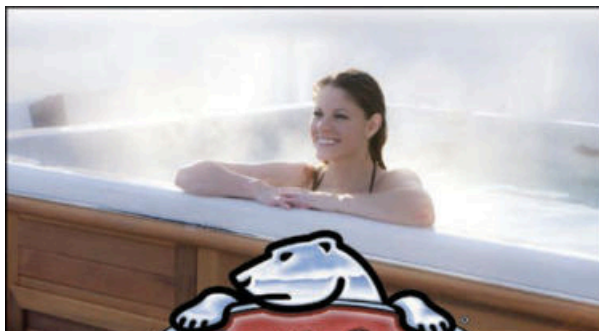
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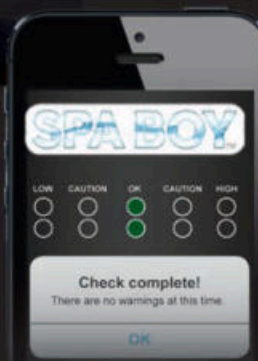


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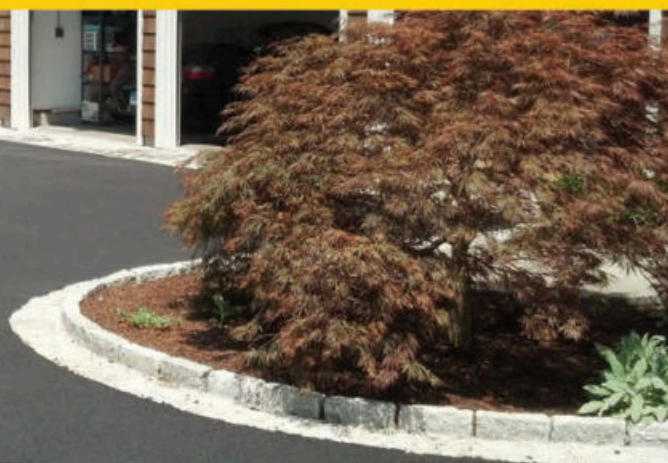
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How Colonial Marble & Granite has become a household name.

Imagine standing in your brand-new kitchen—sipping on your morning coffee or enjoying a little evening snack as you take in the beauty of your gorgeous countertops, the elegance of your new kitchen cabinets, and the sleek look of your new tile floor. If you’ve been dreaming of this space for a long time, you can probably picture it in your mind. But now you can do more than just imagine it. With Colonial Marble & Granite’s Kitchen Visualizer tool, you can virtually build the space on your computer—all from the comfort of your own home (or one of Colonial’s locations if you’re there browsing materials). You’ll not only see how it can all come together, but also get a quote for how much it’s going to cost. It’s a tool that can help make your dream kitchen a reality.

The Kitchen Visualizer is just one of many ways in which Colonial—a family-owned business that opened its doors in 2008—has continued to offer its clients world-class customer service. Keeping the customer at the center of the company’s rapid growth has left them constantly innovating and looking for ways to fully meet their customers’ needs. There’s no question that this “customer-centered growth” has been a key to their success.

A One-Stop Provider

Beyond this technology, Colonial—a full-service supplier of natural stone and quartz materials—is also continuing to offer its customers the best by being a truly one-stop provider for all home (and commercial) renovation needs. With a slab yard with more than 5,000 slabs in over 500 different colors, there’s truly something for everyone. Colonial also offers tile, sinks and faucets.

In terms of what’s popular right now, James Freeman, Colonial’s chief operating officer, says that quartz continues to be trending upward. However, with such a vast selection of stone materials including granite, marble, onyx, quartz, quartzite, travertine and more, there’s something for every taste, style and budget.

“We are proud to offer an extensive showroom that gives our customers the wide selection that they want access to,” Freeman says. “However, we also understand that a choice this big can be overwhelming, which is why our designers are available to guide our customers in

“How we can best meet our customers’ wants and needs continues to be at the heart of all of Colonial’s expansion and growth.”

—James Freeman, Colonial’s chief operating officer



making a selection that they'll love. We want every aspect of the process to be both easy and enjoyable for the customer."

A Demand to Expand

As Colonial has continued to become a household name, there's been a growing demand for the company to offer even more services. That's why the Colonial brand has now expanded to include Colonial Home Services. Under this umbrella is Colonial Generators and Colonial Smart Home Services, giving customers access to the same top-notch customer service they've come to count on for more of their needs.

While Colonial Smart Home Services handles upgrading homes with more smart controls, Colonial Generators is a leading emergency generator installation company that has simplified the process of purchasing, designing, installing and monitoring standby backup power systems.

On top of expanding the company's service offerings, Colonial has also grown regionally by adding new locations. This has increased access of Colonial's services by customers who were otherwise driving quite far to be able to work with the company.

"It became obvious that we were getting

A Company that Cares

It's no doubt that Colonial has grown its business by being a company that cares about its customers. But Colonial is also a company that cares about the community. They believe strongly in giving back to the local areas that have so wholeheartedly supported them over the years. As a result, they are devoted to a number of local and national causes. For instance, they have focused a lot of attention on raising funding for childhood cancer research and have maintained a strong partnership with Alex's Lemonade Stand. Colonial also supports the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

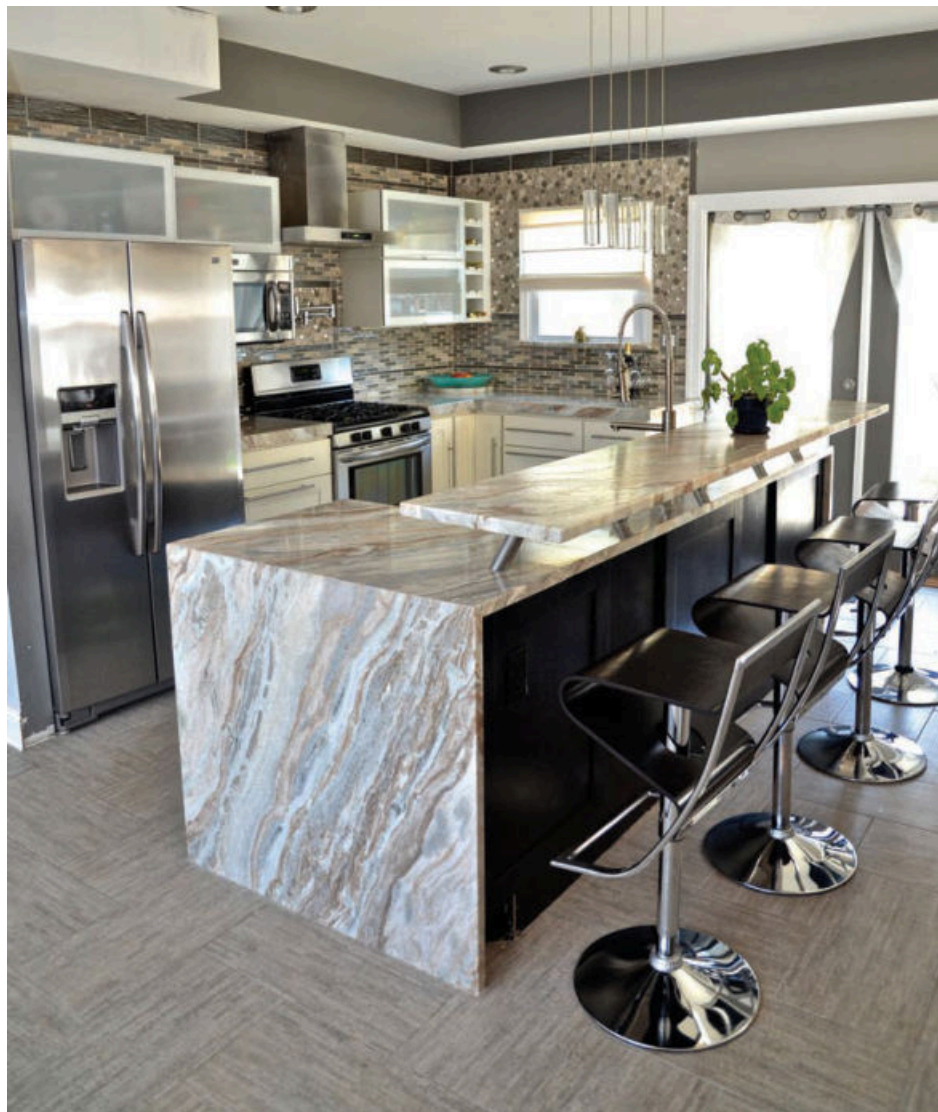
On top of that, Colonial recently hosted its annual Charity Golf Outing and raised more than \$100,000 to support Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Upper Darby.

"We've always believed in giving back," says Freeman, "and our growth has made it even more possible to do more for the causes we believe in."

Colonial is also an avid supporter of local sports and a proud sponsor of the Temple Owls, Philadelphia Flyers, Philadelphia Union, Philadelphia Sixers, and more.

As the company continues to undoubtedly grow, Freeman says that their commitments to the customer and to the community at large will remain unwavering.

"We recognize that it's our customers who have helped us get this far and that's why we'll continue to look out for them," Freeman says. "We're proud to be thought of as a company that makes the customer our top priority." **H&H**



"How we can best meet our customers' wants and needs continues to be at the heart of all of Colonial's expansion and growth," says Freeman. "With the growing demand for the installation of smart home applications like Nest, there's been interest from our customers in having those services performed by a brand they've already come to know and trust which is why we've expanded into smart home services."

quite a few out-of-state customers who were driving a couple of hours or more to one of our showrooms," says Freeman. "Our flagship King of Prussia location remains our largest showroom but we've grown to include showrooms in Center City Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and New Castle, Delaware. With four locations we're now more accessible to New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Metro New York."

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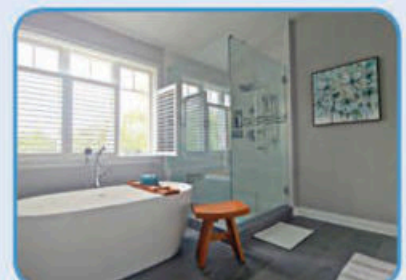
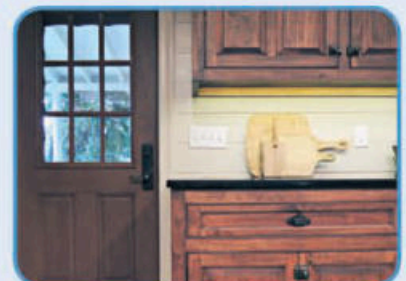


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