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Volume 23, Issue 12



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INSIDE:
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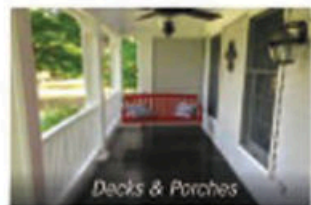
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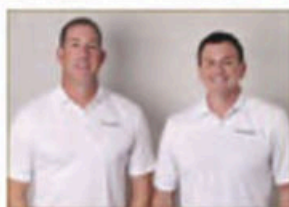
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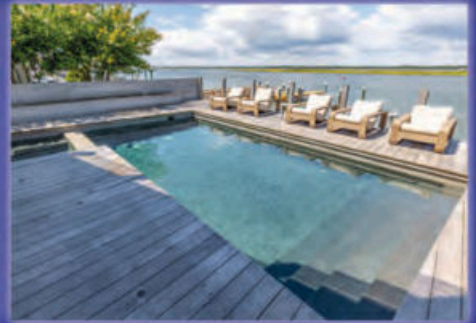
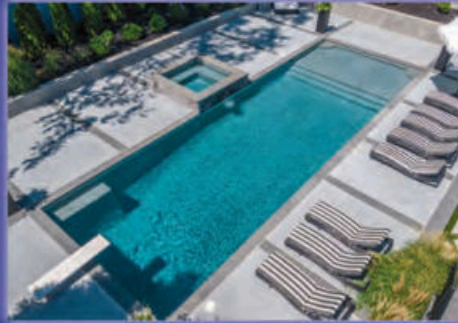
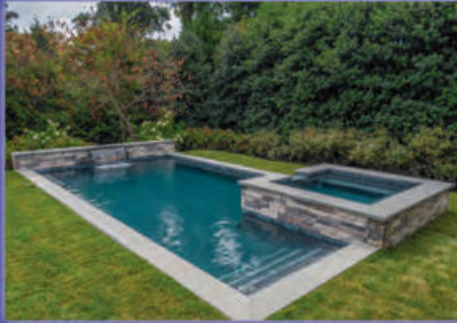
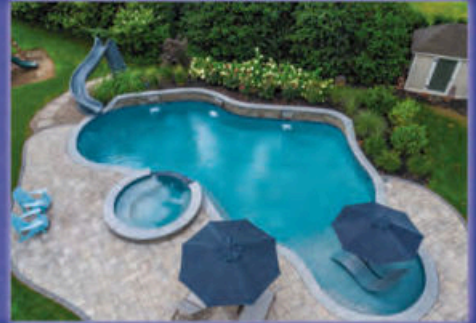
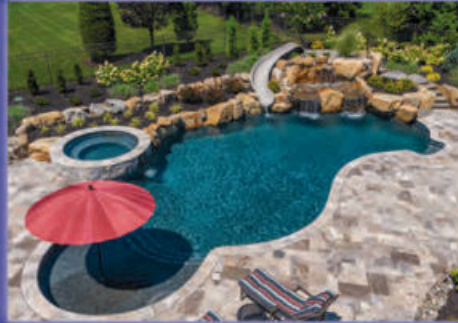
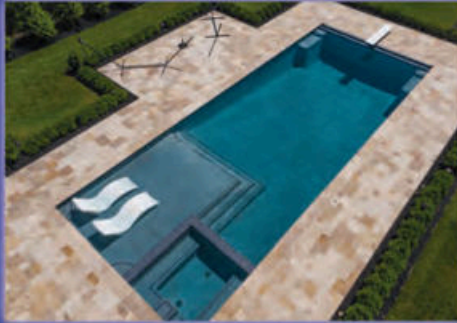
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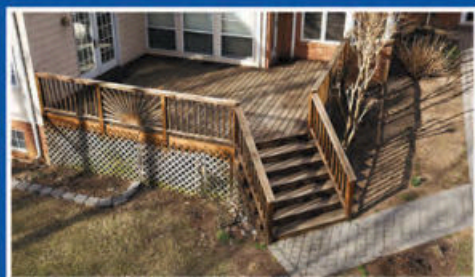


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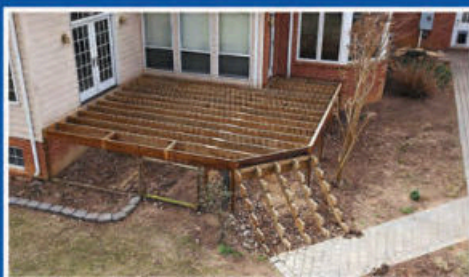
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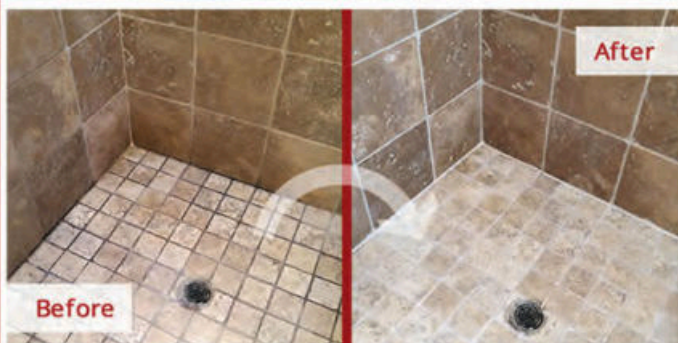
Home improvement industry experts clue us in to what's hot right now

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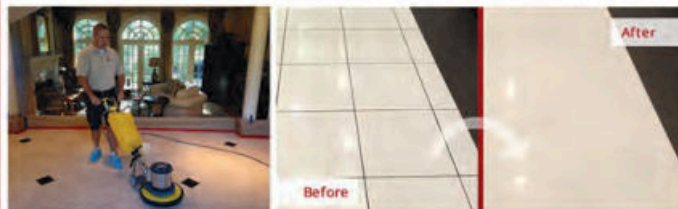
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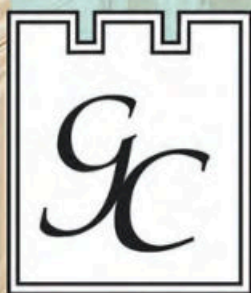
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A Matter of Trust

When it comes to finding the right contractor for the job, **Emmons Remodeling** offers clients both expertise and peace of mind.

When you need work done on your home—expected or not—you want to know that you can trust the contractor you’ve hired to get the job done well. After all, you’re not an expert on what’s involved in services like roofing, siding or windows, and you don’t want to get taken advantage of as a result. Because of that, it’s important to choose a company that you can feel confident is reputable.

But how exactly do you know a company can be trusted?

One important factor in choosing the best contractor is longevity. Only a company that performs great work is going to be able to stick around for the long haul. That’s exactly the case with Emmons Remodeling, a company that has been offering expert care for South Jersey and the Jersey Shore area since 1996. They are a well-known name in the region—and for good reason. Their success was built upon a reputation of honesty, integrity and good work.

In fact, the company is an Owens Corning Platinum Preferred Contractor. That’s not a designation that any old company can have. Platinum Preferred Contractors are in the top tier of a premier network of roofing professionals. In order to achieve this title, they must have passed a workmanship inspection, been professionally screened for financial stability and customer service, and continue to adhere to stringent guidelines set forth by Owens Corning. Fewer than 1% of roofing contractors in the United States are Owens Corning Platinum Preferred.

“It’s a title that backs up our already strong reputation,” says Stephanie Kelly, co-owner of the company along with her husband Matthew. “Only the most reputable companies are able to earn that designation.”

Besides being able to feel confident that you’ve hired a contractor you can trust, this designation benefits homeowners in a more tangible way as well. That’s because Platinum Preferred Contractors are able to offer 50-year warranties on their work—much longer than other companies can offer. According to Owens Corning’s website, “because we stand behind these warranties, we need to make sure that we are backing up the best roofers in the business.”

Protect Yourself Against Storm Chasers

Unfortunately, when it comes to contractors for roofing, siding and windows, there are a lot of fly-by-night companies out there and it’s important for homeowners to protect themselves. In the business, many of these companies are called “storm chasers.” They follow severe weather from area to area, knowing that there will be a lot of work.

They typically have no community roots and therefore no knowledge of local building codes. Their “rush job” often has shoddy work, and since they typically leave the area in chase of the next storm, they can’t be reached when there are problems.

How can you spot a storm chaser? Stephanie says it’s critical to be wary of contractors who may not have a physical office—again, an indicator that they may

be a fly-by-night company. They’ll do the work poorly and then disappear, leaving you with problems.

“We are a local small business in Williamstown with real people answering the phones—not an answering service,” Matthew says. “We don’t work out of a house and we do not have a ‘virtual office.’ Be wary of contractors that will not provide you with a physical address but instead only have a P.O. Box or suite number and only use an answering service.”

Some of the worst storm chasers don’t even carry the proper insurance and are therefore putting you at risk.

“We are fully insured and also carry liability insurance, which is required for roofing operations,” Matthew says. “But many contractors carry cheaper insurance that does not include liability insurance, leaving you, the homeowner, liable if a worker is injured while working on your roof. Make sure the insurance certificate sent to you by your contractor’s insurance agency specifically includes liability insurance.”

Choosing Wisely

At the end of the day, your choice in roofing, siding and window contractors can be the difference between good, quality work—and a big headache. Stephanie says that the last thing Emmons wants to see is people in their local community get taken advantage of by unscrupulous roofing, siding and window contractors.

“You should be able to feel confident that you’ve chosen a contractor that you can trust—not one that is going to leave you with problems to fix after they’ve gone,” she says. “At Emmons, you are not only investing in a new roof, new siding or new windows—you’re investing in peace of mind.” **H&H**

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Timeless Modernization

by Carly Murray

While advancements in home improvement progress rapidly with each year, the trends of today are reminiscent of classic aesthetics revitalized with a contemporary flair.





With the influx of home improvement television shows, products and services in the past decade, homeowners have subsequently elevated standards—from the latest technology to fine-tuned details, to customization options that make a space simultaneously coordinated and one-of-a-kind. Local renovation professionals who specialize in different niches and have cultivated specialties within their expertise regularly observe the latest trends, and *House & Home* spoke with a few to gauge the latest and most popular in home renovation.

Trends in the Industry

It has been noted time and again that the pandemic resulted in more do-it-yourself home improvement projects. With an indeterminate amount of time spent indoors to take up a new hobby or to watch hours of renovation videos and shows, people became overnight experts with ambitions that heavily outweighed the capability of an untrained, solo non-professional. Now that the days of zero-contact are limited, industry professionals are eager to actually achieve that once-abandoned project—up to the standards envisioned. That's not to say that it isn't a highly collaborative effort between a client and a professional: After all, additions or changes to a home come with an expectation of longevity, for the residents of a home to look at on an everyday basis. Cecelia Mullen, the owner of Upstyle Chique, began her company with a focus on stone and brick for home exteriors and interiors.

“People are opting for stain, especially for exteriors. The reason being that stain is a mineral-based product and it calcifies with the exterior, brick or any type of masonry,” she explains. “It's increased because the likes of HGTV are promoting it and are using it more, so people are becoming more knowledgeable.”

While customers are thoroughly aware of their idealized finished product, they also have service expectations newly aligned with a both fast-paced and cautious society, which area professionals have noticed and strive to accommodate. Remaining conscious of the comfortability of a client alongside the renovation services and product demands appear to have invaluable results.

“[A client] really built a really nice relationship with the guys, because we were

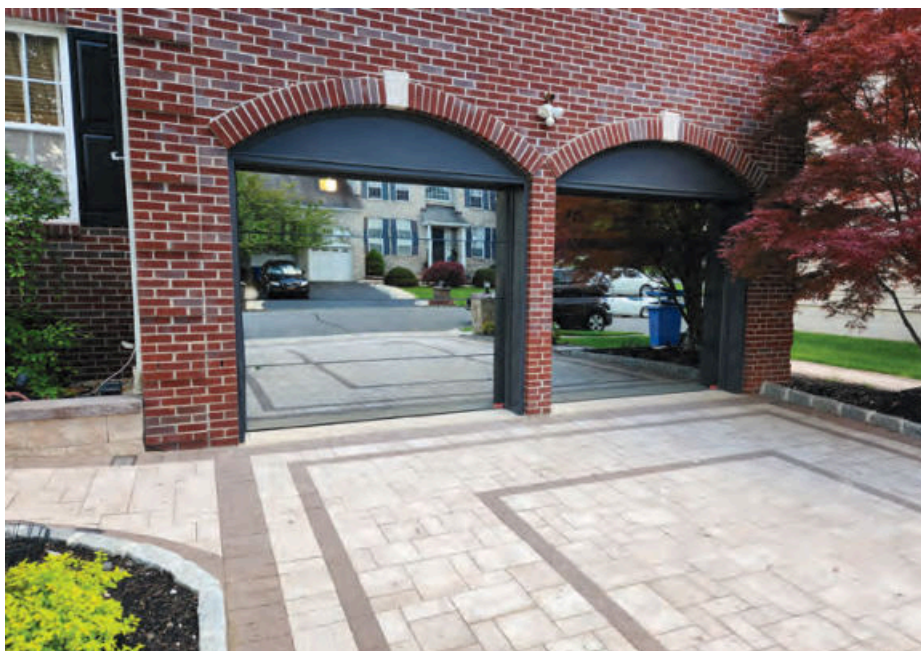
Timeless Modernization

there for four or five weeks doing this extensive project and when it came time to leave, I was speaking with her on the phone on the last day of the project and she actually got teary ... she was crying and hugging them when they left. She really enjoyed having them in their home. She was very concerned, as most people are, about 'The men that are coming to my home. Are they conscientious? Are they respectful? Can I trust them? Do they really know what they are doing? Do they have my best interest in heart?' All the things that every customer is concerned about," says Mark Ollivier, design sales manager at Home Trimwork. "When she realized that we are who we say we are and the men that were in her home are really looking out for her best interest and tweaking things along the way, she started to share more about her style."

With all of the options available for companies that specialize in home improvement nowadays, trustworthiness is often one of the most vital assets in making that choice.

Trends in Aesthetics

While industry processes and standards evolve with time, classic colors and styles still dominate the world of interior design. In the context of the beautiful historical architecture characteristic of the region, many homeowners are opting for a similar effect on both the inside and the outside of their house. In a landscape that can so quickly vary from farmland, to oceanside, to metropolitan in one drive, the home designs throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware are a stunning sight to behold.



"We're kind of in the country here, so we still have a bit more rustic style. We do sell some more modern looks as well, but the country-rustic look is still there. And then colors, we see people moving away from the grays and getting back into more beiges," says Elmer Stoltzfus, owner of Heritage Floors.

"Unfortunately, the size of the houses in Pennsylvania are a lot more colonial, so the modern designs don't fit into the design of the house," says Imraan Omar, owner of Door King.

Regional considerations also have an impact in the sense of neighborhood community amalgamation for exteriors. Often, homeowners will consider the resale value and marketability of any changes made to their property.

"A lot of houses are in gated communities, small communities where most of the garage doors look the same," Omar continues.

Therefore, the most commonly seen colors are neutrals modernized by sharp lines and contrasts. If a bolder color is utilized, it is often a shade of blue or green.

"We're definitely doing a lot of cellular honeycombs, Roman shades, more into the warmer grays like your taupes, and those sorts of colors," says Stella Zaffino, showroom manager at Blind Builders. "The color has changed: We started with the warm earth tones and then we went into the grays and the cool tones, and we're seeing more of those earthy taupes, greens, those sort of colors come out now."

Trends in the Process

In harmony with the expectations of streamlined planning and service is the inclusion of a digital design tool for many companies to showcase their abilities in advance, especially as nearly everything in the modern world is technology-driven. This is also something that has become standardized because of models of home improvement in popular culture, once shown only on television but now widely available. Once a consultation is finalized, it's extremely rare that clients stray from the plan. And with high inflation on a majority of Americans' minds, people expect to stick to a budgetary estimate, too.

"People come out of [a virtual consultation] knowing exactly what it's going to look like, exactly what it's going to cost. Yes, it does take the face-to-face, eye-to-eye out of the equation, but ... people want answers now," explains Ollivier, who has been working with the evolutions of virtual planning technology for 12 years. "I don't play the game of getting somebody all fired up on





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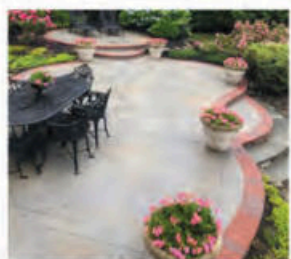
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something so that I can hit them over the head with an \$80,000 number, trying to convince them that it's what they need. I let them know, 'This is the range you're looking at' before we start really getting details."

Despite visual trends appearing to remain evergreen, there has been an increase in homeowners expressing their creativity by transforming rarely used areas or spare rooms. Common projects are home offices and in-law suites, but professionals have also seen workout rooms, rooms for pets and even bars. As residents are eager to make productive use out of all the space their homes have to offer, they also want these installations to be long-lasting. For example, topcoats can be a vital finishing touch to keep floors safe and resistant to damage.

"We're seeing more and more exterior jobs, patios and porches," says Joseph Paul, president of Apex Concrete Coating Solutions.

Protecting floors from scratches and dents is a consideration in the planning process by choosing the right material for one's particular lifestyle and expectations.

"The luxury vinyl plank is very popular because it's very durable, very scratch resistant; it holds up well against pets, families, spills, that kind of thing," says Stoltzfus.

And those considerations are applicable to all areas of the home. With the plethora of options, decisions can truly be catered to a variety of accommodations.

"Shade is going to provide better room darkening than, necessarily, a blind—but we're doing more slatted blinds in living room areas where you can allow more light in without giving up privacy," explains Zaffino.

Experimenting with different products during planning phases can truly achieve an idealized result. It's all about being transparent with one's needs and desires with a knowledgeable professional. **H&H**



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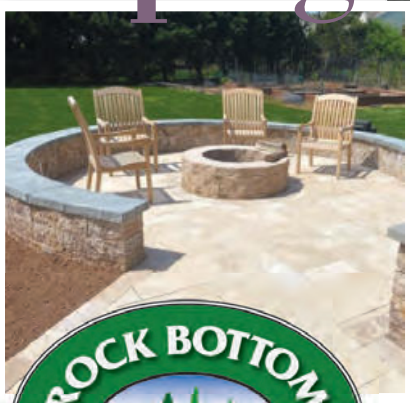
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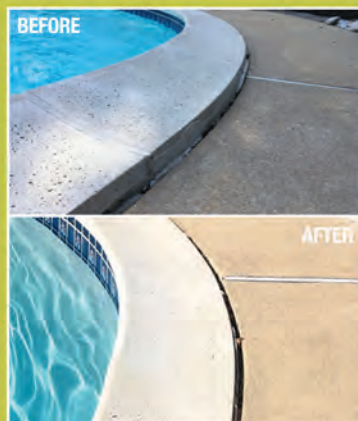
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