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DelChester/Main Line West

Your #1 Resource and Design Magazine

Volume 23, Issue 9


# Imperial Marble & Granite

Providing dedicated customer service and exclusive products to more Pennsylvania homeowners *page 11*

## *Great Garages*

*There's no shortage of ways to transform the space*

## *Inside: The 2023 Annual Resource Directory*

*The most comprehensive collection of local home improvement companies* page 12

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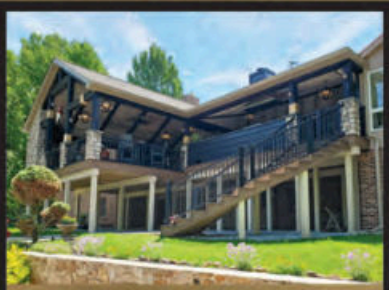
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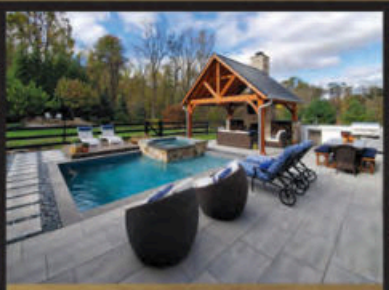
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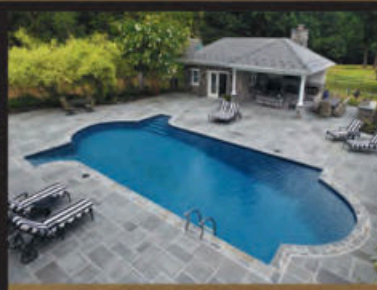
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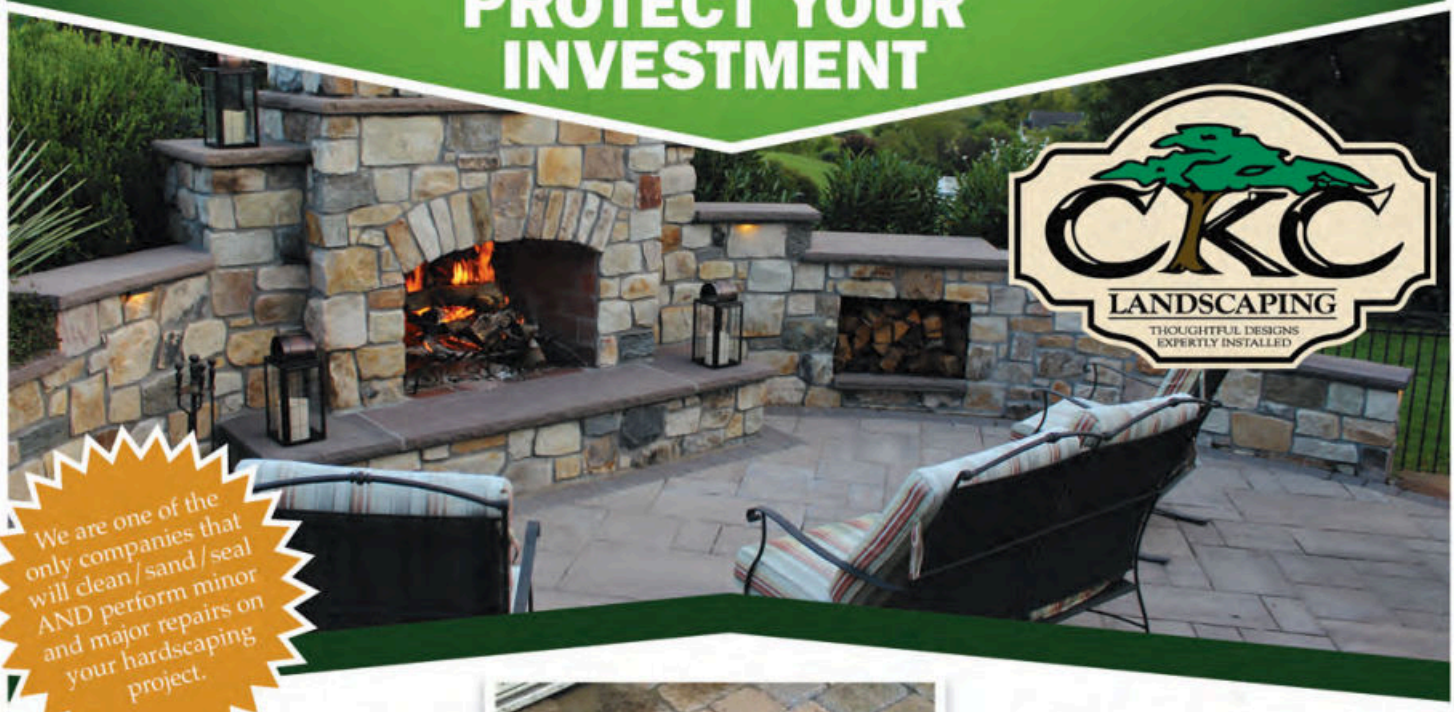
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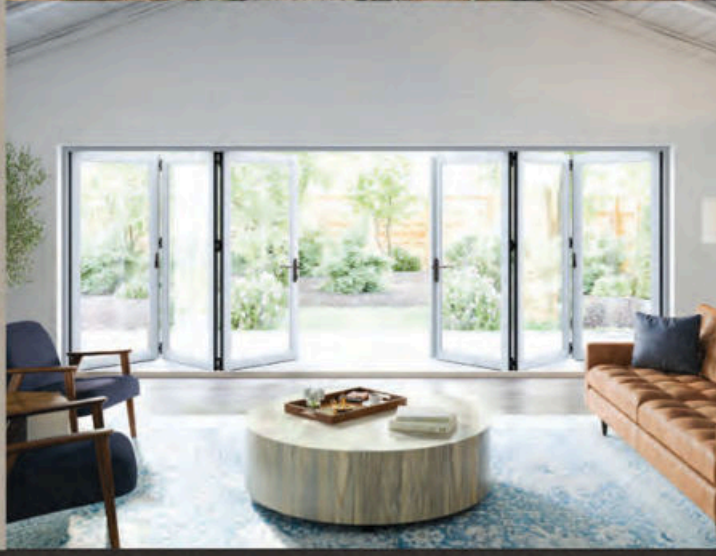
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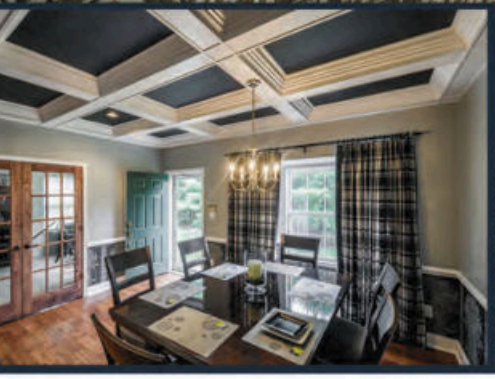


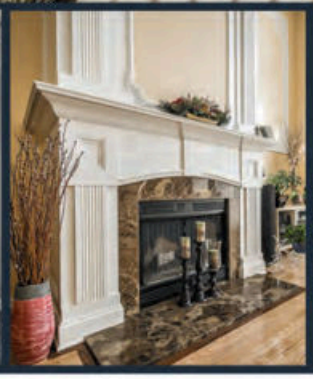
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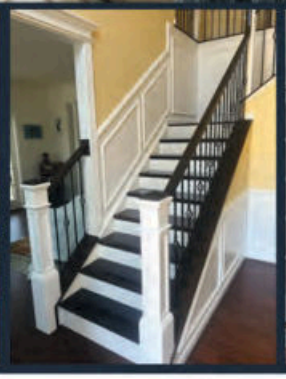
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# Just a Stone's Throw Away

Debuting a West Chester showroom earlier this year has helped **Imperial Marble & Granite** bring its dedicated customer service and exclusive products to even more Pennsylvania homeowners. *by* **Madeleine Maccar**

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Since 2004, Imperial Marble & Granite has been working with clients from all over eastern Pennsylvania to design, fabricate and install uniquely stunning natural stone and quartz furnishings, from residential kitchens and bathrooms to retail establishments' reception spaces and dining areas.

But owner Albert Kzelian noticed a worrisome decline in clients from Exton, Malvern, King of Prussia, West Chester and other areas for whom Imperial's Essington location was just a little too far away.

So, just like with every job Imperial puts its name on, Kzelian came up with a solution that prioritizes his customers' needs: establishing a showroom closer to them.

"I said, 'OK, if you guys don't want to come to us, we'll come to you,'" he begins. "An opportunity came up at this location in West Chester and I could not resist. We built a 4,000-square-foot, beautiful showroom, and it's right on West Chester Pike."

The result was a wide-open, thoughtfully designed space. Open since April, that West Chester showroom is already a resoundingly well-received success.

One of the most striking features of the Imperial showroom is that there are no tiny samples trying to approximate the full extent of all the colors and natural beauty that exist in one piece of marble or granite: The entire slab is available for client scrutiny, which Kzelian says is crucial in helping them fully assess a stone they're considering for their home.

"The sample certainly doesn't justify what the slab looks like," he explains. "The slabs have so many variations that a sample that's just six or 12 inches isn't going to tell you about the entire piece because that piece has gold, gray, white, beige, all these different colors that a sample can't show you. So when the customer sees the whole entire piece, they're like, 'Oh my God, this is beautiful!' or 'Wow, this is not what I was expecting, it's too busy.'"

But the showroom, Kzelian points out, "is not just for countertops." It's also where you can find an array of ceramic and marble tile, vanities, faucets and sinks, knobs, kitchen cabinetry, lighting and even sound systems. Imperial also outsources appliances so "we can give everything to the customer looking for a complete kitchen."

"We have a variety of different things," Kzelian says. "A homeowner could come in and purchase pretty much everything for every room all at once."

The Imperial team stays on top of current trends and client-demographic preferences—Kzelian notes that customers under 40 tend to gravitate to the manmade quartz but those 40 and older still prefer more natural stone like granite and marble, while neutral colors are staging a comeback in demand across the board—that guide their offerings.

And for much of those in-stock options, Kzelian adds that Imperial is the only place in the state where they can be purchased. "There are specific products or colors that we're the exclusive dealers of in Pennsylvania. Nobody else carries them or has them."

While the West Chester showroom gives clients a chance to get an up-close, hands-on look at all the pieces Imperial has in stock, one of the biggest advantages to them is the cost savings that comes with making a purchase directly with Imperial.

But what really differentiates Imperial from the rest is the kind of dedicated, attentive client support that drove Kzelian to open up a showroom to better assist his customers in the first place.

"Customer service is No. 1, No. 2 is craftsmanship and No.3—which is the most important thing—is turnaround," he says. "From template to install, it's a 10-day turnaround.We have the technology and machinery to back us up. Everything is done by digital measurements and laser measurements, so that helps us make things more precise and accurate."




It is that determination to deliver high-quality, skilled and minimally intrusive work to clients that Kzelian believes will ensure that Imperial keeps growing so it can keep finding new ways to ensure all their clients' needs are met.

"We started out in 2004 with six employees and now have 43," says Kzelian. "Our second location is helping us to continue helping clients with a warehouse experience that has all the beautiful lights and design of a showroom." H&H

Nina Lea Photography

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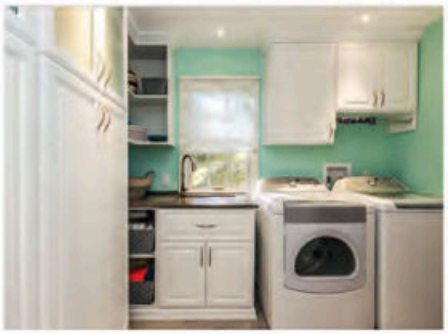
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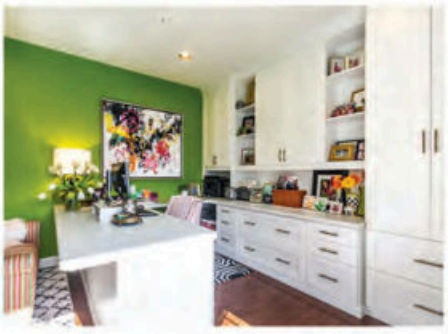
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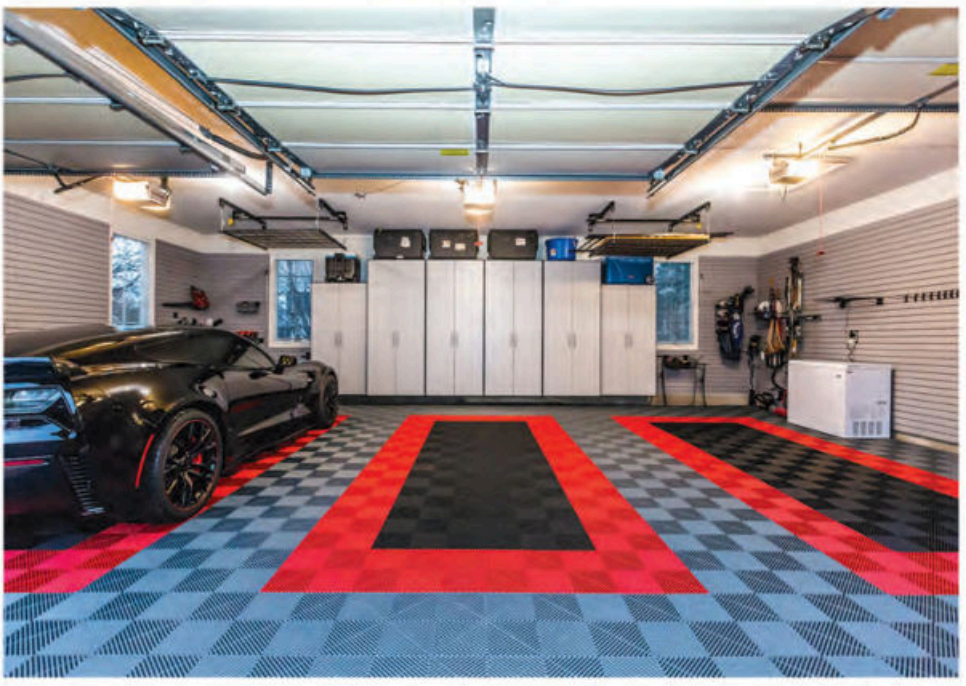
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# REVOLUTIONIZING

**Garages can often be the dirtiest parts of a living space,** as well as the most neglected. Many people use their garages for storage, and sometimes reorganizing can seem like too much of an undertaking. This is exponentiated by dirt tracked in from vehicles or shoes, which inevitably causes the flooring to deteriorate. Ultimately, a garage's utility and appearance are just as necessary as any other type of home renovation—especially when walking through it cannot be avoided.

Transforming a garage can result in numerous finished products: from storage spaces with streamlined organization systems, to an additional room that functions as a living space, or even just creating enough room to park vehicles. Whether one envisions a new workout room, or a man-cave makeover to invite friends over to watch a game, local experts are there to provide services from top to bottom. As an added perk, a renovated garage can increase a property's value.

In speaking with garage makeover professionals, the two most common problems that people experience with their garages are flooring that is too difficult to clean, and clutter. They all agree that the before-and-

When renovating a house, **one of the most neglected areas is the garage**—yet, it is often a high traffic area—used as an entryway and an exit that is walked through multiple times a day. Thankfully, local companies are here to help turn a garage from an eyesore into another space that **feels like home.**



# YOUR GARAGE

BY CARLY MURRAY

after transformation results in an awe-struck customer.

"They're pretty excited, which is surprising. It's a garage, right? They're delighted that the main house is clean because people aren't tracking all the dirt from the garage in the house," says Reid Murray, owner and president of Floorguard.

The main priority in seeking a renovated garage floor is its durability, as traditional gray is generally the customer's color preference. Furthermore, any patterns are typically subtle. For those who want a bold statement for the first impression of their home, there are options for blue, black, red and even glitter embellishments. Straying from the conventional is rare when it comes to garage design, but it's exciting to know the extent of customization that can be achieved to convert an ideal vision into a reality. Though appearance is important when considering a garage renovation, it is not the only element for which to account.

Especially in a home with children, garages contain many potential hazards. Flooring with a sealant will be more visually appealing, and it is safer and less likely to cause slipping. According to experts, the traditionally considered epoxy is losing traction for garage flooring. Additionally, since the pandemic, the price of epoxy has increased.

"Epoxy is very hard, but it does not have much flexibility. Therefore, with the concrete movement in garages from temperature change, the concrete will move slightly with the temperature change and this could cause epoxy to crack since the epoxy is not flexible—and another reason for using the polyaspartic versus the epoxy is it has a better heat threshold, which means it won't melt or peel from the hot tars. And last of all, epoxy is not UV-stable which means with direct sunlight, it will start to yellow or fade. … Polyaspartic is totally UV-stable, which means it will not fade from direct sunlight," says David Smucker, owner of Duramax Concrete Coatings.

"The texture from the flakes gives it a natural slip resistance. And we can also add to that with an additive in the top coat, which gives it more of a sandpaper feel. So

# REVOLUTIONIZING YOUR GARAGE

we can very much control the final texture as far as slip resistance," he adds.

As an alternative product to epoxy, Joseph Paul, president of Apex Concrete Coating Solutions, recommends "the combination of the polyurea base and the polyaspartic top that really sets us apart from most of our other competitors. It's the best combination of garage flooring currently on the market."

Murray says the installations at Floorguard also contain a polyaspartic topcoat with textured flakes.

"People are delighted with the product. I like to say it's all about us, but the product and material, which—we make our own chemicals, and we make them in the United States and we've been doing it for 30 years—but the product is great. The finished product is really terrific," he says.

There's no excuse to delay getting started when using the right materials. According to Paul, "We're not hampered by cold temperatures or extremely high temperatures for installation. We do work all year round. Air temperature can be a big issue with the epoxies."

Once a company is selected and an inquiry is made, a garage can be modified with minimal stress on the customer's end. Professionals are available from start to finish, taking care of each necessary step. "We go in and measure the garage, see what they're looking for, create a design and then we proceed from there," says Aaron Lewis, owner of Closets For Less.

"We handle it from start to finish, we've got a network of outside sales reps who are designers that meet with the potential customer, consult them on their needs and their wants with the design, and then sketch it out and use their experience and our product portfolio to best use the space to accommodate the goals of the storage area," says Dave Schaefer, general manager of Innovative Closet Designs.

And with the perfect storage solution, tripping on clutter can be avoided, too. For further safety, it can also prevent clutter from collapsing or creating an avalanche. Organized storage options come a variety of ways, and different lifestyles call for a unique choice for each household. One would be amazed at how a compatible storage system can completely condense disorder into newly available space.

"Lately, everyone wants to have a nice floor and they want to get organization systems. Some customers want cabinets to have everything enclosed. Some customers don't mind having shelving, or they actually prefer having shelving so they can see everything," says Lenny Kelman, owner of Dream Garage Remodeling, Co.

Storage systems can be functional, trendy and even protected—meaning locks can be added to ensure security. Whether protecting valuable items from theft or keeping items like power tools and chemicals out of the reach of children, there is a storage solution for each customer's needs.

"We have the ability to give people what they want. … We can offer cabinets, slatwall, the door-front Monkey Bar shelving and overhead storage. So basically, everything that you may think of that you may want for a storage purpose … in most cases, it's a combination of things," Kelman continues.

Perhaps reorganizing can allow for a perfect workshop, with all of the tools in a designated place and easily accessible. Maybe a garage's makeover into a livable space will inspire further evolutions of utility like a private space to play loud music or video games comfortably without disturbing the rest of the house. Ultimately, with unfathomable new space, the options are endless. Schaefer notes that he has even made room for dog-washing areas.

"Thanks to our flexibility and being able to customize or to accommodate specific requests or goals in the design, we're able to accommodate more imagination or creativity to accomplish the client's requests," he says.

Clutter can be removed with a proper shelving or cabinet system without having to get rid of items completely. Making those tough decisions does not have to be part of

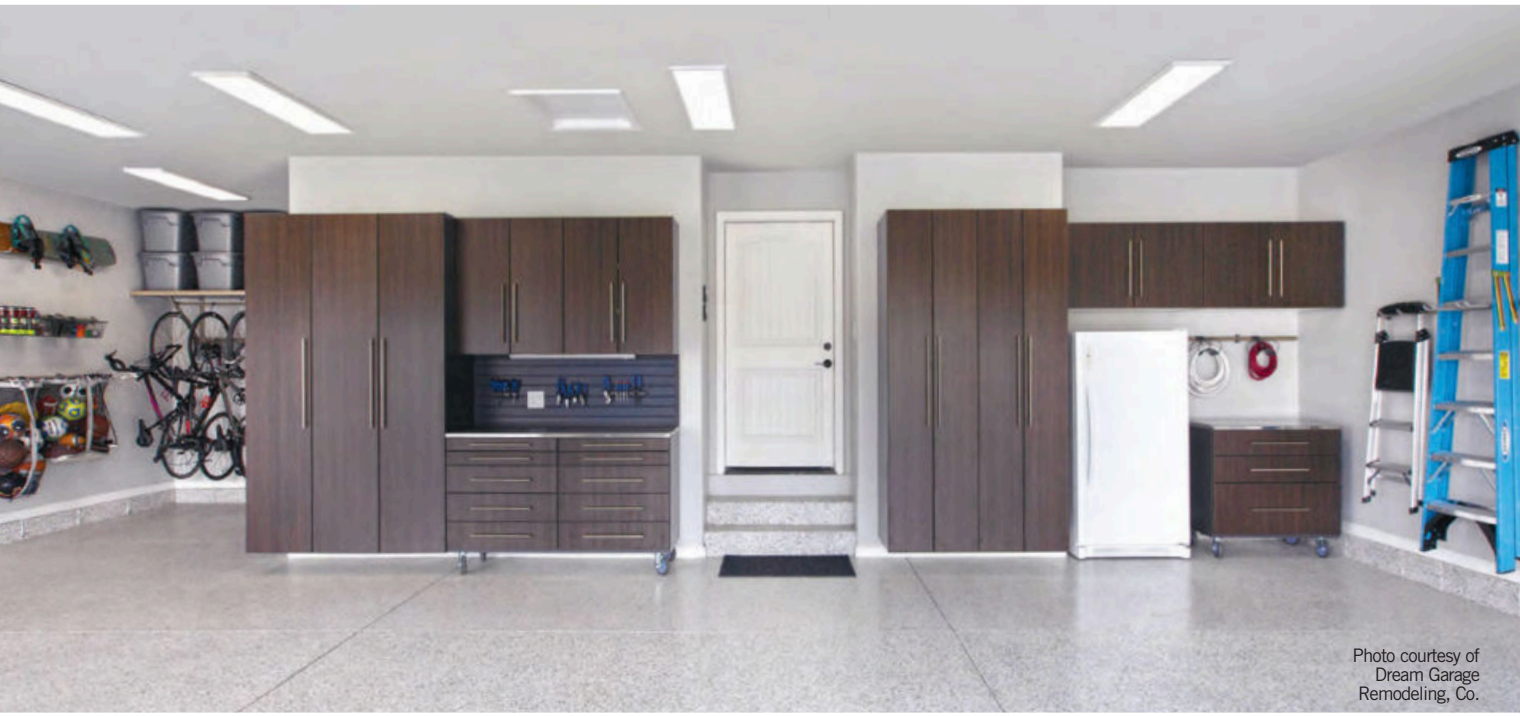


Photo courtesy of Dream Garage Remodeling, Co.

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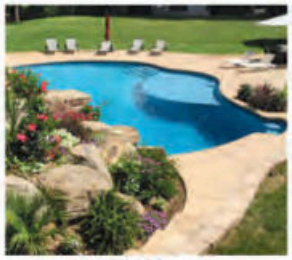
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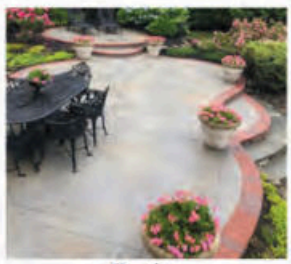
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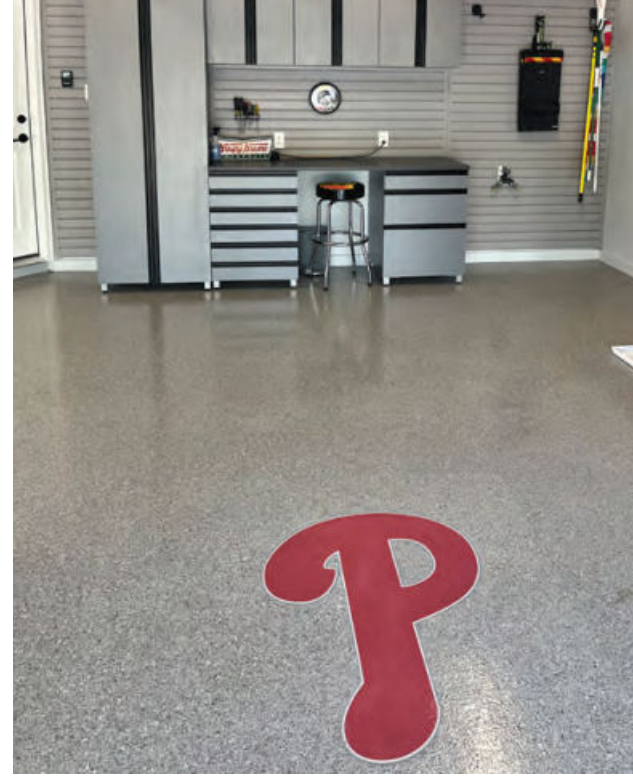

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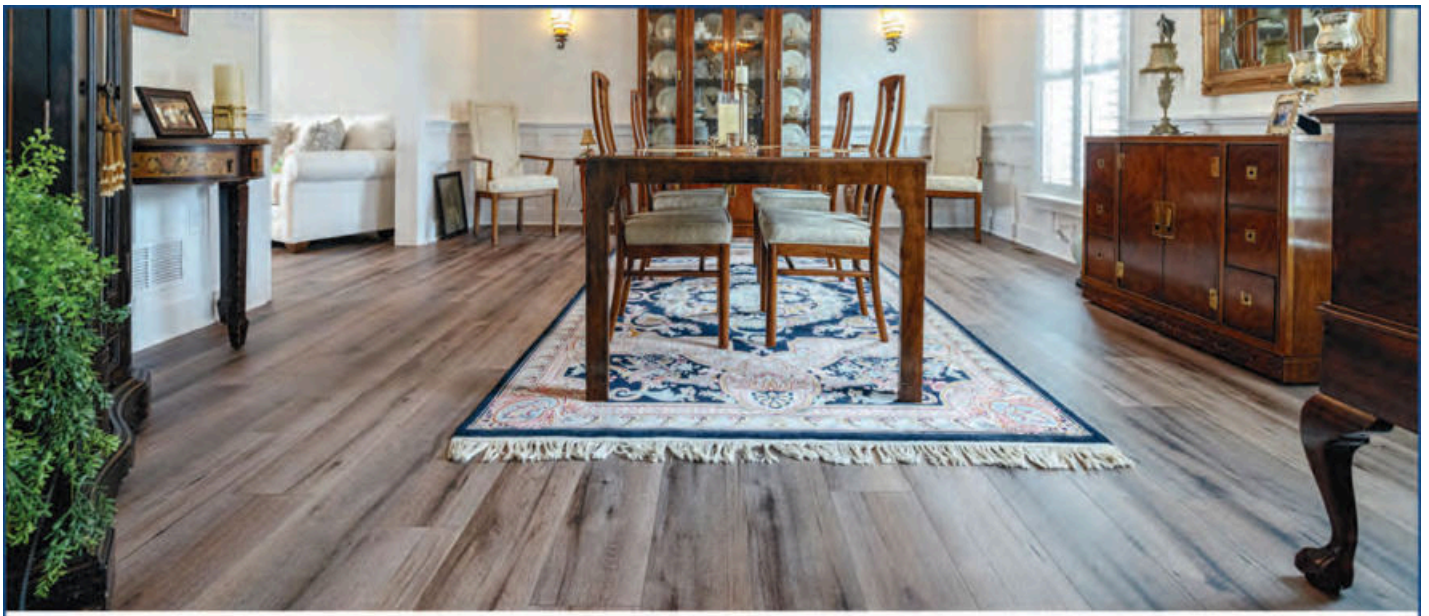
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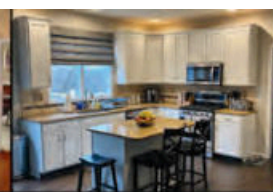
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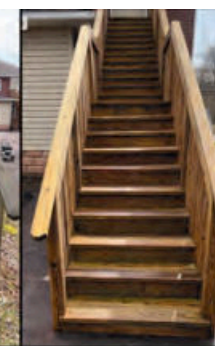
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# EMBRACING The Outdoors

## The latest trends in outdoor structures help to enhance your living experience.

*by* **Kristen Jorgensen**

As the world continues to embrace the significance of nature and its positive impact on human well-being, outdoor living spaces have gained immense popularity. Homeowners are increasingly turning to outdoor structures as a means to create inviting, functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces that blur the lines between indoor and outdoor living. The latest trends in outdoor structures not only amplify the beauty of your property, but also offer numerous benefits, enriching your overall living experience.



These days, outdoor structures are no longer limited to just one purpose. The current trend revolves around creating multi-functional retreats that cater to various activities. A single space might serve as a yoga studio in the morning, a workspace during the day and a cozy movie theater at night. These adaptable outdoor structures add versatility to your living space, accommodating diverse interests and hobbies.

In this article, we explore some of the most cutting-edge trends in outdoor structures and delve into how they can enhance your daily life.

### The perks of pergolas, pavilions and more

The lines of demarcation between indoor and outdoor living continue to blur as more homeowners gravitate into backyard spaces to whip up dinner for friends, light a

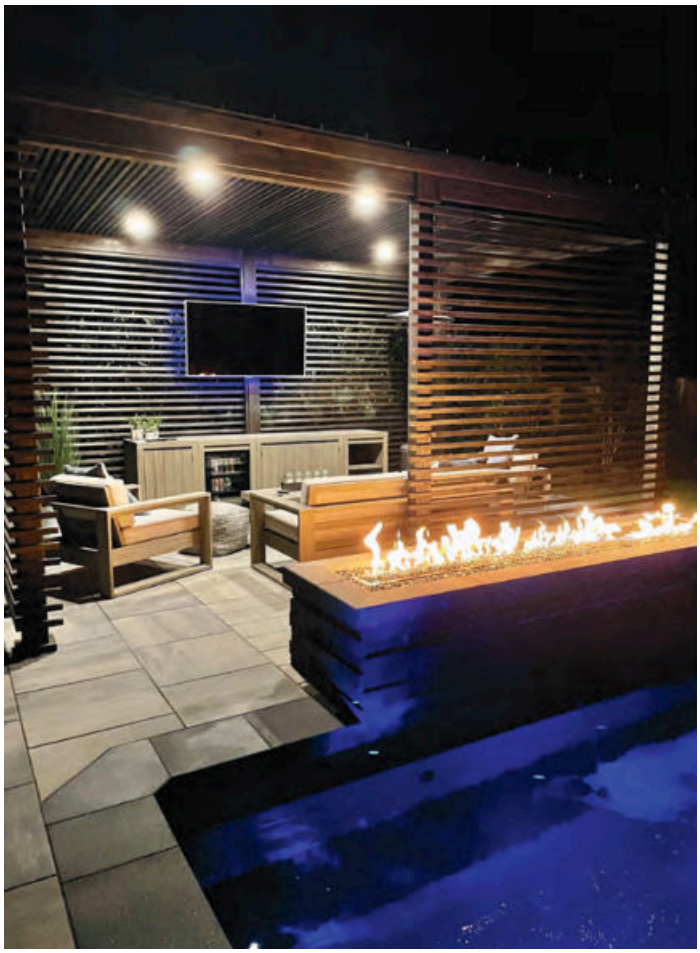
small bonfire or put in a few hours of work while sitting on a shaded patio.

"The benefits of adding an outdoor structure to your yard provide you with a comfortable outdoor living space. Bring the party outside, relax poolside or just enjoy the outdoors. Most structures also have a storage space component—store the party supplies, hide the pool filter and chemicals, or use as a bonus shed to hide lawn equipment," explains Kristi Reading from Buxton's Backyard Structures.

When considering what direction to plan for when it comes to upgrading your outdoor space, Reading offers a few suggestions. "Homeowners should consider the size and purpose of the outdoor structure. If you are just looking for an outdoor bar—what size bar area and what size storage area would be beneficial? It's important to get something that will work for your needs.

"Another thing to consider is how you want it to look. Are you trying to match your house or make it stand out? There are lots of options from painted wood, vinyl siding, faux stone siding, hardy plank, board and batten, or log cabin. There are so many options to customize the perfect structure for your home," Reading continues.

For homeowners with pools, poolside pavilions are the ultimate trend in enhancing outdoor living. These structures offer shade and protection from the elements, making poolside relaxation a comfortable and enjoyable experience. Pool pavilions can be designed to include lounging areas, mini-bars and changing rooms, providing a perfect blend of leisure and convenience. "Homeowners want shade from the sun in the summer and the ability to keep using their outdoor space with heaters or fire when the temperature drops. Pavilion-style structures and pool houses are very popular for this reason," says Karen Frederick from The Louvered Roof Company. "Something to think about when you're









H&H OUTDOOR STRUCTURES

investing in an outdoor structure is natural light and airflow. Do you want to be completely inside with closed doors and air conditioning, or do you want to have that vacation feeling where you can still be outside and feel the air but have protection from the elements? There is a lot of room for personalization when designing a pavilion."

Pergolas have also quickly climbed the ladder of popularity with homeowners because they can be ideal for an outdoor space that's used frequently. Whether over a porch, yard or garden, pergolas help the outdoors feel more hospitable for long days outside. "The kitchen is typically the heart of the home, so extending that to the outdoors with a pergola allows the homeowner to have more usable entertaining space," Bill Wilson from Amazing Decks says. "A pergola or retractable awning can provide shade, allowing homeowners to enjoy a meal outdoors, and help to create a warm and inviting space from early spring through Thanksgiving."



One thing to note, pergolas aren't meant to keep the elements away completely, but to visually designate and decorate pools, seating areas or yard features. The overhead beams offer places to hang plants, lighting or even swings. Pergolas are also perfect for anyone who enjoys being outside but wants to avoid strong overhead sunlight. Some homeowners use outdoor curtains to add a bit more privacy, and because they are stylish and affordable, pergolas are a no-brainer for anyone looking to create a serene space.





### The coop craze

After the pandemic was declared, people began to panic-buy the essentials from grocery stores, which included everything from toilet paper to eggs. With more time being spent at home, people invested in gardening and becoming more self-sufficient in general, thus also creating an uptick in the ownership of chickens. "We have sold a lot more chicken coops since 2020 than in recent years [and] it hasn't really slowed down. Folks love the comfort of knowing they're getting fresh, organic eggs right from their backyards," explains Reuben Zook from Mainline Outdoor Living.

Deciding to own chickens is only half the decision. The other part of that equation is




providing the appropriate outdoor housing structure to support a safe—and aesthetically pleasing—environment for both the chickens and human residents alike. "[We] offer an assortment of sizes and styles for anyone who wants to own chickens. Coops can start as small as 15-20 square feet to as large as a couple hundred feet. There really is a lot of personalization that comes along with owning chickens," explains Zook.

### Sustainable structures

As environmental consciousness grows, sustainable outdoor structures are also gaining traction. Living walls and vertical gardens not only add a touch of greenery, but also provide insulation and promote biodiversity. Moreover, eco-friendly building materials and solar-powered lighting solutions are being integrated into outdoor designs, reducing the environmental impact while adding to the overall appeal of the space.

### Final thoughts

As urbanization continues to rise, the importance of outdoor spaces cannot be understated. The latest trends in outdoor structures offer homeowners the opportunity to transform their yards into captivating and functional extensions of their house. Whether it's al fresco dining areas, cozy outdoor living rooms, sustainable structures, multifunctional retreats, poolside pavilions, or outdoor showers and spas, these trends enhance the living experience by fostering a deeper connection with nature and promoting overall well-being.



Reading concurs: "There are so many additions that you can add to your structure. From a fully finished interior, flooring, roofing, fans, lights, bars, windows, dormers, porches, screens, French doors, sliding barn doors, weathervanes and more. There is no limit to what you can have."

So embrace these trends, and let your outdoor oasis become a sanctuary that enriches your life in countless ways. **H&H**

## RESOURCES

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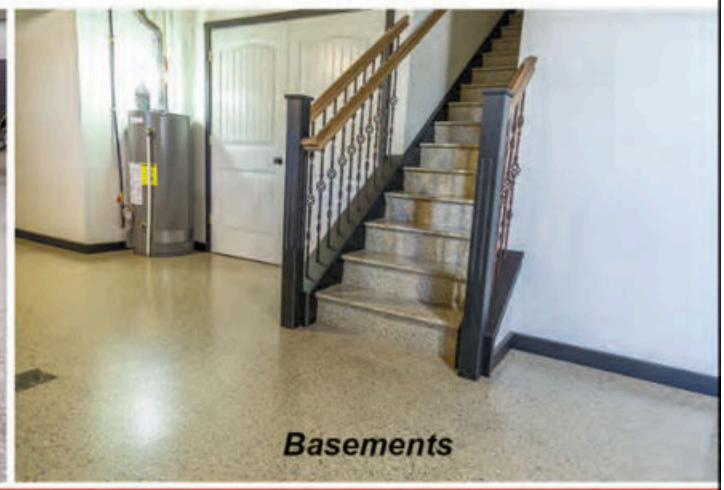
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