

Volume 24, Issue 1
DelChester/Main Line West

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for your next project *page 11*



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Helping homeowners
make their dreams
a reality *page 19*



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Best of HOUSE & HOME

Imperial Marble & Granite

Providing dedicated customer service
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Pennsylvania homeowners *page 27*



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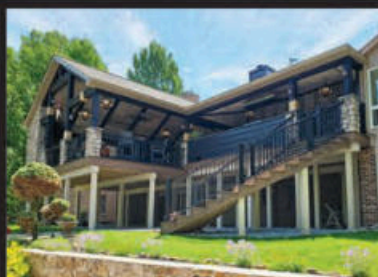
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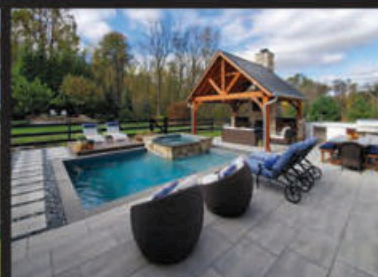
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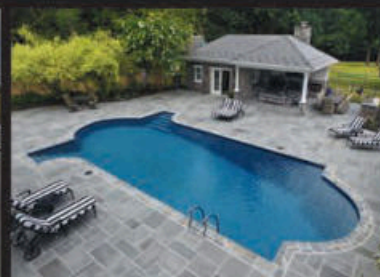
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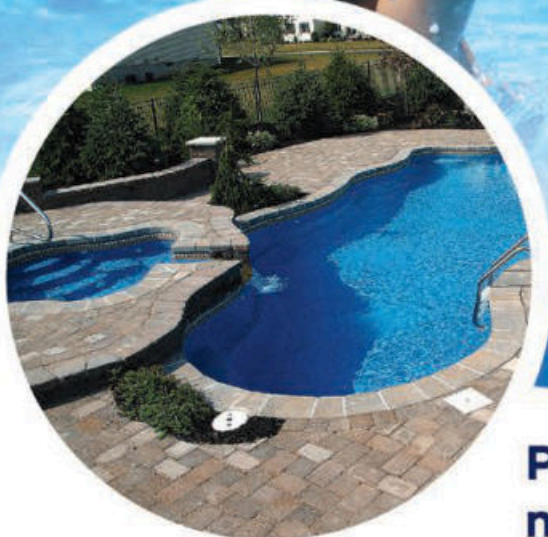


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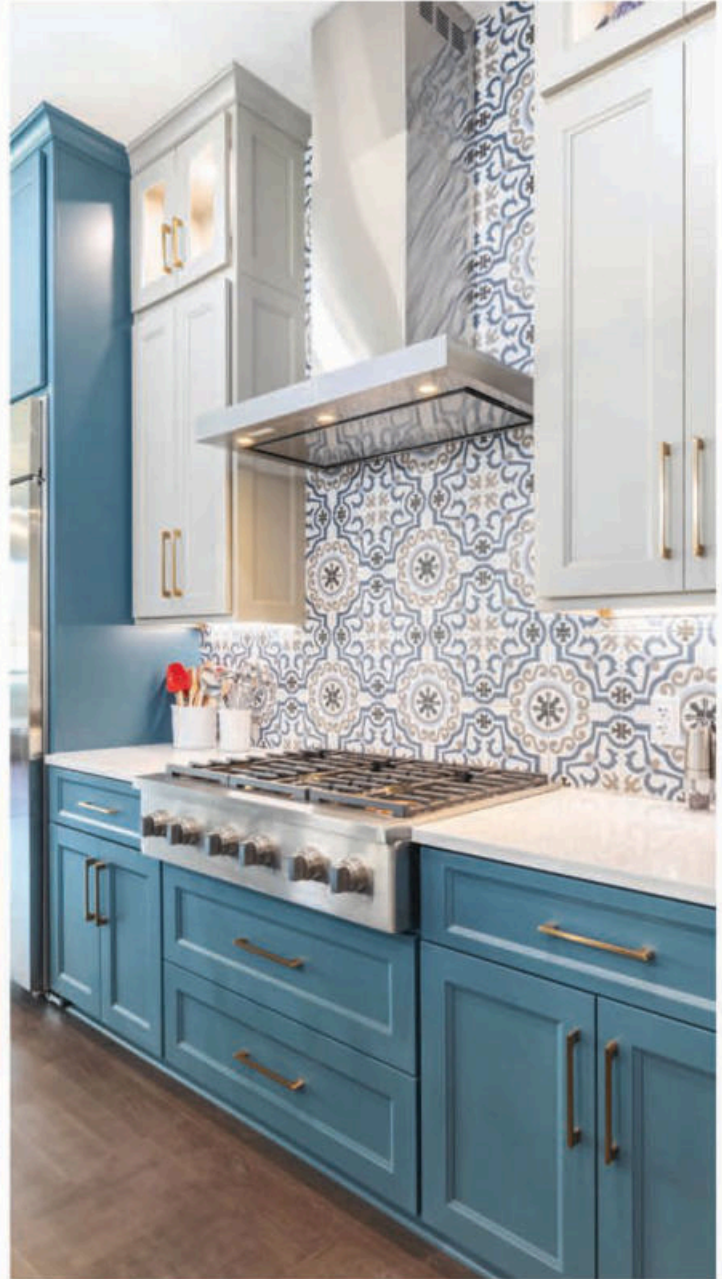


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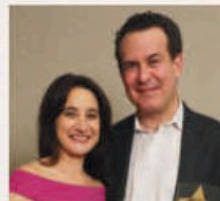
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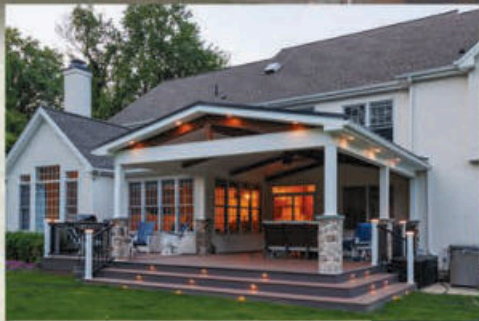


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AAA Hellenic

STONE MATERIALS ARE ESSENTIALLY THE ICING OF ANY KITCHEN OR BATHROOM PROJECT, PROVIDING BOTH THE FUNCTIONAL VALUE OF PULLING THE ROOM'S COMPONENTS TOGETHER AND SOMETHING PLEASING FOR THE EYE.

Choosing the perfect stone takes careful consideration, and the guidance of someone who knows the product. At AAA Hellenic, customers can turn to professionals who have decades of experience designing and installing stone in kitchens, bathrooms, foyers, fireplaces and even in outdoor living spaces. Mike Werner, sales manager, is one such expert who has been with the family-focused company for more than 10 years.

House & Home spoke with Werner about how new products from Silestone and Dekton are giving people the high-end looks they've wanted at a more reasonable price.



Mike Werner,
sales manager

WHEN YOU MEET WITH CLIENTS, WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR LIFESTYLE TO GUIDE THEIR SELECTION?

Most individuals typically have saved pictures they found online or in magazines to establish an idea of their design preferences. We also want to know about what's going on in the space where the stone will be used. Every household is different. Materials they might like or find attractive might not be the best choice for their home. Granite is very dense and durable. It is heat resistant and scratch resistant, with minimal maintenance. Marble

is a classic choice with unrivaled beauty and gives you a timeless look. It may be a little softer than granite, but will still give you a very durable surface.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE EMERGING POPULARITY OF NATURAL STONE QUARTZITE AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF IT?

Engineered quartz has gained popularity over the past couple of years, but natural stone is still the most requested for its beauty and durability. Natural stone quartzite is an especially good choice for kitchens. Everyone likes the look of marble, but it's softer and more porous. Quartzite is a dense stone that can handle the impact and functionality in a kitchen, and it's not as porous.

We directly import this stone from the quarries to our facility, which enables us to

pass discounted pricing on to clients for rare quartzites in a wide variety of colors. The materials are temperamental and require a high level of care and precision, which Hellenic excels and specializes in.

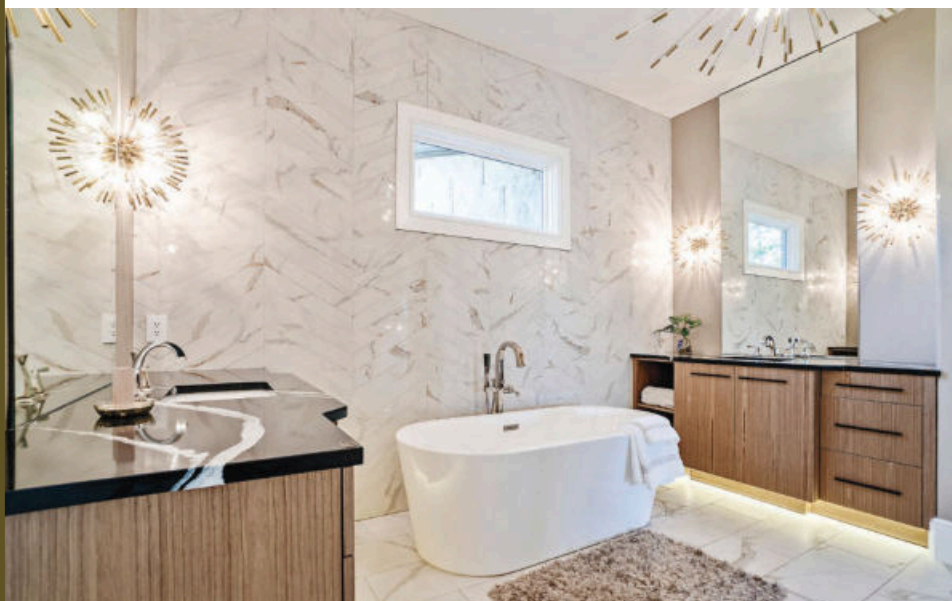
WHAT ARE THE NEWEST MATERIALS ON THE MARKET AND WHERE ARE THEY BEST USED IN THE HOME?

We're really excited about the design potential with products from Silestone and Dekton in shower wall and bathroom applications. People have been longing for a solid-slab, seamless look on their shower walls—nobody likes grout joints—but this comes with additional labor to get these large slabs into tight shower spaces. These new products are more durable and thinner, making them easier to transport and install. Silestone is engineered quartz and in particular has some nice combinations of natural stone-looking materials, as well as muted patterns for the monochromatic look people want. Dekton is a porcelain and glass hybrid with quartz that is more durable and still gives that desirable natural stone look. This is something that we are specializing in.

HOW CAN CUSTOMERS ARRANGE TO VISIT YOUR SLAB YARD TO SEE THEIR OPTIONS?

Our slab yard is open by appointment so we can control the amount of people in the building at a time, everything is spaced out and we also have outdoor inventory available weather permitting. We have implemented additional safety measures, including UV light systems and UV air purifiers to reduce airborne contaminants and provide more peace of mind for customers. We also offer virtual appointments.

Our inventory of marble, granite, soapstone and quartzite is very strong right now, we've added a lot of new products for people. We have about 200 different colors on display, and our stones are directly imported from places like Italy, Brazil and Africa. It's always beneficial to walk through and see the stone in different lighting, and more often than not, people find something they never expected. **H&H**



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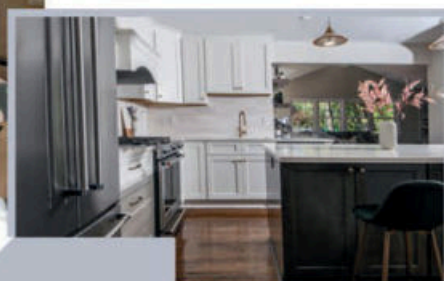


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We are excited to present our ninth annual

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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 and showcases that shed some light on their dedication. For your next home project, there is no one better than these winners.





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What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

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

Yes, we are now offering Daltile Perennial Porcelain roofing as an option. They have a slate collection, a natural cedar collection, and a clay collection. We have done a few of these installs and the finished look is amazing. It is really catching on in this market.

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

At the end of the day, it is extremely rewarding to read letters and reviews from our clients expressing how thankful they are for the transformation that we brought to their home. Seeing a phenomenal finished product is really rewarding.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

The building industry is special because each day we get to be a part of helping someone create a place that they can call home, which is a safe place and a place that they can use to make memories for years to come with their families.



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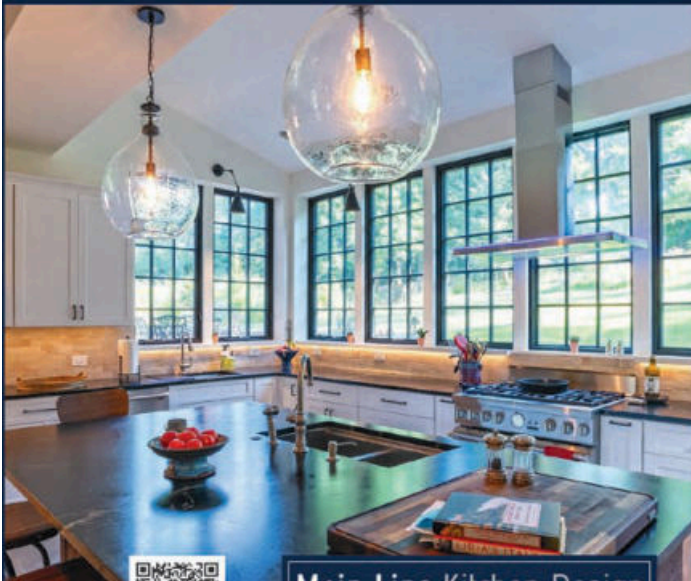
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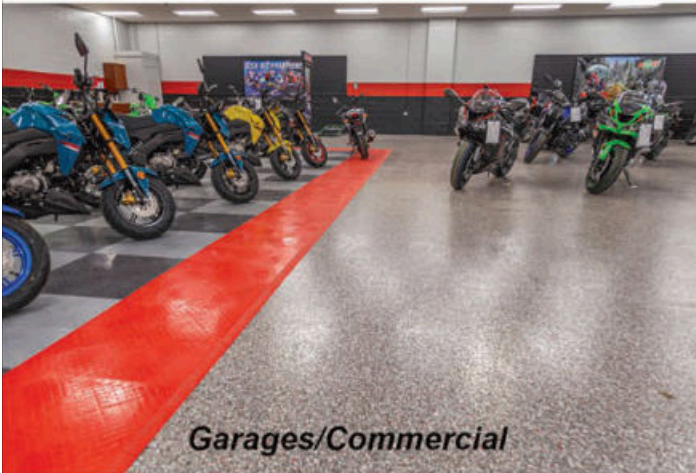
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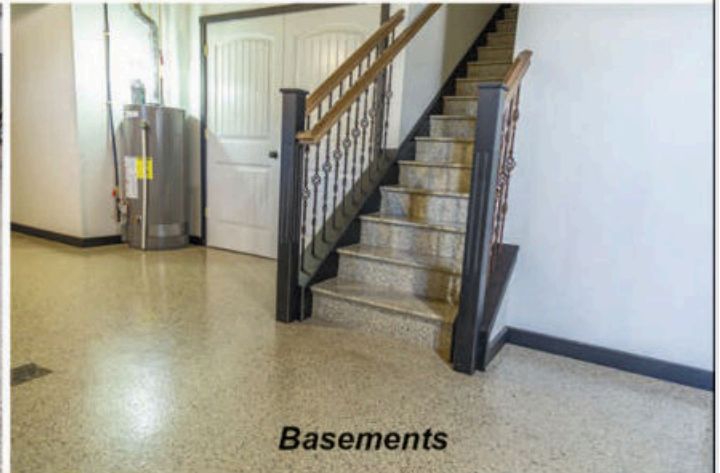
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IN THE WORLD OF CONSTRUCTION AND INTERIOR DESIGN, THE CHOICE OF MATERIALS PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN DEFINING THE AESTHETICS, DURABILITY AND OVERALL QUALITY OF A PROJECT. AND FOR THOSE SEEKING TIMELESS ELEGANCE, NATURAL STONE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TOP CHOICE. FOR MANY, THAT MEANS TURNING TO ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED NAMES IN THE INDUSTRY—COLONIAL MARBLE & GRANITE.

The family-owned business is undoubtedly the fastest-growing provider of fabrication and installation of stone materials in the Northeastern United States and among the array of stone providers, they stand as a reputable and enduring name in the business.

The company was founded in 2006 by the Papadopoulos family, with the sole mission to offer customers the greatest selection of materials at the lowest prices available, not to mention the highest quality installation. These days, in addition to their stunning showroom, the company has risen to become the largest stone supplier in the Northeast. That growth has only reinforced its commitment to client satisfaction.

In addition to its exceptional product quality and selection, Colonial Marble & Granite who collaborate closely with clients, offering guidance and support throughout the selection and installation processes.

“When you come to Colonial Marble & Granite, every customer is treated equally

and goes through the same design process, no matter the budget,” explains Sandra Phillips, executive vice president of sales, marketing and design. “One of the things we love most when working with clients is taking them back to the slab yard and showcasing all of the options and variety of stones we carry. The real excitement comes from watching our clients become inspired through our selections.”

A DIVERSE RANGE OF NATURAL STONE

It is within the design process that the key strengths of Colonial Marble and Granite shine and lie in its vast selection of natural stone materials. “We offer an impressive array of options, including marble, granite, quartzite, onyx, quartz, soapstone and much more. Whether you’re seeking the classic elegance of Carrara marble, the durability of

granite or the versatility of quartzite, Colonial Marble & Granite has the perfect stone to meet your needs,” explains Phillips.

This diverse range of materials ensures that designers, architects and homeowners can find the ideal stone for any project, from kitchen countertops and bathroom vanities to flooring and wall cladding.

“Our entire staff is professionally trained to help take every client through the design process. If a client comes in with a complete vision at their fingertips, we can help bring it to life for you; if they visit our showroom unsure of exactly where to begin, we offer design assistance, and can help narrow down selections and options, to get them to a vision they’ll love,” shares Phillips.

No matter what the client ultimately selects, Colonial Marble & Granite’s commitment to sourcing the finest natural stones from around the world ensures that they will have access to the best materials available.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Quality is the cornerstone of Colonial Marble & Granite’s success. The company takes rigorous measures to ensure that every piece of stone meets the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship. From the selection of raw materials to the cutting, polishing and finishing processes, each step is meticulously

executed to produce flawless products.

“A lot of our marble is unique. Owner Nikos Papadopoulos personally travels to other countries to hand-select the best products and stone options. Some of our stone comes from Brazil, others from Italy, and even different parts of the U.S.,” says Phillips.

The commitment to excellence and client satisfaction is so well received that customers often return to Colonial Marble requesting kitchen and bath cabinetry.

“We had repeat customers coming in to inquire about their cabinetry needs because they had such a wonderful experience with selecting stone from us. As a result, we decided to rise to the occasion and started carrying cabinetry to further support our client’s renovation projects and make it one seamless shopping experience,” Phillips says.

TRENDS FOR 2024

With Colonial Marble & Granite being leaders in the industry, it’s also crucial for them to stay informed about new products, techniques and, of course, trending designs. According to Phillips, the days of all-white kitchens are being abandoned in exchange for more warm woods, drama and even pops of color.

“We started to see a shift in designs during 2023 that will continue into next year,” she says. “The richer colors and moodier vibes are absolutely going to continue into next year. Another design we’re seeing return to kitchens is the use of lighting. The addition of under cabinet and toe kick lighting is showing up in a lot of designs in the new year.”

Colonial Marble & Granite combines years of experience and the finest materials with first-class customer service to create an unmatched experience for all their customers and partners. Their core values of integrity, quality and customer focus remain deeply ingrained in the way they conduct business and a reflection of the unwavering dedication to delivering top-notch products and services. Whether you’re embarking on a renovation project or designing a new space, Colonial Marble & Granite stands ready to provide you with the finest natural stone solutions available. ■

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Built to Last

by Carly Murray



As an increasing number of homeowners anticipate staying in their residences long term, they're considering longevity as a primary driver of their home renovations.

With home prices and moving costs at an all-time high, it's no surprise that many are deciding to stay put.

Consequently, those planning to put down long-term roots want their home to be long-lasting and characteristic of both their preferences and their family's needs for years to come. *House & Home* spoke with area experts for advice on how to achieve longevity in functionality, style and advantageous residency.

"People are remodeling their house to stay [there] as opposed to selling it and moving into a new house, and they're remodeling and making the house more convenient [in preparation] for as they get older," says Aaron Lewis, owner of Closets For Less.

Storage solutions are an excellent way to create the feeling of an expanded space with the extra benefit of organization. The

days of chaotic clutter and not knowing where anything is are long over, especially with organizational systems that vary depending on client needs.

"I often explain to people that a closet system is a great idea for any space that you want to maximize the storage in. It is a flexible system, which allows you to use the space for your exact needs, even if those needs change in the future," says Karen McWilliams, owner of Closets by Karen.

Homeowners are also becoming more creative than ever before: transforming garages for more space, creating gathering places in their outdoor areas and dedicating unused rooms to make expansive walk-in closets reminiscent of Barbie's.

"If they want to get rid of their furniture and make their closets

Built to Last

more of a dressing area, we can put drawers in the closet as opposed to just shelving, shoe shelves and so forth,” explains Lewis.

Walk-in closets can be a game-changer, providing a better quality of life with clothes and accessories easily accessible and arranged to speed up a morning routine. With organization trending on social media lately, people are looking to both simplify the everyday aspects of their lives and designate spaces and systems for specific purposes. It’s also in style to show off these home transformations—which is why design and color are equally considered.

“In general, organization of every aspect of your life has become a huge trend. Closets and closet organization have become a priority when people are remodeling a space, building a home, or just need to make their existing closets more functional. As far as the closet materials go, I am seeing a huge trend of lighter wood and white closets. Most people want a light, bright feeling in their closets,” says McWilliams.

One option is to use a personal passion as a starting point for brainstorming ideas to create a prized new space. Book lovers can take their supply of books and organize them by color to display a unique and charming library for visitors to admire while also designing a picturesque environment in which to read; seated window nooks are great for pets and a place to relax in the sun-

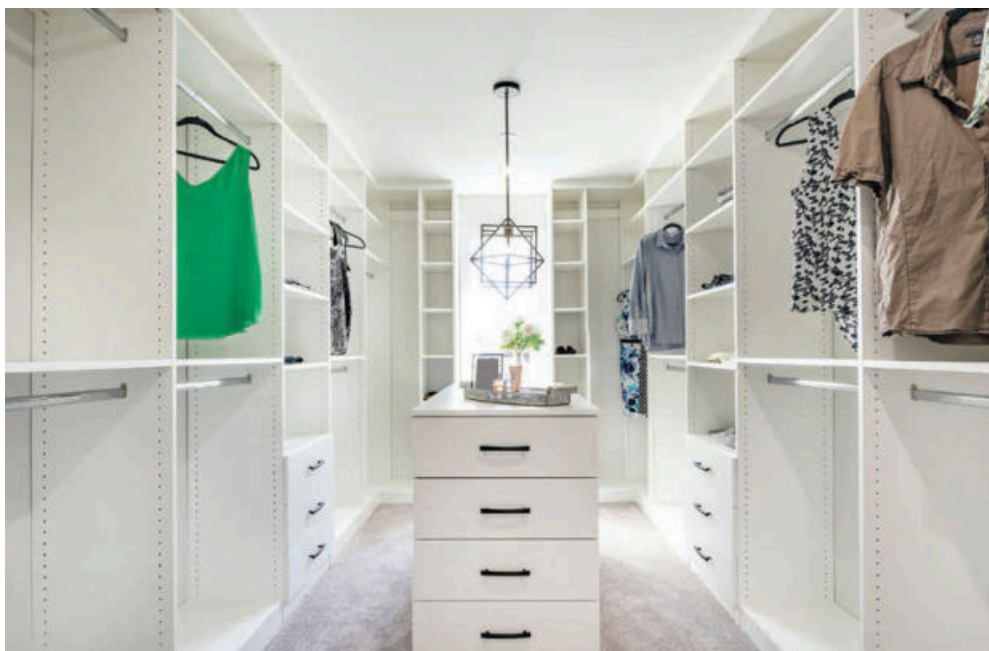
light while still indoors; a backyard patio with television and sound system installations can be the new favorite place to watch the game—the options are endless.

Home Trimwork’s design sales manager Mark Ollivier determines his client’s taste from inspiration images. His projects include built-ins, stairways, paint, molding, fireplace mantles and flooring, thus bringing the wisdom it requires to make a room—and the entire home—come together harmoniously.

“For many years, clients would tear out magazine pages of images they like and put them on the refrigerator door so they could glance at it several times a day. These days, anyone can do a simple Google search and have countless images to browse and save,” he says. “Getting the client to

share these images so that we can review them together is vital. Having several images from a client is very helpful to see if there is a common thread from a style standpoint. As we go through these examples, I can pick out certain details to see what part of the example draws their eye. From there, I can apply those features to their design and display how it flows and complements their space.”

While everyone’s taste is different, experts see more of their customers drawn to timeless designs with room for alterations. Having modifiable implementations allows for tweaks to be made when a fixture needs sprucing up, allowing for easy changes in the future. Neutral colors and simple lines are popular for that very reason.





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“Clean, simple lines with painted finishes tend to have more longevity, as they can easily be changed as time goes on. Natural wood products that commonly receive stained finishes are not as common unless we have a client that has longed for a traditional-style library or home office where most or all of the surfaces are finished with stain and polyurethane. This, of course, is timeless if done properly,” Ollivier continues.

Whether opting for an addition like a protective top coat or a larger construction project like new flooring, any change can make a long-occupied home feel revitalized and brand new. If the time comes to move one day, refurbishments and exclusive qualities only add to the property value.

“[Floor finishing is] a water base or oil base. It depends on the type of the floor they have; we figure out the best finish to put on the floor. Water base is going to last longer than three years ... even oil base is good as well, standard for three or more years,” says Gilmar Marcelino, owner of Victorian Floor Finishing.

To prove that planning is everything, he emphasizes an all-at-once methodology.

“One shot from beginning to the end; not phases, like, one room today, another room tomorrow. We never recommend that. Two things: the process takes longer ... and the cost of the effect,” Marcelino continues.

The key to a long-lasting look is to implement materials that are more resistant to damage. Like everything, finding the right product is a case-by-case scenario, but evaluating expectations and necessities for a project with a professional can make renovation goals a reality. Knowing the chosen materials and products will go a long

way in expediting any needed replacements in subsequent years.

It's no mystery why homeowners are opting to make a home the best possible version of itself. At the forefront of a completed project is the everyday satisfaction it will bring for years to come. Refurbishments, remodeling or just a fresh coat of paint can bring a new spark of energy to your home and, subsequently, to your life. **H&H**



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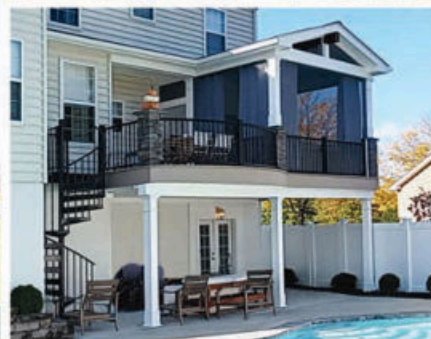
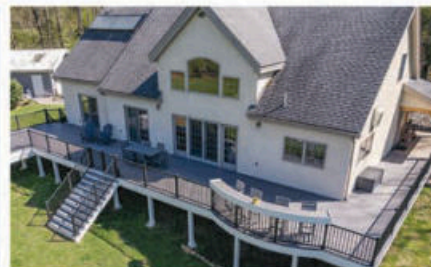
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Just a Stone's

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

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 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

Imperial Marble & Granite

Main location: 200 Old Tincum Island Road, H Complex, Essington, Pa. (610) 521-0130

Showroom: 1311 West Chester Pike, West Chester, Pa. (610) 738-5277 | IMGStone.net

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**

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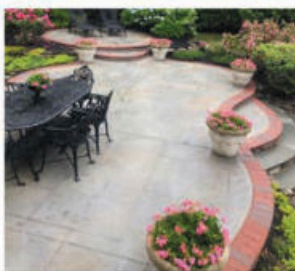
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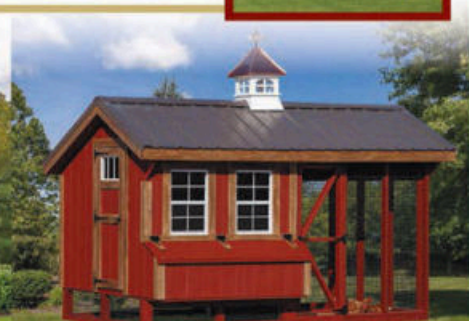


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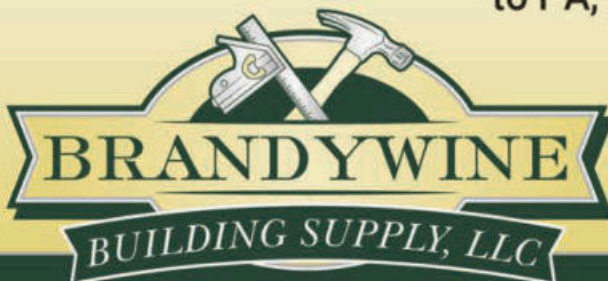
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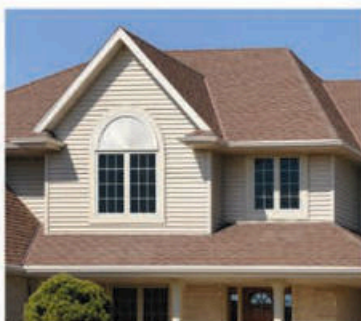
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