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Volume 22, Issue 1



AAA Hellenic Marble

Expert guidance to find the perfect stone product for your next project *page 11*

Prime Projects

The lowdown on the latest in kitchen and bathroom remodeling

+

Inside: Annual Kitchen & Bath Directory *page 14*

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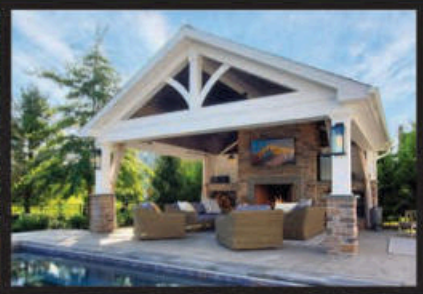
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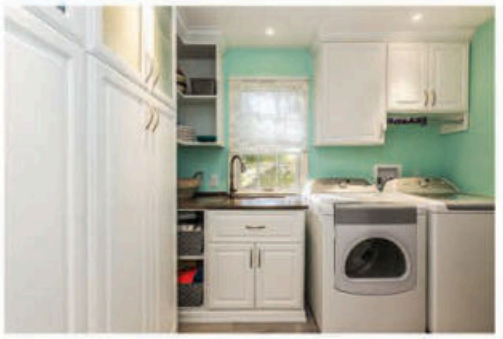
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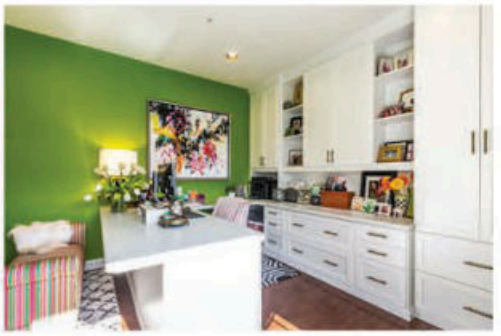
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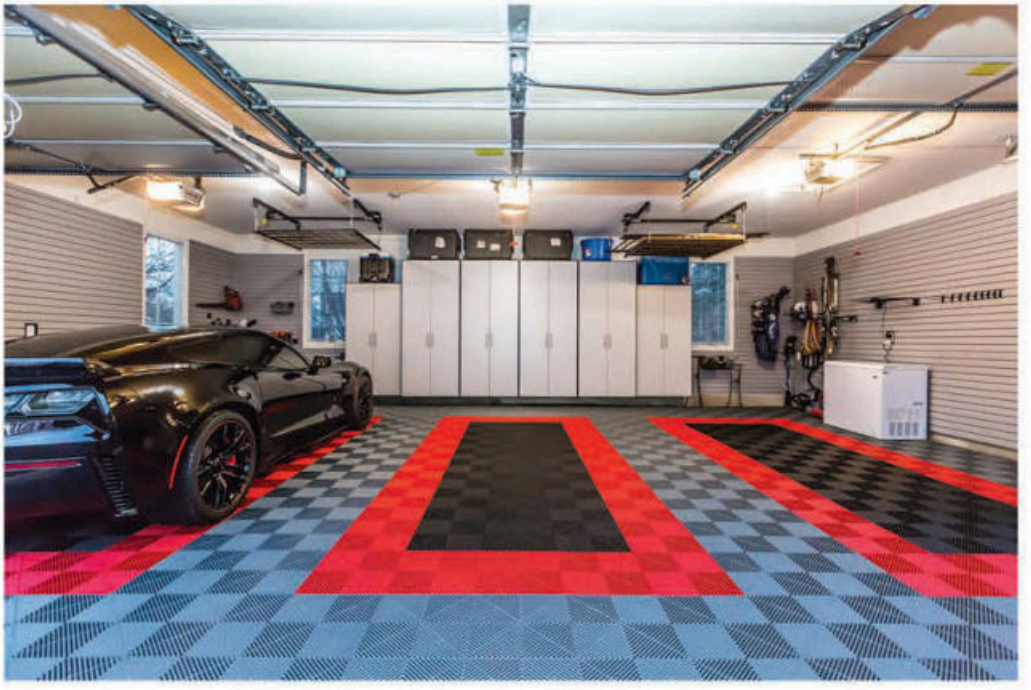
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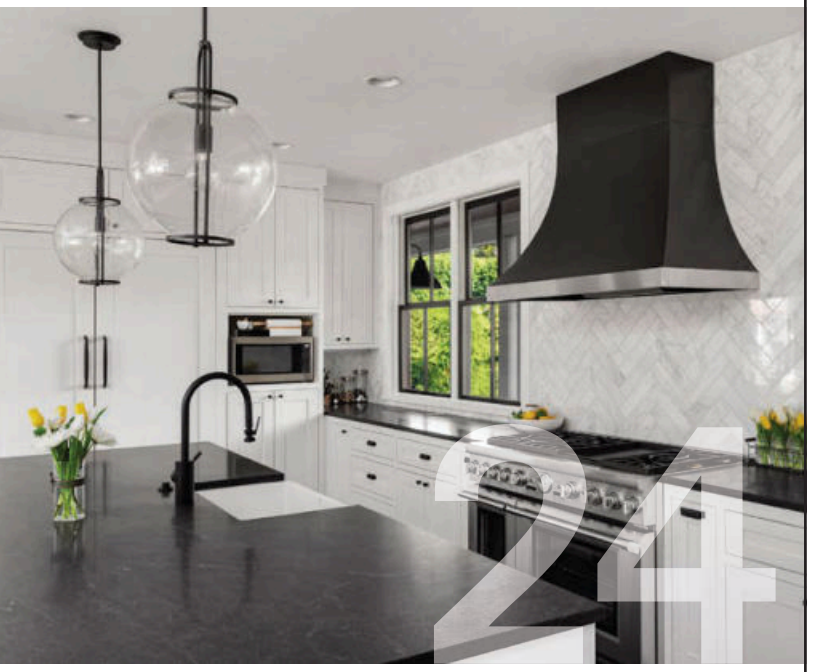
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On the cover:
At AAA Hellenic, customers can turn to professionals who have decades of experience designing and installing stone in kitchens, bathrooms, foyers, fireplaces and even in outdoor living spaces. Turn to page 11 to find out how their products give homeowners a high-end look at a reasonable price.
Cover image courtesy of AAA Hellenic

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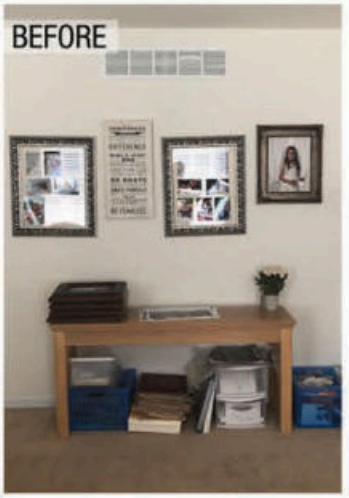


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Set in Stone



With expert guidance from **AAA Hellenic Marble**, homeowners will find the perfect stone product for a variety of applications.

by **Liz Hunter**

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 Marble, 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.

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?

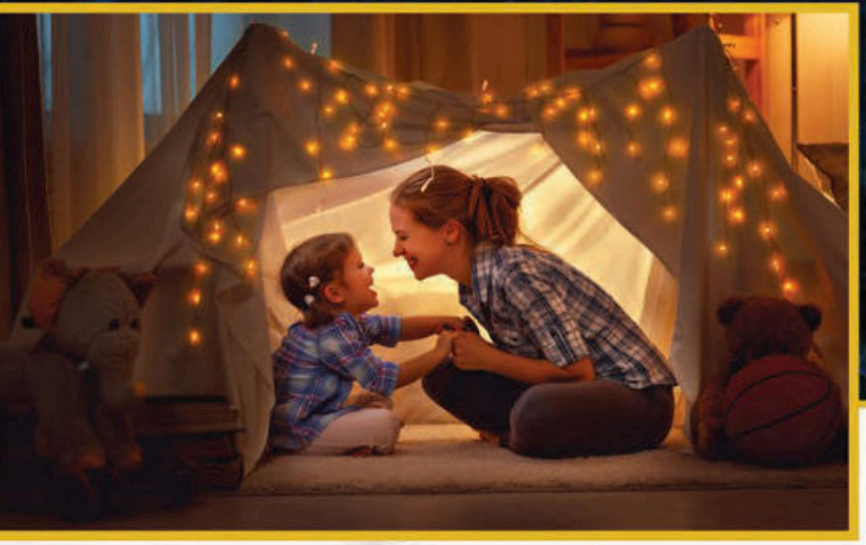
Our slab yard is open by appointment so we can control the amount of people in the building at a time, everything is spaced out and we also have outdoor inventory available weather permitting. We have implemented additional safety measures, including UV light systems and UV air purifiers to reduce airborne 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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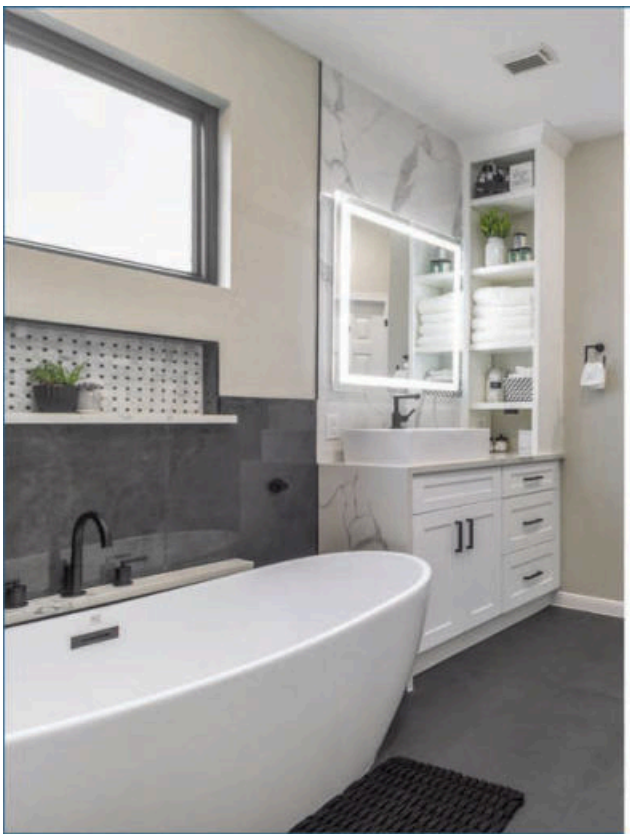
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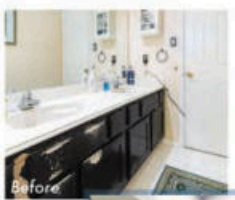
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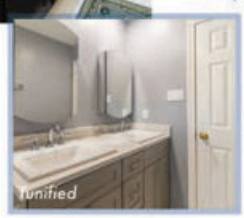
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IN THE WORLD OF HOME IMPROVEMENT, kitchens and baths continue to reign supreme. Survey after survey shows that these spaces can add the most value in a home. Homeowners who are ready to make the investment in upgrading their kitchen or bath can simply look on the following pages to find qualified professionals in various specialities from marble and granite and cabinetry to remodelers and designers. With the help of this *House & Home* Directory, we hope the design of your dreams can soon become a reality.

3 Popular Misconceptions About Kitchen Cabinet Refinishing

The true story I'm about to share with you could reignite the love affair you once had with your kitchen.

When my brother Ivan and I were growing up in Pennsylvania, we used to watch Pop build cabinets out in the barn.

I guess that's what inspired us to work in the construction trades — And how we discovered an amazing new method of refinishing cabinets.



After a time building homes in Colorado and Montana, we decided that although we loved it out west, we wanted to be closer to family back in Pennsylvania.

A Radical New Cure For The "Dull Kitchen Blahs"
Right about that time, we heard stories about an innovative technology for refinishing cabinets that was literally transforming lives.

Yes, I know that's a bold statement. But imagine muddling along with a dark and dull kitchen for years. Then, within a matter of days, waking up to a bright and beautiful kitchen every… single... day. It was something you could cherish for years.

With this new process, we knew we could help a lot of our friends and neighbors back east enjoy their kitchens again. But first we had to help them clear up a few popular misconceptions...

"It's Messy"
"Dust over everything… Rude contractors taking over your home for weeks… Having to clean up every day after they go home…" These were just some of the concerns we heard. And rightly so, based on some of the old methods, or relying on general house painters.

However, the beauty of the special process we use is that our crews are in and out in just one week — from start to finish.

There's very little dust in the home because the doors and drawer faces get sanded and coated in our shop. The cabinet boxes, which remain in place, get a "wet sanding", which keeps dust to a minimum. So other than a careful removal and reinstallation process, there's very little disruption to normal life at home.

"It's Too Expensive"
There's no doubt, refinishing cabinets requires a considerable investment. Usually around three to five thousand dollars, or more depending on the size of the kitchen. The lifelong benefits, however, far outweigh the one-time investment.



Financially speaking, you can expect to recoup 70% or more of your investment in the value of your home. Not only that, consider how much better you'll feel in your own home every day. Waking up to a bright and beautiful kitchen can really make a difference.

And who knows.... With your gorgeously freshened up cabinets, you might even save money by entertaining at home more often!

"The Paint Won't Last"
YES — All of the terrible things you may have heard about peeling, chipping and cracking are 100% true and accurate… UNLESS, that is, the refinishing is done PROPERLY!

If you're going to paint cabinets yourself, or hire a local painting contractor who doesn't specialize in painting cabinetry, it's certainly reasonable to expect problems. If the surfaces aren't prepared just right... Or if the coatings aren't applied correctly… Or the right combination of coatings isn't used.

Unfortunately, there's a LOT that can go wrong...

The average homeowner or painting contractor who doesn't meticulously follow a proven system can easily miss a critical step leading to disappointing results that can last for years.

Durable cabinet refinishing requires that each piece is cleaned thoroughly to remove every spec of dirt, grease and grime. Each surface must be sanded to a dull finish to prepare it for coating.

Then finally, a specialized combination of coatings that bond together to form a film strength equal to or exceeding factory baked-on enamel must be applied.

The results WHEN DONE PROPERLY? A silky smooth and gorgeous finish that will last for years. And a bright, beautiful kitchen you'll love to show off and enjoy fixing meals in, day after day!

Curious to find out if cabinet refinishing could completely transform your kitchen?



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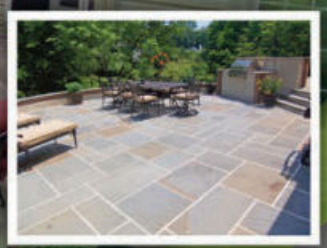


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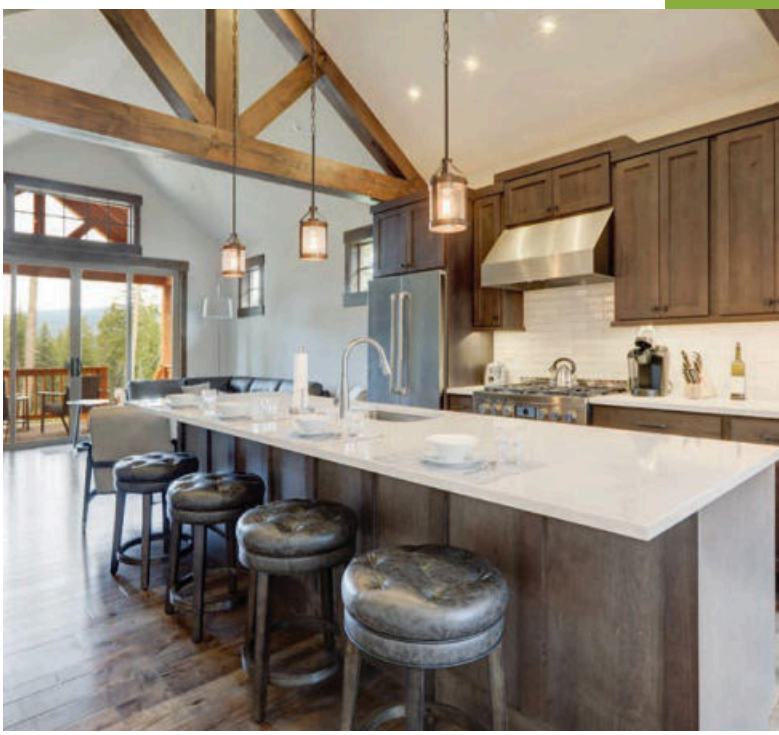
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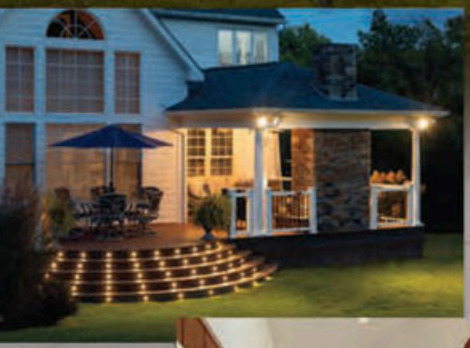
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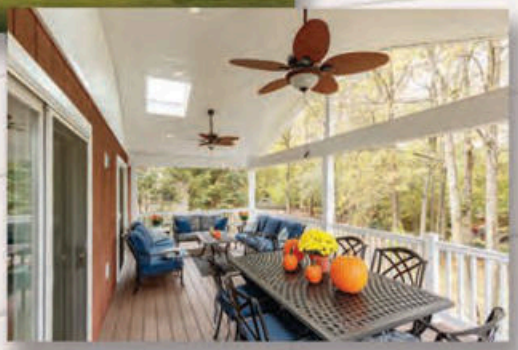


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THE GREAT INDOORS

Despite supply-chain delays, homeowners are still riding the pandemic's ongoing trend of refreshing their living spaces with a focus on interior spaces like bathrooms and kitchens.

BY MADELEINE MACCAR


Kitchen Magic

After staring at the same walls, fixtures and accents throughout the pandemic's uptick in time spent at home, homeowners everywhere have been overhauling their living spaces. Whether it's all as one big project or tackled room by room, kitchens and bathrooms have not escaped housebound families' scrutiny and desire for an interior refresh.

The area's experts took some time from their busy schedules to talk to *House & Home* about how clients can plan ahead for a smooth project timeline, managing expectations as supply delays are still creating a number of snarls along the way, and all the options available for lightly renovating or all-out remodeling two high-traffic areas on any budget.

BEGINNING A PROJECT

As the adage says, failing to prepare is preparing to fail, and home projects are no exception. While some clients are experienced at navigating the process, others are beginning their first foray into interior redesigns armed with only the knowledge that it's time for something new.

Whether you're working with a one-stop shop or a dedicated expert in kitchens and baths, the team you're trusting with the job can ensure you stay within your budget while planning a new layout, establishing a timeline and providing all kinds of expert insight as they bring your dream designs to life

"Construction is a journey," says Joe Sananes, who runs Cabinet Design Center with his wife, Yafit. "It can be fun and exciting, but it can also be overwhelming so you have to prepare a client mentally for the whole process. Hiring a company that will be transparent about that will help them be prepared for the journey and encourage them to look at their home like it's a blank canvas."

Whether that blank canvas will be filled in with new countertops and cabinets, a shower upgrade, customized accents, a full-scale remake or an addition, coming up with a layout design will help a homeowner visualize what their updated kitchen or bathroom will look like.

"We create a 3D layout on the computer so the customer can see a rendering of their new kitchen," notes Lorraine Sterl of Sterl Kitchens. "The custom layout/floor plan we create with the customer is based on the space they have available in combination with the use they have in mind. For example, [that could be] drawer bases, lift-up doors, spice racks, trash/recycling pull-out cabinets, islands, height of wall cabinets (from 30 inch to 42 inch, or stacked if desired higher), farm sinks, glass doors on cabinets, glass shelves, etc. There are so many options."

While the end result of any successful renovation project is making a lived-in room feel like a brand-new space that's more in line with your current tastes or modern trends, getting there takes a tremendous amount of proactive communication from beginning to end.

"You have to ask the client questions to find out what their wants and needs are, like if they're a retired couple, if it's for a family with a new baby or if it's a rental home," explains Denneen Guidici, designer for Floors Just For You. "There's usually an initial design consultation and, depending on the client, it gets handled in a few different ways. Sometimes we go out, measure the space, and then put together a quick design and estimate—there's so much involved that people don't always know how much it's going to cost."

No matter the scope of the project, managing a budget is one of its most crucial elements.

"Set realistic expectations going into the project," advises JT Norman, product and design innovator at Kitchen Magic. "Budget depletion happens when the homeowner doesn't set a realistic and clear value for a quality remodel and product costs. … Choosing materials and items that fit your budget and allow for one or two must-haves that are within your budget allowance is key."

While some experts say that the ongoing supply chain delays are getting somewhat better, they remain an additional hurdle that homeowners will have to be cognizant of as their new kitchens and baths take shape.

"In the last six months, our management and designers have recognized the impact of both the lack of trained workers available in the manufacturing sector, and the inability to source raw materials that are used in production of cabinetry," says Barry Tarzy of CabinetTree Design Studio. "We believe this state of the business will continue to cause delays in some clients' orders early into 2022."

MODERN OPTIONS, CURRENT TRENDS

David Cerami, owner of both HomeTech Renovations and Let's Face It, says that homeowners have a wealth of options when it comes to redoing their living spaces, starting with the scope of their projects. Let's Face It has offered refacing as a greener, less-laborious alternative to completely reconstructing a room, and is generally the preferred option for folks who love the bones of a room but love its dated details a little less.

"We were one of the first companies to offer an alternative to the

THE GREAT INDOORS

conventional approach of gutting the cabinetry and rebuilding the entire kitchen from floor to ceiling," he says. "Cabinet refacing is for homeowners who have a kitchen that mostly works for them in terms of its design, but they're tired of the colors, the door style, the hinging of their cabinets."

Even those homeowners who begin a project with the utmost confidence in their visions have been swayed by visiting a showroom to see their options for tile, flooring, countertops, cabinets, bathtubs, showers and more in-person and all under one roof. Actually interacting with the elements they'll potentially see every day for real-life assessments and comparisons is an invaluable asset to clients.

Spending some time in a showroom can also help illustrate just how many options there are for every budget.

"What I do is start out at a mid-grade bathroom and I let the customer go wherever they want to go with it," says Chris Hermann of Harmony Home Remodeling. "I give them a range of material pricing where I would say, 'Your shower wall's tile can be $4 a square foot, your floor tiles are $3 a square foot.' If they want to go higher or lower, then I tell them they can go to my showroom, pick out what they want and then they pay the difference. … I can get anything they want in any material, so it's a one-stop shop."


Amiano & Son Design-Build

Hermann notes that his company specializes in additions, and that "90% of the time, if someone does an addition, they'll want other work done." That could be anything from turning bathroom closets into smaller storage spaces with matching vanities, replacing outdated small tiles with much trendier large tiles, installing heated floors and replacing a second tub with the stand-up showers that clients are still clamoring for.

Sophia Amiano, the design-build specialist at Amiano & Son Design-Build, adds that the freestanding garden tubs everyone wanted a few years ago are being replaced by cabinets and linen closets. She agrees that walk-in showers are still popular but that "the main focal point in any bathroom that I've been doing is definitely storage, as well as having that nice, spacious shower."

But she says the most prevailing trend she's noticed, from the western Pine Barrens to the Jersey Shore, is an in-demand, versatile hue: "If 2021 had an official color, it would be navy blue," she notes. "I and the other designer on our staff have been doing a lot of navy blue kitchens. What's nice about it is that it can look a little nautical, it can look a little modern and it can look a little more sleek and almost glam."

When it comes to outfitting those kitchens, Sterl says there is one countertop option that, hands down, delivers the biggest bang for your buck. "The best value for your dollar? Quartz countertops," she says. "They do not absorb bacteria or stains because they are nonporous, do not need to be resealed, are an extremely hard material, scratch-resistant, warrantied and very beautiful because they are made from natural quartz stone."

Norman observes that homeowners have been outfitting their kitchens with multitasking amenities like islands, desk niches customized for specific uses and pet stations, plus designated bar areas for a wine fridge, glass storage and entertaining. "Function remains vital to the way a kitchen performs," he says.

Sananes notes that Cabinet Design Center has been creating a lot of farmhouse-style kitchens with less-is-more vibes and clean lines. "Our job is to listen to you and look to the future while correcting any missteps—we are designers by trade so we try to create a timeless look," he says. "If you invest in an item, like a kitchen island, that's too trendy, you're going to get tired of it. So we encourage the customer to be bold, but with items that are easily changeable. It's not a big deal to change paint colors, but to change a cabinet would be."

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Of course, no matter the trends, every good designer and expert wants every customer to be happy with the kitchen and bath they'll be seeing, using and living in for years to come, which means using their expertise

> "If 2021 had an official color, it would be navy blue. … What's nice about it is that it can look a little nautical, it can look a little modern and it can look a little more sleek and almost glam."
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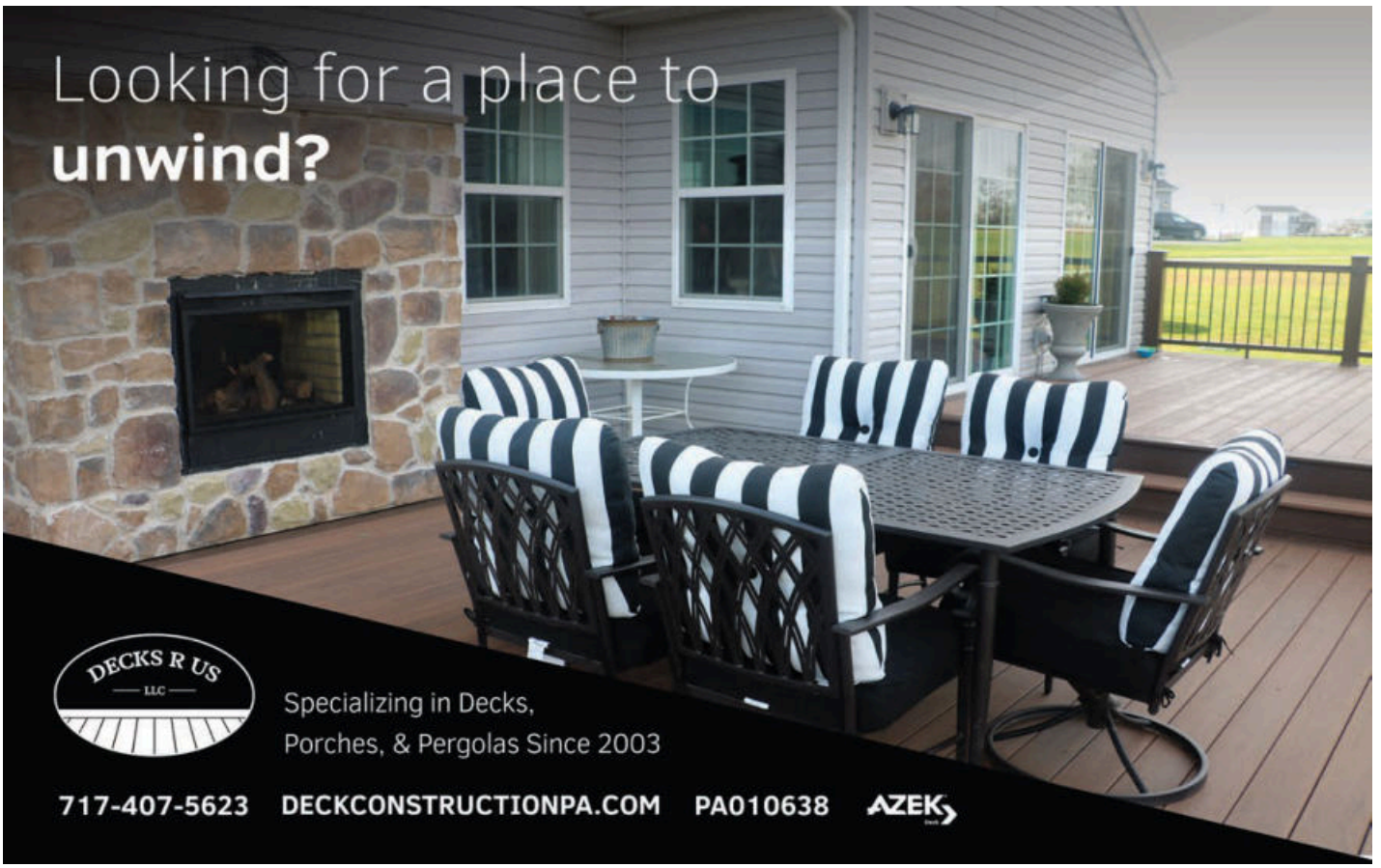
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"If you're looking for a very specifically styled or color cabinet, there typically are alternative solutions within the stock cabinetry lines," says Amiano. "Right now, stock cabinetry is probably a bigger seller than semi-custom. The stock cabinetry nowadays is beautiful, with these great options in styles and colors."

With so many options on the table, it's important for an expert to get familiar with your space before the project begins.

"Getting a free in-home consultation and estimate can be a valuable first step in the remodeling endeavors," advises Norman. "Kitchen consultants come with a list of ideas and will give you a solution and quote for what your budget will allow."

No matter what direction you're taking your kitchen and bathroom, though, one of the best ways to ensure a project's success is to plan ahead.

"Order early to prevent delays in planned construction and kitchen and bath installation," Tarzy says. "Make sure you select and secure all plumbing and electrical fixtures ahead of time so that when it is time to install, everything is in place with no delay caused by lack of products. Couple cabinet delays with the availability of a qualified professional to install—it has become more important than ever to plan ahead."

The other, of course, is to enlist the help of quality, qualified professionals who know how to turn the spaces of your dreams into a long-lasting reality.

"You get what you pay for," Cerami points out. "There are some very talented contractors out there, but they might not be good at communication or following up, they're not good with designs or suggestions that would yield a project that is flawless in the end. You wouldn't build a house without an architect or a plan; certainly, you wouldn't build out a significant kitchen without one." **H&H**

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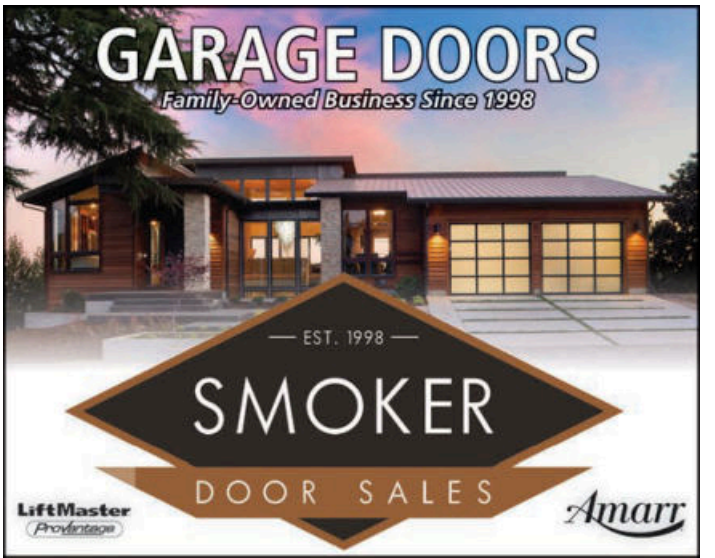
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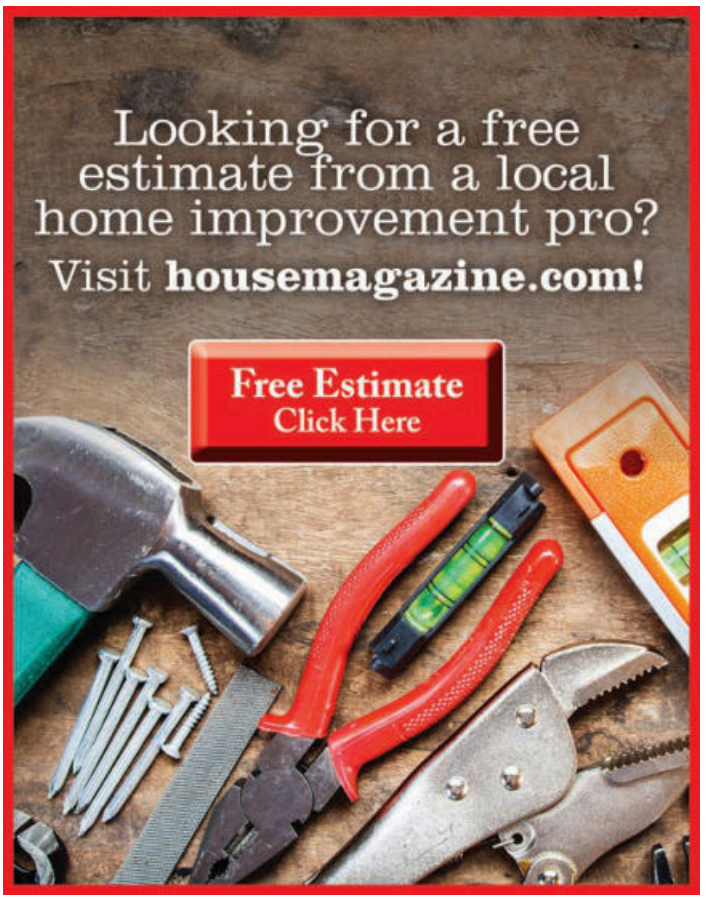


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