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Volume 23, Issue 3

published by HOUSE&HOME

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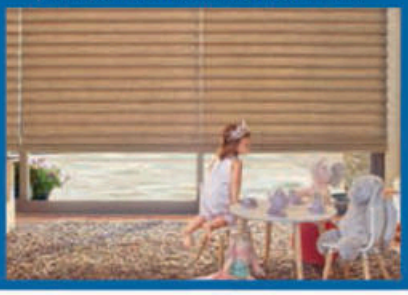
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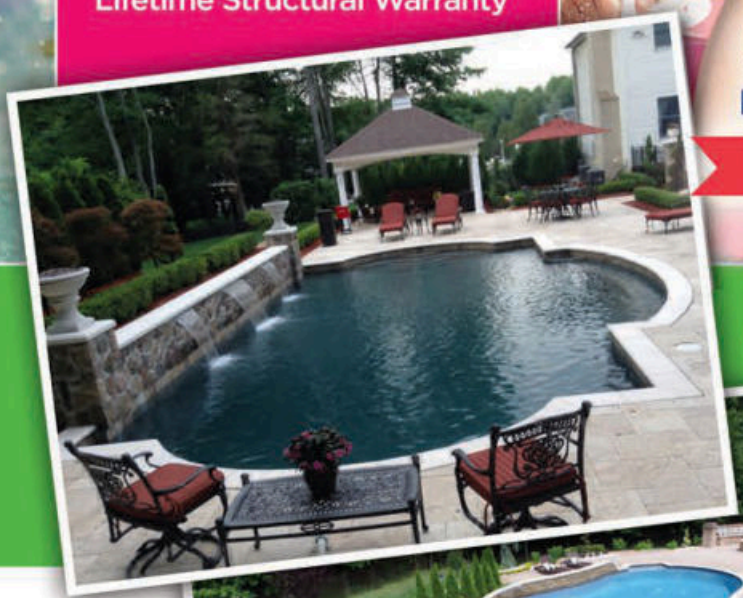
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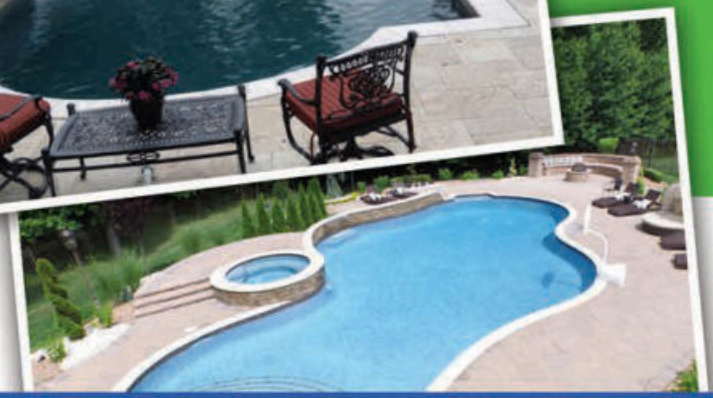
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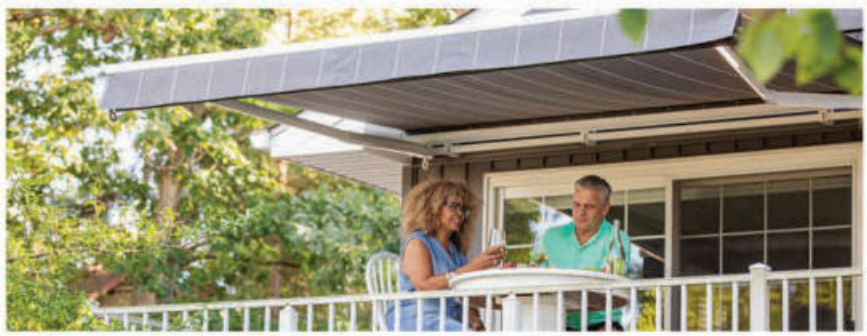
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# contents


12 **Making a Statement**
Shore homes are making bold statements with creative décor and personalized interior spaces

19 **Ask the Expert:**
Staffa Stone

21 **Ask the Expert:**
HomeTech Renovations

23 **A Leader in the Industry**
Gehman Design Remodeling offers homeowners the benefits of working with a trusted design-build contractor

28 **Make Your Home Work**
These days, the home office is much more than an unoccupied corner in a spare bedroom

38 **Let There Be Light**
A look at the latest trends in home lighting and what local experts think has staying power

41 **Shore Showcase Special Advertising Section**

46 ***House & Home* Shore Resource Directory**



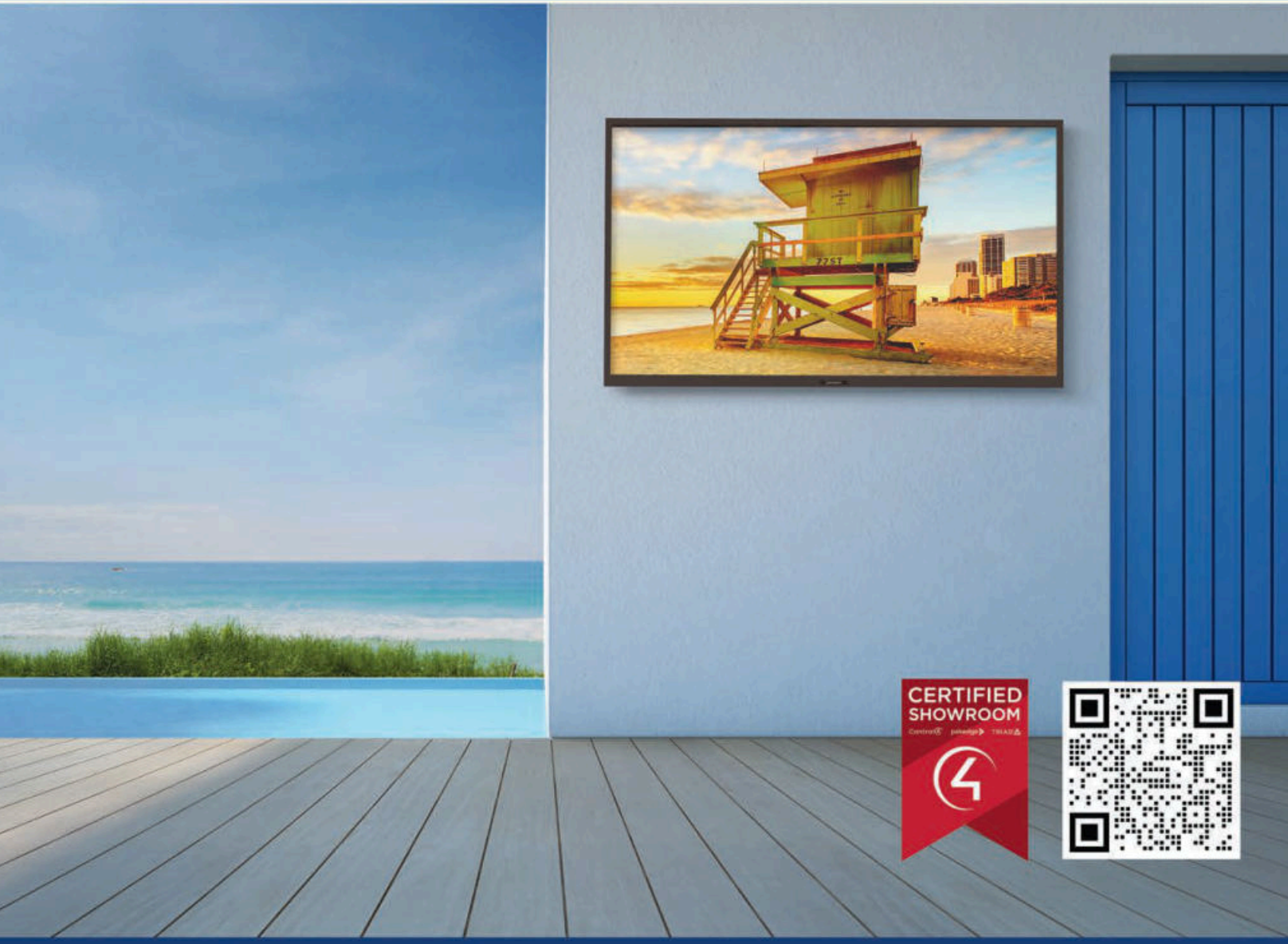


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**National Sales Office:**
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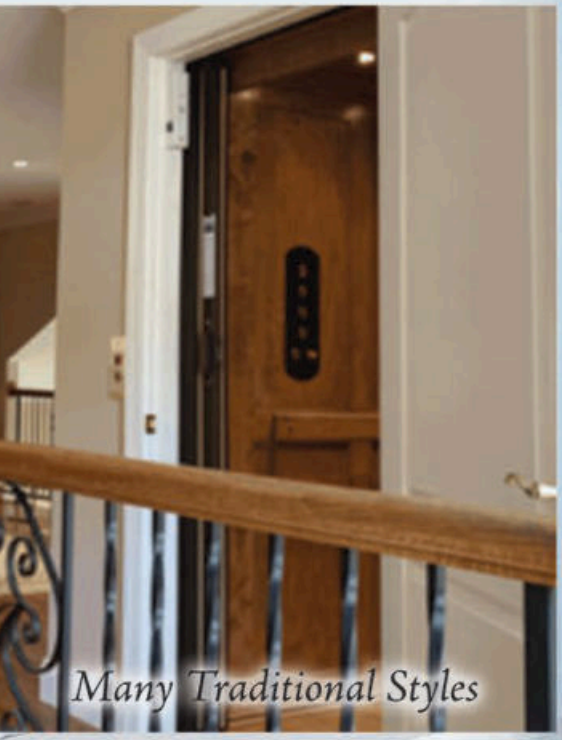
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# Making a Statement

Shore homeowners are becoming bolder with their décor choices and looking to create stylish, personalized spaces.

BY MATT COSENTINO

There was a time when not much thought was put into the décor of a Shore house. After all, it was usually just used as a vacation home, not a primary residence, and days spent there were more about enjoying the beach and the outdoors than sitting inside. As a result, homeowners often went with the simplest solutions available, rarely got creative in their design aspects and ended up with interiors that resembled everyone else's on the block.

My, how things have changed. With remote work making longer stays down the Shore more feasible, people are more interested in creating a stylish space they feel comfortable in, and are working with experienced designers to bring the latest and greatest products on the market into their vacation homes.

"We're seeing a lot more people care more and more about making it personalized," says Kyle Eisele of Coast Tile & Marble Supply. "For a long time, everybody just wanted what was easy: They wanted to get it done so they could get into their home and start enjoying it. Nowadays, they're putting more time and care into making these selections because they're spending a lot more time at these vacation homes. It's not just an occasional weekend in the summer that they come down—they're spending Christmas down here and spending time throughout the offseason here, along with extended weekends in the summer. So they want it to be that oasis, that escape, the opportunity to get away from the everyday life and find that place where they can relax and call it their home away from home."

*House & Home* spoke to several local professionals about the recent trends in Shore interior décor, including accent pieces, appropriate furniture, the most sensible flooring options and the finishing touches that window treatments provide.



Photography this page and opposite page courtesy of Coast Tile & Marble Supply

## KITCHENS AND BATHS

Coast Tile & Marble Supply is a third-generation family business that has been operating at the Shore since the 1960s. Eisele notes that the entire team has been energized by the recent push by homeowners to add exciting elements to their interiors.

"Probably in the last year, we've seen people come in wanting to make bolder choices and make things speak to their own personality and creativity, which opens up the whole showroom to us," he says. "We've spent a lot of time trying to bring in products that are more unique, different and exciting, and now we're finally seeing people who are more willing to use those looks and bring that home to life more. So it's been great for us and we're having a lot of fun working with these homeowners, designers and builders and coming up with something that is going to look different. They don't want it to look like their neighbors' anymore, they want it to speak to who they are and let their creativity show through in their designs."

Open concepts are quite common in Shore homes, many of which have kitchen and bar areas side by side as gathering places for friends and family. Homeowners are getting bolder in their choices for backsplashes and accent pieces in these areas, using materials such as tile, marble and natural stone in a variety of colors.

"We're seeing a big jump in the vibrant colors," Eisele says. "Because we're a beach town, we definitely play to the nautical tones, which are going to be your traditional blues and your softer pastel colors. The newest color schemes we're starting to see are greens, purples and pinks. People are definitely more willing to utilize that style to draw out the nautical theme in their kitchen and bar backsplashes."

That creativity carries over to the bathrooms, although since there are often multiple baths in a Shore home, they may have to pick and choose which ones to go all out in for budgetary reasons. Eisele says the master bathrooms and powder rooms are usually where homeowners devote most of their attention and dollars, followed by the kids' bathrooms and then toning it back in any additional baths. Whichever bathroom they are focusing on, there are options upon options.

"We have a two-story showroom and we probably have about 4,000 different products for them to choose from," Eisele says. "Each product can be combined with a variety of different looks to create an overall completely different vibe in each bathroom, so the possibilities are endless and they allow people to be creative. In our industry 25



"THEY WANT IT TO BE THAT OASIS, THAT ESCAPE, THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET AWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY LIFE AND FIND THAT PLACE WHERE THEY CAN RELAX AND CALL IT THEIR HOME AWAY FROM HOME."

Kyle Eisele
Coast Tile & Marble Supply

# Making a Statement

years ago, you could pick between a handful of options. Nowadays, we could have 500 people walk in here and pick out something that's completely different. It's really a cool opportunity now for people to pick out something that is unique to them."

As for flooring, once again homeowners are no longer just relying on old standards but are branching out to stand apart from the crowd. "What's really fun is people are switching from that basic wood look to a variety of different larger formats, huge pieces of tile that have some character and texture and really speak to being unique," Eisele says.

He personally vouches for porcelain tile, which was a huge benefit in his own home when Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012.

"We got 27 inches of water in the house, and afterwards we just took a hose right to our porcelain floor and it looked like it did the day it was installed," he says. "From a durability and long-lasting perspective, you can't beat porcelain. There are thousands of different porcelain looks, so it's not like you're going to be limited to any options when you decide to go with a porcelain floor. When you're tracking sand and water off the beach and into the house, the easiest for care and maintenance is going to be a porcelain floor."



## FURNISHING THE HOME

Therese Simon, a designer at Oskar Huber Furniture & Design's Long Beach Island location, shares Eisele's view that homeowners are spending more time in their Shore houses throughout the year, even hosting parties related to the holidays, weddings and milestone birthdays. She also has many clients who plan on one day retiring to these areas, so they want to create a space that is just like their primary homes with comfortable, high-end furniture.

Therefore, it's often a balancing act between choosing items that fit with a beach theme and those pieces that suit their overall style.



"Around this area, we get a mixture," Simon explains. "Some people say, 'I want to do coastal, but I don't want it to be kitschy. I want it to be a more sophisticated look, a more modern look.' Depending on the client, some people are going modern farmhouse, but the trend is definitely toward a more modern feel, cleaner lines, more minimalistic, less heavy on the accessories, but [using] bigger accessories: big, beautiful pictures, nice lamps, big vases, that type of thing. They're more statement pieces, and rugs are really important here too. They love a rug that expresses their personality and they tie it in with the furniture."

Shore homes often have unique footprints compared to other residences, and may have tiny nooks that can be filled with nautical bookcases, shelving, pouf tables or personal items brought from the primary residence, Simon adds.

With many different bedrooms to furnish, she says Oskar Huber clients often do a mixture of traditional bedroom sets with custom-made options from several Amish companies they partner with.

"People here tend to spend more on bedrooms now because they want quality, first of all, and also they want more choices," she says. "Where it used to be just white, now they want a distressed gray or something with different hardware or something that speaks to them and their style. So they're going more custom [in the primary bedrooms], but in the guest room that's not used too often they might use a bedroom set that doesn't cost as much."

The supply-chain issues from recent years are starting to be resolved, leading to fewer delays and better pricing for furniture. Simon says January is when preparation for the summer season really starts to pick up, with showrooms getting busier and busier in the months leading up to Memorial Day.

"I love every minute of it, even the crazy times, because you meet so many great, interesting people from all different walks of life," she says. "I love connecting with them, getting to know them, getting to know their style and filling that need for them. At the end of the process when their furniture is delivered, they end up loving it and they refer people because of that."

## WINDOW TREATMENTS

DeSatnick's Window Fashions is celebrating its 50th year in business, and while the company will often travel to towns like Haddonfield, New Jersey, and Malvern, Pennsylvania, to work with loyal customers, the majority of its focus continues to be in the Shore towns of Cape May County. Owner/partner Chad DeSatnick, the son of the original owners, says window treatments of all styles are being used not only for homeowners spending more time at their vacation homes, but also as a way to attract renters in investment properties.

He says plantation shutters are among the most in-demand products because of the benefits they have in a coastal community.

"They're resistant to moisture, they're resistant to hot and cold temperature fluctuations, they're super easy to clean and they're durable," DeSatnick explains. "We say that once you install plantation shutters, you don't have to worry about another window treatment for the life of the

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window. It's not necessarily the style that 100% of the clients like, but when people start weighing out their options, they realize it's something that can give them privacy, light protection and insulation, and that plantation shutters are a great value for windows."

Of course, there are plenty of other options as well, and automation is always popular and available for most selections. "We use Silhouettes, which are sort of a blind and shade in one," he adds. "It gives you the option to roll the shade down, but it also has louvers that you can open and close. We do a lot of woven-wood shades that have bamboo, matchstick and hemp material options. We also have access to Roman shades, so people will pick out specific material and we can make some Roman shades or custom draperies."

The company is an authorized showcase dealer for Hunter Douglas, one of the leading names in the industry, and DeSatnick says that is helpful to clients not only because of the wide variety of styles available, but also because the products are made in the U.S., so if parts or repairs are needed, it's a quick turnaround time. However, they work with other manufacturers as well, especially in addressing unique window shapes that can often be found in Shore homes.

"It's actually interesting because a lot of times architects will design houses and they'll have an oval window in the master bedroom that faces east," DeSatnick says. "What people don't realize is once they get in the house, that oval window—which looks awesome aesthetically—has sun coming in at first light. So it looks great, but functionally what are you supposed to do to cover this window, because you at least want the ability for privacy or light protection. So we absolutely deal with specialty shapes and a lot of the manufacturers we work with have options, whether they're remote-controlled, manual or fixed. We can accommodate any type of window and there are certainly a variety of windows available in the market right now."

DeSatnick's can also be of assistance for any style of home, and it's rewarding to go from town to town or neighborhood to neighborhood and help bring a client's vision to life.

"I think that's the appeal for me to continue in the business," DeSatnick says. "You have the Southern California-style modern homes, the Nantucket-style beach cottages, and then you have the Victorian homes that were built 200-plus years ago. It's really cool to be able to go into these people's homes and see what they have done to modernize a 200-year-old home while also keeping the integrity and the look. A lot of times you see the outside of the house and they've used cedar shakes and they've painted it the right color for the Historic Preservation Committee in Cape May, but then you go in and there's modern-style tile or a kitchen that has Viking [appliances]. It's cool to see all the different styles that people choose from, and to help them out with what they need." H&H

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ask the expert by Amy Kodrich

# Staffa Stone

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**CURB APPEAL IS THE FIRST IMPRESSION YOUR HOME GIVES OFF AS PEOPLE ENTER OR PASS BY YOUR PROPERTY, AND HAVING A STRONG ONE CAN SEPARATE YOUR HOME FROM THE OTHERS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.**



Kyle Staffa, Owner

Many homeowners, whether they are planning to move or stay long-term, are looking for new ways to boost their curb appeal. Staffa Stone owner Kyle Staffa has helped countless homeowners elevate their homes' visual presence in a variety of ways—in fact, he states that, on average in the New Jersey market, owners can expect to see an 8-12% uptick in home value just from an improved curb appeal alone. Not only that, but updating your backyard landscaping can be a boost to your overall property value, as well.

*House & Home* magazine spoke with Staffa to see what new and exciting updates homeowners are looking for to freshen up their property's appearance and take its curb appeal to the next level.

### WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CURB-APPEAL PROJECTS HOMEOWNERS ARE REACHING OUT FOR?

Lately, the landscape of our business has changed a little bit. We are seeing all sorts of different curb appeal projects: There are projects that are very extensive that include paver driveways with intricate inlays, to basic decorative stone driveways with bluestone curbing.

One of the biggest ideas homeowners are doing is dressing up the foundations of their homes using veneer stone or brick. This is a timeless look. Raised flower beds using a nice Unilock estate wall system to give the home a three-dimensional approach. This draws the eye to a new focal point. These walls look exceptional when you add in the landscape lighting.



### DRIVEWAYS CAN BE ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS YOU NOTICE ABOUT A HOME. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UPKEEP?

Driveways can be a true statement piece to the home. What many people don't understand is all driveways require some sort of maintenance. Asphalt requires seal coating every other year to keep it looking fresh. In the Northeast, concrete must have an expansion joint for freeze/thaw factor. There is one major disadvantage with concrete, and that is cracking and spalding. Having an eye-popping paver driveway can be as little or as much maintenance as you choose. You can seal them if you choose, or you can choose an inline sealed paver. Unilock is making a few different pavers that are already pre-sealed. This means it prevents staining from your tires, motor oil and other organic materials, eliminating the need for yearly maintenance.



### WHAT SHOULD A HOMEOWNER LOOK FOR IN A BACKYARD OUTDOOR SPACE?

When homeowners are looking to plan their outdoor living oasis, there needs to be some basic questions asked. A few of the considerations are: What are your needs and wants? What do you need now and what do you see happening with the space for the future? There needs to be a comprehensive look into the layout of property. Major issues can be averted by using a good designer who will shoot grade elevations to help with water runoff.

### WHAT ARE NEW OUTDOOR TRENDS FOR POOLSCAPING THAT HOMEOWNERS ARE RAVING ABOUT?

When we move from the front yard landscaping to the backyard poolscaping, there are many things to consider. What type of pool coping should I use? What pavers should I use that won't get hot?

These are just the two most common we hear when walking homeowners around our display. Unilock is the only paver manufacturer that produces a solar reflect hardscape product. This helps keep the summer heat from burning the bottom of your feet. Many of the pools we see now are salt water, so we also try to recommend a dense product that will not allow the salt to eat away at the coping and patio.

### WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO START CONSIDERING LANDSCAPE PROJECTS?

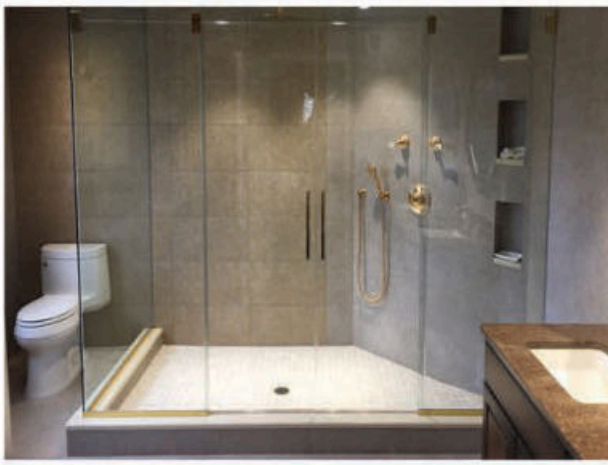
Wintertime is the best time to start thinking about your landscape projects. First off, if you have to hire a contractor or a designer you will want to get on the schedule sooner rather than later. Secondly, many of the hardscape products are in good supply now but, as spring approaches, these manufacturers have a hard time keeping up. H&H

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ask the expert by Amy Kodrich

# HomeTech Renovations

**THE KITCHEN IS THE HEART OF THE HOME AND FOR THE PAST 38 YEARS, HOMETECH RENOVATIONS HAS BEEN HELPING CLIENTS BRING THEIR VISIONS TO LIFE.** With his extensive expertise, David Cerami has helped many families completely change their living experience.



David Cerami, Owner

Most recently, he helped the Kramer family update their kitchen into everything they've dreamed of. Over a series of meetings and home visits, Cerami and his team developed a detailed design plan combining their desires and functionality. From new cabinets to backsplash to custom built-ins, the room is unrecognizable from its previous incarnation.

*House & Home* spoke with Cerami to get insight on their latest project and advice on when to take that next step in remodeling.



**WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO START MAKING BIG IMPROVEMENTS TO ONE'S HOME?**

We have some clients who may call us that just moved into their home. Or, maybe they're on a corporate relocation; they want to make some improvements but they don't necessarily want to go to the extent of someone else who may make the home their lifelong residence. So we find that depending on where somebody is in their life cycle, working careers or retired, everybody puts different emphasis on what they really want to do with their home.

The Kramers, for instance, are really committed to their home for the rest of their life. The homeowners wanted something really special because cooking is their passion, their hobby. They wanted something that would serve as a chef's kitchen while also fitting a lot of collectibles that the family had managed to acquire during their travels throughout the world. We integrated their pottery collection into this design to be able to put it more front and center in a room that gets used more than any other room in the home.

So, we not only brought the art that they both enjoyed into this environment, but we also made this a true chef's kitchen featuring Blue Star appliances, which are probably one of the highest-performing pieces of cooking equipment available.

**HOW DO YOU HELP GUIDE CLIENTS THROUGH THE DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION PROCESS?**

Many times, homeowners don't know what they want until they know what they want. I become that vehicle to help take them through the process of what those potential possibilities are.

The main thing is for clients to determine their wants and needs they feel are acceptable to them and then I become that conduit to say, "Hey, here's kind of what you can get. Here's how much value you could get based on my design expertise."

You need a plan and with the plan you need materials and you need someone to [lead the project]. So, I'm the sort of orchestra leader that mandates what I believe to be important and coordinates the design and the build to actually come up with a process and a product that that customers really love in the end.



**WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL DESIGN/BUILD COMPANY?**

The advantage of working with any professional is that you're going to get that added insight. And that added insight has value just like the added insight of a skilled surgeon or an accountant.

Could you call a contractor again to create a new kitchen? Yeah, but you become the designer at that point. You're gonna make whatever selections you know about but you can't account for what you don't know. And I think the advantage is that many experienced, accredited design-build professionals are going to have that basis of knowledge to be able to show you a few other ideas that may really benefit you in the long run. H&H

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H&H profile

by Amy Kodrich



# Gehman Design Remodeling



**DENNIS GEHMAN TURNED HIS LIFELONG PASSION FOR BUILDING INTO A WELL-ESTABLISHED DESIGN/BUILD COMPANY WITH A STELLAR REPUTATION THROUGHOUT SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.**



For the past 32 years, Gehman and his talented team have continued to stay innovative and up-to-date on the most successful ways to guide clients through the remodeling process.

Gehman strongly en-courages homeowners to consider a company that does in-house design/build contracting; their designers and craftsmen work side-by-side to produce beautiful, successful projects that leave clients coming back for more. *House & Home* recently spoke with Gehman about what makes for exemplary design/build contractors, and ways to identify the industry's standout teams.

### WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES CLIENTS NEED TO LOOK FOR IN A SUCCESSFUL DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTOR?

A contractor that is up to date on the latest trends and styles is important. Oftentimes, clients are very knowledgeable about the styles they want, which is helpful. There's always new materials, new tools, new ways of doing things. Our industry is ever-changing and evolving.

Long-term relationships are important to build, not just short-term during the project itself. We want them to know if they have anything related to their house, they are welcome to call us and if we can answer it we will; if not, we'll point them in the right direction. We want to be their go-to person, a one-stop shop, to make sure that their house is working properly.



### WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR CLIENTS TO DO ONCE PICKING A CONTRACTOR?

So I think a lot of times, the best thing we do is to ask a lot of questions. Generally speaking, people know what they like, but many times they don't know how to explain it. They're hesitant, but we'll ask a lot of questions and we'll listen closely.

We should be able to get an understanding and then kind of say, "OK, based on what I've heard you say, I think that we could go this route," and show them some pictures of other projects that are coming to mind, and we can keep building off of that throughout the process. We realize that this project is for the clients: We want them to feel good about it and give them what they want.

### HOW DOES THE GEHMAN DESIGN REMODELING TEAM'S DYNAMIC WORK?

Most of the design and trade work is done by our employees. This is a benefit to the homeowner for a few reasons. I'd like to think that we can better control the quality and know we can control a tighter schedule because we're not waiting for a subcontractor to finish up something else before they're available.

We commit that when we start on their project, we keep things moving. If we have to make adjustments, we'll communicate that. We need good tradespeople but, to me, it's important that you have people that have good manners and consideration. Most of the time when we're working, the family continues living in their home. Sometimes that isn't the case. It's not just Mr. and Mrs. homeowner, but it's their children, it's their pets, their space. H&H

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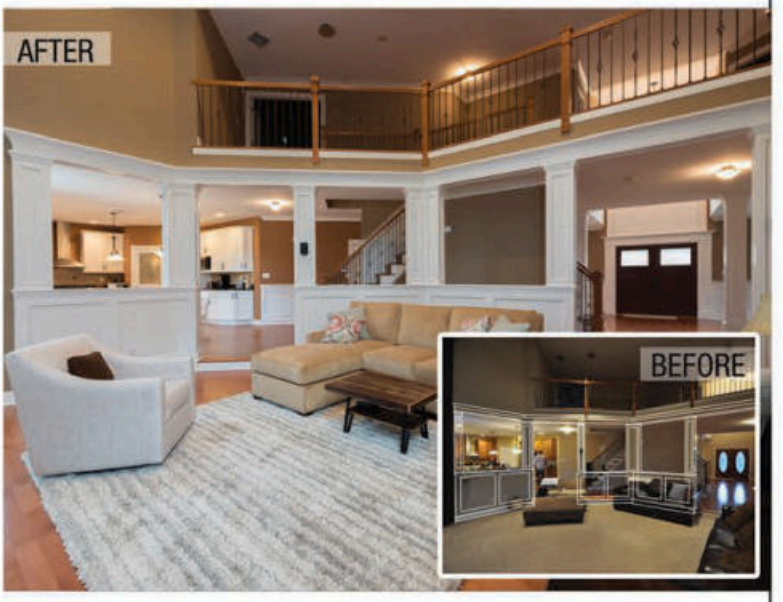
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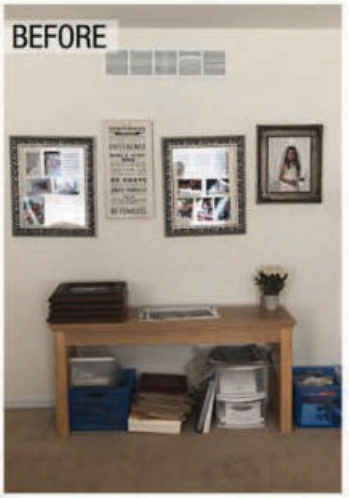



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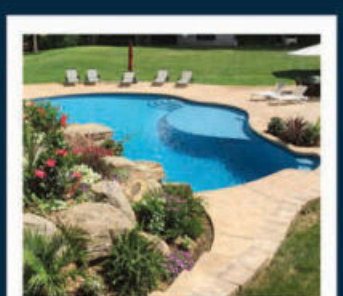
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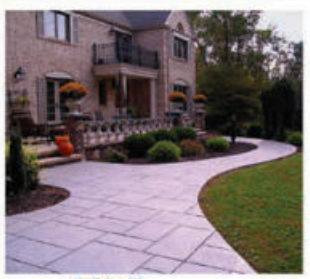
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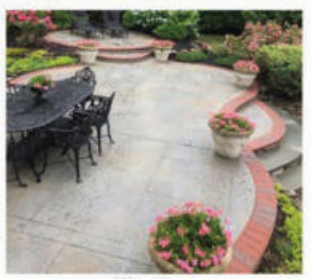
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H&H INDOOR

by **Katie Francis**

With some help from local experts, you can spend less time working on your home office and more time working in—and enjoying—it.



# MAKE YOUR HOME WORK

According to the United States Census Bureau, the number of people primarily working from home went from 5.7% to 17.9%, or 9 million people to 27.6 million, following the onset of the pandemic. In fact, 2021 marked the highest recorded number and percentage of Americans working from home since the American Community Survey began in 2005.

Because of the everyday distractions that come with any household, the design and overall utilization of an at-home workspace play critical roles in this significant portion of the country's professional success.

*House & Home* spoke with local interior design and construction professionals who have experienced this trend firsthand.

Neil Wiessler, owner of Shore Sound & Cinema, says that offices are now customary in standard home designs, where they were afterthoughts just a few years ago.

"Every project we are involved in has either a dedicated home office or flex space detailed on the architectural plans. A home office is no longer a luxury: It has become a necessity," Wiessler says.

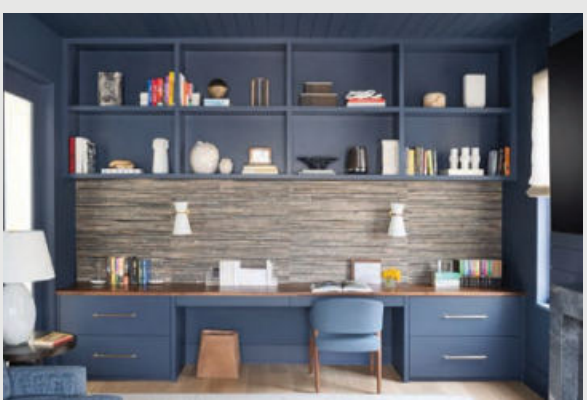
Aaron Lewis, who owns Closets For Less, echoes this statement, adding that many companies continue to have their employees work from home to cut overall costs.

"Since COVID, more companies have found it more productive to have people working from home, and they have cut down on the amount of office space needed," he explains.

Regardless of how big or small a space may be, experts say that the importance of utilizing every square inch is key in home office design. Intentional use of space allows each workspace to reach its full potential and gives its occupant the maximum chance at success.

Lewis, a master of incorporating storage in even the smallest of spaces as the owner of a closet installation company, recommends "utilizing the height of the walls." This can be accomplished in a number of ways, from bold floor-to-ceiling cabinetry to minimal, sleek floating shelves scaling the walls.

These amenities are not only great ways to add storage, but also allow each homeowner to incorporate their personality into their professional space. Lewis says that his clients actively ask for more ways to display items to make their workspace more "homey." Cabinets, shelves and bookcases can be customized with different materials and colors, and high shelves serve as the perfect displays for treasured items like memorabilia and framed photographs.



Meanwhile, lower cabinets and shelving are ideal places to organize and store everyday office supplies in convenient, easy-to-reach locations. These simple methods allow each space to be as one of a kind as the people it serves while enabling full productivity.

Maximizing desk space is also a major component of any workspace, whether it be professional, leisure or educational. Lewis emphasizes the recent popularity of workspaces suitable for dual and even triple monitor setups.

Multiple monitors mean multiple tabs, which can't run smoothly without top-tier internet, and Wiessler has a keen understanding of how electronics and automation can drastically change the functionality of a home office. He knows that while working from home is often convenient, many run into problems when a poor internet connection is compromised by multiple other devices operating throughout the home.

In fact, Wiessler says that "rock-solid connectivity" is his clients' No. 1 priority and request.



"Having a home network on par with a business-class network is crucial for our clients to work remotely. From Zoom calls and Teams meetings to file sharing and remote access, we provide our clients worry-free, enterprise-grade wired and wireless networks," he says.

With the growing interest and need for home offices, they now garner "the same level of style and detail as the rest of the home," according to Wiessler. This includes amenities like "state-of-the-art audio and video," and the even more advanced "motorized shading and smart lighting control." If implemented and utilized correctly, lighting in a home office can help improve and increase productivity even more than in a traditional workplace setting.

"A well-designed home office should include a combination of natural light, shading and a properly designed lighting control system. With a lighting control system, we can create an ideal work environment," Wiessler says. To do this, the team utilizes the natural, internal human clock of circadian rhythm to "enhance performance and well-being and to prevent fatigue and eye strain."

Of the 27.6 million Americans who work from home, they all have their own unique personalities, preferences and professions. And whether they're an accountant or a social media manager, each of these tips and trends is guaranteed to come in handy when designing a home workspace for them. **H&H**

## RESOURCES

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**How many years have you been in business or in this industry?**
I've been in the industry for 17 years, and the last six months with Compass RE. I built my own team that encompasses three other realtors to assist with all clients' needs.

**What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?**
I pride myself on communicating proficiently with industry professionals and all my clients. Other realtors love to work with me, so all my transactions go smoother. My goal is to have every transaction headache-free and to get deals done without hassle/aggravation. I want my clients to be thrilled to work with me. I make it turnkey and I figure out transactions strategically. I am always available 24/7 to take your phone calls. I am a full-time realtor.

**What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?**
I love making my clients happy and helping them achieve their real estate goals, whatever they may be. One of my favorite things is to help my clients find their dream home and get the best deal possible. I enjoy seeing them put the key in the front door and look at their happiness when they fall in love with their new home!

**Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?**
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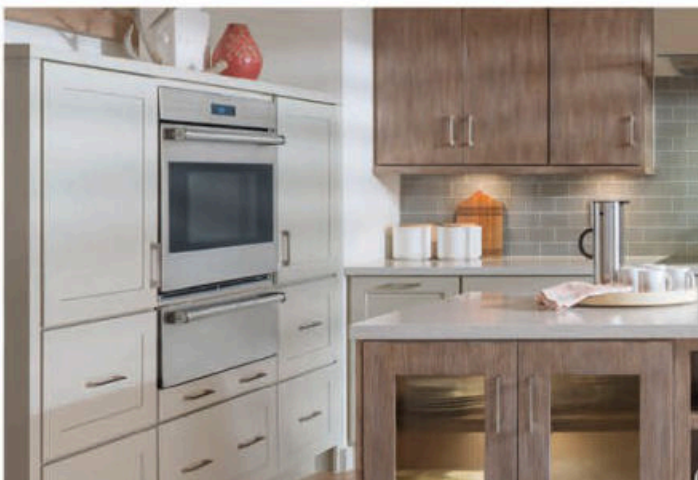
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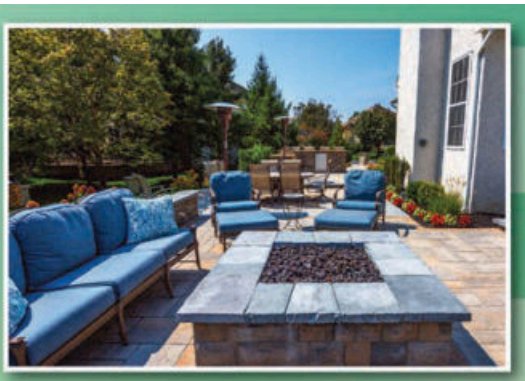
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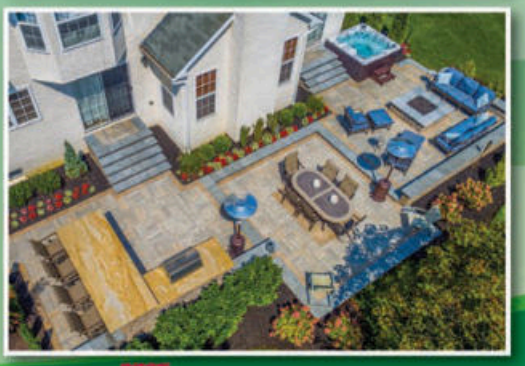
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**Whether you're shopping for a new table lamp or looking to overhaul an entire room's lighting configuration, the area's design experts know how to navigate your wealth of options.**

*by* **MADELEINE MACCAR**

# Let There Be Light

**NOTHING CAN CREATE DEPTH, MOODS AND ACCENTS QUITE LIKE SOME EXPERTLY ARRANGED AND SELECTED LIGHTING OPTIONS DO,** and nothing can tie a room together quite like a light source that marries form and function by doubling as a statement piece, focal point or conversational element that lights up a room—both literally and figuratively.

With HGTV, social media and even others' homes all being sources of infinite inspiration to homeowners looking to freshen up their living spaces, to say nothing of all the ways lighting options have evolved in just the past decade alone, there's a veritable array of options available to those looking to make their interiors pop with some new or updated bulbs, lamps, overhead lights, recessed fixtures, sconces, chandeliers, pendant lights, track lighting and more. But all those possibilities can be a little daunting to take in, which is why *House & Home* turned to the professionals to shine some light on the topic.

## Designing Around Variables

Like every successful interior redesign or refresh, it's crucial to take into account all the individual elements at play, like how a space is used, the overall design theme of a home, a room's spatial and technical limitations, and the client's budget and goals, just to name a few. These aren't just considerations that exist in a bubble, however, and need to be examined both on their own and as complementary aspects either playing off or impacting one another.

And while the experts are here to help, they emphasize that every project is informed by the homeowner's vision and space, as they're the ones who'll have to live with the end result.

"It all comes down to the project," explains Mike Noon, showroom manager for Billows Electric Supply Company. "If it's a new build or a complete remodel, we're seeing more of that recessed lighting plus the focal point: The recessed lighting will get you your everyday lighting and then that focal point will be the artwork, per se, of the room. If it's somebody that's just replacing a regular light, we don't really talk about recessed lighting because recessed lighting is an undertaking, it's not something that you can just add to a room without doing some major work."

Knowing all the options and having the pros offer their guidance on how to best mix and match for the desired effect is one way lighting experts are helping their clients stay true to their tastes while dabbling in contemporary trends. With the popularity and flexibility of layered lighting utilizing various sources to achieve a well-lit and visually balanced space, there are plenty of ways to bring that trend to life at any price point and with a variety of illumination configurations.

"It all depends on the individual," agrees Scott Fenton, Denney Electric Supply's regional showroom manager. "Price is a big thing, and so is their style. You might see a dining-room chandelier—or two, since some people who have long farmhouse tables like to put two chandeliers over them—and they also will put some recessed lighting around the perimeter, and then there's also cove lighting involved in that, so that's considered your layered lighting."

Relying on a combination of fixtures helps to ensure that a room's dimensionality, mood and degree of illumination can be endlessly adjusted and personalized for all manners of household needs.

"With layered lighting, it is all about the different lightning," Fenton says. "You can get dinner lighting out of it, you can get mood lighting out of it, you can get clean-up lighting out of it. It's all there."

## Today's Trends

While layered lighting remains an in-demand end result, the design aspect that elegantly appointed light fixtures can bring to any project means they should not be overlooked as either accent pieces or as objects with the potential to become a focal point themselves.

"Right now, we're seeing a lot of mixed metals, not just everything brushed nickel," Noon observes. "That's a really big trend we've been seeing come out of last year and going into this year."

And while contemporary eclecticism is certainly an easy way for a homeowner to bring all of their tastes to one room without overwhelming it, the grand statement that a chandelier can make is having something of a renaissance these days.

"As far as chandeliers go, people are going back to that focal point," continues Noon. "People are looking for that piece that's really going to bring the eye right to that lighting."

Brightening up areas that once suffered from insufficient lighting is the name of the game for many, and has yielded a trend that the Denney team incorporated into their showroom displays.

"Under-cabinet lighting is one of the hottest things out there right now—everybody wants it," adds Fenton. "We have displays in all of our showrooms that show the differences in it. You can dim it all the way down, or you can raise it all the way up to get that bright, white-blueish light."

To further prove that trends can be tweaked to match every taste, Fenton says that "everything is LED right now," thanks to tremendous strides in the variety and intensity of LED colors and lumens.

He continues: "In the past 10 years, it's really changed big-time. Some people still think of LED as that blue light it was when it first came out, but now you can get all kinds of lighting levels from it."

Indeed, gone are the days of "cold, harsh" LED lighting, as Noon has also seen the energy-efficient lighting undergo a revolution of sorts in recent years.

"LED is very popular right now," he affirms. "What's nice about LED is that it's less energy, so the bulbs last a lot longer. You're not replacing bulbs every six, eight months: They last for several thousand hours of lighting, and there's all kind of color tones available."

And, of course, luxury pieces are always in style and bring with them a timelessness that matches their master-craftsman durability.

"I've been bringing in a variety of styles ranging from the most basic to the more upscale so there's something for everyone," says Fenton. "There's one company we deal with in Vermont, and they basically hand-forge everything they make: They work their magic with chandeliers, with ball sconces, with everything."

## Illuminating Expert Insights

While both client taste and the type of lighting a room can sustain remain the primary drivers of where a lighting project goes, making time to not only educate but also have a conversation with customers is paramount for successful communication from concept to completion.

"Most people come in and know what they're looking for, whether it's a dining room chandelier, a kitchen light or table lamps with floor lamps to match, and it's up to us to help them find that item," Fenton notes. "Between talking with them about the overall design they want to accomplish and dealing with a good 100 manufacturers, we can find anybody almost anything they're looking for."

Working one-on-one with each client to deliver a final result that reflects their individual taste while tailoring a light-design element to a room's size, aesthetic and purpose is a surefire way to ensure a harmonious home-lighting design that the customer loves.

"The trends are what's getting them in the door, and then it really comes down to their personal taste," says Noon. "We do this every day, and we use our expertise to build client trust as we help them balance that functional versus decorative part of lighting." H&H

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**What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from competitors?**
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**How does it feel to be recognized among *House & Home*'s Best of Winners?**
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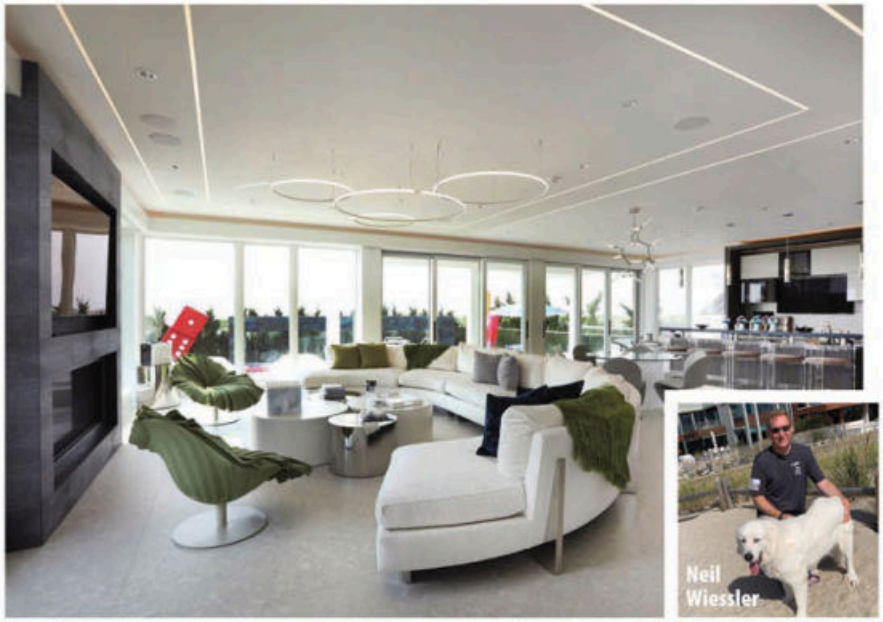
**What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?**
Seventy percent of our crew is family, the other 30 percent is our extended family. I work every day in a pleasant atmosphere where everyone's goal is to keep The Cabinet Shop successful not only now, but also in the future.

**What do you find most rewarding about this industry?**
The kitchen is the hub of the house. It is not only used for cooking, but also has become the gathering place for family and friends. It is rewarding to be involved with the area that makes a house a home.

the cabinet shop

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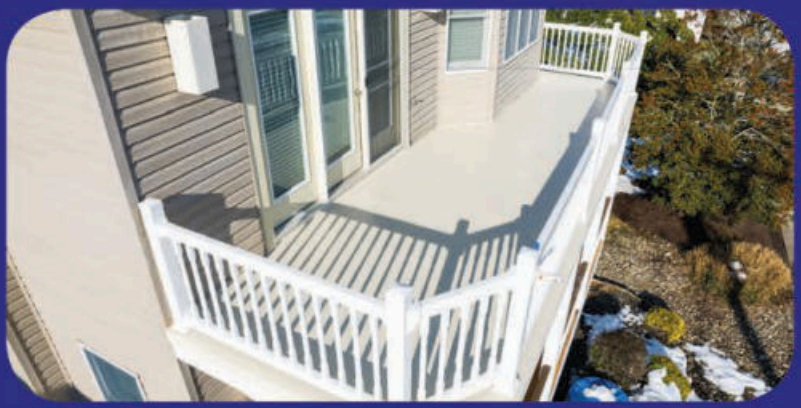
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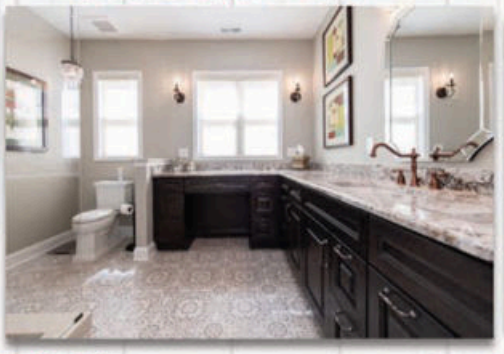
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## Stair and Wheelchair Lifts/Ramps

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732-631-3225
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## Window Tinting/ Film

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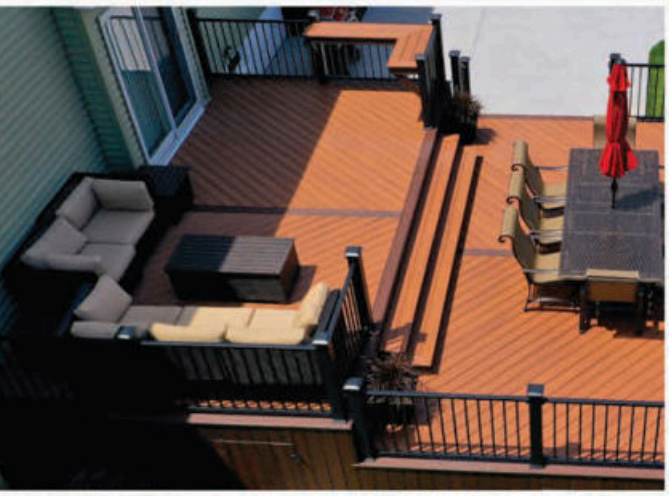
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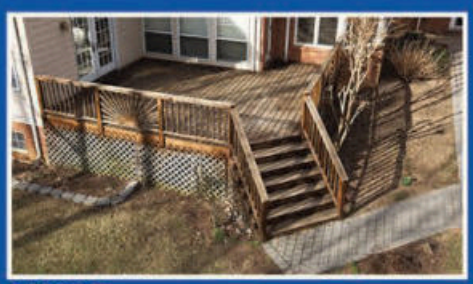




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