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Volume 24, Issue 2

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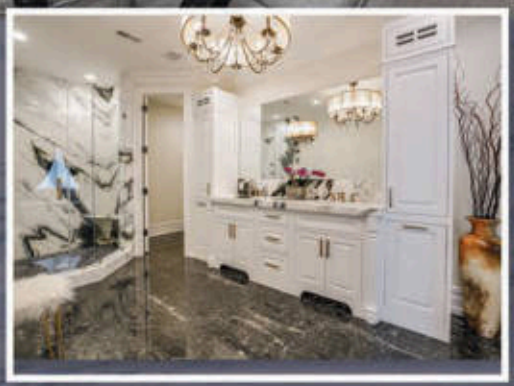
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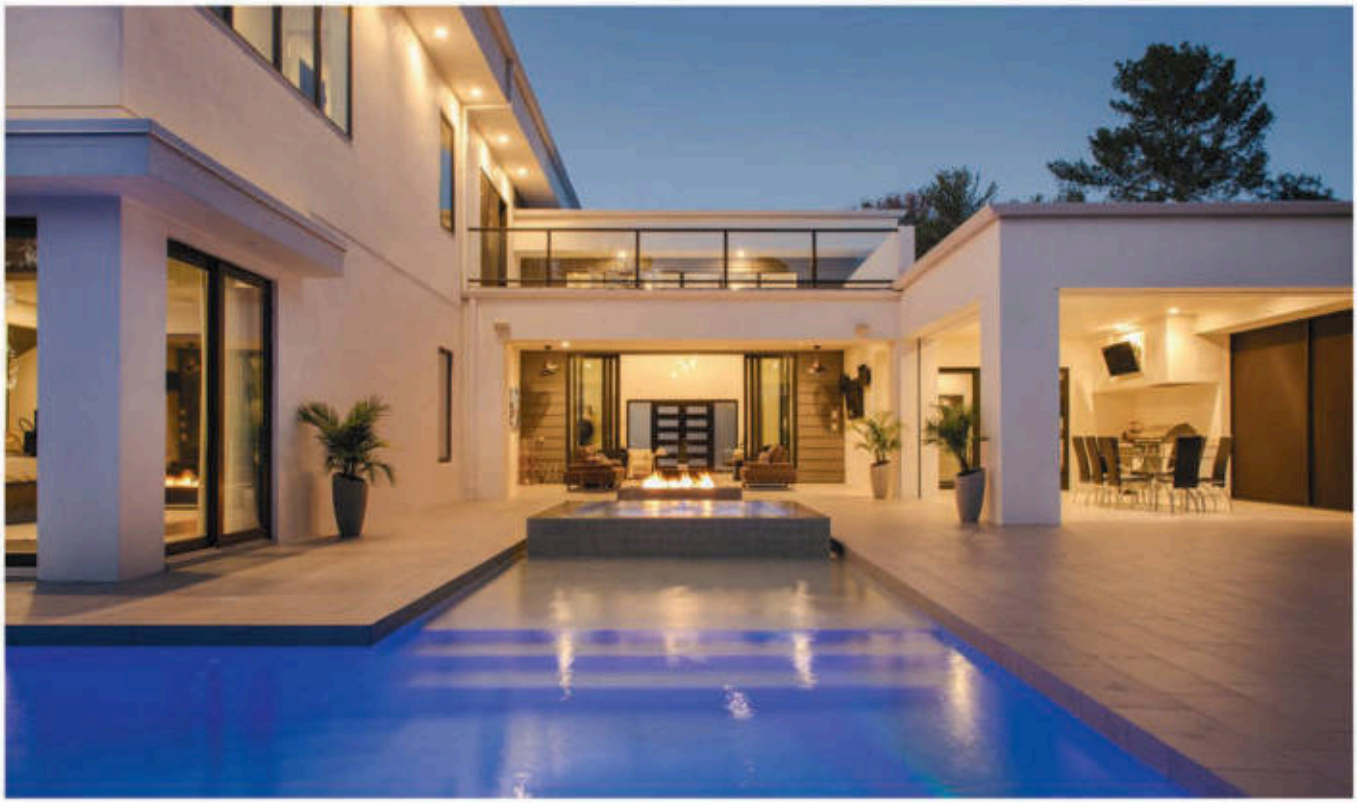
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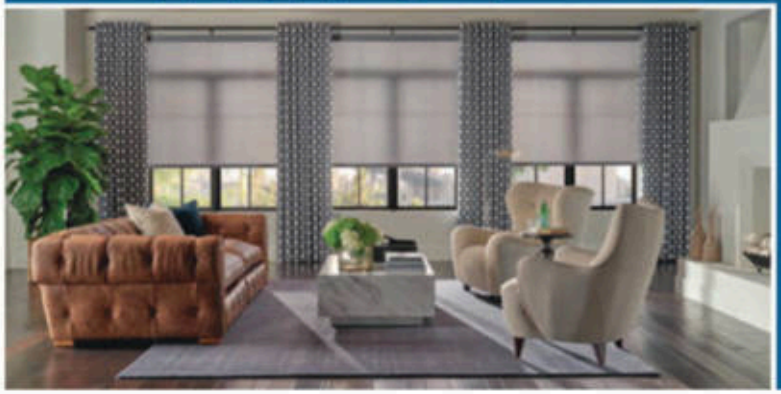
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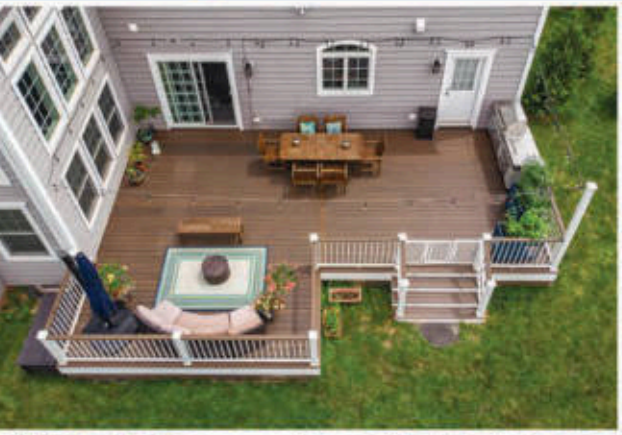
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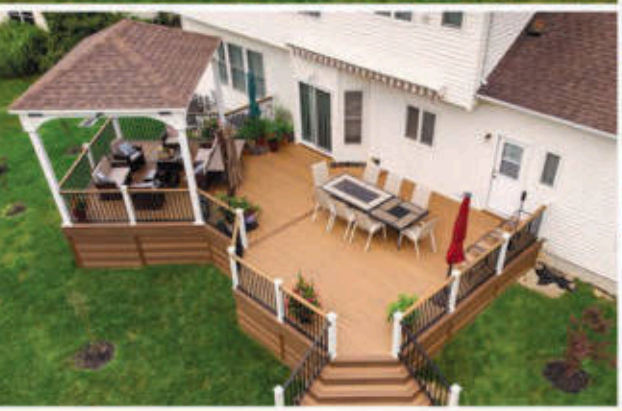
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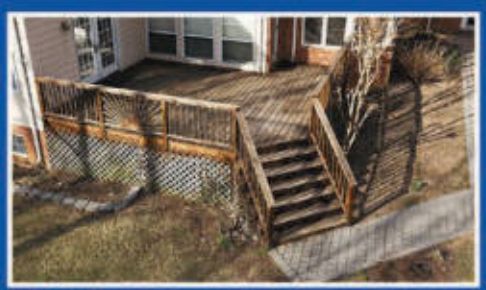




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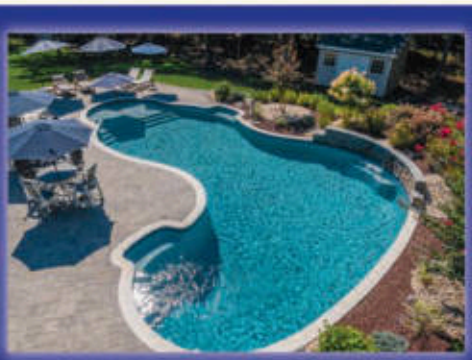
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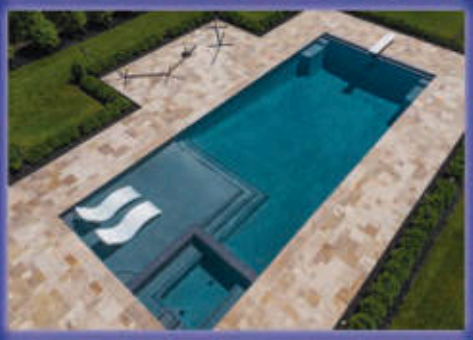
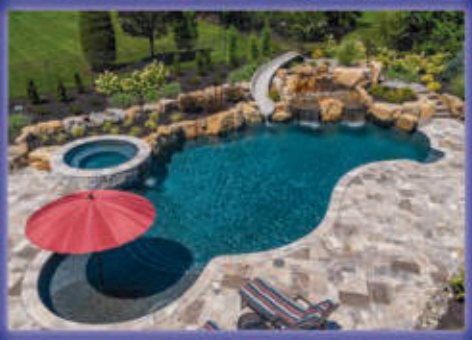


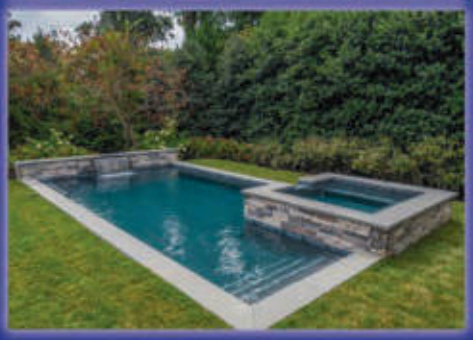


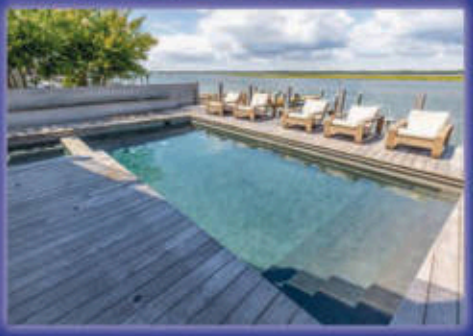
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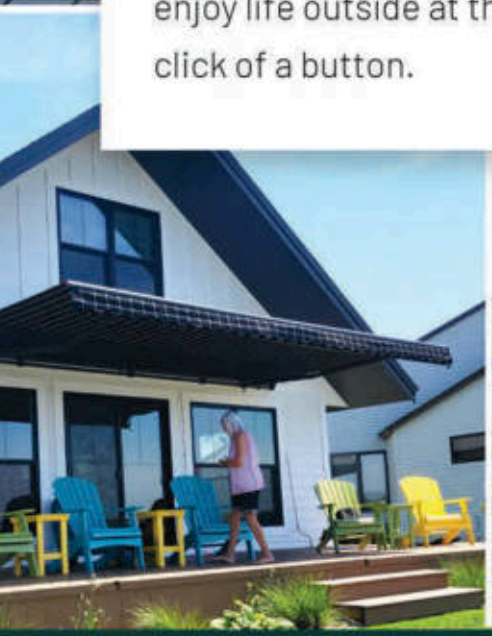
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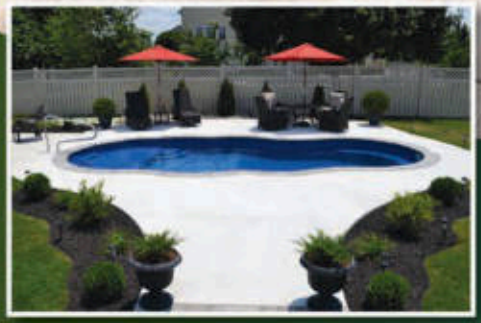
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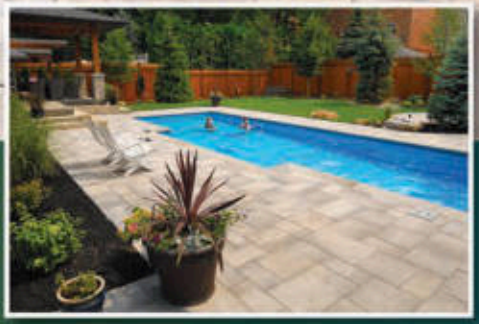
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HomeTech Renovations

REMODELING CAN TAKE YOUR HOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL, MAKING OLD, OUTDATED SPACES FEEL LIKE A BRAND-NEW HOME. While remodels are more cost-effective than relocating, these projects can easily exceed their original budget and schedule unless care is taken to ensure you get the desired results without breaking the bank. Consulting with an experienced, accredited—NKBA, NARI, CKBR or ASID—professional can reassure homeowners their project is in good hands.

House & Home spoke to HomeTech Renovations' CKBR-accredited president David Cerami to emphasize the importance of hiring qualified professionals whose experience allows them to create your dream vision within the reality of your budget.



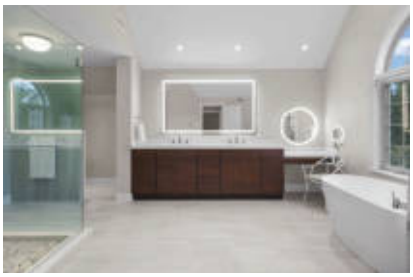
David Cerami, Owner

HOW CAN HOMEOWNERS SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH EXPERIENCED, ACCREDITED PROFESSIONALS?

They'll have the experience to understand a lot of the nuances of a design expansion. Homeowners often want some changes within the existing design—remove a wall or expand the footprint into an adjacent room—which would involve some form of remodeling. An expert understands what needs to be done and some of the cost benefits and projections associated with a project like that. I find that a professional can help customers hone their budgets a bit more by explaining the cause and effect of some of the things they've considered before we get into the design of a project.



For example, I had a client that I just finished the design for. He wanted to remove a wall but had a chimney there allowing his furnace to heat the entire home. He thought he was locked into leaving this monolith in the middle of the footprint; I suggested some alternatives that would allow us to claim that space and really expand this kitchen tremendously.





Because of my knowledge, I offered him some cost-effective ideas to remedy that issue. There's always something needing to be addressed: A true professional that has been around would certainly know the issues associated with a project's demolition and rebuild aspects.

HOW WOULD YOU ADVISE A HOMEOWNER UNDERTAKING THEIR FIRST REMODEL OR REDESIGN?

Work with an accredited, experienced design-build company. Design companies are quite different from design-build: I've worked with very talented designers, but there's value-based engineering that could have been incorporated by a design-build team in some of these designs.

The second thing that's very helpful for any professional is for a customer to realize what they can afford and potentially want to invest in. Most homeowners we meet don't think about kitchens and baths in terms of a process: They think, "I'll just call this contractor and get one estimate." That's hard because how do we walk into a home and prepare one estimate on a space requiring pre-existing conditions, design, demolition, products, product integration and selection of various elements? There's a lot to consider.

Share with that professional a comfortable budget you're considering. That way, they can walk in and if the budget is not in line with the breadth and scope of what you're looking to do, they can say, "That budget could get you X, but would not be sufficient to get you your ultimate vision. Here are your other options." It saves time for both the homeowner and professional.

WHAT ARE SOME POTENTIAL "SWAPS" FOR HOMEOWNERS ON A BUDGET?

If they're not looking to radically change the footprint of the kitchen, they might consider cabinet refacing or restoration. Cabinet refacing spruces up the space with new cabinet doors and soft-close hinges to match other design and material details without replacing the cabinets altogether. They might also consider standard plumbing fixtures, sticking with existing flooring or luxury vinyl as opposed to tile or stone, switching to energy-efficient LED lighting or saving upgrades on standard-sized appliances for later. As for the bathroom, one-piece shower pans and surround panels, eliminating large builder-grade whirlpool tubs, and considering standard-sized vanities incorporating specific countertops and integral sinks that retrofit with the vanity are wonderful style options that aren't likely to break the bank. H&H

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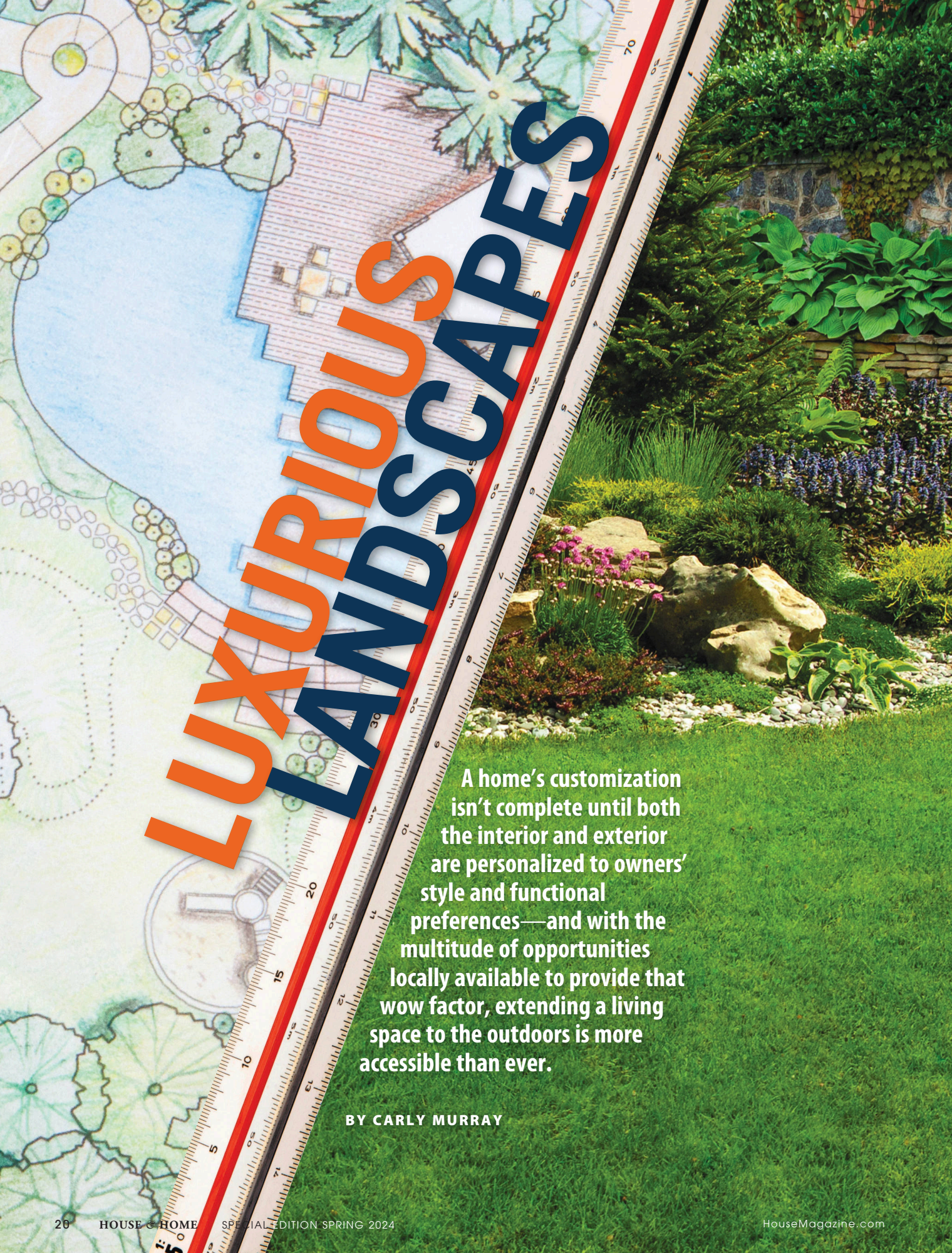
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LUXURIOUS LANDSCAPES



A home's customization isn't complete until both the interior and exterior are personalized to owners' style and functional preferences—and with the multitude of opportunities locally available to provide that wow factor, extending a living space to the outdoors is more accessible than ever.

BY CARLY MURRAY



Some of the most cherished memories of time spent with loved ones center on gatherings by the fire, by the grill, or in the pool, all heightened by the naturally welcoming atmosphere. And while it is often said nowadays that it's nearly impossible to coax kids into enjoying the outdoors, many modern landscaping features create an undeniable draw for all ages: It's all about getting creative. An expert's opinion can help transform an area into a personalized entertainment destination for guests, family members or even solo relaxation.

While an all-neutral color palette is a typically trendy option for interior projects, outdoor designs are all about that complementary pop of color. After all, what is natural to that outside space includes a green and blue landscape, not to mention the rich pinks, purples and orange of sunrises and sunsets. Plants are an easy way to start experimenting with color, or they can bring out the hues in already-established manmade fixtures. Particularly, blue accessory additions look amazing next to a pool or water features.

"Blue-colored plants like flowers, perennials, annuals; blues and boulders accent each other and contrast each other very well. I try to use a lot of blue colors when I deal with boulders," says George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds By George. "If you want to do a little formal flair, you can use certain types of sculpted plants … boxwoods will tend to formalize anything because they're so compact."

Mihalchick adds that the blue color of the boulders is both all-natural and native to Pennsylvania. Lichens or moss that grow on the rocks will not only enhance that effortlessly outdoorsy aesthetic, but also provide a lived-in look that is hard to replicate with synthetics.

Individuality is a key trend in walkways, patios, driveways and pool decks, too, which have been traditionally influenced by simple, clean styles. While major design factors include lifestyle and safety, such as slip-resistant materials near any water features, the rising popularity of home-renovation projects has encouraged people to both experiment with and expand their design preferences.

"The early 2000s witnessed a preference for earthy and irregular designs, which gradually gave way to gray and sharp aesthetics. Recently, there's been a slight resurgence in demand for more color and diversity in design, possibly influenced by the lifestyle changes brought on by COVID-19. This trend seems poised to continue into 2024," says Steve Abel, partner of Architectural Concrete Design.

However, that's not to neglect the stunning browns and beiges that an outdoor vibe would be nothing without. Josh Eberly of Marygrove Awnings has seen a resurgence of bold color accents for awnings as well, which can create a next-level deck that unites the calming and classic patterns and tones of an exterior with the vibrant colors of a landscape. One trick to obtaining a luxury look



is to ensure that every fixture and detail harmonize beautifully, as if the separately acquired pieces belong together in a set.

"For awnings, when selecting a fabric, we still recommend a stripe pattern, which is a classic awning approach," Eberly advises. "For a more refined finish, a smaller, more subtle stripe pattern can really elevate the look. Our cafe fabric collection leans into that, with modern color palettes and subdued stripes."

Stunning aesthetics aren't exclusively created with colors and patterns: While those visual components will ensure a picturesque landscape, appealing to other senses achieves a richly layered kind of ambiance. Water features are an excellent choice for this reason, as a waterfall, fountain or pond help enhance a backyard with life and movement. The soothing sounds of the water harmonize with its movement, as well as attract birds for a personal wonderland.

At Ponds By George, each member of the household can get involved with picking out different colors and types of fish representative of their individual flair—an activity that kids particularly enjoy. Opportunities for customization don't end there, as a home with smaller children or pets might be better suited for a still-interactive pondless waterfall or an illuminated fountain.

"Lighting has really become sophisticated. You just use your phone and you can control the lighting, you can control your water flow," says Mihalchick. "The way technology is, you can do anything with your fingertips as far your lighting color in and out of the water, your lighting or your water speed if you're entertaining and you want that big 'wow!' factor. … If you're just having a nice night, you want to relax a little bit with a cocktail, then you can turn it down."

Technological additions, like with everything else, are highly valued for efficient operation and top-tier beautification. While the contrast of a fire pit next



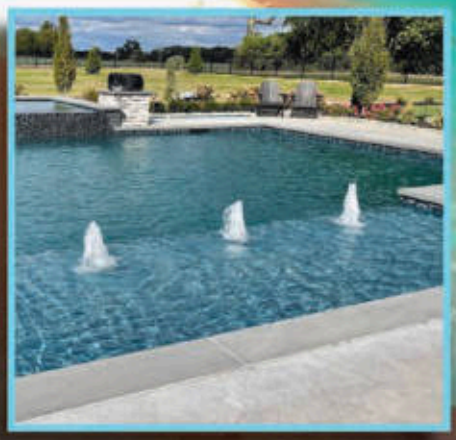
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to a water feature is a very popular option, lighting systems are a safer and easier to personalize element—and they can be easily integrated with almost anything.

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After spending so much time inside during the pandemic, being surrounded by nature can help channel the Earth's natural healing and calming powers, with which many are still getting back in touch. This concept is often reflected in landscape designs, and can help guide what choices to make in regard to colors, materials and patterns.

"[Some homeowners] are drawn to unique patterns that evoke a sense of connection with the Earth, such as our exclusive rock skin joint patterns that replicate a fractured earth aesthetic or classic brick layouts," says Abel. "Seamless textures are exceptional in their ability to complement and enhance the overall landscape, contributing to a cohesive and awe-inspiring outdoor environment."

While luxury is subjective, all of the latest trends epitomize fine-tuned customization. It has never been a more exciting time to discover the potential of how landscaping projects can elevate both one's home and one's life. H&H

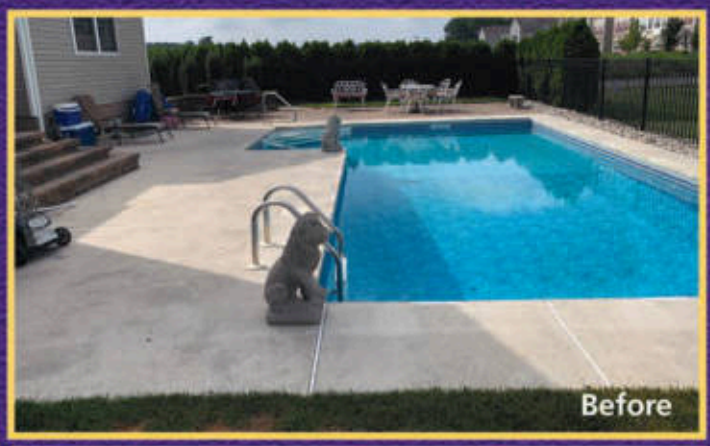
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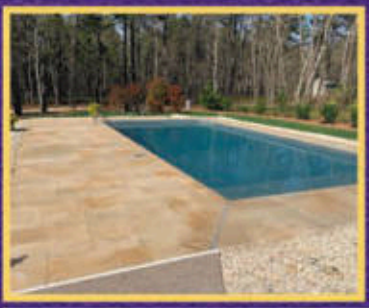
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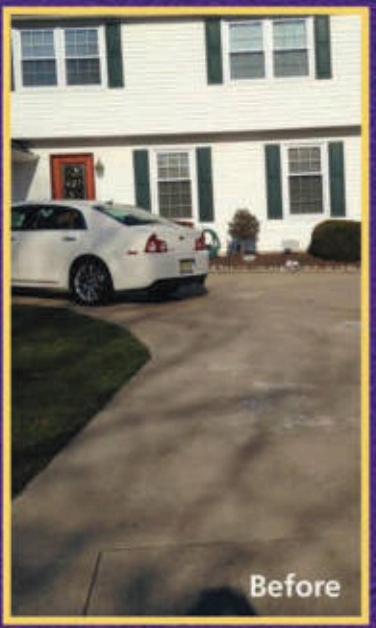
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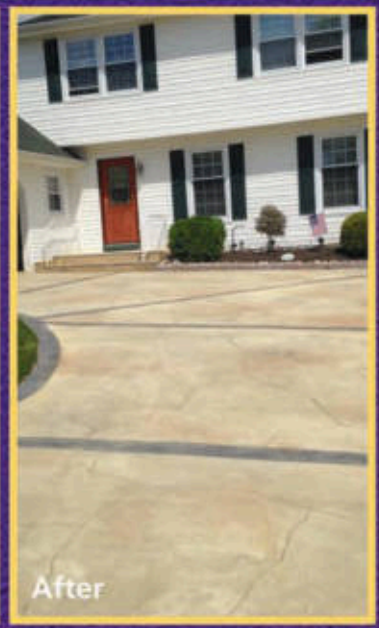






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Shining Design

By Bill Donahue

A kitchen renovation performed by Gehman Design Remodeling enhances the aesthetics and functionality of a home's entire first floor.



The kitchen, before and after the renovation.

IN Erdenheim, an empty-nest couple had spent years dreaming of a new kitchen. When key appliances began to wear out, the homeowners saw an opportunity to turn their dreams into action.

The couple hired Harleysville interior designer Mel McDaniel to work with them on a fresh look. In turn, McDaniel recommended another Harleysville-based firm, Gehman Design Remodeling, to handle the renovation.

"The couple had renovated the kitchen with new solid-surface countertops and painted the cabinets an avocado color maybe eight to 10 years before, but they were ready to do the whole thing," says Dennis Gehman, a Master Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler and president of Gehman Design Remodeling. "We focused primarily on the kitchen, but the renovation ended up extending to the entire first floor of the home."

The couple wanted to bring more light into the kitchen, and to enjoy a better view of the backyard while standing at the kitchen sink. Gehman's firm sought to achieve this by adding a taller, wider window in which the countertop serves as the windowsill; the window's arched top required more height, which Gehman's firm gained by installing a load-bearing header in the second-floor joists. In addition, new glass patio doors were installed to flood the area with natural light. The couple also wanted the kitchen ceiling to "feel higher," which Gehman's firm accomplished by removing the soffits above the existing wall cabinets, and installing new white cabinets that extend to the ceiling; doing so involved relocating the plumbing behind the soffit.



A taller, wider arched-top window brings more light into the kitchen and provides a better view of the backyard.

"The kitchen was U-shaped with a peninsula," Gehman recalls. "We worked almost exclusively with the lady of the home on this project, which is pretty normal, and I told her upfront, 'The kitchen feels tight. What do you think about an island?' She didn't think that could work, so we drew up two different conceptual plans—one with the peninsula, and one with the island. She chose the island, and it was a good choice."

The renovation also included replacing a pantry closet with pantry cabinets, which increased accessibility and doubled storage space; widening the opening between the family room and the hall to the foyer from 32 inches to 37 inches; the installation of luxury vinyl plank flooring for the entire first floor; new crown molding atop the built-ins around the family-room fireplace to match the crown molding in the kitchen; and adding a pet door in the laundry room.

Gehman's firm completed the project in four months. His favorite element of the renovation: the arched-top window by the kitchen sink.

"I also really like the mosaic backsplash, and Mel McDaniel gets credit for that," he says. "Another interesting aspect involves the stained maple-wood island counter and the piece of stained wood on the range hood; they're subtle accents to the otherwise all-white kitchen." ■

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Photos courtesy of Gehman Design Remodeling

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WATER DAMAGE—IT'S A SCARY TERM FOR ANY WISE HOMEOWNER. Research by Travelers Insurance found that homes are **10 TIMES** more likely to be damaged by a water leak than by a fire. These leaks are no small issue. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency found that the average house leaks nearly 10,000 gallons per year. Without preventative measures, these leaks can lead to stressful situations, higher insurance premiums, resident displacement and costly renovations.

One of the largest contributors to water damage? Toilets.

Greg Capizzi, founder of aquaHALT, faced this exact issue after a toilet leak occurred at the condominium he manages, which necessitated renovations of four apartments and cost the condominium $320,000 in damages. It inspired him to create and to patent aquaHALT, a toilet leak detection system tucked discreetly behind the toilet bowl that stops toilet leaks by automatically cutting off the water at its source.

House & Home spoke with Capizzi about the importance of installing a leak detection system and how it could save homeowners time, money and frustration.







WHY ARE WATER LEAK DETECTION SYSTEMS IMPORTANT?


Greg Capizzi, aquaHALT founder

Water leak detection systems are another line of defense for home protection. Just like a smoke or carbon monoxide detector, leak detectors can avoid significant damages. The average water leak can waste from one up to 11 gallons of water in a single day and cost homeowners on average $11,098 in damages. In many cases, insurance companies aren't quick to pay for the damages. This could result in out-of-pocket payments, drawn-out back-and-forths with the insurance company and hours spent on the phone, before any work is even done. Once work begins, homeowners have to contend with potential displacement, repairmen in their homes and a mess. Dealing with a water leak is a nuisance and one that can be easily avoided with a proper water leak detection system. In fact, water leak detection systems like aquaHALT are so effective, many insurance companies are beginning to require them or offer discounts for households with them—so it not only saves homeowners money in costly damages, but also can even provide them discounted coverages.

WHAT MAKES AQUAHALT STAND OUT FROM OTHER LEAK DETECTION SYSTEMS ON THE MARKET?

There are different water-sensing devices out there, which all operate in their own function. Some are installed on the main water lines for your home that once activated turn off the entire house. Such devices are costly and sometimes come with a yearly subscription. Most are Wi-Fi based and can fail since Wi-Fi is not always a stable connection. Water-sensing devices that are Wi-Fi based also only send a notification. Therefore, these systems are sending you an alert, if Wi-Fi allows, while water is constantly flowing, creating more and more damage.

Alternatively, aquaHALT—recently named one of *TIME's* Best Inventions for 2023—is battery-operated just like other detectors in your home. This ensures reliability, as it requires neither electricity nor a Wi-Fi connection. In addition, aquaHALT will do more than send you an alert: Once a leak is detected, aquaHALT will automatically shut off the water locally to stop the leak while allowing your household to continue to use other water sources—minimizing the inconvenience. The device will beep to alert you to the problem until it is physically reset.

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Because Global Home Improvement offers a full range of exterior home remodeling solutions such as metal roofing, James Hardie Siding and Infinity Windows from Marvin, they can handle your entire renovation from start to finish. "Every project is assigned a dedicated project manager and our in-home consultants are also there to help with accurate pricing, design and ideas without the high pressure tactics of other companies," he says.

If your home is due for exterior renovations, Parnes advises not to delay. "Planning your renovation ahead of time is always the way to go." **H&H**

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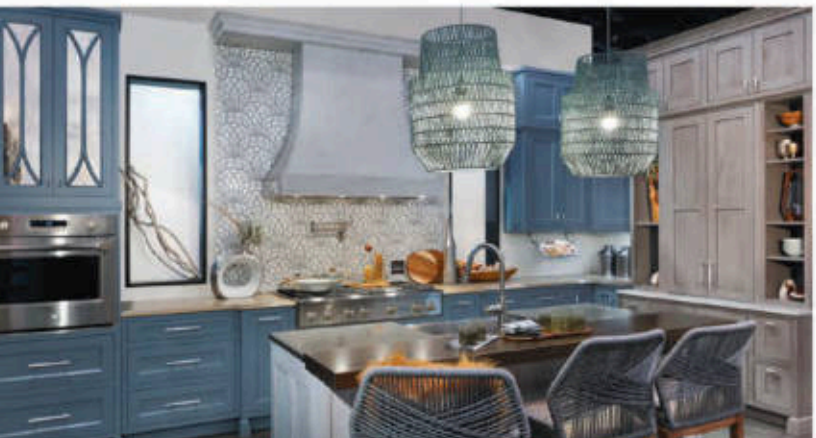
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H&H KITCHENS

by Kristen Jorgensen

THE SURGING POPULARITY TREND OF SECOND KITCHENS: A CULINARY REVOLUTION IN MODERN HOMES

In recent years, a fascinating trend has emerged in the realm of home design and lifestyle—the rise of second kitchens. Once considered a luxury reserved for expansive mansions or extravagant estates, secondary kitchens are now becoming increasingly popular in a variety of homes, ranging from suburban residences to urban apartments. This growing trend reflects a shift in the way people approach cooking, entertaining and the evolving role of the kitchen in modern living.

Granted, second kitchens are not necessarily a new thing, nor are they relegated just to upper-crust luxury homes. They've long existed in kosher Jewish residences, as dietary laws forbid the mixing of meat and dairy. Islamic halal cooking and severe allergies also necessitate separate areas for certain ingredients.

The COVID-19 pandemic also fueled a fresh need for a separate spot where we could unload potentially germ-laden groceries and store more quarantine supplies. Even though the panic of those years is largely over, the added storage still definitely comes in handy today. Add a sink or mini fridge to that oversized pantry and *voila*, the second kitchen is reborn.

Keith Eisele from Coast Tile elaborates, "Second kitchens we used to think were exclusive to large estates and the ultra-wealthy for many years, but with the shift in how we spend our leisure time sparked by the pandemic and the rise in home renovations, and second-home buyers, the concepts became more real for the people looking to update their living situations. With people starting to spend more time in the home and less time going out, the resurgence of the second kitchen took off."

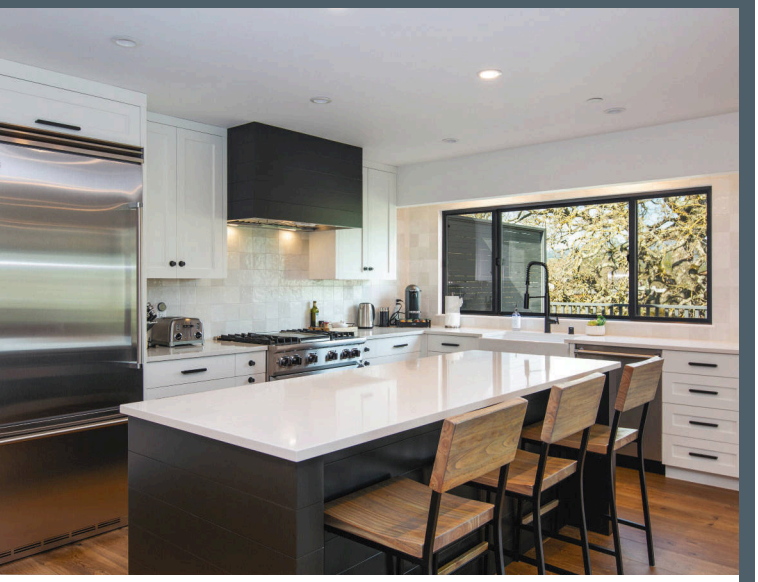
THE EVOLUTION

Second kitchens go by many names, none all that savory—scullery kitchens, working kitchens or simply "messy kitchens"—and the reason for their existence is to function as the original kitchen was meant to, but can't. *Why?* Because "Kitchen No. 1" has evolved to such a pinnacle of entertainment perfection that it's mostly just for show. "Kitchen No. 2," hidden behind closed doors, is where all the smoking, steaming, cooking and cleaning takes place.

Traditionally, the kitchen was a utilitarian space tucked away from the prying eyes of guests. "Kitchens weren't really the star of a home like they are now in the modern day. A lot of homes had smaller second kitchens to separate the non-cooking preparations of food provisions from the intensity of the actual cooking that took place in the large kitchen," explains Dennis Gehman, president of Gehman Design Remodeling. "We often saw smaller, second kitchens in homes that



Top photo courtesy: Joseph Hendrickson, Shutterstock.com



were built over 100 years ago, where their main function was to bring in and store the fresh vegetables, produce and meats, essentially away from the heat of the performance kitchen."

However, now as the focal point of the home, the kitchen has undergone a significant transformation. It has evolved from a functional area where meals were simply prepared to a social hub where families and friends gather, creating a demand for larger and more versatile kitchen spaces.

This modern lifestyle places a strong emphasis on entertainment and hospitality and ironically pulls a page from the past for more functionality. Homeowners are now investing in dedicated entertaining spaces, and a second kitchen becomes an invaluable asset when hosting gatherings.

This trend also aligns with the growing popularity of open-concept living, where kitchens seamlessly integrate with dining and living areas. The second kitchen allows hosts to prepare and to serve food without the intrusion of guests into the primary cooking space.

IS IT TRULY BENEFICIAL?

Two kitchens in one house may seem excessive to some unless it's a multifamily house. However, having a second kitchen installed could be just what your home and family need, especially if you are simply looking for more convenience.

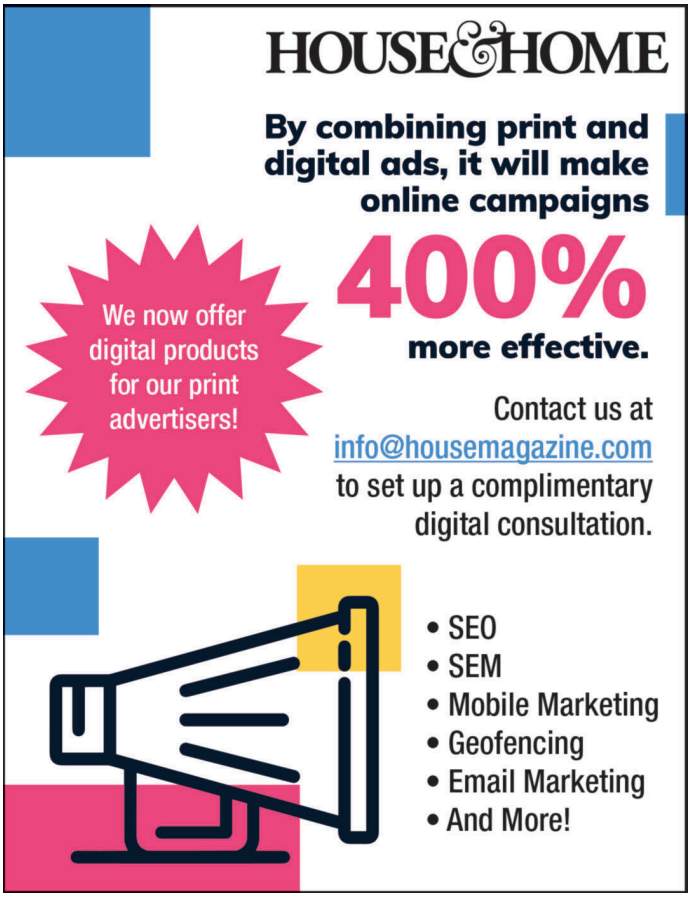
"The first thing that comes to mind is functionality. Especially coming off the holiday season, when hosting a group of people and preparing food for everyone, having more space is everything. Having a second oven, stove top, counter space, etc. It's essential in taking out the stress of the event preparations," says Eisele.

If you want to take it a step further, bringing in a catering company or a private chef to prepare food and drinks for a party can often be a challenging task. Having a secondary kitchen allows the event to have a more upscale feel and functionality for both the caterer and the homeowner.

Another key driver behind the surge in second kitchens is the increasing prevalence of multigenerational living arrangements. With more families choosing to live together under one roof, the need for separate cooking spaces has become evident.

"Second kitchens offer privacy, autonomy and con-







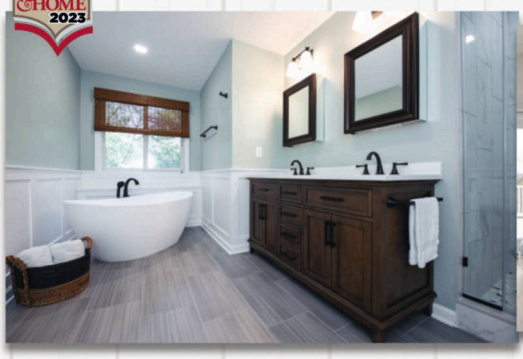
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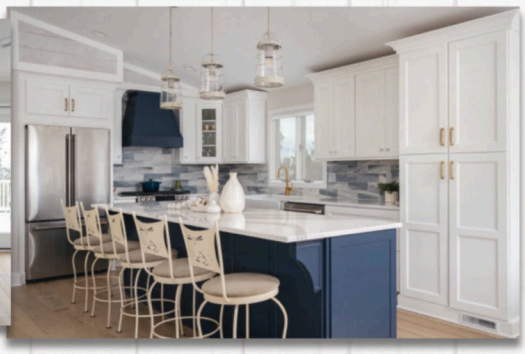
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venience for different generations sharing the same living space, allowing them to prepare meals without disrupting the daily activities of others. It really helps provide a more welcoming and adaptable atmosphere for in-laws or aging family members who may be sharing a living space," shares David Cerami, president of HomeTech Renovations.

ADDED PROPERTY VALUE

A kitchen is one of the most crucial parts of a home—so much so that having one can distinguish a place as a residence. Installing a second kitchen greatly increases the value of your home. This is also especially true, as mentioned earlier, with the number of multigenerational households increasing, as living expenses rise.

"During the pandemic, more and more people sought ways to make conducting their lives at home easier, such as by installing a home gym, another home office and a second kitchen. In spite of increased demand for homes with two kitchens, they remain fairly rare, so having a second kitchen installed can increase the value of your home.," Gehman says.

Eisele adds, "There is no doubt that a second kitchen increases the value of your home. A second kitchen is like a heated floor, once you have one, you cannot imagine life without it. It becomes a selling point for any realtor and a conversation piece for everyone who walks through the door."

Of course, when it comes time to find the right remodeling contractor to take on a project of this nature, you'll want to do your homework.

"Referrals are the best way to find a remodeling contractor," says Dan Dilworth, owner of Dilworth's Custom Design. "Ask your friends, neighbors and coworkers. Use social media. There are new 'neighborhood' apps that are increasing in popularity. You can use these to ask others in your neighborhood if they've had similar work done and how they felt about their contractor. Local lumber yards and realtors are other good sources."

Dilworth also stresses the need of having a budget in place from the onset of the project. "It's almost impossible to decide what options you want if you don't have a budget already in mind," he says.

The popularity trend of second kitchens signals a profound shift in the way people view and utilize their living spaces. Whether designed to address specific living arrangements, culinary pursuits or entertaining, the second kitchen has become a versatile solution to address the diverse needs of modern homeowners. As this trend continues to gain momentum, we can expect to see further innovations in kitchen design, catering to the evolving lifestyles and preferences of individuals and families alike. **H&H**

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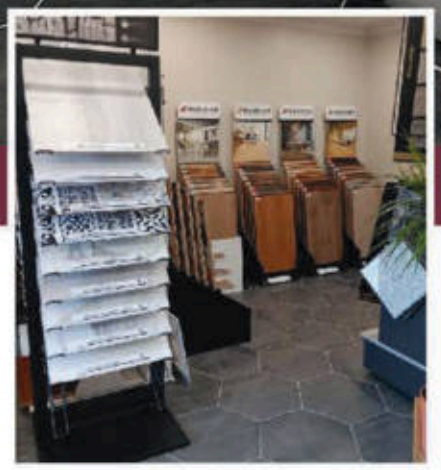
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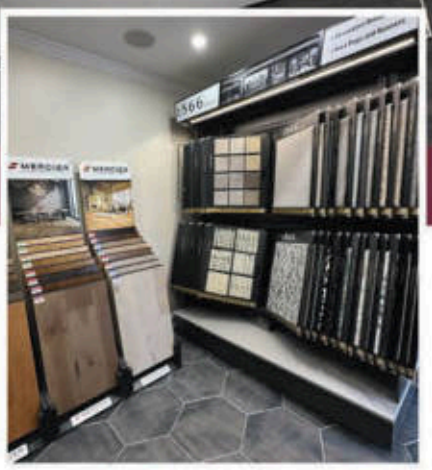


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What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
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Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?
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How many years have you been in business or in this industry?
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What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?
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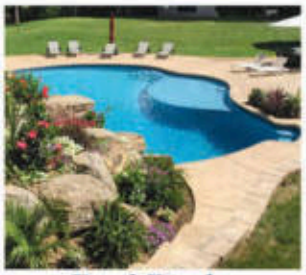
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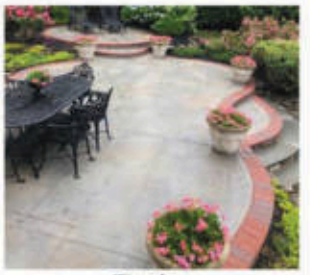
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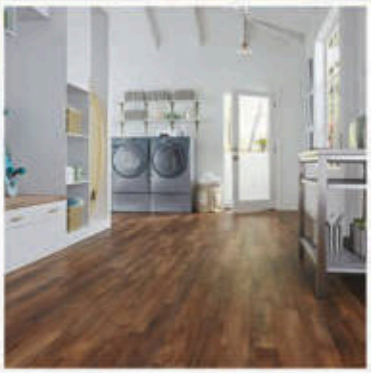
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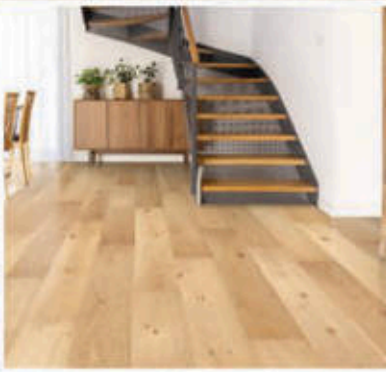
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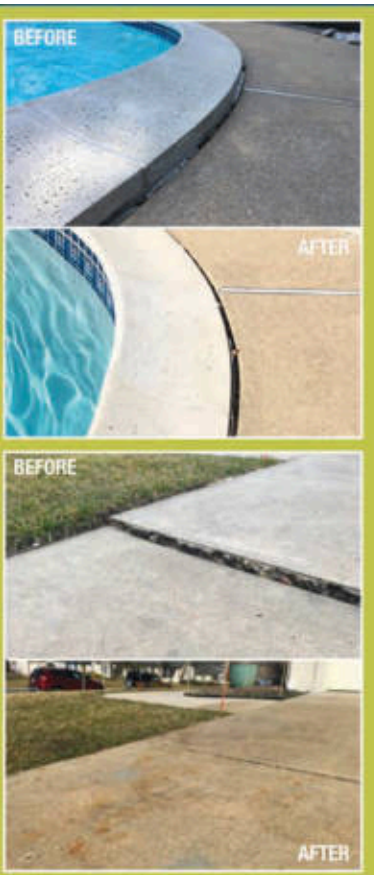
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