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page 2

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How pavers can enhance your outdoor aesthetic

Finding the Right Flooring

What factors to consider when choosing the right options for your home

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Bringing unmatched expertise and a designer's eye to decorative concrete projects *page 11*

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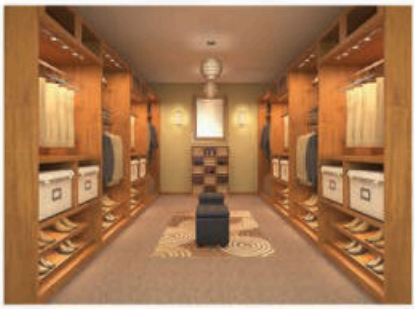
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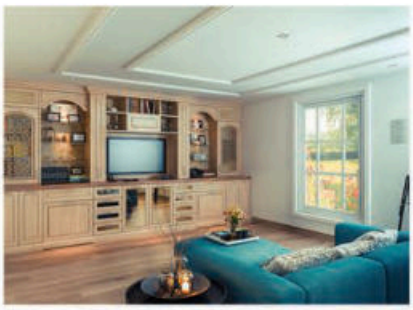
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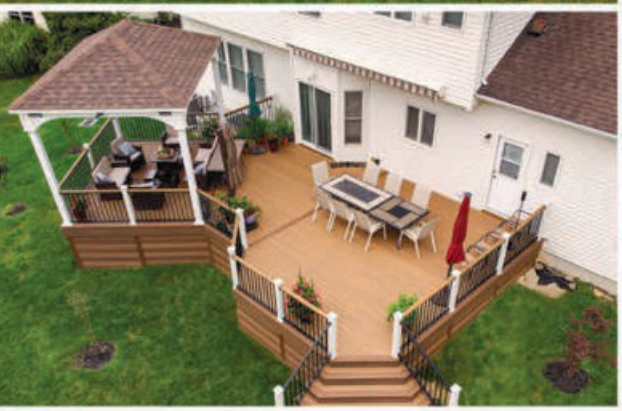
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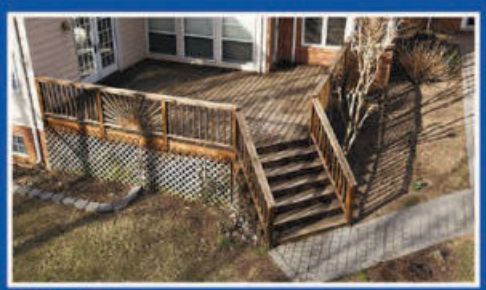




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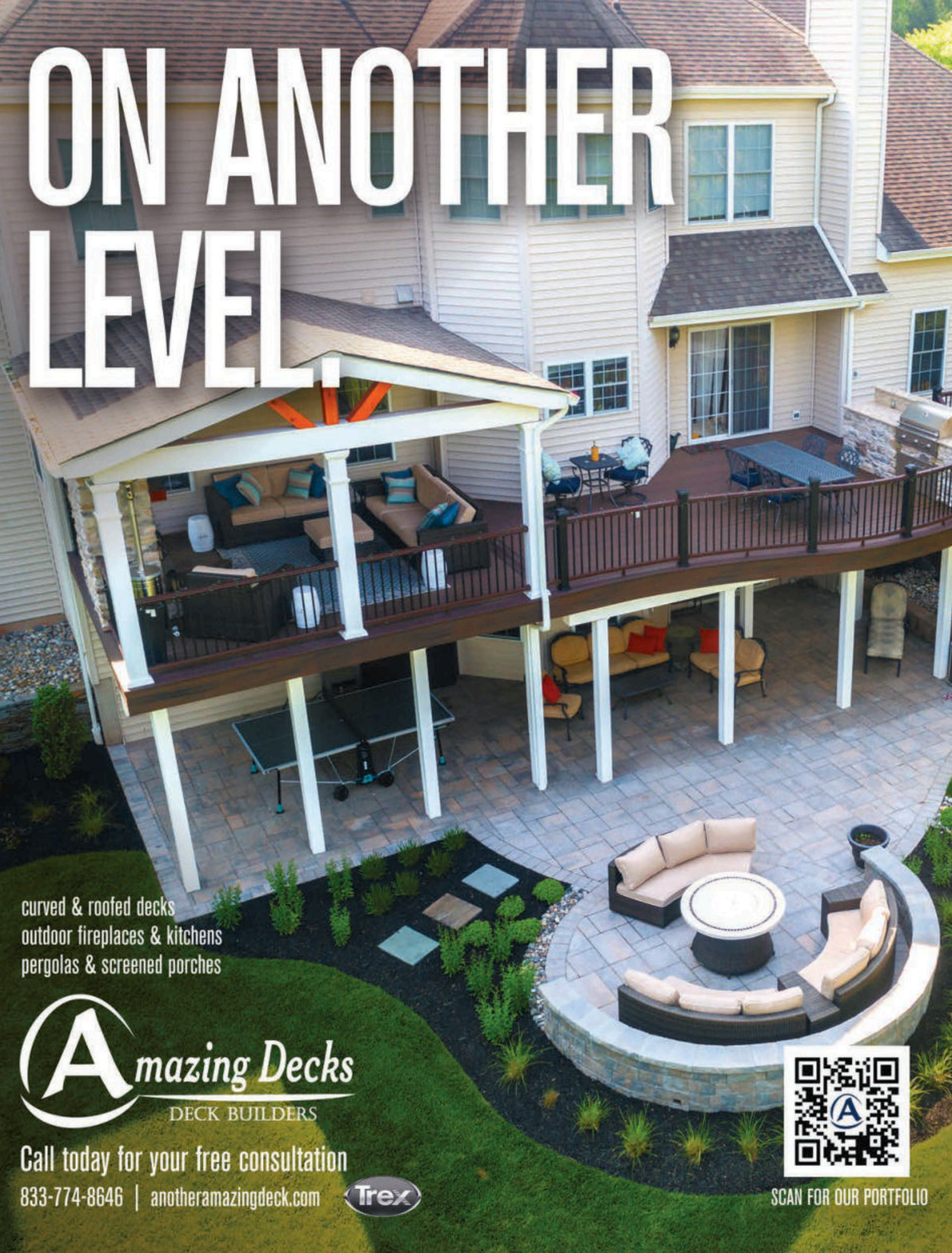
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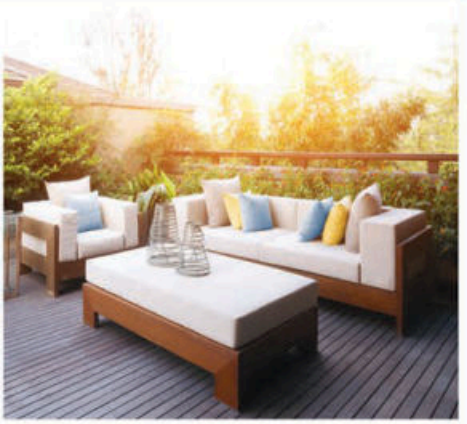
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H&H profile *by* **Kristen Dowd**





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Architectural Concrete Design specializes in a wide array of decorative concrete solutions to upgrade your exterior with top-quality projects.

IN THE EARLY '90S, DECORATIVE CONCRETE WAS A LITTLE-KNOWN ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT ON THE EAST COAST.

That all started to change when Architectural Concrete Design, or ACD, came onto the scene in 1993. When founder Chris McMahon started the Levittown-based business, his aim was to introduce the Greater Philadelphia area to the innovative world of decorative concrete.

"Our foundation was built on the principle of blending aesthetics with functionality in concrete designs," ACD's Managing Partner Steve Abel says. "This innovation rapidly positioned ACD as the leading decorative concrete installer on the East Coast. Our journey of innovation continued as we developed custom stamping tools, contributed to industry-standard application techniques, and consistently delivered unparalleled installation quality."

He continues, "What truly sets ACD apart is our unwavering commitment to decorative concrete. Unlike many in the field who might dabble in various construction areas, we focus solely on this specialty. Our team, led by foremen with over 25 years of experience, understands the art and science of decorative concrete."

From its location on New Falls Road, ACD specializes in a variety of decorative concrete solutions: stamped concrete, which can replicate stones, tiles or bricks; exposed aggregate, which creates a textured surface by exposing rocks, pebbles, sand or other material mixed in with the concrete; and colored concrete, which comes in a wide selection of shades. The company also offers comprehensive maintenance services for clients' existing concrete structures.

Decorative concrete is a longer-lasting, easier-to-maintain product that is also more cost-effective than traditional materials. The design options are seemingly endless, too, with sophisticated styles and trendy finishes—or even the chance to create something completely outside the box.

ACD can install its products wherever a client is looking to improve aesthetics and functionality around their property, too. This includes pool decks, driveways, patios, walkways and more. The company strives to showcase its expertise and excellence in every project, whether it's a commercial job or residential property.

"Our approach is meticulous, ensuring the use of superior materials, adherence to optimal curing times and deployment of skilled crews," Abel says. "This dedication to quality, coupled with our 30-year legacy as both a residential and commercial contractor, has cemented our reputation among the region's top builders."

Abel says ACD's philosophy is encapsulated in its motto: "We only have one chance to be perfect, do it right, do it now, whatever it takes." This sentiment is a reflection of the company's commitment to excellence, which it achieves by ensuring top-tier talent, the finest materials and best-practice installation methods.

"Our customer-first mentality is at the heart of our operations. We understand the challenges of transforming raw materials into artistic products under time constraints, and we thrive in this demanding yet rewarding environment," Abel says.

ACD is ready to meet the needs of every client, whether it's a seasoned professional with precise requirements for the project they're envisioning or a brand-new customer who wants to find out how stamped concrete can transform their home.

"We tailor our approach to each client's needs," Abel says. "Our design team plays a pivotal role in this process, helping clients understand the product, market trends, and how these align with their personal preferences and functional needs."

Collaborating in this way ensures a customized project that is going to please the client, according to Abel.

And becoming an ACD client is as easy as giving the office a call or submitting an inquiry through the company website.

"We welcome everyone, from homeowners exploring decorative concrete options to ready-to-proceed customers," Abel says. "Our team is passionate about what we do and eager to assist clients in making informed decisions." **H&H**



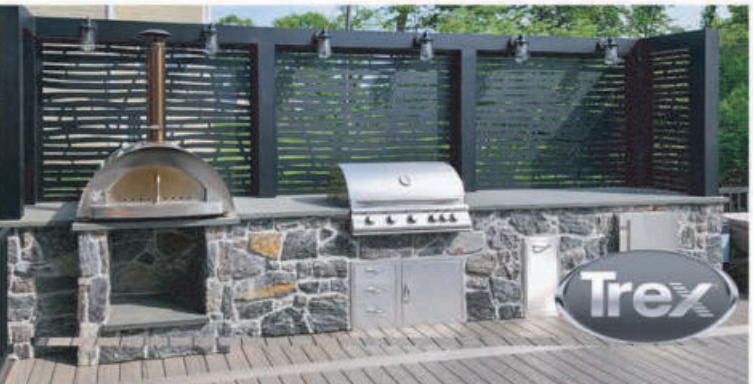
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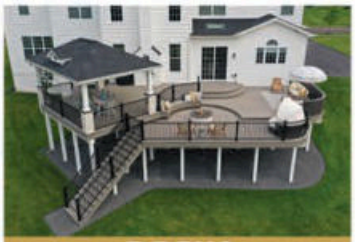
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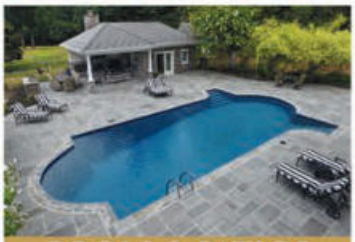
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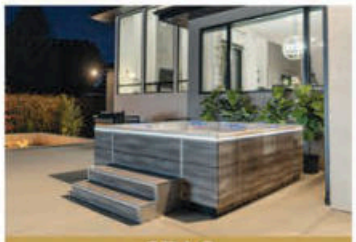





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COMPLETELY Floored

No matter what type of flooring homeowners choose, they can be sure that it will look its best well into the future with careful planning and consideration. by Carly Murray

As lifestyles have changed, home interior trends have evolved, too. Homeowners are considering the longevity of their choices more in-depth than before, especially following the pandemic. Currently, people are most commonly seeking low-maintenance and cost-effective flooring options that are uniform throughout the home.

"Years ago, for instance, boys' bedrooms [carpet] would be blue or green, the girls' would be pink or white, and the parents' would be beige. … Everybody had their own color scheme in their room. It seems like today, it's the same floor all the way through—a neutral enough floor [because] it's easier to paint a wall than it is to replace flooring," says Steve Matteo, co-owner and store manager of Matteo Family Kitchens and Flooring, Inc.

This trend allows for easy modifications to kids' ever-changing aesthetic preferences, rather than hindering creativity or color options. Matteo mentions that wall paint and accent details function as a burst of color that complements the neutral flooring. He also explains that this completely cohesive floor technique doesn't only extend to bedrooms, but throughout the entire home. Of course, this option also will come in handy if the day arrives that a property will be rented out or sold, with nothing too bold left unalterable.

The lean toward a preference for an amalgamation of convenience and quality is why luxury vinyl plank has gained such traction again lately. While nothing is maintenance free, vinyl plank only requires simple and as-needed cleaning. Its waterproof quality also makes it a preferred choice for kitchens, especially. Though, it should never be drenched in water on repeated occasions, making marble or porcelain a better choice for bathrooms.

"[Vinyl plank] is waterproof. Maintenance is just as basic as: dust mop, broom [and] vacuum. For daily maintenance, use a





"PEOPLE'S PREFERENCES REALLY VARY; I ALWAYS ENCOURAGE SOMEBODY TO MAKE SURE THAT IT FITS YOU. DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE TREND AND MAKE SURE IT'S SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE."

Elmer Stoltzfus,
Heritage Floors

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damp mop with water only or with a pH neutral [cleaning product]—never use harsh or abrasive cleaners with ammonia, bleach, oil, polish, strong alkaline or wax," explains Lorraine Sterl of Sterl Kitchens, Co.

Hardwood is still a preference for homeowners visually. However, this look is attainable without the high maintenance and expense of installing hardwood floors. Vinyl plank is typically the most universally compatible with any lifestyle. Though it may be made to look like wood, it does not easily take damage like a wood product because it is made of calcium carbonate and PVC, a type of lamination. Its installation is a fairly easy and quick process, as well—it is known to be an achievable process for even solo beginners.

"Vinyl plank gives you one of the most scratch-resistant surfaces on the market, next to ceramic tile. Hardwood is beautiful, it's a natural product, looks great, but one characteristic with hardwood is that it does scratch and it does bend," adds Elmer Stoltzfus, owner of Heritage Floors. "So, if you have big dogs or a lot of children, or just a big family, hardwood is not as serviceable as vinyl plank would be."

The variations of luxury vinyl flooring extend far beyond imitation wood. One can choose from beautiful patterns and designs to transform an area. Depending on the choice and the room, some designs can create the illusion of expanded space. On the other hand, a crowded pattern in a small room can create a cramped effect, demonstrating the necessity of planning with alternative solutions in mind.

Not everyone has the luxury of starting their renovation journey with a blank canvas, and a flooring choice may depend on the structures already available. Walls and embellishments can always be modified, but kitchens and bathrooms, especially, are more involved. One might consider flooring that is a complement to already-existing countertops in those scenarios.

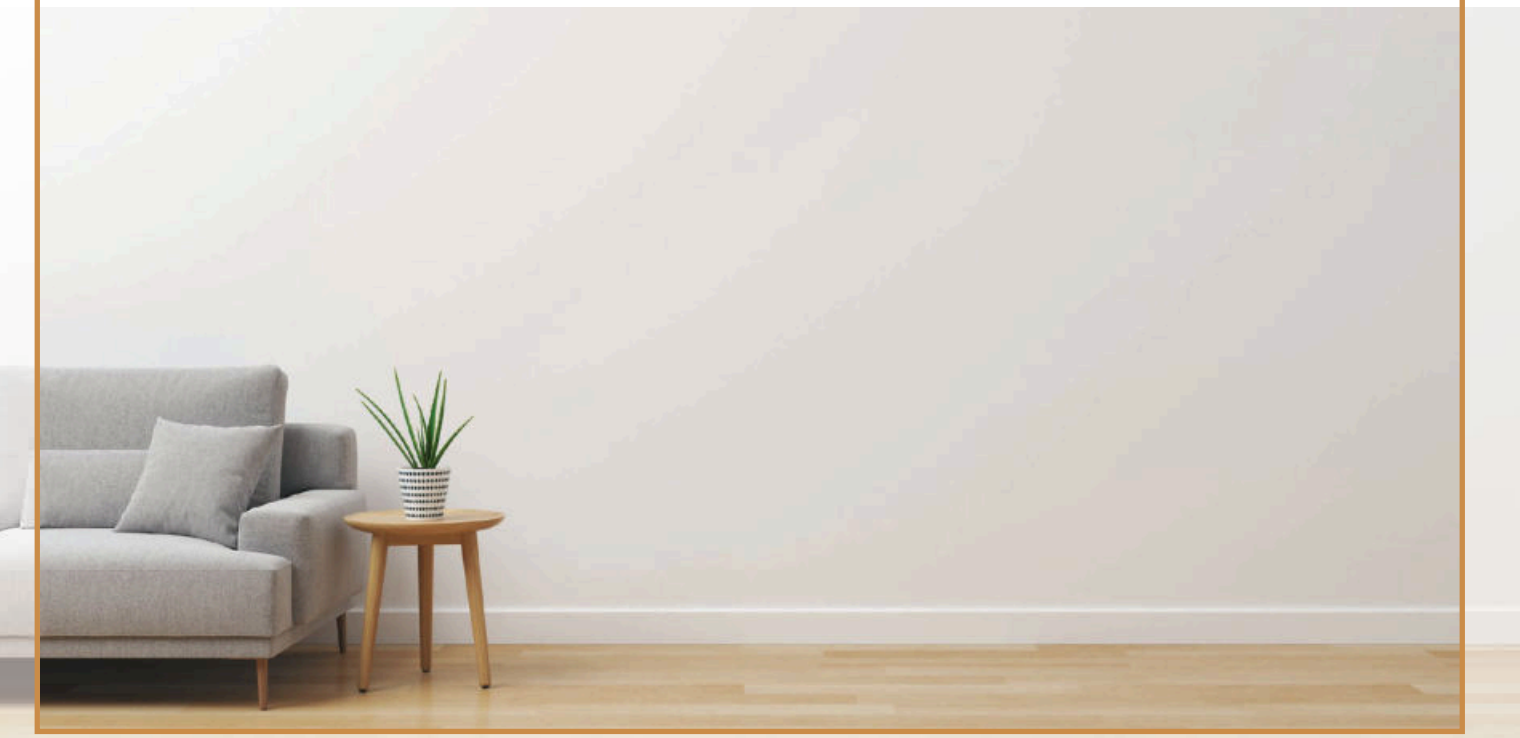
The continuously growing interest in top-notch home design at an obtainable level has resulted in a perpetual release of more convenient, stylish and functional options. Although luxury vinyl plank and luxury vinyl tile have been implemented since the '70s, they contain a contemporary look and feel. This, in large part, is due to consistent developments in home renovation projects. One such example is the incremental increase of luxury vinyl tile's thickness.

"MSI [Surfaces] has a brand-new product coming out: the 'Studio' collection of LVT [luxury vinyl tile] flooring, which has a 30-mil wear layer for even greater damage resistance and improved longevity," says Sterl.

It's obvious that vinyl plank flooring has many benefits, but Matteo points out that many are returning to carpeting as a response to high inflation, cost of living and budget cuts. Traditionally difficult to maintain, especially for pet owners, carpet has made a surprising comeback with new technology that improves its durability. Matteo explains that new carpet products have a built-in stain resistance to messes and stains with plastic sheets on the top surface.

"We do know they are holding up so much better than carpets in the past," says Matteo. "We try to be a teaching facility more than just selling to someone. When somebody comes in our door we want to ask them: How do they live in their house? How many kids and pets? … That way, we can give people our honest opinion on what we think might be the best product for them."

Ultimately, the capacity for creativity and heightened functionality offers the freedom to truly customize flooring to one's





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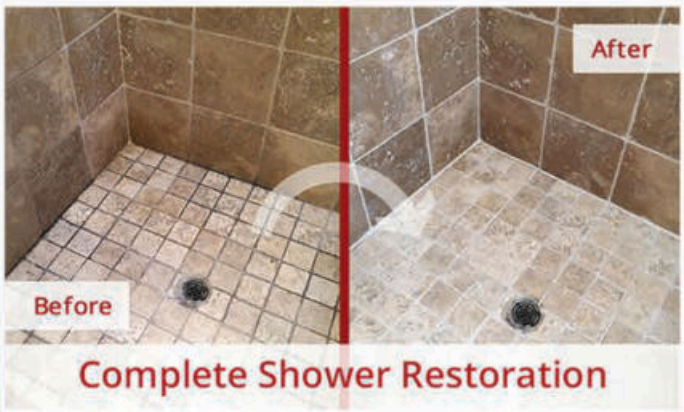
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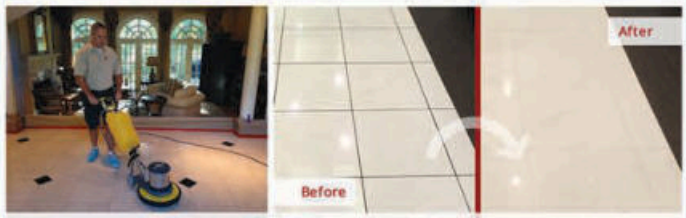
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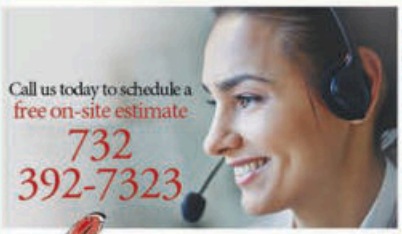
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unique household. Cool-toned neutrals like grays were recently replaced with warmer beiges and blondes in popularity, demonstrating that trends are subjective. Stoltzfus mentions a recent re-emergence of manufacturers offering colored carpets rather than all neutrals, particularly blues and greens.

Ultimately, the best choice is what each individual would enjoy seeing and using on a regular basis, for years to come.

"People's preferences really vary; I always encourage somebody to make sure that it fits you. Don't worry about the trend and make sure it's something you'd like," Stoltzfus advises. "I think it's very important to, rather than worry about what's going to be popular with people, make sure you get something that you're comfortable with." H&H

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When Global Home Improvement was founded 25 years ago, the company set out to work with only the best manufacturers in the industry. Whether homeowners are investing in roofing, windows, siding or gutters, they can rest assured that Global Home Improvement stands behind the products they install.

Over the course of two decades, one manufacturer has stood above the rest: Marvin Windows and Doors. Global Home Improvement is the area's premier installer of Infinity Fiberglass Windows and Doors from Marvin. The company has been hand-selectedby Marvin Windows and Doors to handle their absolute best-looking and best-performing window, says Adam Parnes, marketing director.

"Infinity Fiberglass Windows from Marvin are custom-built using Ultrex® fiberglass, which allows us to measure and order your windows to the exact size. We believe in accuracy from appointment to install," he continues.

Shopping replacement windows can be a confusing and at times frustrating process, but this partnership with Infinity Windows from Marvin aims to simplify things for every homeowner. "Our consultants are here to help you break through the clutter and confusion so you can focus on the window solution that best fits your needs," Parnes says.

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.

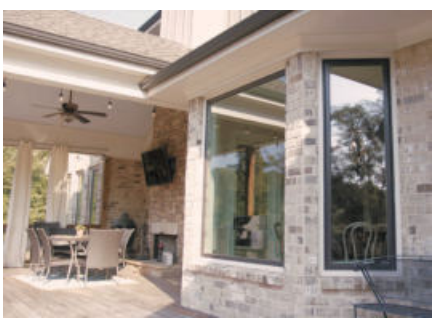
If your home is due for exterior renovations, Parnes advises not to delay. "Planning your renovation ahead of time is always the way to go." H&H

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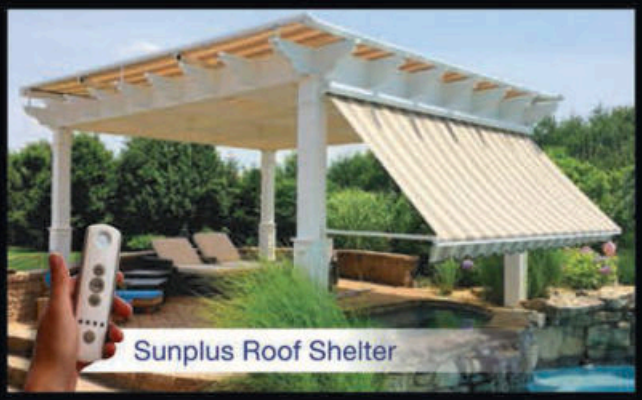


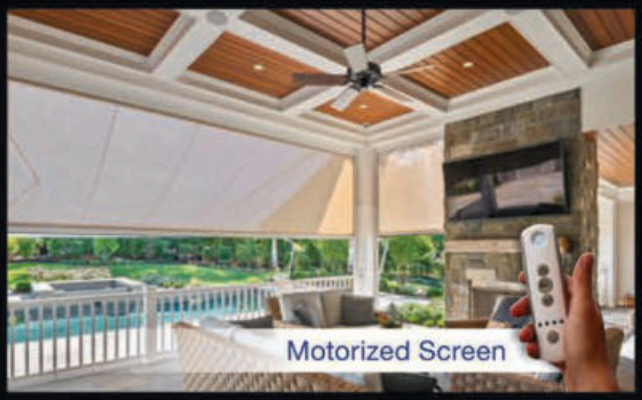
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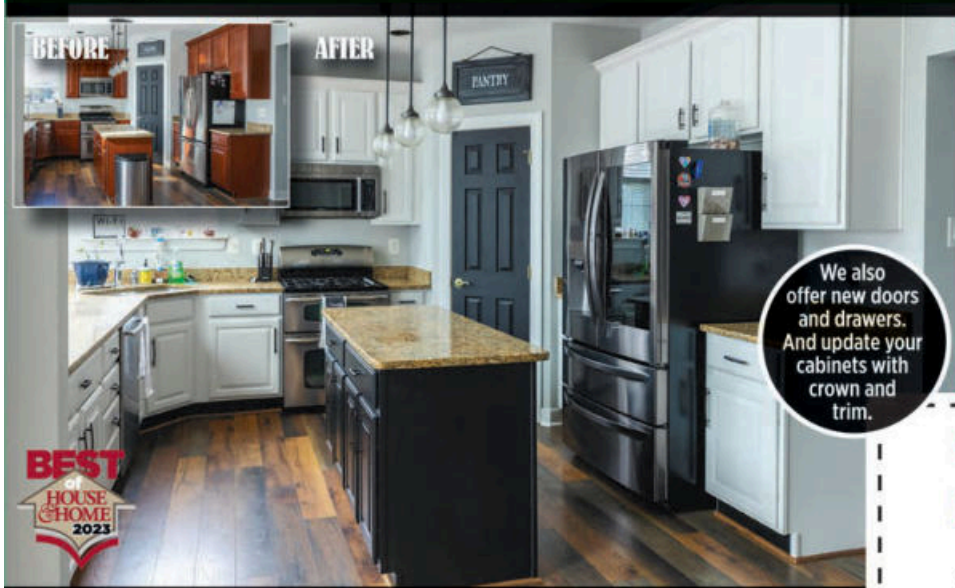
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New for SPRING

Enhance your outdoor aesthetic by exploring paving options for your landscape.

by Kristen Jorgensen

Creating an inviting outdoor space involves thoughtful consideration of various elements, and one crucial aspect is the choice of paving. Whether you're aiming for a cozy patio, a winding pathway through a garden or a grand driveway entrance, selecting the right paving option can significantly enhance your outdoor aesthetic. In this article, we'll explore a range of paving materials and styles to help you transform your landscape into a visually stunning and functional outdoor haven with local experts.



BRICK PAVERS

Brick pavers exude classic charm and warmth, making them a favorite for traditional and vintage-inspired landscapes. With their rich earthy tones and uniform shapes, brick pavers lend a sense of timeless elegance to outdoor settings.

"After the pandemic, people became reluctant to travel, and wanted to create beautiful outdoor spaces that they can enjoy at home," explains Chris DeMato of Rock Bottom Landscaping. "And brick pavers have become an extremely popular choice for homeowners from the start."

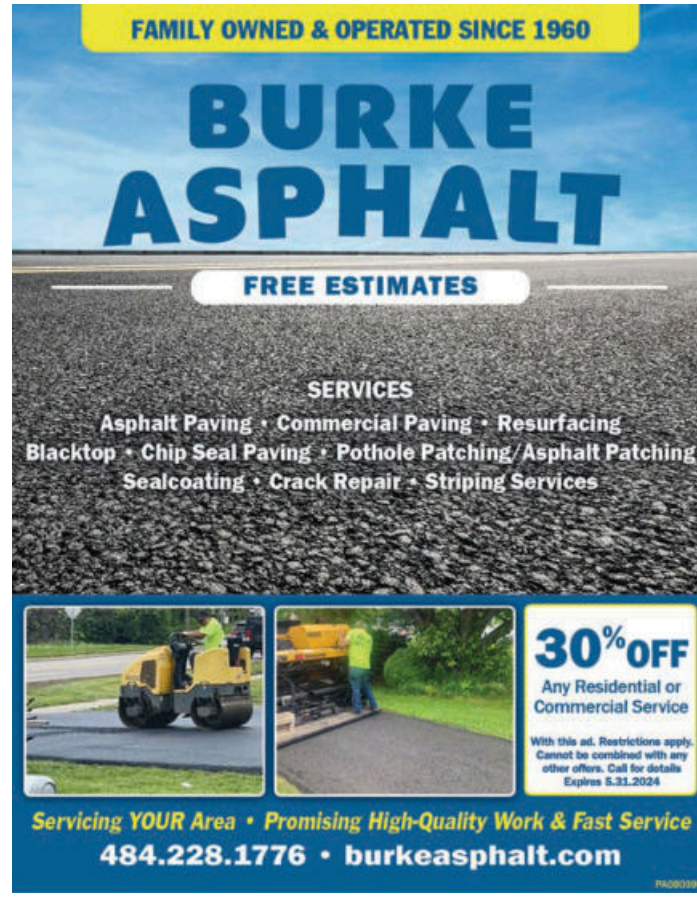
Whether laid in herringbone, basket weave or running bond patterns, brick pavers create visually captivating surfaces that evoke a sense of nostalgia. Moreover, their inherent strength and low-maintenance requirements make them a practical choice for high-traffic areas.

"Brick paver manufacturers have done a great job with developing new styles and also many natural stone look-alike products for a less expensive option than real stone," says DeMato. "We have adapted these products at Rock Bottom Landscaping to beautify your home's curb appeal as well. For example, you can use a brick paver for a driveway, or border your asphalt driveway or entranceway."

Another plus for homeowners, brick manufacturers also give a lifetime warranty on the structure of the products. "A good power washing and sealant job can turn that dull paver into almost new again," shares DeMato.

CONCRETE PAVERS

Concrete pavers offer versatility and durability, making them a popular choice for various outdoor applications. Available in an array of shapes, sizes and colors, concrete





New for SPRING

pavers allow for endless design possibilities. From classic brick-like patterns to sleek modern designs, concrete pavers can complement any architectural style.

NATURAL STONE

For a timeless and elegant look, natural stone paving is hard to beat. Materials such as flagstone, slate, limestone and granite impart a rustic charm and unmatched character to outdoor spaces. Each stone carries its unique texture, color variations and veining, adding visual interest to pathways, patios and driveways. While natural stone may require professional installation due to its irregular shapes and sizes, the result is a stunning, one-of-a-kind landscape feature that ages beautifully over time.

ASPHALT

When it comes to building your perfect home driveway, there are a few options available. From concrete to gravel to asphalt, each material has its pros and cons, with asphalt being a common choice among homeowners, and for good reasons.

"One of the major benefits of choosing asphalt for your new home driveway construction is that it can be installed quickly and easily. Asphalt is often poured in a single day, allowing you to get your driveway up and running as soon as possible," explains Patrick Burke, third-generation contractor at Burke Asphalt.

Asphalt is also a cost-effective option when it comes to construction materials. "It is relatively inexpensive compared to other driveway materials like concrete and gravel. Asphalt is also relatively simple to install, which means you will not have to invest a lot in labor costs," Burke says.

Additionally, asphalt is long lasting, requiring fewer repairs and maintenance over time. So if you're looking for a cost-effective solution, asphalt may just be the perfect choice.



RESURFACING OPTIONS

Resurfacing asphalt is the practice of overlaying a new driveway over a settled old driveway using what is called a modified driveway mix.



That is essentially 9.5 millimeters of top coat asphalt that has been modified to get into the cracks and crevices of the old driveway so you don't have to tear up what you have.

"Resurfacing your driveway saves the homeowner quite a bit of money and gives the same result as tearing up and starting new. Of course, there are exceptions, such as pitch concerns and water drainage concerns, which may make certain projects unqualified for true resurfacing," explains Burke.

Homeowners can choose to resurface concrete around the home as well. New Castle Artisan offers an innovative, effective way to renew old, chipped, spalled and cracked concrete surfaces.

"Over time, wear and tear, weather and exposure to the elements can cause damage to your property's concrete surfaces. That damage, if left unfixed, can get worse and eventually result in unsightly blemishes, unsafe surfaces and decreased property value. Our talented professionals can transform your concrete surfaces to have an entirely new look, turning the error into art," says Gwen Kunkle from New Castle Artisan. "Once the concrete is applied, our artisans go to work creating beautiful designs in wonderful colors. The designs are chosen to suit the state of your concrete space, match your preferences and complement the surrounding space. Once the new concrete surface quickly sets, your space is ready for use in an amazing new way."

When taking the resurfacing route, homeowners can have peace of mind that their environment stays free and clear of costly, time-consuming obstructions.

Whichever direction you go, choosing the right paving option is essential for enhancing the aesthetic appeal and functionality of your outdoor space. Whether you prefer the timeless elegance of natural stone, the versatility of concrete pavers or the modern allure of composite decking, there's a paving material to suit every style and budget.



DeMato advises: "Whatever direction you choose when pricing your job, be sure to work with licensed and certified professionals, as proper installation will save you thousands in repair work down the road."

In the end, by carefully selecting materials, reliable and professional contractors, and creatively combining paving materials, you can transform your landscape into a visually stunning and inviting retreat that reflects your personal taste and enhances your outdoor living experience. **H&H**

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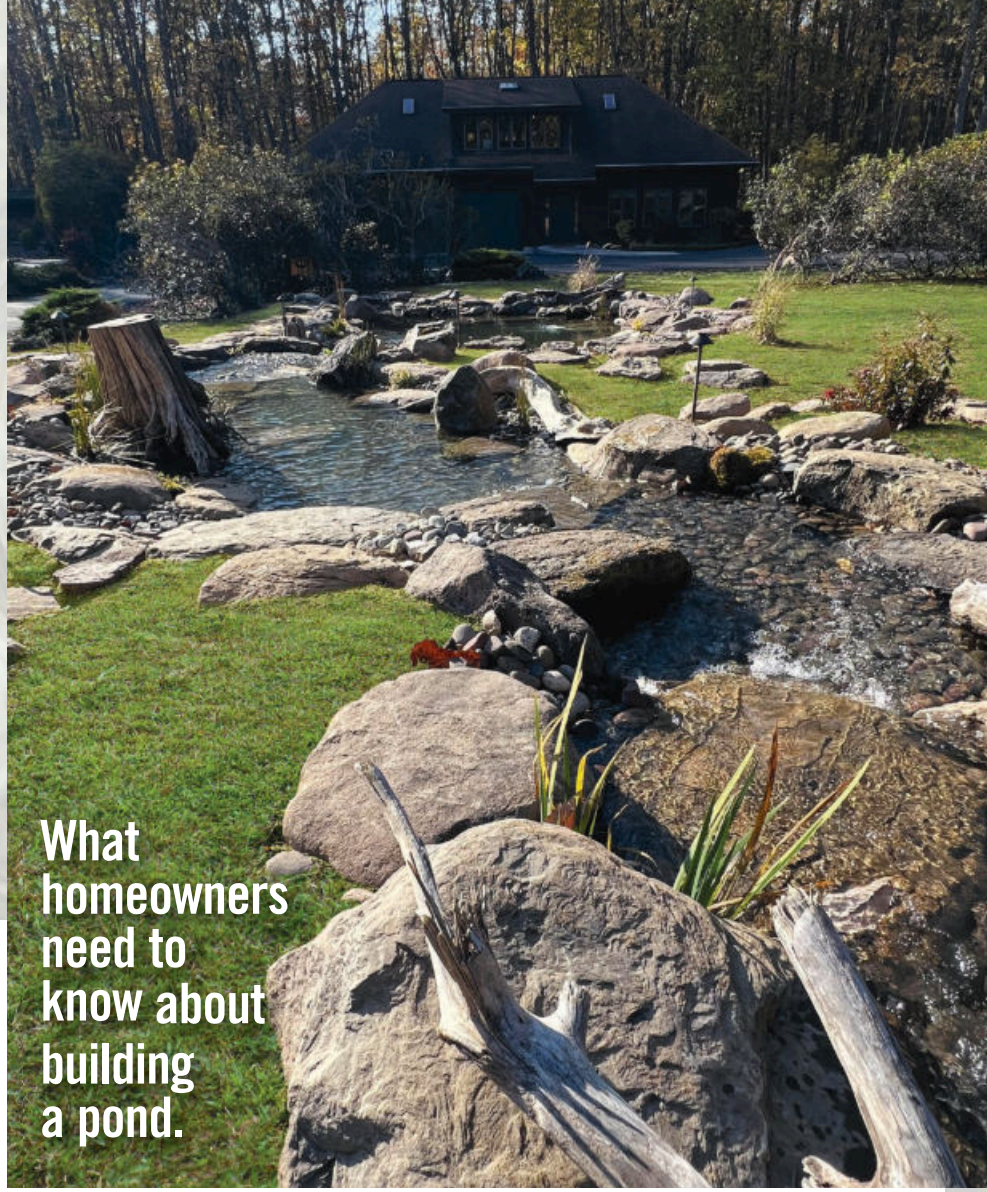
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Peace in Your Own Backyard

For nearly three decades, George Mihalchick has been helping people connect with nature through water features. From fish and koi ponds and bubbling fountains to disappearing waterfalls and all the accessories in between, Ponds by George can bring a wealth of creativity to any space.

As spring approaches, it's a great time to consider bringing these features to your own yard. If you're contemplating a pond project, Mihalchick says the following topics are some of the most important to consider.



What homeowners need to know about building a pond.

Location

SHOULD IT BE CLOSE TO THE HOUSE, PATIO, PORCH, ETC.? You definitely want to see and hear it from a comfortable location. Don't put a pond in the lowest area of the property as outside water can enter the pond and harm the fish, and/or put pressure under the pond liner and possibly lift the liner and rocks inside the pond. Sun or shade have some impact; water plants will perform better in the sun allowing more root growth, which in turn filters the water better. Shade means more leaves and debris can fall into the pond causing more maintenance.



How Big?

BIGGER IS BETTER! The bigger a pond is, the easier the maintenance. A bigger pond allows for more water movement and more filtration which results in less algae. A depth of 24-to-30 inches is plenty. Most townships require a fence around the pond over a 24-inch depth.

Dirt

A LOT OF DIRT COMES OUT OF THE HOLE DUG FOR A POND. Most of the dirt will be used around the waterfall, some will be used in the landscaping around the pond as well. Sometimes you will need to find places to put any excess dirt.

Water Line

A DIRECT WATERLINE IS NOT NEEDED TO HAVE A POND. Once you fill the pond, however, you will need to top it off due to evaporation. You will need to use a garden hose to add to the water level if there is no rain for a while. If this becomes troublesome, then an autofill can always be added.

Filtration

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP. The bog or wetland filtration is the best type. This is created with gravel and plants and no filter pads. This is completely natural allowing the water to move up through the gravel into the roots of aquatic plants growing in the gravel. The fish waste is absorbed into the roots and turned into usable nutrients for the pond, keeping the water crystal clear. Cleaning can be as little as once every one to two years depending on fish load.

Cost

THIS IS RELATIVE TO SIZE AND TYPE OF FILTRATION. Extras such as lighting, landscaping, driftwood and fish caves will add costs but have an amazing impact on the final project. H&H

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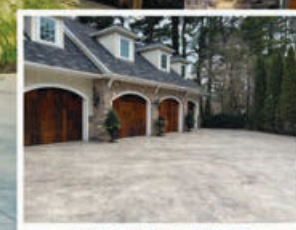
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There's No Place Like Home

by Erica Young



Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia is committed to Better Building by Design



You can feel it in the air: Warmer days are just around the corner. As it's finally time to start venturing into the great outdoors once again, many homeowners are taking stock of the summer ahead. That comes with more family time and the return of backyard parties, celebrations and more.

If more socializing is back on your summer schedule, then now is the time to consider improvements to your outdoor space. That's where the team at Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia comes in: Husband and wife duo Karim and Jessica Mrad have a team of expert builders and designers ready to turn your outdoor entertaining dreams into a reality.

Together with more than 50 locations, Archadeck has built over 135,000 structures since its founding in 1980, making it North America's largest deck and porch design and building firm. Beyond that, Archadeck also offers outdoor structures including covered spaces, outdoor kitchens, pergolas, sunrooms and more.

Karim, an engineer, and Jessica, an architect, have taken their experience and brought it to the backyards of their own Northwest Philadelphia community. "We consider ourselves to be in the service business, not in the construction business," explains Karim Mrad. "We have more than 50 offices around the nation but we are local and know this area because it is our home as well. Our carpenters and project managers have the local and professional knowledge to build within your budget and to match what you were envisioning for your home."



Getting started

Mrad says that now is the ideal time to start planning your big summer projects with Archadeck.

"Today is the best day to start that project you've been thinking about all winter," says Mrad, who offers around a three-month turnaround time from initial conversation to final build. "We're starting to hear from people looking outside and seeing that it's time to start preparing for the warmer weather."

When considering an outdoor build, Mrad says there are some essential elements to make the project easier, accessible and more affordable.

"When you're looking at your outdoor professionals, you want to ask: Are they licensed; are they insured; will they handle all of the aspects of your projects? What will they provide to get the job done in a way that doesn't take too long?"

Archadeck is a full-service firm, meaning they offer everything from design to build, including sourcing all materials, completing permits and HOA approvals, organizing warranties and schedules, and even developing financing plans. It starts by contacting the team on their website or over the phone. From there, an Archadeck designer will work with you to understand the nature of your project, your budget and how you want your outdoor project to fit into your lifestyle.

"It helps that we have so many national resources, because we are able to show a wide range of ideas to draw inspiration from," explains Mrad. "No two projects are the same, they each have their own needs, budget and each have their own homeowners who will use the finished product in their own way, so we can show them designs that match up with their personal style or the layout of their backyard, to better consider how their design can function."

That includes looking at industry trends. Mrad says that outdoor designs are continuously leaning toward hassle-free materials.

"Low-maintenance decking continues to be the trend, and is also very sustainably sourced. You want to enjoy your deck; you don't want to have to worry about it," he says.

Backed by the national brand, Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia offers customers premium warranties and protections focused entirely on the homeowner. "We work with a network of suppliers who are able to make sure that the essentials are always available, including railing and lumber. No matter what happens your product is going to be delivered on time and in the quality you want."

Outdoor kitchens have also skyrocketed in popularity, especially as people all over the area have embraced the opportunities of entertaining at home. "Our customers are excited to welcome people back into their homes again, and having an outdoor kitchen space means you never have to be away from people for too long."

With a summer of reunions and long-awaited fun in store, Mrad and the team at Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia are here to help make memories that last a lifetime. "People have spent the last two years connecting with their home on a new level, and in that time many homeowners have realized that there's so much potential in the outdoors," he says. "We're lucky to be part of that." H&H

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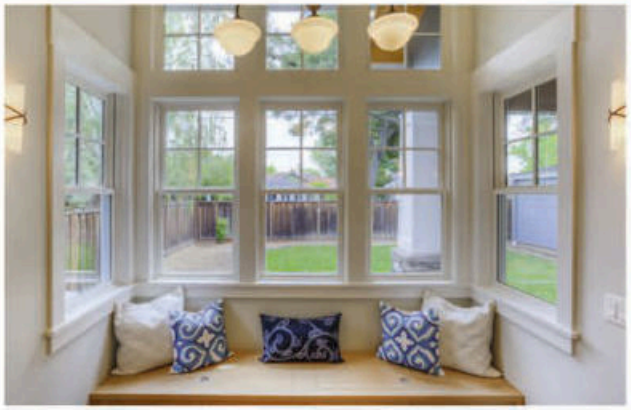
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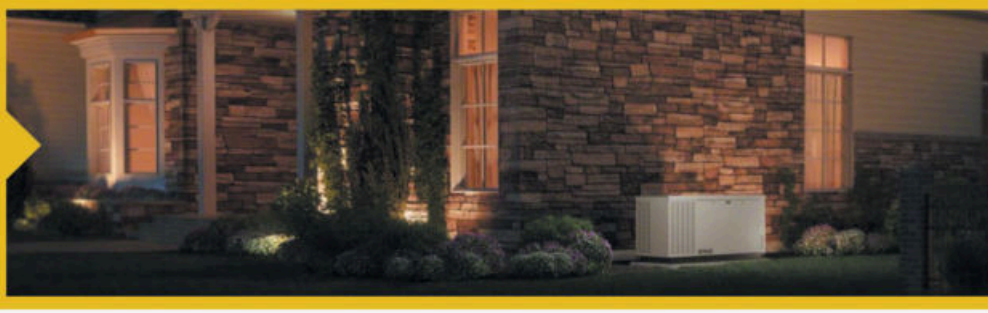
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