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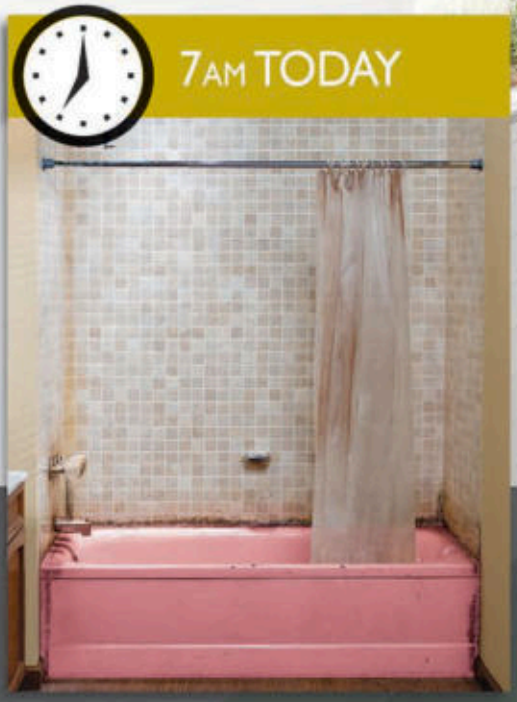
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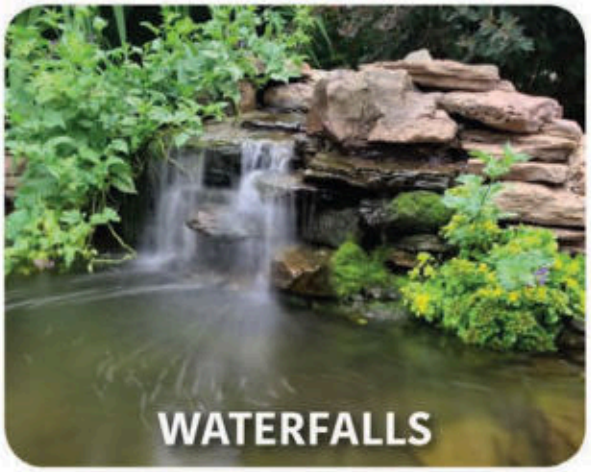
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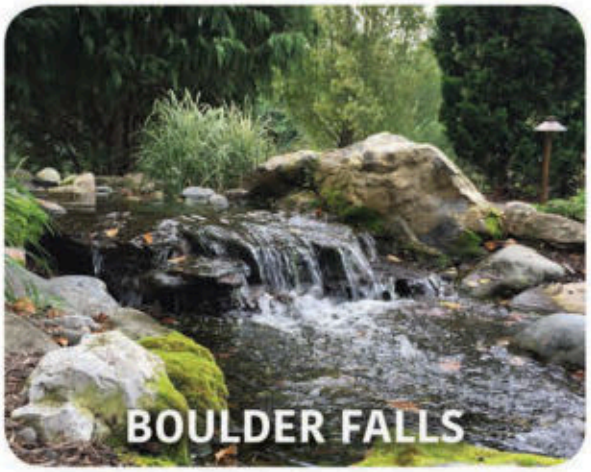


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ALWAYS IN

While some industries ebb and flow with the seasons, **kitchen and bathroom remodels** remain a leading area of home improvement all year long.



DEMAND

BY MATT COSENTINO



Photo courtesy of Amiano & Son Design-Build

When the ground is frozen and snow is in the forecast every other week, it makes it difficult for contractors to be building an outdoor living space or working on a pool installation. Conversely, the middle of summer isn't an ideal time to be replacing a roof given the extreme temperatures. Certain industries inevitably have their down times throughout the year, but there are two particular home improvement projects that never seem to come to a halt: kitchen and bathroom renovations.

"We dip down a little bit during the holiday season, typically mid-December to mid-January, but this year that dip was just around Christmas—it picked right back up in the new year," says Linda Fennessy of Kitchen Magic. "We've been seeing it continuously. We have a lot of work and our backlog is as big as it's ever been. The orders are there and we're working to get them installed as quickly as possible."

Increased time at home as a result of the pandemic has led to even more remodeling than normal, and kitchens and baths have lived up to their reputation as the most popular rooms to refresh.

"Now more than ever, kitchens and bathrooms … are a large part of our business," says Vic Fiore of Magnolia Home Remodeling Group. "It's a 12-month, steady flow of people looking to get prices, ideas and consultations."

The planning phase remains crucial to the process, and an experienced firm can assist greatly in setting the budget and expectations. *House & Home* spoke to several local professionals to get their tips and find out what trends to look for in 2022.

DEVISING A PLAN

Homeowners taking the leap to renovate a kitchen or bathroom have plenty of options, but finding a company that provides both design and construction services can make life a lot easier. That is especially true when it comes to a complete makeover of the space.

"A major kitchen remodel is not a straight A to B path," says David Cerami of HomeTech Renovations. "You need a plan and someone who can integrate everything into a fluid design and help you personalize it."

Sophia Amiano of Amiano & Son Design-Build believes education is an important part of the initial meeting with a customer. The average homeowner is not aware, for example, of the expenses involved when compiling a wish list for their new kitchen or master bathroom.

"Everybody goes into a project already having an amount in mind," she says. "We show them what we can do for the project and the work scope within that investment amount. We simply inform them on the market, on certain product costs, maybe how we can help keep costs down, just so that they're getting more realistic information. Sometimes Google can be very inaccurate and that will be a homeowner's first go-to when looking for information."

Fiore's first priority when meeting with a client is establishing a framework for pricing, which of course will ultimately be dependent upon their material selections. He also gets to know the customer's vision for the space.

"We always ask people what their needs and wants are, if they have any inspiration, pictures or examples of things they know they want or don't want," he says. "We put together a plan taking into account their feedback but also really what we think will work best. Then we work with the homeowner to fine-tune the plan, make sure it's their own and what they want."

"[The first appointment is] basically a fact-finding meeting," Fennessy adds. "We ask how they use the kitchen, are there multiple cooks, how big is their family, do they find it functional, what are the challenges, do they like the color, how long have they been in the home and how long do they plan on staying. Then we make our solutions

based on their budget. We have them pick colors and styles and give them a price quote."

Amiano wonders how any project could get accomplished without detailed planning in place. Her family's company follows long-held procedures for every job, to help prevent hidden costs or anticipate issues that may arise.

"The reason we've built our process to the way we have over the years is for that exact reason, because if you don't properly plan and put a project together from the get-go before jumping into construction, hiccups are bound to happen," she says. "Construction is already a process as it is and it's never 100% perfect, no matter how much upfront legwork you do, especially in today's day and age when you have delays. If we didn't do all that work in the beginning, I don't even know how you would get a project together.

"We pick out all the materials up front, we design the space as close to the measurements as we can get, we even do an onsite visit prior to signing the contract just to verify those measurements and that the layout is going to work properly. … We take pride as a company that we do those steps and we really limit those hidden costs that can happen in construction."

BUILDING THE DREAM KITCHEN

One of the most important decisions in a kitchen remodel centers on cabinetry. White kitchens have been popular for years and although color has been introduced more lately, Fennessy does not anticipate white going away.

"I opened up a Houzz 2022 report [recently] and it definitely mimicked what we're seeing: People are still choosing our whites—antique white, frosty white and satin white—and those are our most popular colors," she says. "While I hear the woods are coming back, I don't see it yet, only in our older demographics. Flat color is popular; we do sell a lot of colonial blue. Gray is second and we've just added a moss green to our offering, and that is by customer demand. Our in-house designer said we absolutely had to add it to our offering because it's everywhere and it's going to be very popular. But whites are still king."

Amiano saw a great push for colored cabinetry in 2021, particularly in the blue family. But the trend has not lasted long, at least with her clients.

"In this new year with all of the jobs we have coming in, we have a lot of people who want natural elements," she says. "I've done some research on it and that's where they're predicting everything to go. In the last couple of years more people have been working from home and they've been in the house more, so people want that natural and organic feel. I have people who want wood tones and soft gray cabinets, and natural or sage colors for the wall. I see it falling more in that direction than going too bold with color."

Color can be used in a way where it does not dominate the entire room, however.

"We're doing color for islands," Fiore says. "Some people will do the perimeter in one color and the island in another, or they'll do different colors for the upper and lower [cabinets], which is becoming more popular. … We're also doing a lot of open shelving. Is it here to stay? I don't know, but you can incorporate open shelving into a traditional design and it works nicely. It breaks up a wall of all cabinets."

Amiano suggests that stacked cabinetry can have the same effect. "Maybe you have a 36-inch cabinet on the bottom with a 12-inch cabinet on top. It looks super elegant," she says. "A lot of people will make the top cabinet glass for a decorative design feature; I've had quite a few kitchens where we've done that."

For those looking to keep costs down, Cerami and Fennessy agree there are many benefits to cabinet refacing. "We've really seen an uptick in that," Fennessy says. "They'll reface it because they're sick of looking at their outdated kitchen, and refacing offers a cost savings as well as quick transformation in color and style."

Five to 10 years ago, granite was the hot word when it came to kitchen countertops, but quartz has replaced it as the go-to material. "It's mostly all quartz [because of] maintenance and consistency," Fiore says. "If you have veining, it's a consistent look, whereas granite has a lot more variation. You can get the look of a natural stone and it's amazing. The options out there are incredible."

Another kitchen trend is to create a statement with the backsplash, compared to the past when it was used more to complement other elements in the room.

"We used to sell subway tile all day long in the ceramic, but people are asking for more elaborate styles and patterns," Fennessy says. "So we're adding lantern and octagon and geometric shapes. People are getting the lighter quartz countertops, the whites, so they're not as busy and it's the backsplash that is the star of the remodel. … You can introduce color, you can do busy patterns. It's eye-level and people want to make it the showstopper."



Photo courtesy of Kitchen Magic

A SPA-LIKE RETREAT

For some time now, many homeowners have looked to recreate the feel of a spa or luxury hotel in their master bathroom. For Cerami, that usually starts with removing the large, builder's-grade tub that is rarely utilized and using that space for the shower instead.

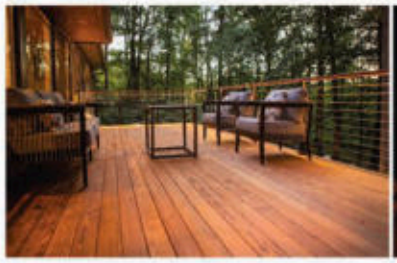
"The No. 1 request we get is to increase the size of the shower and the functionality of the shower," he says. "Why wouldn't you want a shower that is more like a spa experience? It can have a rain showerhead, a handheld showerhead, body sprays or room to sit down. People want more of that human car wash experience with beautiful tile surrounds, a space that is

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well-lit and modern amenities."

Fiore is getting the same request from his customers, along with oversized vanities and heated floors. Cerami adds that those who still want a tub can opt for a freestanding one that is almost like a piece of art and has visual appeal. To that end, Amiano recently designed a master bath that certainly stands out.

"We just did a project where we actually incorporated the tub into the shower, so it's a drop-in tub in the shower," she says. "We did granite at the top to coordinate with the granite on the vanity top, and it looks really neat. I also do a lot of the freestanding tubs. Most people if they can fit it still want a tub, but the idea is to make a bigger shower so it's like a hotel or luxury feel to it."

She adds that no-entry showers are also in demand, especially for older homeowners who want to ensure safety without having to step over a curb. Linen cabinets within the bathroom are popular as well, so that towels can be accessible without walking down the hall.

THE FINAL WORD

Renovating a kitchen or bathroom is a major project and homeowners should know what to expect when beginning one. But with the right plan and team of professionals in their corner, the end result can be life changing.

"Understand that they are probably the two more costly projects to get involved with, especially if you're going to go all in, meaning you're going to strip the room and upgrade the plumbing, electrical, insulation, drywall and then start your finishes," Fiore advises. "But if it's done right, there is a return on your investment, not only in terms of house value but enjoyment and day-to-day use. The mistake that some people make is not setting a sufficient budget and not being 100% satisfied with the finished product. You really need to have a budget that is realistic in terms of the space and what needs to be done.

"You might want to wait until you can properly budget for a whole room renovation. You can minimize your cost and just do a little facelift until your budget allows for the full gut. You don't want to spend too much and you don't want to spend too little. We try to find a good balance of budget and scope, and you also have to take into account how many years you plan on living in the house and what your long-term goals are. Not everybody needs a custom gourmet kitchen with $50,000 appliances. Everyone has to make sure they're comfortable with the entire scope, budget and material selection." **H&H**

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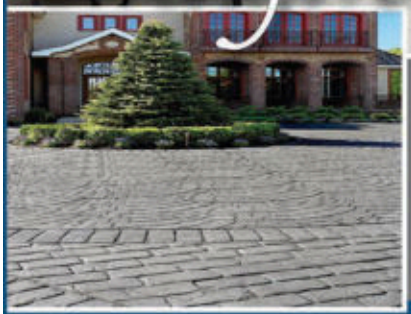
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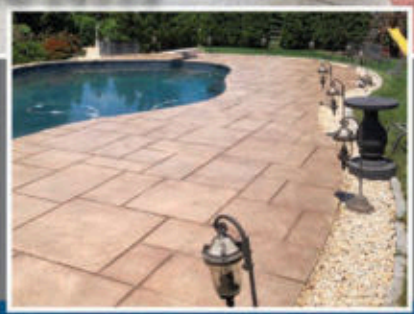


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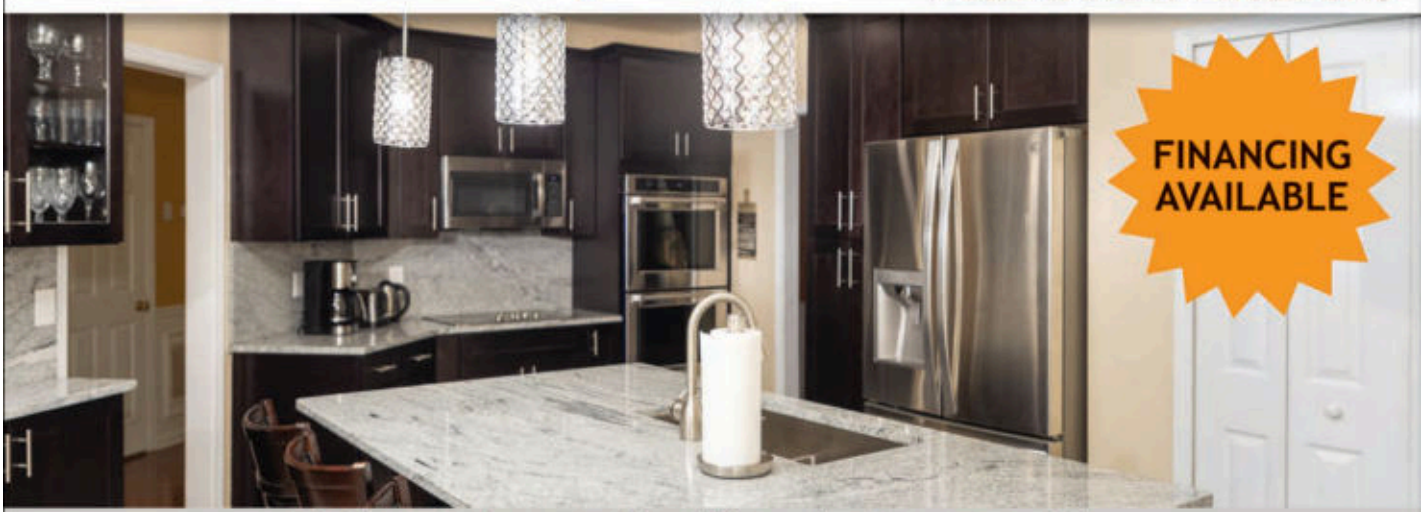
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PHILLY HOME +GARDEN SHOW

Greater Philadelphia Convention Center in Oaks, PA
February 25-27

American Red Cross





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Show guide produced by House & Home Magazine
phillyhomeandgarden.com
Philly Home + Garden Show produced by
MARKETPLACE | EVENTS



Welcome to the 2022 Philly Home + Garden Show!

This is where you can explore more than 200,000 square feet of exhibit space, delight in new features and solutions designed to meet your needs, gain insights from design experts and knowledgeable exhibitors, and even learn some new, hands-on project skills (and take home the results).

You'll see and learn about the newest ideas and products in home and garden improvement, get inspiration for your next project, and connect with experienced local providers who can assist you in achieving your goals. To enrich your Philly Home + Garden Show visit, we've added some fun special events, unique shopping experiences, and happy hours.

We hope that we will inspire and help you to try new ideas and ways to enjoy your indoor and outdoor space!

Sincerely,
Jenna Naffin, Show Manager

Don't Miss These Special PhillyHome Show Events!

The 2022 Philly Home + Garden Show is very excited to announce the Main Stage Guests and Speakers at this year's event! Friday kicks off with hit television and home renovation stars, Jeff Devlin from DIY Network's *Stone House Revival* and Matt Blashaw from the HGTV series *Professional Grade, Yard Crashers,* and *Vacation House for Free*. Get ready to hear from HGTV star, Mina Starsiak Hawk from *Good Bones* on Saturday, Chris Lux from *Harth Builders*, Chris Mattingly from *Backyard Eats*, and Jennifer Anderson from *Trellis for Tomorrow*. On Sunday, get expert advice from Collen Falicki from *Back to Earth Compost Crew*, as well as Jeff Devlin. For Main Stage schedule updates and more information please follow the link https://phillyhomeandgarden.com/ show-features/speakers-celebrities.

Celebrity Guest: Mina Starsiak Hawk

SATURDAY, FEB. 26, 1 PM



The HGTV series star, Mina Starsiak Hawk from *Good Bones* will be in attendance to share some of her best home improvement and renovation tips, as well as meet with fans of the show.

Celebrity Guest: Jeff Devlin

FRIDAY, FEB. 25, 5 PM;
SUNDAY, FEB. 27, 12 PM



Host of DIY Network's *Stone House Revival* and licensed contractor with more than 20 years of building experience, Jeff Devlin will be in attendance to share his passion for designing, creating, and building with attendees. Devlin will also have a booth set up all weekend demoing different tools and answering your questions.

Celebrity Guest: Matt Blashaw



FRIDAY, FEB. 25, 6 PM;
SATURDAY, FEB. 26, 11 AM

HGTV Host of *Professional Grade, Yard Crashers,* and *Vacation House for Free*, Matt Blashaw will be in attendance to share his experience as a licensed contractor and relator with the slogan "One Call Fixes It All." If you are thinking about starting your own DIY project, Matt is the guy to talk to.

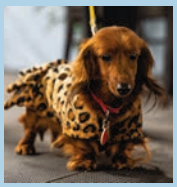
Make-It, Take-It Workshop Presented By Little.Tall.Rulers

VARIETY WORKSHOP TIMES THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND



Take your DIY skills to a new level this year with a variety of DIY workshops presented by Little.Tall.Rulers. Attendees will have the opportunity to work directly with local designers on a variety of projects including candle making, mini sunburst wall hangings, clay earrings, the art of charcuterie, hand-stamped vintage spoon plant stakes, melt and pour soap, sugar scrubs, paint your own cookie, and a clean/dirty dishwasher magnet

Doggy Fashion Show



SATURDAY, FEB. 26, 3 PM

We've partnered again this year with our friends at the Pennsylvania SPCA to bring some of their adorable, adoptable dogs to the Philly Home Show. Support our four-legged friends as they strut their stuff in Doggy Fashion Show where a portion of sales will support PSPCA!

The Spirited Backyard Yappy Hour

ALL WEEKEND

2D Distillery has partnered with this year's event to set up the Whiskey Backyard where attendees can relax and check out some of the finest spirits. Guests are also welcome to join Yappy Hour on Saturday, February 26th, 4PM- 6PM with our furry friends from the PSPCA!

The Red Cross Blood Drive

FRIDAY, FEB. 25, 10AM- 3PM

This year's show has partnered with the Red Cross to put together a Blood Drive in Hall E of the Expo Center to support U.S. blood banks. Come out and support the American Red Cross by donating at this year's event! Pre-registration is required. Visit phillyhomeandgarden.com to register to donate.

Hero Day

FRIDAY, JAN. 25, ALL DAY



The Philly Home Show proudly honors our local heroes on Hero Day. All active and retired military, nurses, first responders, firefighters, and teachers will receive one free ticket with identification at the box office on this date.

The Factory In Oaks

FRIDAY, FEB. 25, ALL DAY

The First 100 people to come to the show on Friday, February 25th will receive a free ticket to the American Treasure Tour, and every attendee will receive a coupon with discounts for all the fun at Arnold's Family Fun Center.

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PHILLY HOME +GARDEN SHOW

SHOW HOURS:

FRIDAY
February 25
11 a.m.–9 p.m.

SATURDAY
February 26
10 a.m.–9 p.m.

SUNDAY
February 27
10 a.m.–6 p.m.

WHERE:

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks
100 Station Ave.
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Get Growing

Over 3,000 square feet of garden inspiration for your outdoor space, as well as a relaxing wine garden brought to you by The Renegade Winery. The space includes an inspirational garden, a garden market, a flower shop, and a succulent bar.



Floral And Hardy Garden Market And Succulent Bar

Shop the Garden Market with some of the most unique décor and gift items to spruce up your yard and be sure to customize your own succulent at the DIY Succulent Bar.



Pop-Up Flower

Take home beautiful, fresh-cut arrangements by Cameron Peters Floral Design and register for one of the Cameron Peters Floral Workshops throughout the weekend to learn the artistry behind the floral design process.



Ask The Gardener

This year's event will feature an "Ask the Gardener" booth thanks to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in which attendees will be able to ask questions and get advice from the professionals.



The Barking Lot

Don't leave the show without visiting The Barking Lot pet market! Delight your fur babies at home with special treats, accessories, and more that you'll find from vendors in this specialized market area. And you'll feel good about a portion of all purchases benefitting the Pennsylvania SPCA.



The Spirited Backyard

2D Distillery has partnered with this year's event to set up the Spirited Backyard whiskey and vodka tasting area where attendees can relax and check out some of the finest spirits while playing backyard games with their family and friends.



Do You Dig It?

Join the experts to upgrade your gardening experience. Learn more about edible landscaping, composting, native plants, and more.



Homes That Roam

Drop by the Homes that Roam presented by Campers Inn to check out the latest and greatest in RV's including new adventure trailers that are perfect for bringing along your bikes and kayaks. Don't settle for a tent on your next camping trip, find out more about your new home away from home on wheels at the show!



Philly's Favorite Market

An open market featuring one-of-a-kind décor and gifts from local artisans and retailers. Shop anything from antiques to original art to homemade pieces to finely crafted items.

Reimagine Your Workspace

Remodel your work from home office space with traditional and modern inspiration from the design corner presented by Ethan Allen. Vote on your favorite design and be entered to win great prizes!



PHILLY HOME +GARDEN SHOW

FEBRUARY 25-27, 2022

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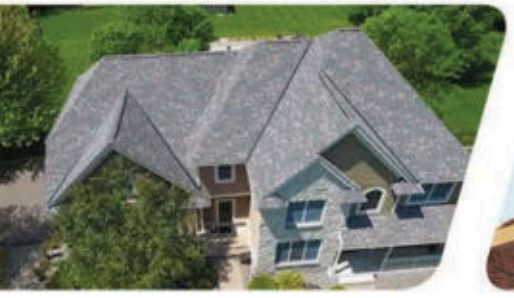
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Moving on Up

Residential elevators from **Total Access** provide the solution to mobility challenges with added luxury and convenience.

by **Liz Hunter**

We take for granted the fact that many appliances around the home were not always standard. Automatic washers and dryers were considered a luxury in the 1930s and microwaves didn't even become mainstream until the late '60s—yet we can't imagine life without them. And if you ask Curt Lampe, co-owner of Total Access Elevators & Lifts, residential elevators are poised to become the next must-have appliance in the home.



Lampe incorporated the company in 1991 with his partner Ted O'Neill. The market for residential elevators was still new, but over the past 30 years, Lampe says the demand has grown tremendously.

"In a lot of new construction, especially at the Shore for the multi-level properties, elevators are being put in automatically," he says. "We're also seeing people who want to age in place investing in an elevator instead of moving out of the home where they raised a family. They can install an elevator without the hassles of selling, packing and moving, and they can stay in their home comfortably."

Elevators appeal to people for a wide range of reasons, whether they want added luxury to their property or have mobility challenges. They can also be used to transport groceries, laundry and other bulky items as well, taking the physical burden off of people and encouraging more independent living.

There is a product to fit any lifestyle and budget, says Lampe. One of the most popular styles right now is the pneumatic vacuum elevator (PVE). Using only air, PVEs require less space and less energy than the traditional in-home elevator with a shaft.

"The PVE uses the same technology as when you go to the bank and send your money through the cylinder. One of the best features of this product is that construction is minimal. It doesn't need to be in a shaft, and we don't need to dig a pit in the basement," O'Neill says. "Technology has come a long way."

These units are also eco-friendly, only using power when going up. Coming down is all gravity. Lampe says some models can connect to your smart home setup as well.





In areas where water might be a concern, the elevators have float switches and homing devices included. "If the unit comes down and hits water, it automatically shuts off. Also, after you take the unit down to the lower level, a homing device brings the unit back up to the highest level after five minutes in the event water could become an issue. It's safest up at the top," Lampe says.

Additional safety measures include light curtains, which can sense if something is operating incorrectly and stop the unit automatically. Doors must also be fully shut for it to run, and if a unit loses power, it can still lower itself to the lowest level so a passenger could exit.

If the design of a home does not allow for a clear passage for the elevator on the interior, an exterior installation will soon be available, says O'Neill. Currently, the company has its first beta test exterior elevator attached to the side of its building, and it's expected to be available for residential installs by October.

Lampe says the time from when the product is ordered until installation is approximately two months, and if it's new construction, the elevator is one of the last things installed.

Throughout the process, homeowners can expect to have any question answered by a knowledgeable team of professionals. "We pride ourselves on the longevity of our employees and sales consultants. Most have at least 14 years' experience each, and both myself and Ted are actively involved in the business every day," Lampe says.

Total Access services all of New Jersey and Delaware; Eastern Pennsylvania (out to State College) and Maryland (down to Baltimore). H&H

Total Access Elevators & Lifts (877) 333-LIFT | TotalAccessCo.com

WHAT'S ON THE Outside Counts

As the snow and ice melt away, it's an ideal time to have your home's exterior refreshed.

BY **LIZ HUNTER**

Although Punxsutawney Phil may have predicted six more weeks of winter, there's no reason to wait on exterior remodeling projects that could save you money and have your home looking in tip-top condition for spring.

In fact, the harsh winter weather can expose our home's inefficiencies and exterior weaknesses. "This is the time of year when you'll see the roof possibly leaking when the snow sits on top and doesn't run off due to ice damming and clogged gutters, as well as air leakage in windows and doors from broken seals," says Barbara Carranza, president of Carranza Roofing and Remodeling.

Jane Alfaro of Alfaro Enterprises says it's not uncommon to notice water leaking through windows caused by incorrect flashing, or missing shingles, fascia and siding that blew off in a storm.

These issues can quickly be identified by professionals who can recommend repairs or replacement.

Ace Bajrami, co-owner of Ace-Pro Construction, says an honest contractor will tell you when a repair is enough to address the current issue. "We'll recommend a repair when it makes sense, and sometimes they need a little bit of time to prepare for a full replacement," Bajrami says. "Roof cleanings on a regular basis can be an important preventative maintenance measure that can reduce the pres-



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ence of mold and mold spores."

"We go out and inspect during a scheduled consultation," says Jeff Kay, president and CEO of East Coast Roofing and Siding. "We're trained by manufacturers in products and installation. We look for signs of moisture. Bugs and spiders are telltale signs of moisture. … Homeowners may also notice increased utility bills due to energy insufficiency with windows or attic insulation. They crank the heat to compensate, but without proper attic ventilation, it creates condensation when that heat hits the cold attic space. If they check up in their attic and notice water droplets hanging from the nails, that's a sign of inadequate ventilation. This is really only resolved with a full roof replacement and installation of proper intake and exhaust."

As William Suarez, owner of Revolution Roofing and Remodeling, has learned, not too many homeowners like going in their attic to check things out. "You can find out a lot about the roof from inside the attic but eight out of 10 people don't do it regularly. We recommend taking a look up there when you're putting away the holiday decorations," he says.

Certain clues tell these experts about the age of the roof. "We walk the roof and check the age of the shingles, the condition of the pipes and the chimney," says Alfaro. "With the 35 years' experience that we have, we're usually right on when it comes to quoting the time left that the roof will last before the customer needs to think about changing it."

"We'll find out how old the entire home is and check the different penetrations. Sometimes those can be fixed up to extend the life of the roof for another five to 10 years, but if you notice nail pops or loose shingles, the roof is most likely at the end of its lifetime," Suarez says.

Carranzo says, "Depending on the age, we would recommend repairing if there are missing shingles and the roof itself is in good shape. Pipe collars are another area to check for leaks, but those can't be repaired, they have to be replaced. If a roof has nail pops, they can be hammered in but if there are too many it's best to replace the roof."

Roofing installations and products have undergone vast improvements in recent years, and companies that have been properly trained and certified by leading manufacturers can install entire roof systems.

Carranza, whose company is GAF Master Elite-certified, installs roofs all the way from the wood deck with ice and water shield and leak barriers, to shingles, new pipe collars and CapMaster vent pipe caps. These elements were not always part of roofing installations.

> *"You can find out a lot about the roof from inside the attic but eight out of 10 people don't do it regularly."*
>
> —**WILLIAM SUAREZ**
> REVOLUTION ROOFING AND REMODELING

A roof is nothing without proper installation, advises Alfaro, whose company works with Timberline. "All these products are good and have excellent warranties, however, it's all in the installation of the products to get the maximum life expectancy out of them," she says.

Improper installation could even disqualify you from the warranty protections, Suarez adds. "Be aware of who you're using and if they're certified by the manufacturer. They can only achieve that certification by being vetted by the manufacturer and that is what allows the company to offer the upgraded warranty."

If your issues lie elsewhere on the exterior, such as siding and windows, Alfaro says you may want to consider replacing them at the same time. "Once you have siding off it's a great idea to replace your windows so that you can get a good coverage of the plywood and around the windows with Tyvek weatherproof barrier and Tyvek tape, which is perfect for flashing your windows to get that extra protection."

James Hardie is one of the most well-known siding manufacturers in the industry, and



homeowners will find many companies offering their products. "Their warranties are extensive and the [fiber cement] product is durable and provides a unique look to a home that traditional vinyl doesn't give," Carranzo says.

Alfaro adds that the current color trends for James Hardie are the charcoal blue or night gray with arctic white trim/flashing.

East Coast Roofing and Siding has partnered with CertainTeed. "We can show homeowners a complete 3D model of their home and what it will look like with the different siding designs," says Kay. Cedar Impressions is one line of siding that people are using for interesting accents. "They tend to stick with the traditional horizontal siding on a majority of the house and then accent the front with board and batten or Cedar Impression or stone veneer. It gives it a real designer touch."

Bajrami says stucco is another visually appealing option that people prefer to maintain if it is currently on their home. Bajrami would first ensure remediation efforts are not needed. He says homeowners like to mix textures with stucco accents and siding.

On the window and doors end of the spectrum, there's no shortage of options, although every company has their preference. At Global Home Improvement, it's Marvin Windows and Doors, specifically its line of Infinity Fiberglass products, says Adam Parnes.

"Infinity Fiberglass windows from Marvin are custom-built using Ultrex® fiberglass, which allows us to measure and order windows to the exact size," he says. "Infinity Fiberglass is eight times stronger than vinyl, and has low expansion/contraction to prevent seal failure. They are also non-porous and 100% moisture resistant."

He adds that, for a true modern look, black window frames are emerging as a go-to trend. "Not only are they an exciting change from a traditional white window frame, but they can offer your home contrast and elegance with a modern aesthetic."

No matter which area of the home's exterior you may be considering repairing or replacing, industry professionals advise homeowners to do their research. "Reading online reviews should be one of the first steps," says Bajrami.

"An educated customer is a plus," chimes in Carranzo.

Suarez suggests comparing products and installation techniques, and not just numbers in the estimate.

"My final advice would be, with the way the world is going today, prices are only going up, so procrastination is going to end up costing you money," says Kay. "Getting a detailed estimate will let homeowners know what they have to prepare for, and maybe an inspection will reveal something they didn't know about." **H&H**

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ask the expert by Matt Cosentino

Gehman Design Remodeling

THE DECISION TO EMBARK ON A RENOVATION PROJECT, NO MATTER WHAT THE SIZE, IS ALWAYS A SIGNIFICANT ONE FOR HOMEOWNERS, and being clear on goals and budget from the get-go is a must. A trusted contractor like Gehman Design Remodeling—which has been beautifying homes with everything from kitchen and bathroom remodels to finished basements, additions such as in-law suites, and even outdoor living spaces for the past 31 years—can provide guidance and knowledge to make the journey as stress-free as possible.

But one other reason for Gehman's sustained success over three decades is the team's willingness to listen to their clients and deliver a space that truly feels like their own. There are many ways to personalize a remodel, and in the end, tailoring the project to each specific client is crucial because they are the ones who will have to live with it when the designers and crews have moved on.

House & Home spoke to Dennis Gehman, MCR (Master Certified Remodeler), president of the company, to learn more about the process.



Dennis Gehman, president of Gehman Design Remodeling

IS IT PRACTICAL TO CHANGE THE LAYOUT OF A ROOM DURING A RENOVATION TO MAKE IT PERSONALIZED FOR THE OWNER?

Yes, it certainly is. Many times, part of the reason for remodeling is room layout. If they're already doing a major project, changing the floor plan layout should be part of the consideration, and kitchens are the primary area where people should think about it. Is there more than one person who would like to be working in the kitchen at the same time? If so, let's set it up so there's plenty of space in the aisle ways, for instance between the sink and the island, and let's think about where we are placing the appliances. Years ago, there was always a triangle in the kitchen between the sink, the range and the refrigerator. I think that's still good to consider but it doesn't seem to be as important. You want to have those things nice and accessible but if there's three in a row instead of in a triangle, then that's just fine.

WHAT ABOUT CHANGING THE CABINET LAYOUT IN A KITCHEN?

That is another important thing in the kitchen, considering the height or the reach of the homeowners. A lot of people like wall cabinets, but we're doing a kitchen right now for someone who is 4-foot-10, so she can't reach anything but the bottom shelf in a wall cabinet, and it didn't make sense to do a lot of wall cabinets for her. Storage options for corner cabinets have come a long way; there's no longer the need to crawl in to get things.

ARE CROWN MOLDINGS, WAINSCOTING AND SHADOW BOXES A GOOD OPTION TO ADD ELEGANCE TO A ROOM?

Yes. The room we do it the most in is a foyer, especially if they have a two-story foyer. You have a lot of big walls and generally speaking, they're blank. Putting some molding boxes, shadow boxes or wainscoting helps to make it look more attractive.

SINCE PAINT IS NOT VERY EXPENSIVE, IS THAT A GOOD WAY FOR HOMEOWNERS TO GO WITH A BOLD CHOICE?

It sure is, and with the 3D computer software these days, we can show them the colors and they are pretty true to life. That gives people a good idea before they even buy the paint of how it will look if they do a bold accent wall. Wallpaper is also coming back—some of the patterns and textures, more specifically, and a fair number of grasses.

ARE ACCESSORIES LIKE ARTWORK, LAMPS, LIGHT FIXTURES AND FURNITURE A GREAT WAY TO SHOW OFF THE HOMEOWNER'S PERSONALITY?

Absolutely. Sometimes that's also a great way to show color. We did a kitchen a few years back where orange was their favorite color. We put in pendant lights over the island that had orange globes, and then they got bar stools where the upholstery on the seats was orange. In this case the kitchen was open to the family room, and they had an ottoman that was orange too. It made things really pop.

AS A DESIGNER, DO YOU LIKE USING YOUR CREATIVITY TO COME UP WITH UNIQUE STORAGE OPTIONS, LIKE UNDER THE STAIRS IN A BASEMENT, LAUNDRY ROOM OR GARAGE?

Yes, we use our creativity to offer ideas to our clients. We show them pictures of other projects we've done to give them an idea of how it will look and function. If there's a space, typically something can be made for storage. I've never had anyone tell me that they have too much storage space.



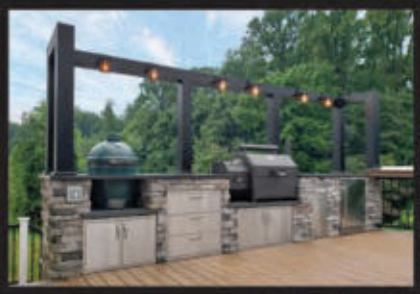
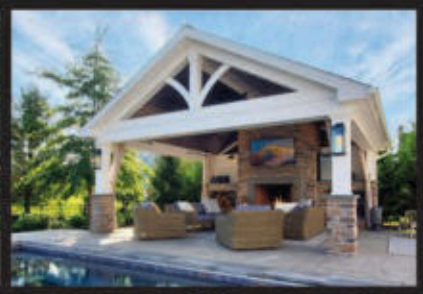
WHAT ABOUT CREATING CUSTOMIZABLE SOLUTIONS IN A CLOSET?

There are many ways to enhance storage in closets. Sometimes it begins with changing the size/width and/or the type of doors to make access into the closet easier. We have a conversation with the clients about what type of storage they want: hangers, shelves, drawers, pullouts, etc. Melamine is a thin, plastic laminate surface over furniture board that works great for closet storage. Adding lighting on a motion sensor switch in closets is a great idea. We can add shelves for sweaters, sweatshirts, shoes, handbags, etc., along with pegs/hooks for belts, neck ties and scarves. Hamper storage for laundry is also a growing trend. H&H

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A Legacy of Leading With Ethics



The second-generation contractor Keystone Custom Decks has grown exponentially across four decades of operation, but the leadership team has always remained true to its founder's roots of prioritizing honest, quality work and customer satisfaction.

by **Madeleine Maccar**



Since Amos Esh founded Keystone Custom Decks in 1983, the company has operated under one prevailing philosophy: Treat customers well, fairly and like family.

"The company was built on making sure that every customer is well taken care of," says Michael Esh, one of Amos' sons who grew up in the family business. "There were even times when my father took a loss on a job to make sure that his customers were satisfied. That is who we are and what we do."

While Amos unfortunately and unexpectedly passed away last year, his legacy lives on in the four sons who are building on that reputation of strong ethics and ideals their father established.

"It's all about customer service: treating our customers well and providing a good customer experience," Esh explains. "That's very much a foundational part of our company. … Overall, contractors kind of have a bad rap, so we strive to be the opposite of that. We look at the pain points people have with contractors and we try to address those head on to make sure we avoid those issues."

Growing up in construction has ensured that the practical skills and know-how the Esh brothers inherited are just as deep-seated as the strong moral principles their father embraced as Keystone's guiding directive.

"We've been surrounded by this industry," says Esh. "I think the biggest benefit for me was watching the work ethic my dad had. He did a very good job of teaching us to work hard and treat people well. So not only being told that that's the right thing to do, but also seeing that lived out every day, I think is one of the great parts of growing up in a family business like this."

Befitting a team that's grown to include more than 100 employees, the company does a lot more than decks these days. Keystone's areas of expertise have expanded, making it a one-stop shop that also offers patios, porches, outdoor kitchens, masonry and, soon, pool installation, reflecting how homeowners have come to regard their backyards.

"Even though our name is still Keystone Custom Decks, that doesn't really describe what we do anymore," he notes. "We design and build outdoor living spaces. The backyard has become an extension of the home. When my dad started the company, the deck was something you stuck on the back of your house for a picnic table or a grill; now, it's almost like we're adding an addition onto the home. The concept around designing these kinds of spaces has changed. There's a lot more thought put into it and there's a lot more options."

And working with one contractor, especially one that focuses on all-encompassing projects rather than one-off standalones, ensures consistency and an intimate understanding of how every feature influences and affects the others.

"We are looking to focus on entire projects: a deck, patio, pool, pool house, the whole thing," says Esh. "The advantage of doing it all together is, for one, it's seamless in how it all fits together—and you know all the pieces will fit together. The other is that you're working with one company and one point of contact who knows your property."

As Keystone diversifies its offerings, its showroom has reflected that growth. Giving customers a place where they can experience a hands-on interaction with the fixtures they're selecting for their outdoor spaces "has been a game-changer," Esh observes, as has the coziness of its café.

"If you're looking at things like colors and textures, a web page or a catalog won't give you as true of an idea as coming into a showroom to touch it and see it in person," he points out. "The showroom has just really helped people visualize what a project will look like, as well as inspire them. It's all part of creating a good customer experience: We also have a coffee shop on-site so it's an educational, practical and fun trip for people."

The range of high-quality work Keystone is able to deliver by offering a range of services all under one roof is further supplemented by in-house experts being hands-on from the very beginning, starting with an on-site survey of the property that yields 3D models of the proposed project. Because while the company has evolved quite a bit in nearly 40 years, the things that matter most will always remain the same.

"Forty percent of our leads are word-of-mouth referrals, and it's because we listen to our customers," Esh says. "The best compliment we get is when clients tell us we visualized what they want better than they could. The business has grown tremendously but we're still very much a family business that just wants to treat people well. That's the legacy my father left behind." **H&H**




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A House That Speaks for Itself

TRI-COUNTY EXTERIORS IS A FULL-SERVICE HOME REMODELING COMPANY DELIVERING UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS. *by* Erica Young

A home exterior project is a major commitment, and one that requires trust and an investment in the future. Those are the exact qualities that form the foundation of Tri-County Exteriors, a full-service exterior remodeling service that has neighbors all over the area returning time and again.

Business partner Michael Macker, owner Shayne Schwartz and his wife and business manager Lydia Schwartz have put the focus of Tri-County Exteriors on quality, delivering solutions that drive up the value of a home's value and produce beautiful, lasting results.

Planning for the Future

Tri-County Exteriors takes full-service to the next level, working with everything from roofing and stone to siding, decks, windows and more.

"We specialize in every phase of your project from the demo, the install and beyond that to include the small details, like roof capping, soffits, downspouts and more. We also do a plethora of stone craft in both real and man-made stone or veneer. They're great accents to give the home more depth," says Shayne Schwartz. "We like to offer a range of options; that way you're not acting as a general contractor on your own—you have a partner to build your vision with."

That work extends to repairs and remediation, working on improperly done construction projects to make your home more visually appealing and also more valuable in the resale market.

"Stucco remediation has become a big part of our business, because stucco installation has earned an ugly reputation from builders getting it done quick and cheap," says Schwartz. "Cheap doesn't buy you quality, and we have a lot of people coming to us who are having problems with stucco applied in a very hasty manner."

If you're noticing hairline cracking and crumbling stucco, now is a good time to get a moisture reading and understand the damage that could be accumulating. "You also want to look for staining at the corners of windows, which will lead to crumbling, and a smell of mold. You can get a core sample done of the stucco to register the moisture in your wall, to see how far the moisture has gone into the stucco."

Schwartz says the Tri-County Exteriors team focuses on high-quality materials and well-timed, well-done installations to prevent future damage to their installations. "There are a lot of considerations that fall into exterior work: putting it up at the right time of year, using the right quality material and applying the right materials. We work with the best out there, like James Hardie Fiber Cement and Everlast composite performance materials. And we educate homeowners on these products, so that you understand what you're paying for and what kind of value it adds to your home and neighborhood."

> **Tri-County has been a go-to for our family whenever we need something done to our home.** Whether we just went through a bad storm and need a small repair completed, or need to spruce up the exterior of our past home to ready it for sale. When we move into our new home, Tri-County will continue to stay our dependable contractor for every upcoming exterior project! —**ALICIA H.**

> **My husband and I have contracted Tri-County Exteriors many times.** They are dependable, prompt and take pride in quality customer service for the client's specific needs. We highly recommend their services for roofing, windows and siding. —**MIKE B.**

> **With my décor business, I have worked with a lot of contractors.** These guys were the best I have ever worked with. They were professional, polite, organized and kept the worksite clean! —**BOB K.**

If you're considering summer and early fall projects—or are beginning to consider listing your home in this enticing real estate market—Schwartz says now is time to begin a consultation.

"Our books fill up fast, and we want to make sure our work is being done at the best time for you and for the project at-hand," he says.

The Importance of Trust

The Schwartzes and Macker have worked to turn Tri-County Exteriors into a team of experts with work that shines among the competition.

"We urge our customers to look at the experience and the quality being put into their projects, because when they do that they see that our work speaks for itself. We have a core group of 100 guys who have been with us for years, with decades of experience. We're a support system that works together to provide results that are unmatched in our area.



"Our dedication and how we honor our promises to the homeowner sets us apart," continues Schwartz. "Customer service is very important to us, and our workmanship is priority. Your trust really matters to us: We're not here to sell; we take pride in our work and with that work you get the standards of myself and my business partner, who are on-site for every project. We have built a one-stop shop that helps you guide every element of your home." H&H

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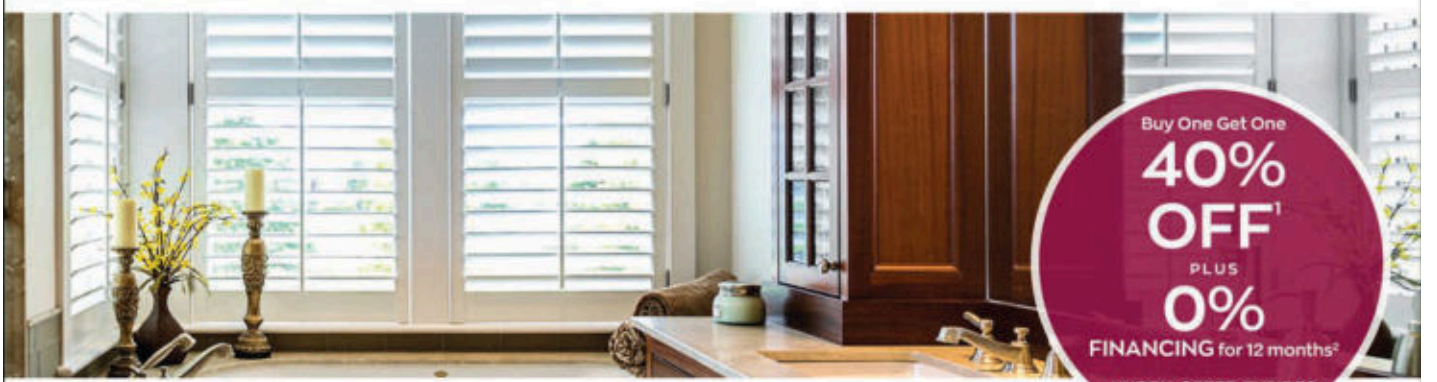
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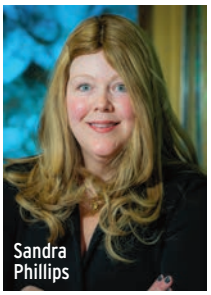
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Leaving No Stone Unturned

by Liz Hunter


Sandra Phillips

Combining high-quality products with exquisite design sense, Colonial Marble & Granite brings your whole home together.

"This past year has been such an adventure." This is the sentiment shared by Sandra Phillips, senior vice president of marketing sales and design, at Colonial Marble & Granite. One year into her tenure with the well-known company, Phillips is proud to be part of the next phase of Colonial Marble & Granite's expanded offerings. "We're bringing in so many products that the Philadelphia market has never before seen," she says.

Recognized as this area's leading supplier of high-quality stone, Colonial Marble & Granite has spread its wings in recent years, reaching into other products that surround the kitchen and bath environment such as unique tiles, fixtures and integrated smart home products from the smart home services Colonial already offers. Customer demand made it even more evident that the company was needed for full-scale kitchen and bath design, and Phillips was brought on board to build out these offerings.

Boasting an interior design resume spanning more than 16 years, Phillips worked in high-end residential and commercial design in Manhattan with experience in running design teams and projects at well-known architecture firms and boutique-style interior design firms. "In meeting with Nikos [Papadopoulos, president of Colonial Marble & Granite], he was looking to take the company's design services to the next level with building teams and developing operations and design support. With Nikos' passion in marble and stone and all he's accomplished, paired with my background in design, it was the perfect opportunity to join together and see where we can take the company in the next several years," she says.

This positions Colonial Marble & Granite as a one-stop shop for customers. While the company has always worked with customers who already have a designer or architect for their project—and will continue to do so—they now have the capability to serve clients with different needs, including designing from scratch.

"We want to make it clear that we're not taking away from the designers out in the field with whom we've developed relationships over the years. We saw the need with clients walking through our doors who had nothing to start with, so whether they come in with a design already or they want us to create one, we're going to dive deeper with them on the project. It's not just taking them to the stone yard, but how does it work for their needs and how does the stone for the kitchen bring the home's whole story together?" Phillips says. "That means pulling the beauty of a stone and showing how it can be embellished with a backsplash, hardware, etc. … How does it all work in the environment?"

The possibilities are endless, she continues, adding that Colonial Marble & Granite is embarking on trends and products no one else in this area is carrying. "After the pandemic caused people to work from home, they realized they wanted the space to feel homier and more comfortable. The stark white counters and cabinets are beautiful and fresh, but not for spending all day in it. Now it's trending toward the warmer, comforting principles with earth and sand tones with gold accents and mixed metals," she says. "People also want color in the space for excitement and joy, and you may notice green and gray/blue cabinets more commonly now, which are a great complement to the warmer tones."

From Phillips' perspective, it's been exciting to integrate her design knowledge with the professionals on the stone side of the business. "I've gained a tremendous amount of appreciation for the products and natural stone. Each one is a work of art created by nature. There is so much talent on the staff and it's been great to develop these conversations about trends and how they affect the consumer walking through the door. So many customers are watching HGTV and reading magazines, and we're here to help them navigate those expectations and how to make them work for their environment," she says.

Customers won't have any issues finding the stone they want thanks to Colonial Marble & Granite's longstanding relationships with leading quartz vendors such as Viatera, Cosentino and MSI Surfaces, among others. "Stone supply has been in high demand and one of the most challenging products to procure because of that and supply chain shortages, but we've been able to get the stock we need. We have the largest natural slab yard in the Northeastern U.S. where you'll find anything you need," Phillips says.

Colonial Marble & Granite's King of Prussia slab yard is a "feast" for your eyes, as Phillips says. "Nikos has invested year after year in inventory and stock, and unique inventory at that. He has handpicked everything."

The company has even devoted nearly 5,500 square feet of showroom space to quartz as demand for it rises. "We're not talking just small samples laid out; these are full 52-foot-by-10-foot slabs that show every detailed pattern and unique design. No one else in the country has this selection," she says.

Every step of working with Colonial Marble & Granite puts the customer first, and it continues to welcome customers into any of its four physical locations, but also offers convenient in-home estimates as well. "We'll bring all of the samples and take you through the entire process. For us, this isn't just a sale, you're part of our family and we give everyone that same attention to detail," Phillips says. "This is a design-friendly environment and we're looking forward to the ideas that customers have and seeing how we can bring them to life with the best products available." H&H

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About-Face

With modern technology and decades of experience, Let's Face It gives your kitchen a brand-new look without the hassle of a remodel.

After many years of living in the same home, it becomes easier to spot the areas where we'd like to have a fresh look. The furniture could be updated now that the kids aren't climbing all over it, the carpet could be pulled up in favor of hardwood and especially in the kitchen, where we spend so much of our time, the cabinets have seen better days.

However, the prospect of a full kitchen remodel often causes people to delay that update. Between the permitting, the disruption of your family's daily life and the length of time, it's not very convenient—not to mention the cost.

Cabinet refacing is a cleaner and more organized approach to remodeling—an alternative that more homeowners are embracing. Let's Face It, established in 1984, is the oldest cabinet refacing company in Southeastern Pennsylvania and has continually developed modern, state-of-the-art technology and design to reface and enhance an outdated kitchen for 60 percent less than a full remodel, and often in as little as five days. Locally owned and operated by David Cerami, CKBR, Let's Face It (LFI) has worked with thousands of homeowners and is nationally recognized as a pioneer in the cabinet refacing industry.

"Our projects are professionally designed, engineered and installed by our own highly skilled employees," says LFI Senior Designer Beth Soldswisch.

A consultation with homeowners will include the clients' ideas being heard, as well as the designer presenting options that will bring those ideas to life. "We want to look at the rooms that are adjacent to the kitchen, especially if it's an open concept floor plan, and suggest something complementary so the space will flow," Soldswisch says.

Using your existing cabinet framework (if structurally sound,) LFI replaces the doors and drawer fronts with designer-quality products. LFI covers the cabinet boxes with matching veneers and panels and the company's environmentally friendly process uses low-odor, non-toxic, EPA-regulated water-based adhesives.



"We can do design changes in the room that other companies can't."
—Beth Soldswisch, *LFI Senior Designer*

Clients can choose any style door in an almost unlimited range of materials. Shaker, modern and minimalist or traditional are all options. Stained genuine woods like walnut are gaining in popularity. LFI also offers durable painted products in a wide range of colors with custom colors also being available.

"The industry is heading toward products that are more durable, longer-lasting and easy to clean, especially for homes with children," Soldswisch continues. For this look, LFI offers the highly popular 3DL finish, which is chip resistant and cleans with soap and water. "3DL finish is considered identical to a painted design and is also offered in a contemporary or primitive wood grain, available in classic Shaker, raised panel traditional and the European modern total-flat panel," she says.

LFI can take the cabinets a step further than others in this industry thanks to its full-service local wood shop. Homeowners can add custom cabinets, unique islands and tall pantries to their kitchen at a reasonable price. "We can do design changes in the room that other companies can't. LFI frequently removes outdated built-in desks and replaces them with base cabinets for additional storage and counter space. Another great option is using that area for a beverage station with a built-in wine fridge. We can create a built-in frame around the refrigerator for a custom look. Other modifications include changing base cabinets with doors to sturdy pot drawers, putting microwaves in islands and installing matching floating shelves," Soldswisch says.

LFI is not limited to cabinets and many homeowners prefer the simplicity of its one-stop shop offerings. Clients may choose to add a new countertop as well, such as quartz or granite, and both products are now offered with lifetime sealers, in addition to tile and glass backsplashes with high-performance, factory-sealed grouts.

LFI also has licensed mechanical contractors, electricians and plumbers on staff. "Nearly everyone gets our LED under-wall cabinet strip lighting which is longer-lasting and 80 percent less costly to use than incandescent lighting," notes Soldswisch.

On completion, projects are certified with a lifetime cabinet refacing warranty. "Imagine, today, being able to hire a remodeling professional and at the end of the project you are given a lifetime warranty on both the labor and materials. This is not offered by any other company," Soldswisch says.

LFI maintains a stellar reputation in the industry, with a 97.8 percent Guild Quality performance rating—one of the highest grades in the industry—and has been recognized with several Best of House & Home awards. H&H



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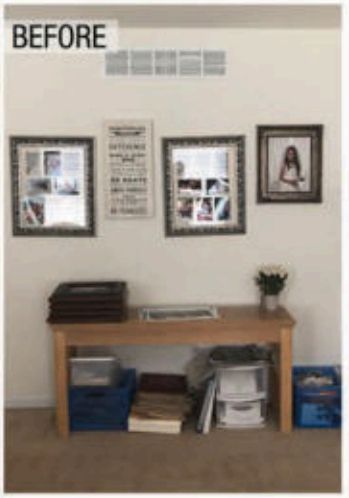


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A Reliable Return on Investment

A cedar or copper roof from MR Roofing can enhance your home and last for years.

by **Lauren Kubiak**

Roofs are the most essential part of the home, keeping your family and possessions protected from harsh weather conditions, whether it's heat, wind, rain or snow. Asphalt shingles may be the most common roofing type you see nowadays, but growing in popularity are dependable options like cedar and copper roofs.

While beautiful, not many companies offer these products because they require careful attention during installation or else a homeowner could be left with a leaky interior and an eyesore exterior. At MR Roofing, homeowners feel at ease knowing they have professionals who offer craftsmanship to the highest degree with reliability, communication and quality for their customers. Henry Stoltzfus, owner of MR Roofing for nearly 10 years, makes sure his clients receive the best of the best in order to have a roof that not only stands up to weather conditions for years and years, but delivers curb appeal to the home.

CEDAR ROOFING

Cedar roofing is available at MR Roofing for homeowners wanting to make a historical home cohesive and luxurious or add home value and aesthetics. The beautiful renovation can give homeowners the look they're striving for, as long as the roof is angular and a distance away from trees.

"The most important thing for cedar shake shingles is for them to dry within 24 hours of rain. If you live in a wooded area with not much sun, the moss could take over pretty quick," Stoltzfus says, adding that his company puts felt between each piece of cedar to keep the roof dry and lasting longer.

This labor-intensive product does make cedar a bit more expensive than traditional roof options, but the return on investment comes with the added curb appeal and a higher asking price—if a homeowner is considering putting the home on the market. Stoltzfus says cedar wood shingles and shakes last 10 years longer than asphalt shingles, and are highly resistant to strong winds and severe storms—factors that add to their ROI.

Cedar is a natural product so the colors do not vary much from the gray/tan family, although there are treated cedar options that have a deep brown color and shine. Over time, all cedar will age into a gray-silver tone.

"The success of a cedar roof is extremely dependent on its correct installation," Stoltzfus says. "Cedar expands and contracts, and requires nails that won't corrode and for them to be spaced out properly. … Not as many companies work with cedar and some roofers think it's cool to offer it, but we've seen roofs fail in five years because the wrong nail was used and the cedar chews through. You have to hire someone who knows cedar."

COPPER ROOFING

Full copper roofing is perfect for homes where a portion, or the entire roof, is practically flat. If you want to get rid of the rubber on a flat roof, copper is the perfect solution. Copper is also a great accenting piece to roofs. It can be used to highlight a bay window or cupola to draw the eye and in small areas such as these, most other roofing materials don't work as well with small applications.

No matter the size, big or small, MR Roofing can complete any copper roofing project from flashing to standing seam to copper sheet roofing. "There's no maintenance. It's a natural product that doesn't decay," he says, noting that its longevity makes it the primary choice for churches and chapels. "And you can cash it in for copper value even if it's 70 years old … they'll pay you for copper value."

Over the years, copper weathers to a rustic green color, and is the perfect complement to a cedar roof.

"Your roof is there every day of the week, not just when it rains. It's not something you get out when it starts to rain and then put away again," Stoltzfus adds. "Curbside appeal is a huge part; it has to look nice; it has to fit in the neighborhood; you have to like it when you pull in [the driveway]."

MR Roofing is a division of Stable Hollow Construction. For additional renovation and construction services, visit StableHollowConstruction.com. H&H



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