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Keystone Custom Decks

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Colonial Marble & Granite

Rising to the occasion to better
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Inspiring homeowners to
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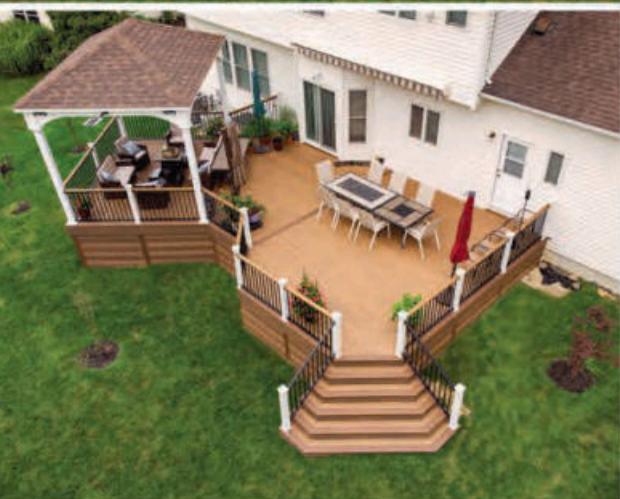
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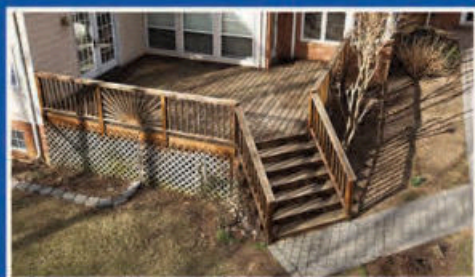


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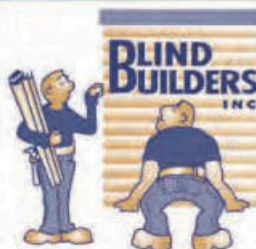
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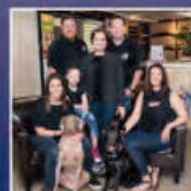
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National Sales Office:

HOUSE & HOME Magazine, LLC
700 E. Main St.
Norristown, PA 19401
Phone: 610-272-3120 Fax: 610-272-2805
Email: info@housemagazine.com

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Central Jersey HOUSE & HOME - NJ
Delaware HOUSE & HOME - DE
DelChester/Main Line West HOUSE & HOME - PA
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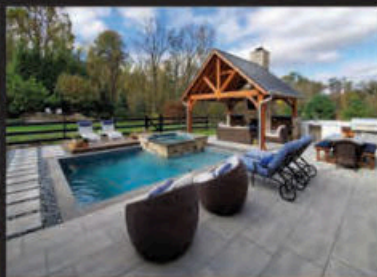
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FOR FOUR DECADES AND TWO GENERATIONS, THE TALENTED TEAM AT KEYSTONE CUSTOM DECKS HAS ADAPTED TO AND GROWN WITH INDUSTRY TRENDS, ENSURING THAT THE EXTERIOR EXTENSIONS OF CLIENTS' INDOOR LIVING SPACES ARE AS STURDY AS THEY ARE STUNNING. *by Madeleine Maccar*

EVER SINCE FOUNDER AMOS ESH WELCOMED HIS FIRST client to Keystone Custom Decks, the company has been building a reputation as sound and as impressive as the pools, pergolas, water features, hardscaping fixtures, outdoor kitchens and, of course, eponymous decks it has put its name on across four states for the past 40 years.

With the late Amos' sons confidently and capably steering the company they grew up in toward its promising future, the family-owned builder is in its second generation of turning homeowners' vast and varied visions for their outdoor living spaces into a fully realized, show-stopping space.

"The trend has really become turning your backyard into your sanctuary, your own personal retreat at home," observes Michael Esh. "It's been kind of gradual over the last 10 years, maybe a little longer, but it just exploded with COVID. We still do decks, but the scope of the project has become so much more than that. Now people want to relax outside with a fireplace and heaters, and have their TV there, and have a swimming pool out there, too."

But before a company can point to four decades of incredible work and satisfied clients,

it needs to assemble a team capable of creating the high-quality, long-lasting and painstakingly individualized outdoor structures that especially today's clients expect.

"We like to push the envelope on what anyone else has done with these ideas that our clients and our sales team have come up with, and just figuring out a way to make them happen," Esh says. "That's what our company and our team thrive on, taking those challenges, those dreams people have, and turning them into a reality."

Keystone's dedicated, hand-picked team has helped ensure that the area's premier deck builder has been able to thoughtfully expand as trends demand an explosive growth of complementary outdoor-living services. With homeowners wanting their properties' exterior amenities to reflect the comfort of those inside, plus the benefit of doing it all under one roof so the client only has to deal with one company throughout the entirety of the project, adapting to an evolving industry's shifting needs long ago emerged as a necessity to company leadership.

"When my dad started this business, an outdoor living space meant putting a deck out back that was big enough for a picnic table and your grill," Esh says. "Today, we're doing projects with

outdoor kitchens, swimming pools and fireplaces because, as the idea behind outdoor living spaces has changed over the years, the backyard has become an extension of the home."

Both training and hiring hands-on talent to deliver the diligent details required of today's projects is just one way the "team has grown tremendously." In addition to knowing all the right kinds of supplemental staff when a specialized skill is needed, more front-facing staff have also been fairly contemporary additions to the team.

"Dad would come home after being on the job site all day and sketch out designs by hand; now, we have an entire team of full-time, in-house designers," notes Esh. "We put together these 3D renderings of the project before people even sign a contract, and we've had to hire people specifically for that, too. But then there are people who have been working out in the field for years, and we were able to bring them into a new role allowing them to use all that experience they've accumulated."

And while an ever-expanding roster of services certainly keeps the Keystone team busy, the meteoric rise of its pool installations accounts for some of its most in-demand projects.

"I think pools are the biggest thing we've really started promoting in the last couple years," Esh says. "We have a whole division now that's only doing swimming pools."

While their areas of expertise go well beyond the decks the company originally built its reputation on, the desire to take on new challenges that ultimately shape the expansion of Keystone's wheelhouse has always been a core tenet of the company.

"We've always tried to stay on the cutting edge and I think we've done that over the years—Dad loved to try new things and all the new ideas that came along," Esh affirms.

But for all the changing trends that come along, the company's cornerstones remain the same all these decades later, like cultivating a family feeling among the talented team making Keystone's exemplary work possible. Perhaps even more important, though, is simply leading with integrity, a lesson that Amos Esh instilled in his children and insisted on for the company he founded.

And it's a legacy that lives on in a company that operates on the unwavering principle of treating customers like they're part of the Keystone family, too.

"We've grown a lot but we're still very much, at our core, a family business," says Esh. "It's very important to us to invest in our team and for them to care for our clients." **H&H**



Springing

CW

PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL CLAIMS SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER,
but recent weather trends hint at spring arriving in the not-so-far future.



by Katie Francis



WE'VE BEEN FORTUNATE THIS WINTER WEATHERWISE, with only a few snowfalls and some unseasonably warm days. Though relatively insignificant to us, fluctuating conditions take a considerable toll on our outdoor spaces, which haven't been adequately tended to since the fall. *House & Home* spoke with local experts to find out what proactive homeowners should be doing to get a jump-start on spring cleaning.

According to Keith Frederick, owner of ELA Outdoor Living, one of the biggest landscaping mistakes that homeowners make is not performing a proper fall cleanup.

"If you have a heavy buildup of leaves on your lawn and you let it sit there all winter and it gets snowed on and matted down, it'll effectively choke out your turf," Frederick explains.

As the owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing, Chris DeMato sees people overlook the importance of fall cleanups often and says that this mistake could end up taking a huge toll on your wallet.

"If leaves are left to linger and sit on the lawn, they do more damage and therefore you'll need more repair work. If you don't address those leaves until April, it could end up costing a lot more in expenses," DeMato says.

An autumn cleanup is equally important for water features like ponds and their inhabitants. George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds By George, says that the decomposition of debris sitting in a pond throughout the colder months leads to excessive algae, which can decrease oxygen in a pond and block the sunlight aquatic

plants need to undergo photosynthesis.

Even if you do tidy up your yard in the fall, leaves and debris inevitably build up over the winter, leaving you with plenty of work to do once the weather gets nicer.

Local experts agree that now is the best time to start fixing up your outdoor space, and the first step is going out and assessing the condition of your property.

"I would recommend that customers walk their property and make a list of any issues that may need to be addressed," DeMato says. This includes hardscape repairs, fencing repairs, dead plant materials and dead growth on trees, which could be dangerous if not addressed.

After surveying your property, DeMato recommends calling your landscaper as soon as possible, as it's never too early to get on their schedule for things like lawn repairs and tree removals.

It's best to leave these larger jobs to the professionals, but

Springing Early

there's plenty you can do right now to prepare for the spring. For one, the piles of leaves wreaking havoc on your once-lush green lawn and manicured flower beds should be removed to avoid further damage.

Secondly, perennials are in the beginning stages of revitalization. These plants can be cleaned up this time of year, but Frederick warns homeowners to be careful what they remove.

"If they prune off flowering plants, they're going to prune off all the flower buds for spring," he explains. Homeowners should only remove things like dead branches and dead plants, which take up space that could otherwise be room for the growth of healthy plants.

While flowering plants should mostly be left alone, besides a few small haircuts, now

is a good time to remove any tree branches that snapped during the winter, as they could be extremely hazardous if not handled promptly and properly.

At this point in the year, there isn't much to be done about the hardscaping aspects of your yard. While it's important to note the state of your hardscape and fencing, experts advise homeowners to wait until the temperature remains steadily warm to address these issues. This includes the readjustment of rocks around water features, which Mihalchick says "could slightly shift" due to ice formation over the winter.

Whether you're thinking about making a subtle change or redesigning your entire backyard, now is a good time to start thinking about fresh ideas you want to bring to your space to ensure that it's ready to enjoy for the spring and summer.

There are so many different options for outdoor entertainment spaces today, from standard decks and patios to grand pools with flowing water features and outdoor kitchens with accompanying fireplaces.

No two yards are the same, and the same goes for households and their personal preferences. This has a huge impact on how to lay out a yard.

"Everybody's different, depending on the land and the size of your family," Don Panetta, co-owner of D. Panetta Contracting with his wife Tammy, says.

According to Mihalchick, the best way to get the most out of a space, regardless of its size, is to be mindful of location during the design process.

"Allow yourself to walk two paces away from any door before steps start. When installing a water feature, keep it close to your living space to be able to see it, hear it, and interact with it," Mihalchick says. These simple layout strategies ensure that a homeowner maximizes both the potential and experience they can get from their yard.

Along with creating a functional entertainment area with the space you have, it's critical that you find a balance between hardscape and landscape to create a cohesive and aesthetic environment that you'll want to spend time in.



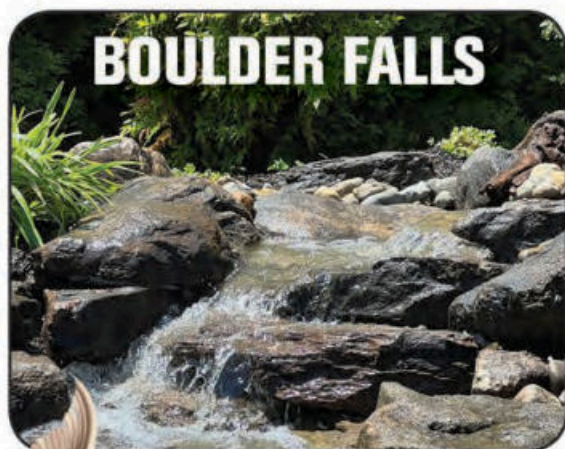
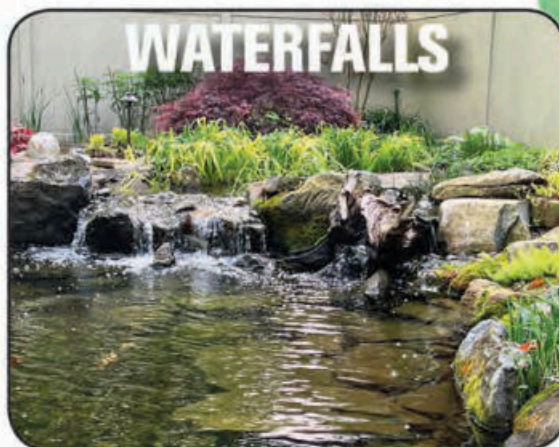
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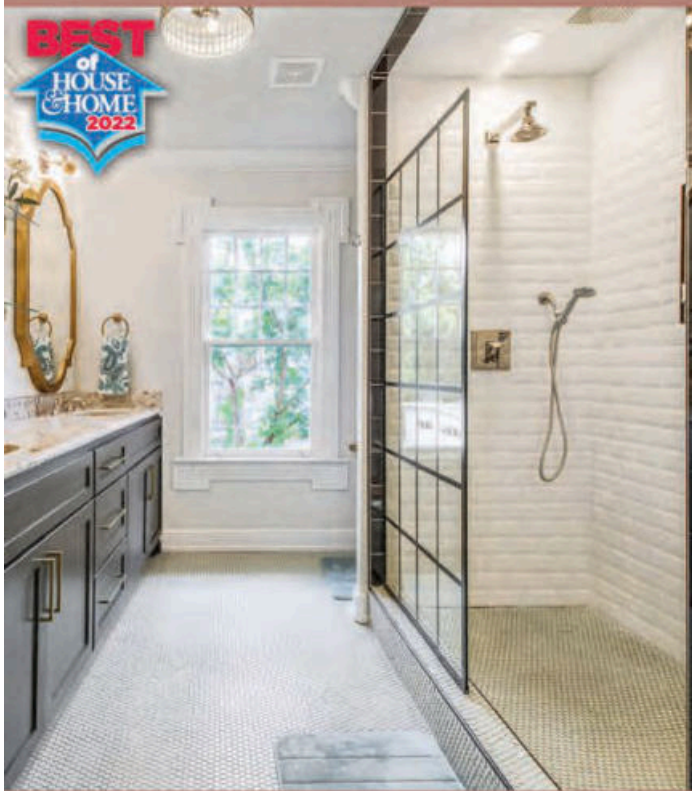


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People typically love installing hardscapes like porches and patios because they are easy to maintain, but DeMato says that too much stone and concrete can result in a “stark, cold feeling.”

“It is very important that you allow space for landscaping to soften up the hardscaping. This will give you more of the garden-like feel that you want to create in your own yard,” DeMato explains.

Creating thoughtful pockets of greenery breaks up the harshness of hardscaping, allowing color and life to complement and soften the space. Tammy Panetta echoes the importance of landscaping, calling it the “icing on the cake.”

There are likely still a few more cold days ahead of us and maybe even a snowstorm, but before we know it, we'll be putting the winter coats away and breaking out the tank tops. It's time to stop dreaming about the warmer months ahead and start preparing for them instead. **H&H**



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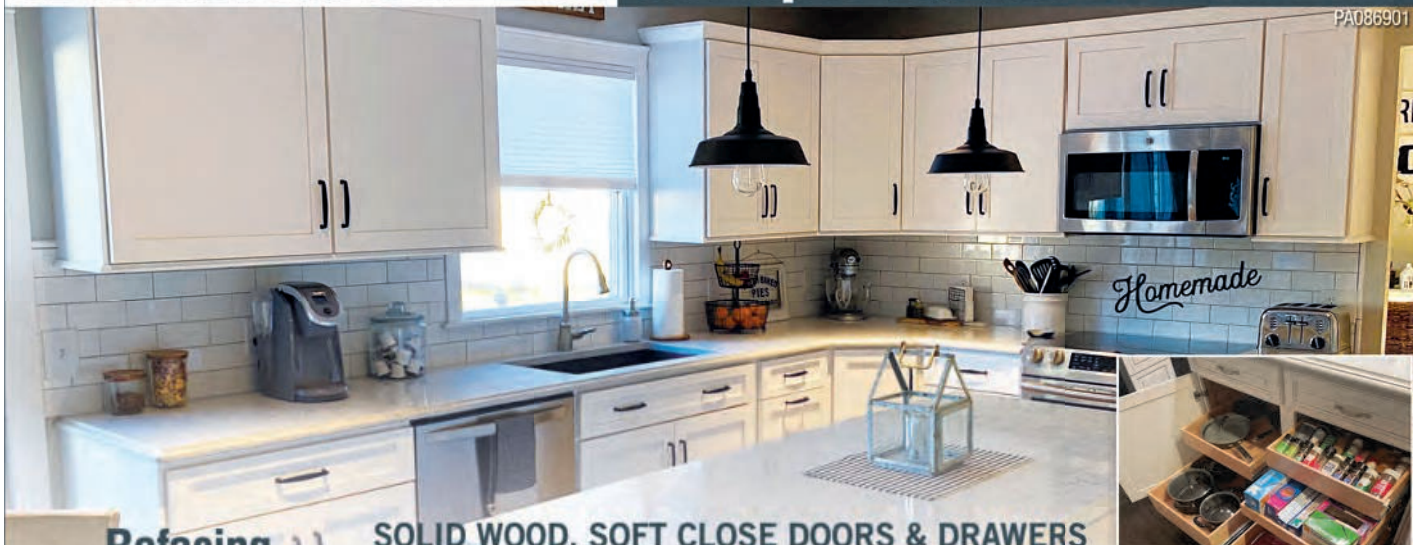
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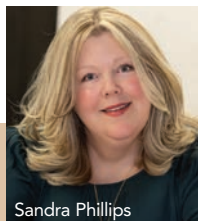
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by **Bill Donahue** | photos by **Nina Lea Photography**



Sandra Phillips

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 2006, COLONIAL MARBLE & GRANITE has become the largest fabricator of stone in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Despite its size and position of prominence, Colonial Marble & Granite has been able to retain the nimbleness of a much smaller enterprise, blessed with the creativity and commitment to self-improvement needed to excel in such a competitive landscape.

“We’re a customer-service-driven company, and we have always tried to rise to the occasion,” says Sandra Phillips, senior vice president of sales, marketing, and design for Colonial Marble & Granite, which is based in King of Prussia.

Colonial Marble & Granite got its start in countertops, but customer demand has propelled the company to branch out into ancillary products, such as tile, sinks, flooring, and cabinetry. The family-owned and operated company also greatly expanded its design capabilities, both in and out of its sprawling King of Prussia showroom; in fact, the company now offers the option to bring the entire design process right into a client’s home.

“Evolution is nothing new for us,” Phillips adds. “People used to come in here and say, ‘Can you do my whole kitchen?’ We would have to say, ‘No, but we can do your countertop.’ We don’t have to say no anymore.

The leaders of this company had a vision for what Colonial could be. As a company, we have pulled that vision together under one roof, and we’re not done yet.”

One might even say it’s only just beginning. For example, Colonial Marble & Granite will soon roll out an interactive call center to facilitate client feedback and streamline the installation process.

“It’s almost like a VIP service,” Phillips says. “When our staff goes out to the client’s home for an installation, someone from the call center can talk to the client while the installers are in the house. Before, if there was any issue with an installation, the client would have to submit a ticket and wait a few days for a response. Now, they get an instantaneous experience.” For the small percentage of jobs that have any kind of issue, the client can give us that feedback and work with us right then and there to figure out what the resolution looks like.”

The call center will become increasingly vital as Colonial Marble & Granite expands its design team and continues to enhance its in-home services. That said, the call center represents only one mode of interaction. Phillips says clients will have multiple ways to connect with Colonial Marble & Granite, including a revamped website that has an

online portal with “chat” functionality.

“Some clients will want to spend \$100,000 on a kitchen, while others will look to spend \$1,999 on a new countertop,” she adds. “No matter how much they’re spending with us, we want to make sure everybody feels like they have been heard, like they matter.”

Colonial Marble & Granite foresees more growth ahead for 2023. The company recently forged partnerships with the likes of American Standard and Grohe, and Phillips says clients are likely to see an expanded showroom alive with “more products that were never available in this area before.” Going forward, the company intends to march boldly into “smart” technology for kitchens and other areas of the home.

“It’s a very exciting time for us,” Phillips says. “We have a sister company, Colonial Smart Home Services, and we’re looking into how we can have these companies work more closely together to deliver what customers want in terms of smart-home functionality. We want to maintain the core of our business, and enrich and build upon it, sprouting out to meet the demand from our customers.”

If there’s a theme for Colonial Marble & Granite in 2023, it’s one of evolution—the evolution of its products and services, the evolution of its showrooms and other spaces, and the evolution of the people who serve as the company’s backbone.

“There are so many untold stories that happen at Colonial, and we’re bringing those stories to the public this year,” Phillips says. “What I think people forget sometimes is that this is a family-owned business. Nikos leads the charge, along with his father, Tom, his mother, Pam, and his brothers. This is what they love to do. They’re a part of every process, from sales and design to operations, and they treat everyone who works here like family. As big as Colonial has become, it still has a family-owned vibe, and that’s a beautiful thing.” **H&H**

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Colonial Marble & Granite will soon roll out an interactive call center to facilitate client feedback and streamline the installation process.

OUTSIDE INTERESTS



Spring is usually an opportune time for homeowners to consider exterior projects, including the installation of new roofing or siding. *by Matt Cosentino*

Although this winter has certainly been mild by typical Northeast standards, it still makes sense for homeowners to head into spring by taking stock of their property after the ice and snow have rolled through. Whether certain exterior projects are on tap out of necessity or just because of the curb appeal they can bring, it is wise to seize the opportunity now to ensure the house is in its best condition and small issues do not become worse.

“As the weather changes and people start coming outside, they should walk around the house to see if any shingles have fallen down, if any screens have ripped or the gutters are loose, anything like that,” says Gary Selleck, owner of C&C Family Roofing. “If somebody is having a problem, we work all winter long, especially this year and last year when there’s hardly any snow and the temperatures are pretty good. But the ideal time is March and April to start assessing what they need done.”

An added benefit of addressing any concerns early is getting on the schedule for the premier roofing and siding contractors in the area, especially since spring and fall are

the best times to complete such projects because the weather is not extremely hot or cold.

“If homeowners want to get the work started and completed in the spring, they’re probably better off considering which direction they want to go and which products they might want to use, and which companies they want to have in to give estimates,” says Vic Fiore, co-owner of Magnolia Home Remodeling Group. “You start the process now so that when the weather breaks, the work can begin and before the spring is over all of the construction work is completed.”

House & Home spoke to local professionals about the most

common exterior projects and the advantages of certain products over others in regard to roofing and siding.

PROTECTION FROM ABOVE

The roof obviously plays a significant role in protecting the rest of the home, so it is crucial to have an understanding of what kind of condition it is in, especially after the winter. A regular inspection by an expert is always a good idea, but there are also clues that homeowners can look for themselves in determining if a new roof may be needed.

“The shingles lifting, shingles breaking off, the granules of the shingles wearing off the face of the shingle and sitting in the gutter. All of those are good signs, and of course a leak,” Fiore says.

“Age is probably the thing you want to keep an eye on the most. If you have a roof that is 20, 25 or 30 years old, you’re nearing the end of its life expectancy.”

Because a new roof is a major investment, some homeowners

may want to put it off as long as possible, and in certain cases a repair will buy them time.

“We don’t replace every roof,” Selleck says. “If one part of the roof is bad and some shingles blew off, they’re wearing a certain way or there’s a flashing that’s not right, we do a lot of repair work and they can last for years and years. You don’t necessarily have to put a whole new roof on. The good thing is, we’re a family company, so if we tell people we can get them through a repair and it will last another three or four years, then they’ll call us back when they need a new roof because we were honest to begin with.”

When it does come time for replacement, there are several options available, with a large majority of homeowners choosing traditional shingle roofs.

“We do shingle, we do some metal, we do rubber and there are some synthetic products that we can work with,” Fiore says. “A shingle roof is the most cost-effective. The warranties are excellent and there are some real solid companies like

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GAF and Owens Corning that we work with that offer all different colors, designs and styles.”

Global Home Improvement has had great success over the years with the installation of metal roofs and recommends that option because it is more durable than a shingle roof. Instead of having to be replaced in 25 years or so, metal roofs will usually last a lifetime for a homeowner.

Metal roofs are also eco-friendly and add an aesthetic appeal.

“Asphalt roofing can show its age quickly,” says Adam Parnes, marketing manager for Global Home Improvement. “It may last 15-plus years, but typically after five it will show discoloration and staining. Metal roofing has no discoloration issues and will last longer and look better on your home. Metal slate roofing turns your boring asphalt roof into a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing focal point of your home.”

Fiore agrees that metal adds a nice decorative touch.

“A lot of people want to use metal as an accent on a front porch roof or something along those lines,” he says. “Once in a while we’ll do a whole house in metal but it’s expensive and the cost becomes prohibitive.”

Because it is a one-time job, metal roofs make financial sense for some, but others do not want to pay the extra money up front compared to a shingle roof.

“It’s expensive and when it rains, it’s very loud,” Selleck says. “When the snow lies up there, it slides off at a fast pace, and if you don’t have the snow guards at the bottom, it can really do some damage if somebody is walking under there. There’s not much call for it—in the suburbs, people want to replace the roof with shingles because it’s cost-effective and the shingles now are a 50-year shingle, which they call a lifetime shingle. The price is right and you can get the job done on most houses in a day.”

WOW FACTOR

Just as with the roof, the siding is important to keep a house protected from harsh weather,

but a new project can also provide a much-needed facelift to a home. There are plenty of options to add curb appeal, including the always in-demand vinyl siding along with James Hardie fiber cement siding.

“[People love] the look and the durability of the James Hardie fiber cement, but the downside is that it’s very expensive compared to vinyl siding,” Selleck says. “And if vinyl siding is put on right, it will look beautiful and stay for years to come, especially if you put insulation behind the siding. There’s only a certain amount of homes that we ever put the Hardie on—it’s all very upscale homes because of the expense.”

If homeowners can afford it, Fiore is a big fan of the fiber cement siding and other products from James Hardie. He also has high praise for Ascend from Alside, which he explains is a composite siding that is installed similarly to vinyl, making it a quick project at a lower price point than James Hardie. Magnolia also works with well-regarded companies like CertainTeed and Azek.

“There are lots of options that work well with any budget,” Fiore says. “It’s just a matter of budget, style and color—those are probably the things that factor into the decision the most.”

“If homeowners are purchasing a higher-end product, they also need to make sure that

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the install is done by somebody capable, knowledgeable and well versed in what the manufacturer is looking for, so you're not voiding warranties and creating a problem down the road."

As for colors, Selleck says grays, whites and earth tones are popular at the moment, and Fiore has had clients ask for darker hues lately.

"The last five-plus years, the trend has been toward these darker architectural colors—

the deep blues, the dark grays, there's even some charcoal and black options now," he says. "[Manufacturers are] able to roll those colors out now because of the technology—they don't have to worry about the color fading because of the advancements in their manufacturing process. Years ago, they weren't able to put out a dark color and guarantee against fading. Today, they're able to do that."

THE FORGOTTEN EXTERIOR PROJECT

While roofs and siding will get most of the attention, Selleck warns homeowners not to forget about another aspect of their house's exterior.

"People really overlook the gutters, but gutters are kind of the lifeline of the roof and siding, and over the years they start to drop a little bit," he says. "If the water is not being taken off quick enough, or the gutters are clogged, then the water backs up and it rots the fascia out and it can get underneath the roof. Not to mention, when it snows and the gutters are not pitched the right way or the gutters could be clogged, the snow builds up and you get ice damming, which could get into people's houses."

Repairing or cleaning gutters can be a dangerous DIY project, but fortunately there are experienced professionals ready to help.

"We have thousands of customers who bring us in to clean their gutters and get the leaves out," Selleck says. "We tighten

them, we clean them and we make sure the downspouts are all clear. Gutters are very important for a home." **H&H**



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ask the expert
by Matt Cosentino

Gehman Design Remodeling

FOR MOST OF US, HOME IS WHERE WE'RE MOST COMFORTABLE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE WOULDN'T LIKE TO SEE SOME SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN IT FROM TIME TO TIME TO BETTER SUIT OUR LIFESTYLE.

Perhaps the children are getting older, heading off to college or buying their own first houses, and there is no longer a need for a playroom or teen hangout. Or maybe the dated kitchen is not hosting large gatherings anymore and the moment for some much-needed updates has finally arrived.

Tackling a renovation to better fit the homeowners' current lives is no small task, and important questions should be asked and answered before the work commences. A trusted design-build firm with years of experience is also a must, and that's where Gehman Design Remodeling enters the picture. After three decades of business in remodeling kitchens and baths, finishing basements and building additions, there is nothing its team has not seen.

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



Dennis Gehman,
MCR, president

A HOMEOWNER'S LIFESTYLE CAN CERTAINLY CHANGE AS THE FAMILY DYNAMIC CHANGES, WHETHER THAT'S CHILDREN GETTING OLDER OR MOVING OUT. IS THAT WHEN A LOT OF PEOPLE LIKE TO REMODEL?

Yes. Many of the homeowners we do major projects for are empty nesters. When they're raising their families, they may not have the extra disposable income to make the house the way they want it. They make it work for raising a family, but when the kids are out of the house and it's just a husband and wife, they want to invest in their home to enjoy it.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS YOU ASK EARLY ON TO DETERMINE THE DIRECTION OF THE RENOVATION?

We need to know how many people are going to be living in the house, whether they have young children or teenagers. If it's a kitchen project, we want to know how many people are involved in food preparation and whether we need to allow room for more than one cook. A lot of it is asking questions in the flow of conversation, not in a drill down list. Many people are not able to articulate what they want, but through conversation and getting to know them, it's our job to extrapolate that information and come back with a few design options that we think would work for them. We narrow it down to the one that is

closest to what they want and work together to make it exactly what they want.

PEOPLE SEEM TO FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT HAVING EITHER AN OPEN DESIGN OR SEPARATED ROOMS. IS THAT A BIG FACTOR IN A RENOVATION?

People do have strong feelings about that. A lot of times it depends on how much entertaining they like to do. If they do a lot of entertaining, the person who's doing the cooking and food preparation wants to be involved in the conversation, so an open floor plan makes a lot more sense. If it's people who are mostly there by themselves, they don't seem to be as concerned about it. Overall, I would say about 75% lean toward an open floor plan.

WHAT TYPES OF FLOORING ARE MOST OF YOUR CUSTOMERS INTERESTED IN?

We're seeing very little carpet, at least on the first floor. In bedrooms there's still carpet, but on first floors it's almost always a hard surface. Generally speaking, most people's first choice is a hardwood of some kind, but that can definitely get expensive. When we show them samples of the vinyl planks—which look great and resemble real

wood—they see that they can save at least 50% of the cost if not more. In open floor plans, you almost feel like you don't have a choice and the flooring should all be the same. When you have different rooms, you have the option to change flooring from room to room.

DO CLIENTS WHO ARE EMPTY NESTERS ASK FOR FEATURES THAT WILL HELP THEM AGE IN PLACE?

We probably bring it up more times than the homeowners. A lot of people still have in mind that if they do that it's going to look like a hospital or a nursing home. I think they're hesitant because that's not the look they want, but we're able to show them pictures of numerous projects we've done that are designed for aging in place.

It may be as simple as making sure the doorways are wide enough in the bathrooms so you can enter with a wheelchair or a walker. We make sure we have solid wood blocking behind the tub and shower walls and behind the drywall near the toilet, so that if they ever need a grab bar, it can be installed without having to tear things apart. Many of the manufacturers now have towel bars that are structurally rated to serve as a grab bar, so it doesn't look institutional; it looks nice but is there as a safety feature. H&H



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Jeff Martin, a manager at the company's corporate headquarters in Myerstown, Pa., says, "The most common issues people want to take care of are hard water, taste, odors, staining and

removing any trace bacteria or chemicals."

Martin highlights the following symptoms of these issues, many of which homeowners may not recognize:

- **HARD WATER:** contains dissolved calcium and magnesium. Hard water can result in dry skin and hair, spots on glasses and silverware, rings in the tub, dull clothing after washing and inefficiency of water-based appliances, such as a hot water heater.
- **IRON AND MANGANESE STAINING:** causes rusty-orange or black staining visible in sinks, tubs, toilets and clothes.
- **LOW PH:** blue-green stains most noticeable on white surfaces commonly found in tubs, sinks, toilets and clothing; can also erode copper plumbing and fixtures, eventually causing leaks.
- **TASTE AND SMELL:** water may have an odor or

funny taste to it; due to a number of factors including chlorine—which is used as a disinfectant.

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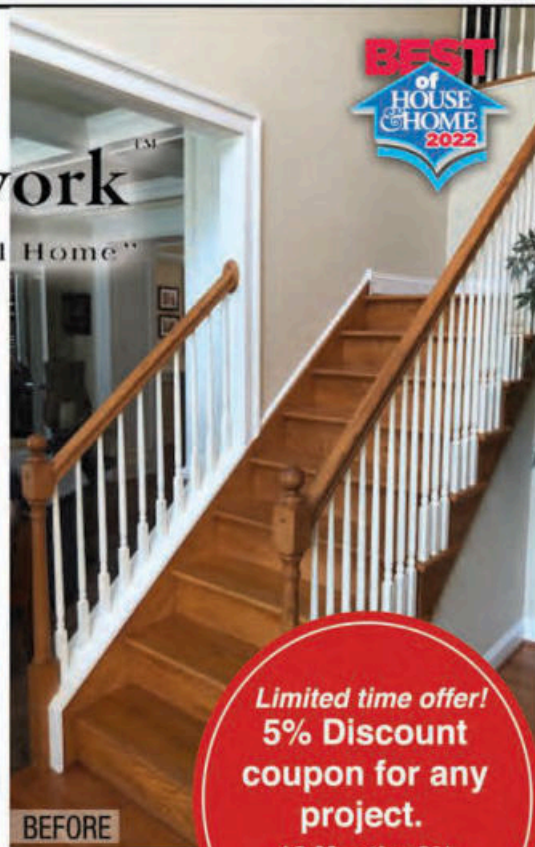
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Pair these gorgeous displays with the knowledgeable and helpful team members who are ready to assist—and homeowners can really appreciate the showroom visit experience. Customers always leave Sequoia with a lot of great ideas and information.

Of course, in general, inventory has been a major issue since the start of the pandemic. Homeowners who have tried to purchase furniture and decking may have noticed limited stock. But Sequoia Out Back has been fortunate to be able to keep a lot of inventory in stock thanks to its relationship with manufacturers and its purchasing power, as well as having a large quantity from the start. Even so, with so many people coming through the doors, now is the time to start planning for the spring while inventory is still available.

After all, before you know it, the weather will be consistently warm, and we'll all be

spending even more time outdoors. Homeowners want to make sure their space is ready now!

"The sooner you can start planning, the better," urges Keller. "The number of visitors coming to the store right now is higher than ever for this time of year. It's definitely not too early to start thinking about setting up your outdoor space."

As you start planning, Sequoia Out Back has all of the amenities that you might want to consider. This includes fire pits, patio furniture and all of the material supplies including decking and railing and hardscaping. Sequoia works with all of the leading manufacturers including TimberTech, Wolf, Trex, Zuri and Fiberon—all of whom continue to offer innovative products.

Whether you're a do-it-yourselfer or someone who was sent by their contractor to look for materials, Sequoia's showroom can accommodate everyone.

It's all about making the experience as easy and as enjoyable as possible for homeowners. As the true outdoor living experts, Sequoia and its team are ready to help make homeowners' backyard dreams come true.

"Outdoor living has been a trend for a long time but it's hotter than ever," Keller sums up. "I think we're all ready to start spending more time outside." **H&H**

IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT US TO APPRECIATE THE OUTDOORS EVEN MORE.

While backyard outdoor living areas have been soaring in popularity for years now, for many, the stay-at-home orders and the experience of being stuck indoors for so long have made homeowners absolutely crave these spaces more than ever. They are truly a must-have—a fact that's been increasingly evident at Sequoia Out Back, where owner John Keller says that he's seeing even more people come into the showroom than ever before.

From the moment that homeowners walk through Sequoia Out Back's front doors, the experience is really unlike any other. The 30,000-square-foot showroom has everything you could want for your personal oasis on display so that you can envision it in your own backyard.

When you walk through a typical patio store or a big-box store, items aren't usually set up or paired together the way they would be in your backyard so it can be difficult to visualize your finished space. At Sequoia, you can see an entire outdoor living space

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For this kitchen, we opted for cottage white cabinetry featuring contrasting quartersawn red oak island and floating shelves on either side of the wood hood. A professional series gas cooktop with full height tile splash gives this space further elements of function and design.

Lower Gwynedd, Pa. | (215) 646-7477 | HTRenovations.com



LBK Design Build

Our clients asked for a modern-meets-transitional master bathroom. We were able to accomplish this goal by having some fun with finishes and tile patterns. The 4x4 tiles on the shower wall in a straight set pattern mixed with the same tile in a diamond pattern on the vanity wall added additional interest to the space. The clean lines of the black hexagon tiles on the floor are a nice contrast to the warm wood herringbone look on the shower wall. The furniture style vanity in walnut adds an organic warmth to the space and the brushed gold and matte black fixtures tie it all together.

Doylestown, Pa. | (215) 675-5000 | LBKDesignBuild.com



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