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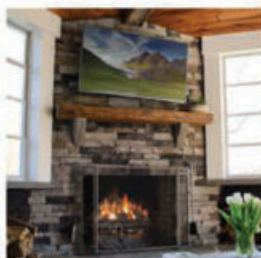


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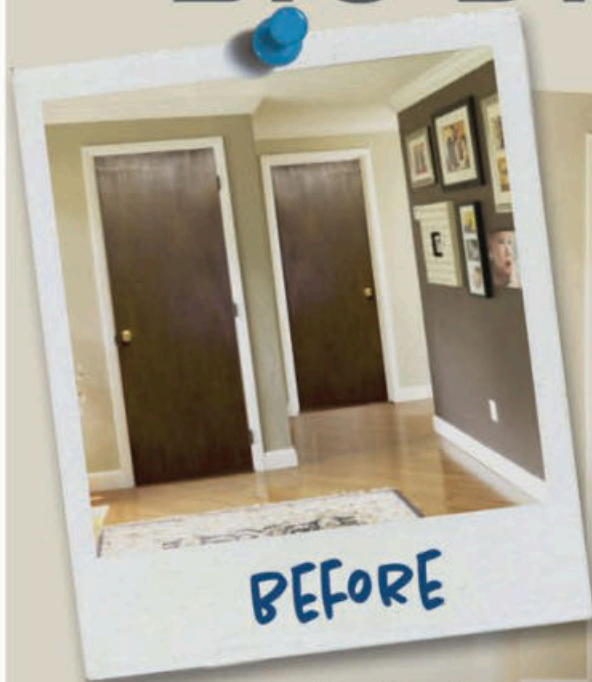
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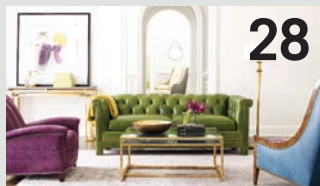
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On the cover:

House & Home is happy to present our fifth annual Best of House & Home, featuring the companies and services that our readers voted on, recognizing their industry expertise, customer service values, quality craftsmanship and overall high-quality products. Turn to page 11 for the list of winners in dozens of categories, each equipped to help with your next home improvement task.

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Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete

by Liz Hunter

There is something to be said about a family-owned business celebrating its 75th anniversary. Now in its third generation, Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete has two locations—Souderton and Lansdale—and more than 50 employees. It is one of the area's largest suppliers of brick, pavers, landscape materials, stucco and cultured stone products.

The company's experience and range of materials make it a quality resource for home improvement projects. "Our staff works with our customers to help them with their home improvement project, [figuring] out if they can do it, or if the job is too big for them," says Jarrod Nyce, vice president. Then the company assists the homeowner in connecting with qualified contractors, ones Nyce says have proven over the years to be reputable and trustworthy.

House & Home spoke with Nyce about why homeowners may be pleasantly surprised by their experience with his company.

How does the level of service you provide differ from others?

We are able to provide just about everything for any type of job. For contractors, we can deliver to all construction situations. We provide concrete pumping service, front discharge tucks and theme conveyor trucks. This makes our fleet versatile to handle all job sites, so we can service our customers. We also have piggyback fork trucks to deliver materials and get the material close



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Is an appointment necessary for homeowners to browse your selection of products?

We are open six days a week, no appointment necessary. Just because we are a contractor service company doesn't mean we don't deal with average people. We try to help everyone make the best decision for their project.

What are the best things a homeowner should do during the winter months to plan their outdoor living spaces?

It's a matter of space, time and budget. It's really simple—we can help any customer figure out what they are capable of doing. We have lots of ideas but doing your research is always best. Once you have an idea of what you want to do, we'll help you get there.

Outdoor living spaces are so much more than patios now. How do I know what's possible for me?

What goes into making a luxurious backyard is up to many different definitions. It depends on what your vision is. We can help in many different areas. Pictures and displays are a good start and we have a lot of both. Whatever you want is limited only by your imagination and budget. Whether it's an outdoor kitchen, fire pit or outdoor fireplace, an outdoor grill area or a beautiful hard-scaped/paver backyard, it's all about going to the next level and we can help you create just about anything you would like to do. It's all up to your imagination.

What types of products do you have to help create these spaces?

One of our partners, Cambridge Pavers, has a full line of outdoor kits from pergolas and pavilions to bistro tables and waterfalls. We also have a ceramic paver that looks like flagstone. It's really cool and can be used in all kinds of applications. It looks like the real thing.

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(610) 380-1119
TurpinLandscaping.com

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

Ground Tec, Inc

(215) 322-7669
GroundTecInc.com

Wes Carver Electric

(215) 855-3340
WesCarverElectric.com

LIGHTING, INDOOR

Bright Light Design Center

(610) 992-1790
BrightLightDesignCenter.com

Denney Electric Supply

(215) 628-8880
DenneyElectricSupply.com

MUDJACKING/CONCRETE LEVELING

BQ Basement Systems

(215) 989-4188
BQHouseandHome.com

MULCH/STONE/SOIL

Victory Gardens

(215) 443-5665
VictoryGardensInc.com

NEW HOME BUILDER

Harth Builders

(215) 654-0364
HarthBuilders.com

ORIENTAL RUG SALES & CLEANING

Kazanjan Fine Oriental Rug Company

(610) 537-8921
KazanjanGallery.com

Knots & Weaves

(610) 644-9192
KnotsAndWeaves.com

Maloumian Oriental Rug Imports

(215) 209-3708
Roysrugs.com

OUTDOOR FURNITURE

Sequoia Out Back

(215) 918-3325
DeckSupplies.com

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

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GroundTecInc.com

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(610) 380-1119
TurpinLandscaping.com

PAINTING SERVICE

Rhino Shield

(717) 638-4100
MyRhinoShield.com

Star Painting & Wallcovering

(610) 409-7980
StarPaintingandWallcovering.com

PAVERS/RETAINING WALLS

Nyce Crete

(215) 723-5506
LandisBC.com

PAVING/ASPHALT

Harris Paving

(215) 513-1977
HarrisPavingIndustries.com

Harrison Brothers Paving

1 (844) Driveway
HarrisonBrothersPaving.com

Liberty Paving

(215) 256-9077
LibertyPavingCo.com

PEST CONTROL

Viking Pest Control

(848) 251-0751
VikingPest.com

PLUMBING SERVICE

Abbey Plumbing

(215) 643-6645
AbbeyPlumbing.com

POOL DESIGN/INSTALLATION

Blue Haven Pools & Spas by Calvitti

(800) 219-2141
BlueHaven.com

Joe Ordini's Best Fiberglass Pools

(215) 602-3485
Swim1Day.com

Ted's Pools

(610) 359-1301
TedsPools.net

POOL RENOVATIONS & REPAIRS

K.S. Greenday

(215) 702-9876
KSPoolsandPatios.com

POWER WASHING

Softwash Platoon

(610) 494-9490
SoftwashPlatoon.com

QUARTZ COUNTERTOPS

Dynamic Marble & Granite

(215) 256-9195
DynamicMarbleGranite.com

Timeless Stone Fabrication

(215) 249-1555
TimelessStoneFab.com

REMODELER/BUILDER

Coleman

Home Remodeling
(215) 721-4431
ColemanHomeRemodeling.com

Gehman

Design Remodeling
(215) 513-0300
GehmanRemodeling.com

REPLACEMENT CUSHIONS

The Foam Outlet

(856) 382-7145
FoamOutlet.com

ROOFING

Glick's Exteriors

(610) 883-6635
GlicksExteriors.com

Global Home Improvement

(866) 735-1121
GlobalHomeInc.com

MR Roofing

(717) 665-1752
MR-Roofing.com

SHEDS & OUTDOOR STRUCTURES

Country Tyme Sheds

(267) 834-0211
CountryTymeSheds.com

SHOWER DOORS

Alderfer Glass

(215) 855-5012 | (610) 489-2221
AlderferGlass.com

SIDING

Glick's Exteriors

(610) 883-6635
GlicksExteriors.com

SOLAR ENERGY

Orbit Energy & Power

(800) 836-3987
OrbitEnergy.us

SPAS/HOT TUBS

Joe Ordini's Best Fiberglass Pools

(215) 602-3485 | Swim1Day.com

STUCCO

Glick's Exteriors

(610) 883-6635
GlicksExteriors.com

SUNROOMS & PATIO ENCLOSURES

Paul Construction & Awning

(610) 287-1623
AwningsDecksPatios.com

TILE

Keystone Granite & Tile

(215) 392-6052
Keystone-Granite.com

TILE & GROUT CLEANING

G & G Home Services

(215) 853-2917
GGHomeServices.com

Genesis Marble & Granite Refinishing

(609) 204-3179
GenesisMarbleAndGranite.com

WALK-IN TUBS

Home Smart Industries

(610) 459-5808
HomeSmartInd.com

WATER CONDITIONING

Martin Water Conditioning

(800) 887-7555
MartinWater.com

WATER FEATURES/PONDS

Turpin Landscape Design

(610) 380-1119
TurpinLandscaping.com

WINDOWS & DOORS

Chapman Windows Doors Siding

(610) 400-3382
ChapmanWindowsDoors.com

Matus Windows

(215) 305-8840
(484) 362-0969
MatusWindows.com

Renewal by Andersen

(267) 337-8998
SmartWindowChoice.com

WINDOW TINTING

Doyle Window Tinting

(215) 657-1000
DoyleWindowTinting.com

Tint-Pro

(610) 409-8000
Tint-Pro.com

WINDOW TREATMENTS

AD Window Treatments

(267) 898-0200
ADWindowTreatments.com

Blind Builders, Inc.

(215) 322-5855
BlindBuilders.com

M. C. Weeks

(610) 489-7231
MCWeeksInc.com

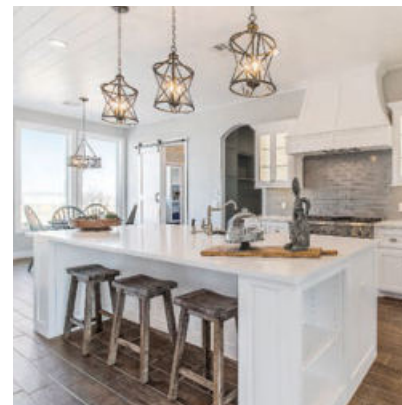
Sunburst Shutters & Window Fashions

(732) 354-4832
SunburstShuttersNJ.com

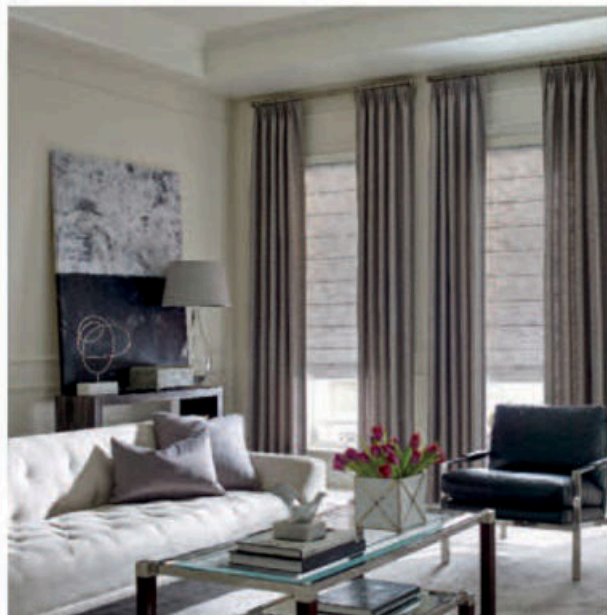
WOOD MOLDING/TRIMWORK

Home Trimwork

(215) 613-4100
HomeTrimwork.com



BEST of HOUSE & HOME in Window Treatments



What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

It all comes down to our personal touch and exceptional client service. Everything we do as a small, family-owned company is done with our clients front of mind. This means that our staff is fully trained and certified, equipped with the knowledge and experience needed to provide the best service and experience possible from design consultations to product installation.

We also are a Centurion Hunter Douglas Gallery dealer, offering exclusive products and services others cannot, including the Right Choice Promise, which enables clients to replace their window treatments within a short time frame if they are not fully satisfied.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

Going into someone's home with my knowledge and expertise to help address their privacy, light-control, UV Protection, décor and other concerns or goals with custom window treatment selections is so rewarding. Many lasting friendships have been made throughout the years, and that is what I love most.



Dan and Laura Hawley

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

Yes; Hunter Douglas just released the new Design Studio Roman Shade line featuring fabric designs by industry-leading textile artists. We are so excited about this new launch that we renovated a section of our showroom to feature it.

AD Window Treatments
Blue Bell, Pa.
(267) 898-0200
ADWindowTreatments.com



BEST of HOUSE & HOME in Kitchen/Bath Design



How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

This year, Dilworth's celebrated 29 years in business!

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

We offer full turnkey services and use no subcontractors. All of our cabinetry is handcrafted in our Phoenixville shop, where we also fabricate countertops. Our quality is second to none, we have the best installers in the business and we stand behind every job we do.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

It's quite a compliment to once again be recognized by the community and our clients as a Best of Winner. Most of our business comes from client referrals and repeat business so an award like this is greatly appreciated.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

Exceeding the hopes and expectations of our clients. It's very gratifying to hear our clients say how easy we made the process and how they still love their new kitchen or bathroom even many years later. It's difficult to describe the feeling of turning a client's dream kitchen into their reality.

DILWORTH'S
— CUSTOM DESIGN —

Dilworth's Custom Design
(610) 917-9119
DilworthsCustomDesign.com

of the **BEST** Spotlight

BEST of HOUSE&HOME in **Waterproofing**



Ken Klinger, CEO
Collegeville, Pa.
(800) 700-9171
BasementWaterproofingSpecialists.com

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

Our family-owned business Basement Waterproofing Specialists, has been servicing Pa., N.J. and Del. for many years.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

BWS has developed cutting-edge, state-of-the-art drainage systems and structural repairs unique to our industry. Most important is our excellent customer service, superior quality of work and our ability to diagnose and correct out customers' problems.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We feel honored to be recognized by *House & Home* Magazine as one of the best in our field. After many years of hard work and customers' satisfaction, this is a great honor.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

We are a fourth-generation American contractor. Every employee feels like a member of the family. The company's philosophy—its formula for success from the very beginning—has been to treat each customer as if they are a family member. We are grateful to our customers for referring as many customers as they do. This is the most rewarding aspect of our business.

BEST of HOUSE&HOME in **Home Remodeler/ New Home Builder**



HARTH
Design • Build • Remodel
www.harthbuilders.com

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

Harth Builders has been serving homeowners across Bucks and Montgomery counties since 1996.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

Harth Builders is a design-build remodeling firm. From architectural design through construction, our team of industry professionals offers a comprehensive menu of residential building services under one contract. Our streamlined process, combined with our commitment to communication, quality and cleanliness, has resulted in consistently high customer satisfaction ratings for our company. Delivering a superior customer experience is what really sets Harth Builders apart from others in our industry.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

Winning multiple categories for Best of *House & Home* is an honor and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote for us. Awards like these are validating for our team members and encourage us to continue providing a great customer experience for our clients.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

Every day, we work with clients who are frustrated with some aspect of their home. Sometimes their stress is so great, it spills over and affects other areas of their lives. They'll even isolate themselves and refrain from having guests over because they're embarrassed about their home's appearance. One of the most rewarding aspects of our work is seeing how completed projects not only look beautiful and meet our clients' needs, but how these projects improve their quality of life.

Gregory Harth, President
(215) 654-0364
HarthBuilders.com

BEST of HOUSE & HOME in **Hardscaping**



How many years have you been in business?
75 years

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We're very proud to be acknowledged by the people who read the magazine.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

Helping people achieve their objectives and making them happy.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

There is always a new challenge, things are always changing. Keeping up with the quick pace of change, and staying on the cutting edge is exciting.

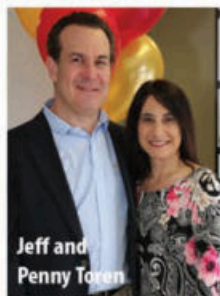
Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

We have a new tile made of porcelain for indoor and outdoor applications. It looks like Pennsylvania Blue Stone; it's really beautiful and versatile.



Jarrod Nyce,
Owner
(215) 723-5506
LandisBC.com

BEST of HOUSE & HOME in **Cabinet Refacing**



Jeff and
Penny Toren

Kitchen Tune-Up
(610) 421-4324
KitchenTuneUp-Mainline.com

What makes you the best in your industry while separating your from your competitors?

We offer the best of both worlds—we are the largest national franchise for kitchen remodeling (which gives us the buying power of over 100 franchisees, plus the shared knowledge), but yet, the attention to excellence of a local owner. This buying power allows us to offer the best quality products in the market for a price that is typically below our competitors.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

It is an honor to receive this honor for our third year in a row. This recognition really goes out to our entire team for the hard work they do every day to focus on the satisfaction of each and every one of our customers.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

In my previous life in the IT industry, you just never really had the chance to make the emotional connection that helping someone remodel the heart of their home can provide. Penny and I were inspired to open this business after numerous bad experiences with projects we completed in our home, and we wanted to change the expectations and process for our customers as to what a remodeling project could be. The Kitchen Tune-Up business model begins differently from the initial contact (we actually call you back!) and never ends, even after the installation is complete in case issues arise years later.

BEST of HOUSE&HOME in **Fireplace & Inserts, Grills**



Jay Stong, President
Hatfield and Eagleville, Pa.
(610) 631-9372
SaltersFireplace.com

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

In May, we were forced to move to a new showroom space 1/8 of a mile from our original showroom, due to a fire at a neighboring business. Our new Eagleville showroom at 3076 Ridge Pike provides a larger space with beautifully designed burning displays. Plus, Salter's Hatfield location has gone through some updates as well to add a wider selection of fire features for residents from Bucks and northern Montgomery counties. And, don't forget, Barto Pool and Spa in Phoenixville (now part of Salter's Fireplace Company) sells above-ground pools, spas, supplies and accessories, as well as provides opening and closing services to pool and spa owners. Salter's customers have all they need within one company to create a warm indoor and outdoor living space.

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

Over 45.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

With two convenient showrooms in the Philadelphia area (Hatfield and Eagleville), Salter's stands out from most hearth retailers because we are truly a one-stop shop for sales, installation and service of fire appliances and outdoor oasis products. A new fireplace appliance is one of the top three improvements in a home's equity. If a customer is looking to replace their old, inefficient, builder-grade fireplace, Salter's has an ABC Rating System to determine if it is "acceptable," "borderline" or "condemned." Our sales staff are experienced hearth designers who take the time to consult with each customer to determine the best type of appliance, fuel and style that best complements the homeowner's living space within their budget.

BEST of HOUSE&HOME in **Basement Waterproofing**



Before



After

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

We have over 20 years' experience in the home improvement industry with a knowledgeable team of various expertise and skill sets.

What makes you the best in the industry while separating you from your competitors?

We are a small, local, family-owned business in the heart of Montgomery County, that prides itself on the customer experience. Our fair pricing policy, workmanship, topnotch communication and customer service sets us apart in the industry. We also offer a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee and a lifetime warranty, which in turn ensures the customer has confidence in choosing us over our competitors.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

It is most rewarding to be able to provide quality services to homeowners in need. We take a lot of pride in homeowners trusting us with doing work on their biggest investment, their homes. As a homeowner myself, I know the struggles of finding the "right" contractor for the job. Numerous core values have been put into place at Rhino to ensure our focus is always in the customers' best interest. A satisfied customer is all the motivation needed after a hard day's work.



How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

It is always an amazing feeling to be recognized among the best. This is a very competitive industry and we are thankful and humbled to receive the recognition. Rhino will continue to put in the hard work and strive every day to be the best choice for the homeowner.

Joe Austin, Owner
Rhino
Waterproofing
Solutions
(484) 996-3600
RhinoWPS.com

BEST of HOUSE & HOME in Roofing



GLOBAL
HOME IMPROVEMENT
Roofing • Windows • Siding • Gutters

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?
22 years

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?

We believe the best products on the market (Marvin Windows, metal roofing and James Hardie siding) also deserve the best installation! That is why we offer unmatched customer service and installation expertise before, during and after the project.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

In the end, we love what we do because we love seeing happy customers. This award is affirmation for all of our hard work and dedication to customer satisfaction.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

We find it most rewarding when we are able to pull off a truly unique project like a Complex Metal Roof or a Curved Marvin Window installation. Creating that "wow" factor makes it all worth while.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?

The biggest and best products are our fiberglass windows from Marvin.

Adam Parnes
(866) 735-1121

GlobalHomeInc.com

Not only will they last a lifetime but they outperform both wood and vinyl! And they look better too.

BEST of HOUSE & HOME in Window Treatments

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?

We have been a third-generation, family-owned and -operated business for 74 years.

What makes you the best in your industry?

Since 1946 our company was built around window treatment products with enduring value for residential and commercial clients. In 2002, M. C. Weeks, Inc. became the first Hunter Douglas Gallery showroom in Pennsylvania and the 100th Hunter Douglas Gallery in the country. Our showrooms occupy a historic 18th century building, featuring products in full-sized windows and real room settings for our customers' experience.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

We find creativity in working with our clients by offering them unique Hunter Douglas window coverings as well as custom draperies, valences, upholstered furniture, bedding, lighting, carpeting, wall coverings and accessories—all custom made in the USA. We've spent years researching and developing the most innovative inventory of products and we're always updating.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

The whole point of our business is not simply to sell products but to enhance our customers' quality of life by making their environment more beautiful and efficient and helping them achieve their dreams.

M.C. WEEKS, INC.
Window Fashions

Natalie Weeks Rossitto,
Third Generation Owner
Trappe, Pa.
(610) 489-7231
MCWeeksInc.com



Gehman Design Remodeling

by Sydney Kerelo

The bathroom is one of the coldest places in the house; whether it's winter or summer it's always freezing. It's the only room in the house that you are wet without clothes on yet it's usually an ice box. *House & Home* spoke with Dennis Gehman, MCR (Master Certified Remodeler), and president of Gehman Design Remodeling about what causes the room to be so cold and how we can warm it up.

What areas of my bathroom contribute to it feeling cold?

The first thing is that the room is primarily hard surfaces. There are tiles, countertops, the glass on the shower door, all of the surfaces that make it feel cool and cold when you touch them.

The age of the house and what type of insulation they have can also play a role. I know there were a couple bathrooms recently where their location on the second floor was overtop the garage and the garage was not heated and it's at the far end of the house from where the furnace is, so the heat that's coming out of the vents is not as warm as it is when it's closer to the furnace. That whole combination of things makes it a cold space.

Can humidity play a part in the temperature too?

Humidity is generally thought of when it's too warm, because warm air holds more moisture but depending on the temperature and the amount of clothes you have on, the humidity right next to your skin might not feel warm. That's part of the whole thing we hear on the weather



EXPERTISE: BATHROOM REMODELING



Dennis Gehman, MCR, President of Gehman Design Remodeling

forecast. Where primarily in the winter, they're talking about the real temperature and feels-like temperature, some of that has to do with wind speed but it also has to do with humidity levels that are present. In the summertime the main reason we have air conditioning is more because of the humidity than because of the temperature—80 degrees or higher feels pretty hot when it's humid but people who live in Arizona where it's 90 degrees and no humidity, it's not too bad.

Is there more than one way to remedy the problem; where is the first place to start?

The first places that I think of starting is one, insulation, but unless you're doing a major repair and tearing everything out there really isn't much you can do there. The other one is the heat source—if it's at the far end from where your furnace is we're probably not going to do much better with that furnace, but we can put auxiliary heat in. We could install a strip of electric baseboard heat that would be more permanent, or a decorative wall mounted electric heater. If we're putting in new flooring, then we can install radiant floor heat and that would make a difference in the temperature of the floor when you step on vinyl or tile. A warm floor is going to

help that and just the natural laws of physics—warm air doesn't just stay on the floor it rises up so it's going to make the whole room feel warmer.

What about ambient heating with lamps and such?

Heat lamps are one way that is often addressed. You can get auxiliary heat, many exhaust fans are made that you can have a heater with them. The heater can be on without the fan being turned on and we can put radiant heat panels on the ceiling. The same electric heat that we put under each floor tile or vinyl flooring can be used under the seat of a shower and countertops.

We've done some bathrooms that tend to be a larger master bathroom that has a tub with a gas fireplace. I always advise that you purchase an inline heater for tubs where the water is moving, because before too long, as you're sitting in it, that water cools down even more so when it's going through the whirlpool process. With an inline heater, each time the water gets thrown back in to be blown back out it goes through a heater that heats it back up to whatever temperature you pre-set it to. **H&H**

Gehman Design Remodeling

PA Contractor Registration PA00297

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GehmanRemodeling.com

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215.664.8926 ext.110

water issues solved

Martin Water Conditioning customizes effective and economical water treatment solutions for your home.

Many of us take for granted the water flowing through our homes. But if you're curious about the quality of water you're using to wash clothes, shower and drink, then a simple water test from Martin Water Conditioning can tell you.

Started in 1973, Martin Water Conditioning is a family-run business founded in Lebanon County that has since branched out to service Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and New York to Maryland with approximately 100 employees. The company offers certified water testing, installation of water treatment systems and service on all brands.

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.

Martin Water Conditioning can perform a test to best determine what solution is needed in your home. "There is not a one-size-fits-all solution," says Martin. "It's like going to the doctor. We give the diagnosis and recommend the medication."

The company carries a number of different

systems, but Martin highlights the Kinetico system as a particularly unique option. "None of the Kinetico systems require electricity to run," he says. "All of the units function off of water pressure using kinetic energy. Kinetico offers both salt-free systems and salt-based systems. They are also twice as effective as anything else on the market ... using very little water and a fraction of the salt needed for water softening compared to electric systems."

Once a system is installed, the changes in water quality will be noticeable. "From a drinking water standpoint, we can give them bottled-water quality from the faucet, safe from chemicals or bacteria that could trickle into the supply. Resolving hard water means things will get cleaner, like clothes and dishes, and you'll use a fraction of detergents, soap and shampoo; appliances will run more efficiently [and] you won't see build-up or crusting on heating elements," says Martin.

To schedule your free water analysis and estimate, call (800) 887-7555. **H&H**



For more information about Martin Water Conditioning and their solutions, speak to a water specialist at (800) 887-7555 or visit MartinWater.com.



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UNBELIE



Industry professionals discuss their clients' amazing basement transformations that might give you some inspiration to start a project on your space.

WABLE *basements*

BY JULIE
SHANNON

KITCHENS ARE KNOWN TO BE THE HEART OF THE HOME AND BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER, but a finished basement is the ideal place to gather family and friends to watch the big game, have movie nights and be the ultimate hangout space away from the main living areas in the home. It's also the area where you truly make this space extra creative and personal, having the ability to create a certain theme that ties into every piece of furniture and fixture throughout the basement.

Having this large space also gives you the options to add a full bathroom or even an extra bedroom, making it a complete living area where it's easier to have company stay over.

The industry professionals we spoke with went into detail about their clients' incredible basement transformations that not only are aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but fixed problems such as leaks and mold residue, and the final results are more practical for each homeowner.

NATURALLY NAUTICAL

"This is a 1930s house and the basement had been finished in the '70s and was poorly done. There were choppy rooms and it had a side entry, along with poor lighting and an old bathroom. They had an oil tank and we did a conversion to natural gas by pulling gas from the street.

"For this transformation, the owners had this idea of a nautical theme because they had family members in the Navy, so we wanted to home in on that specific theme, which was really cool. The thought behind this is, if you're going to spend money, make it personal and be creative. All of our collective thoughts came up with the best ideas. We bought a floating boat off Craigslist

UNBELIEVABLE basements



BEFORE



Courtesy Harth Builders

AFTER

and made a bar out of it. There are glass fixtures above the sink that are like jellyfish, we wrapped a column in the basement with a nautical rope and the balusters are also done in the same rope.

"This is a three-unit family—a husband, wife and son. The father constantly watches the stock market because of his job, but he and his son wanted to be able to watch sports as well, so we installed dual televisions side-by-side so they can watch both at the same time.

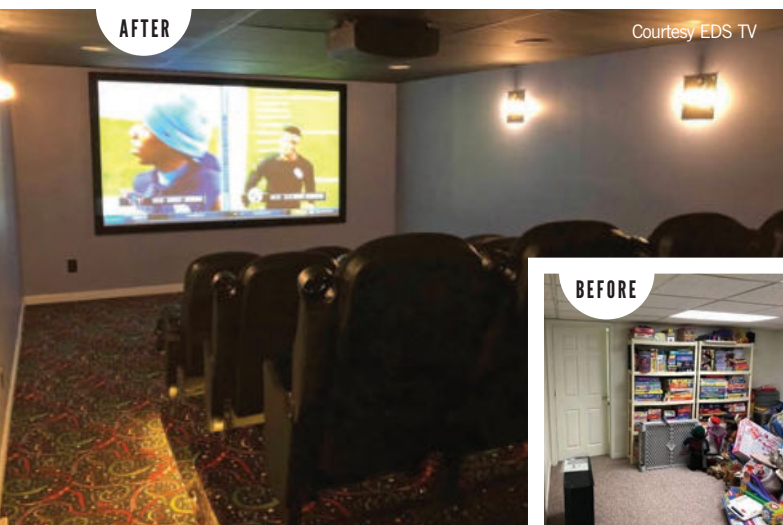
"It was an incredible project from a creativity standpoint and improved efficiency for the home. We relocated mechanicals of the home by going to natural gas and created space they didn't have previously."

*Greg Harth, owner
Harth Builders*

Spring House, Pa. | (215) 654-0364 | HarthBuilders.com

THE THEATER EXPERIENCE

"For this project, the homeowners wanted a theater in their basement. In order to do this, we had to move a wall and build risers to get to the appropriate seating heights so the person in front of you doesn't block your view. We put LED rope lighting on the tiers of the three levels of seating so no one trips on the risers. We installed a 120-inch acoustic transparent screen, a screen you'd find in movie theaters where the speakers are invisible



AFTER

Courtesy EDS TV

BEFORE



and the sound comes through the screen. We also installed a 4K Ultra HD projector and made equipment all automated through the Control4 system. This system gives homeowners complete access to operation and utilizes the ability to use Alexa and smartphones to control devices, including lighting. This minimizes frustration with multiple remotes and components. You can integrate a lighting scheme, you can set up speakers a certain way and start your DVD player with the command of one voice or button—that's automation. One command and it can shut everything down or turn everything on."

Jim Fossile, owner

EDS TV

Colmar, Pa. | (215) 997-4300 | EDS-TV.com

NO MORE LEAKS

"These homeowners had a sub-floor pressure relief system installed by another company that didn't do it correctly. The basement was leaking every time it rained and this company wouldn't follow up with the homeowners and wouldn't hold the warranty up. They ended up calling us to fix it.

"First, by taking out the system, we removed the concrete 16 inches from the wall all the way around the perimeter—285 linear feet. We also did lateral across the middle of the floor because the hydrostatic pressure was so bad. We dug to the bottom of the footer and removed the existing drain system that was incorrectly installed. We installed three, 4-inch perforated PVC pipes with a mud filter sock around it. We pitched 1-inch for every 10 feet toward different sub-containers we installed. Then we surrounded that with ¾-inch triple-washed clean stone, and then installed myriad drain and poured new concrete with the existing floor.

"With our completed job, these homeowners have no more leaks and a dry basement."

Matt Kropp, owner

Dry Tech Waterproofing Solutions

Eagleville, Pa. | (484) 927-4326 | DryTechCorp.com



Courtesy Dry Tech
Waterproofing Solutions

ENTERTAINING SPACE

"These homeowners have a good sized basement—well over 1,000 square feet—and wanted a complete basement renovation because they needed the space for entertaining family and friends, and having the additional bathroom was a bonus. They originally wanted a half bath, but the cost to go from a half to a full bath isn't that much more. They decided to go with the full bath and from what they told me, they've been using it when friends and family come over.

"The customers had a very nice home to begin with. They wanted the finishes to reflect the rest of the house so it didn't look like the basement was an afterthought, from the trim to the paint colors, doors, surface-mounted fixtures and lighting fixtures. We had a similar approach to the bathroom—matching up similar to what they had upstairs with nicer finishes. So when you come downstairs in a finer home into the basement, it has to mirror all

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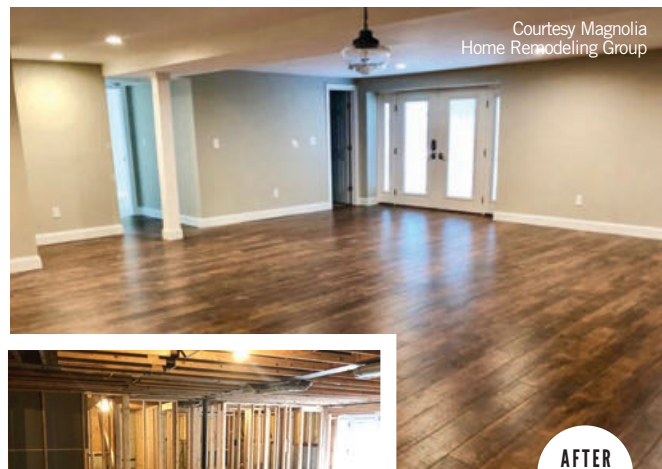
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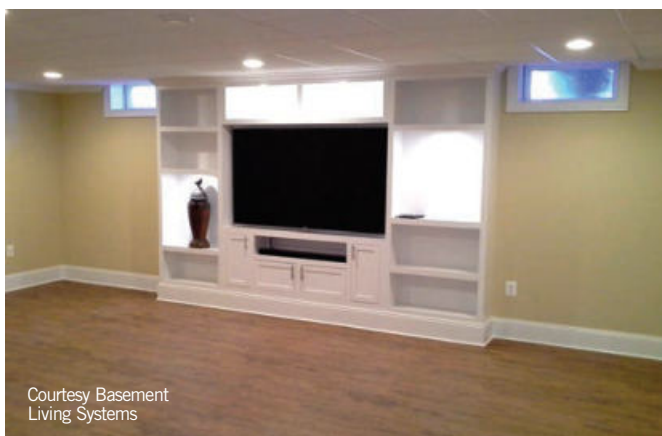
AFTER

tainment center that was customized to the size of their television, LED lighting and a full bathroom

that was also customized to their needs and looks like the master bathroom.

“Another room we added to the basement was a gym and within that gym I used a wall system with the combination of traditional drywall and purple board drywall. The benefits are that it’s mold- and mildew-resistant and it’s breathable; it allows moisture to come through. It also has 90 percent sound efficiency. It absorbs 90 percent of ambient sounds as opposed to drywall where it bounces and doesn’t absorb it.”

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“

Painting is definitely something people are looking to do at this time of year, and it's one of the most economical ways to make a huge change in a house.”

— CONNIE FARLEY,
BELLA HOME INTERIORS



Beautiful *on the* Inside

With less time spent outdoors and the holidays approaching, now is a great time to give your home's interior a makeover.

By Matt Cosentino

Although autumn is a wonderful opportunity to get outside and enjoy the cooler temperatures or the beautiful fall foliage, it is also a time of year when many homeowners are turning their attention toward their interiors. With more guests stopping over—whether it's friends for weekend football or relatives for the upcoming holidays—it only makes sense to give your home that much-needed update it has been clamoring for.

"This is our busy season because of two factors," says Laura Hawley, owner of AD Window Treatments. "People have gotten their children off to school, so they've come back into their house and they want to do some updates. And secondly, they also want to get things spruced up for the holidays."

"In the last few weeks, it's been one person after another coming into our showroom, trying to get ready for holiday parties and family gatherings," adds Natalie Weeks Rossitto, owner of M.C. Weeks, Inc. Window Fashions. "In addition to draperies and valances and the Hunter Douglas products, they're looking for custom furniture, upholstery, pillows, bedding—anything you can think of in fabric. They're hoping to add all of those things in time for the holidays."

From subtle gestures that won't break the bank to full-scale renovations, fall is a good time to make changes to your home's interior. *House & Home* spoke to local professionals in a range of specialties to find out some helpful tips and the trends to look for in the autumn months.

Keep it simple

When most people hear the word "makeover," the first image that comes to mind is a major project that involves knocking walls down or buying new furniture. But drastic changes are not always necessary to have a big impact.

"As far as updating a space, I always tell people—especially with the holidays approaching—that a good way to change the room is to add some accessories," says Ruth Taylor, an interior designer at Hendrixson's Furniture. "Fresh flowers and candles are always in style. You can add some color with pillows and throws, and that can actually cozy up the room with winter coming."

"Some people will just reupholster chairs that have an outdated fabric with a more modern fabric; that's a good way to update too. Some people will change out

Image courtesy of Hendrixson's Furniture



Image courtesy of Bella Home Interiors

Beautiful *on the* Inside

the lamps and lighting in the room because what they have is very traditional; so they'll do something more modern with lighting."

Although Amiano & Son Design-Build is known for kitchen and bath remodels as well as additions, design-build specialist Lucy Ward likes to offer advice on a smaller scale as well.

"As interior designers, we do that all the time in terms of helping people with subtle things or inexpensive things they can do," she says. "In the fall, it might be that you change up your accessories. You have things that look very summery all summer, like blues and greens and those sorts of things that have a much cooler palette to them. When fall rolls in, you want to go with fall colors like you see outside—the oranges, reds and golds. You can add very inexpensive things like pillows, candles and other types of accessories that have a fall theme. ... Area rugs can also add warmth to a room."

A fresh coat of paint is another easy way to add or change color in a room.

"Painting is definitely something people are looking to do at this time of year, and it's one of the most economical ways to make a huge change in a house," says Connie Farley of Bella Home Interiors. "It can freshen things up and make the whole design of your home change, depending on the color that you choose or go from. It can change it from traditional to transitional, or it can create more of a contemporary feel."

Shawn McLernon of Audubon Painting has seen requests for interior jobs take off this season.

"It's always good to refresh and change up the look, especially when you're looking at the same thing every day," he says. "It adds character to the home, and that's why we like to mix and match different color schemes, just to brighten up the homes we're working in."

While Farley calls anything in the greige family—a combination of gray and beige—the hot color of the moment, McLernon adds that repose gray is very popular.

"We use that all the time and

it's a nice neutral color," he says. "Recently, we've also been doing a lot of cooler colors. That's definitely been a trend for us. But what I've noticed is that some people will think a color looks awful, and the next house will have the same thing and think it looks great. It's really all personal preference, so we try to find out the preferences of our clients and figure out a design that works for their home."

Another option aside from paint is to change or add wallpaper to a room. Not to be confused with the old-fashioned offerings of years past, today's wallpaper contains stunning patterns and designs.

"We sell a lot of wallpaper and we find that a lot of people are into buying that at this time of the year," says Jere Bradwell of J Bradwells Home Kitchen & Design. "If you take an average room, like a dining room or a powder room, and you add great wallpaper to it, all of a sudden it goes from average to having a wow factor."

Whether you prefer paint or wallpaper, Bradwell suggests the finishing touch of artwork can make a huge difference. He also stresses that homeowners should not overlook lighting.

"It's like putting jewelry with a lady's beautiful dress," he says. "Lamps add ambient lighting, which makes the room so much more romantic and enjoyable, instead of having all the light coming from above."

Updating window treatments

Window treatments are often an underrated component of home décor. Many homeowners will often choose simple privacy blinds for their windows or leave them bare, but they are missing out on an easy way to add style.

"I look at window treatments as art on your walls," Farley says. "Just like adding a beautiful piece of artwork, you can put a beautiful window treatment, which has the same kind of impact but also allows you to address your lighting issues, sun glare or your heat issues by blocking the cold air



Image courtesy of Bella Home Interiors

with draperies or shades. So you're taking care of that element as well as making the window look really nice."

Weeks Rossitto asserts that window treatments are so much more than just a privacy feature.

"They certainly add an element of ambiance to a room, and they can add color, softness, custom valances or drapery panels," she says. "Even if somebody already has blinds on the windows for privacy or security, we can add custom drapery panels on the side for color and softness, and you can coordinate that with other things in the room, like a matching throw pillow in the same fabric. Something simple like that to throw on your couch right before a holiday event makes it look like you hired an interior designer to come in and pull the whole room together."

For those who have not purchased window treatments in many years, Weeks Rossitto recommends visiting a showroom to get familiar with the modern styles, especially in terms of motorization, which continues to grow in popularity. Most window treatments can now be operated with a remote control or through a smart device.

"There's nothing more impressive than having your family over for the holidays and having everyone gather around the Christmas tree in your living room, and flipping a switch and having your beautiful window treatments move up and down," she says.

Hawley also encourages more people to embrace the technological possibilities with window treatments.

"Even though we have had electric windows in our cars for a

long time, it's taken a while for people to warm up to a motorized or mechanized window treatment," she says. "They think it's some kind of luxury or unnecessary. But we have clients who are aging in place who wouldn't be able to lift their window treatments without a remote control. Or some people have really big windows that nobody can reach. Plus, the cost of motorization has come down considerably, so it doesn't raise the budget too much."

Thinking bigger

Sometimes updating the space requires more than just a different paint color or new window treatments. If the budget allows and homeowners plan far enough ahead, a major project like a kitchen renovation might be possible in the fall before the holidays roll in.

"We have about seven kitchens right now that people are hoping to get done before the holidays," Bradwell says. "That is motivation at the end of summer if they're looking to have a beautiful kitchen before Thanksgiving. They'll get changes they always wanted, like a double oven or one of the amazing appliances available today."

"We're still seeing kitchens that are relatively light or white; that's a very popular thing. The other popular color in kitchens is blue. I've seen people do blue cabinets, a blue island or even blue appliances."

Many of Ward's clients are looking to transform rooms that don't get much use.

"People don't entertain the way they used to with a formal dining room," she says. "They like to mill about in the same space now

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Beautiful on the Inside

versus having assigned rooms. So they want to knock down a wall and incorporate what used to be a formal dining room into an open concept with the kitchen. You might add an eat-in bar or some other things to add interest to the space. We do a lot of that type of conversion."

When looking to remake a central gathering spot, homeowners can benefit from the experience and expertise of a professional designer.

"A lot of times people can only see the space in the way they are currently using it," Taylor says. "A lot of people have a hard time [updating the look on their own], especially with their great room or family room, because there's the TV to worry about, usually a fireplace or focal point and the room is often open to the kitchen.

"Typically, the way I like to work is I will go out to the home, take a look at their space and then measure and photograph the space to get an idea of how they envision using it. At that point, we discuss what they're going to keep and what they would like to replace. I'll create a floor plan and make suggestions on what pieces they can add to update the room and fit their needs."

Farley offers an inexpensive option in which she completely redesigns a given room using only what the resident already owns.

"We empty the room and make furniture rearrangements, bring in pieces from other rooms, bring in lamps from other rooms and rearrange the artwork," she says. "It gives a whole new vibe and feel to that room, just by rearranging it or bringing new things in. When you're living there, sometimes you can't see how to rearrange it or change it with what you already have, because you're so used to being there and you're not thinking outside the box."

If the client is looking for something new in terms of furniture, she can help them find something unique that won't

necessarily be available at the national chain, like a wine table or one-of-a-kind book shelf.

In the end, whatever path a homeowner decides to go down, it is crucial to plan ahead.

"One of the things people need to do when they want to update for the holidays is to get with their consultant and make sure the timeline works out," Hawley says. "We don't live in the world of HGTV—sometimes we can accommodate a quick turnaround when it comes to certain products, but normally they need to plan in advance." **H&H**



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