Volume 22, Issue 2
Montco/Main Line East

Best of HOUSE & HOME

Preferred Home Improvement

Your go-to company for exceptional exterior remodeling services page 31

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Best of HOUSE & HOME



Basement Waterproofing Specialists

Family values, happy customers triumph over pandemic *page 27*

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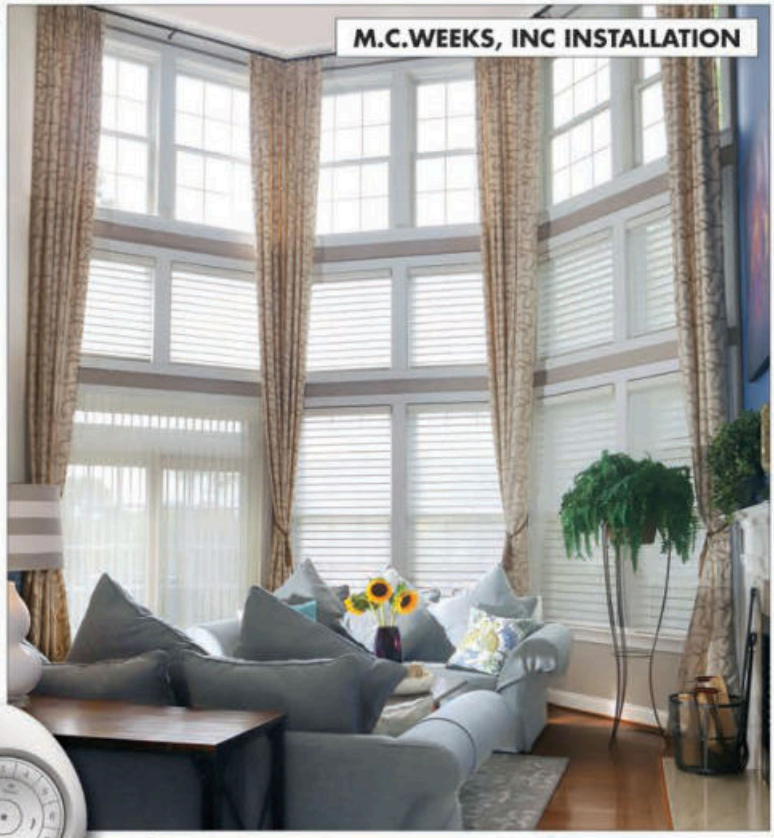
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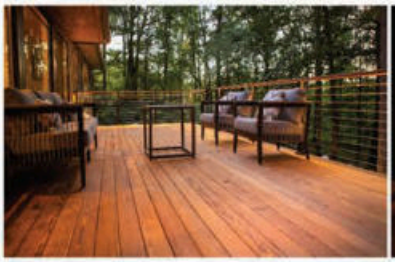
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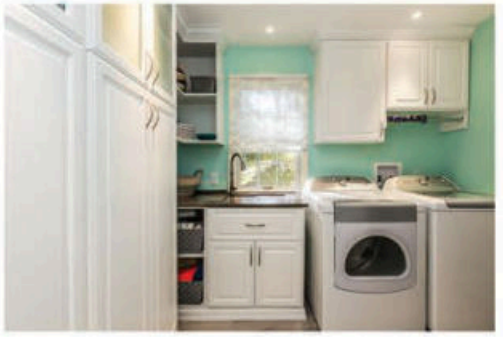
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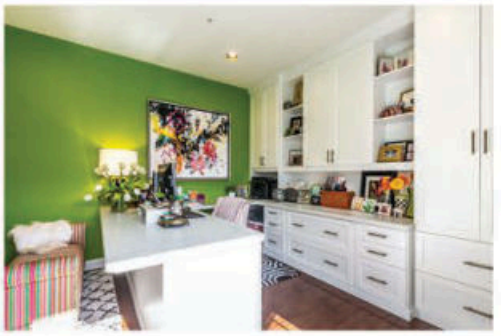
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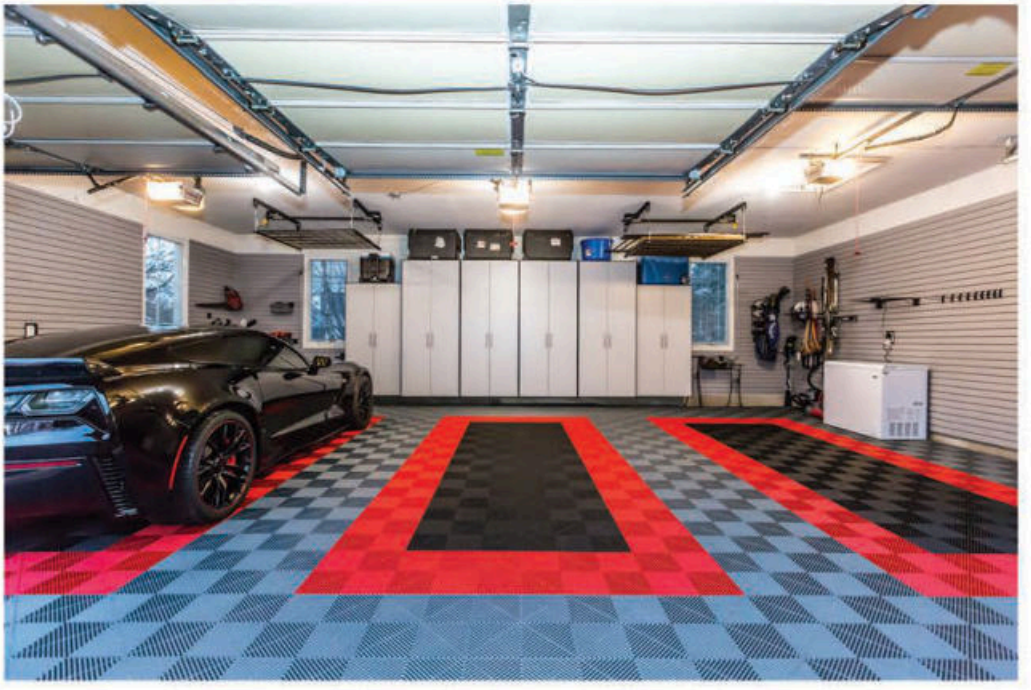
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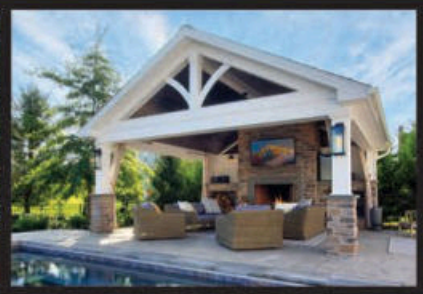
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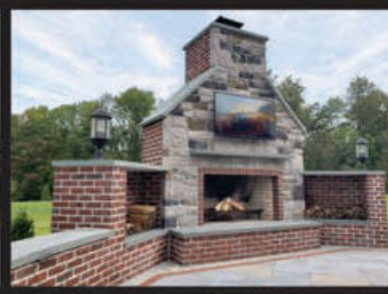


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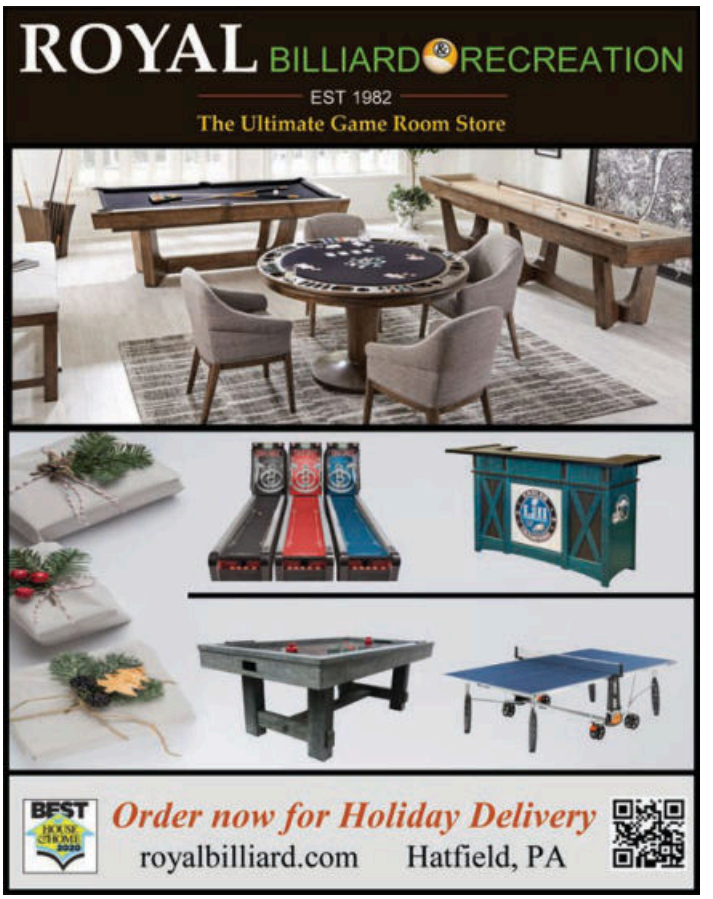
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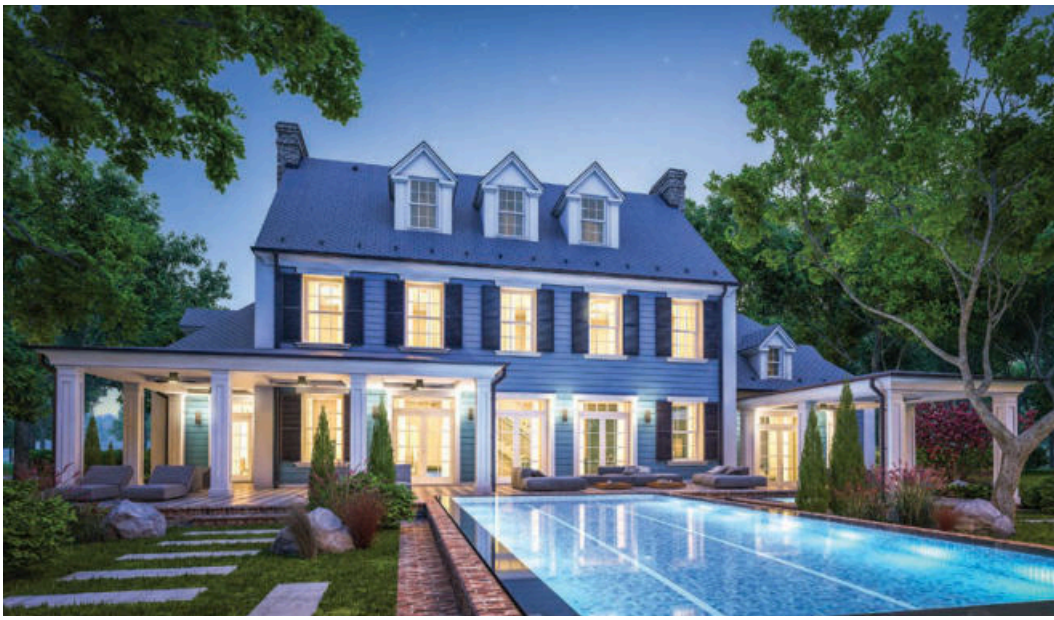
WINNERS and SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to present our seventh annual

Best of House & Home.

As voted by our readers, the following companies and professionals are being recognized for their quality products, expertise, top-notch customer service and reliability. We're also featuring a closer look at these companies in informative spotlights that shed some light on their dedication. For your next home project, there is no one better than these winners.

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Best of HOUSE&HOME

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.

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.

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Blue Bell, Pa.
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BEST of HOUSE&HOME in: Siding



How many years have you been in business?

Eighteen years.

What makes you the best in your industry?

Our company believes our customers deserve the red carpet treatment. We offer the highest warranties available due to our certifications. We are a complete remodeling company so we can serve all of our customers' needs.

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

We are very thankful to our customers for their continued trust in us and to our staff who work very hard. It feels amazing!

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

Our customers and the work we do in our communities through our giving. We want to make a difference in our world.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

I love that I can rebuild trust in customers regarding contractors. We get to meet with a lot of different people and build long-term relationships.

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

We now offer complete remodeling, inside and outside.

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SPOTLIGHTS

BEST OF THE BEST

BEST of HOUSE&HOME in:
Cabinet Refacing



How does it feel to be recognized among *House & Home's* Best of Winners?
It feels great to be recognized for the years of excellence and the thousands of satisfied customers!

What makes you the best in your industry while separating yourself from competitors?
In addition to having the most experienced staff of highly skilled installers and a lifetime guarantee, we can offer an almost unlimited variety of styles and materials. If someone has a vision, we can make it happen.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?
It's easy to stay motivated when you have such happy customers! I always joke that I'm only about 10 percent less excited about the finished product than they are.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
It's really rewarding to be able to give people such beautiful, updated kitchens at an affordable price.
—Beth Soldwisch, Sales Consultant

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LFIKitchens.com
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BEST of HOUSE&HOME in:
Garage Organization



How many years have you been in business?
Fifteen years.

What separates you from your competitors?
I do the little things others don't do and pay close attention to detail.

How does it feel to be recognized among *House & Home's* Best of Winners?
It is very gratifying to be recognized.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?
There are times that I perform magical, jaw-dropping transformations.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
Being recognized by my competitors as the best is very rewarding.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?
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BEST of HOUSE&HOME in: Roofing



How many years have you been in this industry?
Rhino is a family-owned business that serves the Greater Philadelphia area and the surrounding suburban counties of Montgomery, Bucks, Chester and Delaware. The Rhino team consists of several vested professionals who contribute a variety of skills, knowledge and industry specialties. Together we bring over 25 years of experience in the industry.

What makes you the best in your industry?
Simply stated—trust. Homeowners can trust that Rhino is the right company to do the job. It is an arduous process to select someone to work on your biggest investment, your home. At Rhino we make this process smooth and easy. From our fair pricing policy to our no-pressure sales approach, we help homeowners with a consultative experience throughout the entire process. With no money down we take the stress of this unscrupulous industry away from the homeowners.

We stand behind all our work with our 100% satisfaction guarantee and Rhino is backed by the nation's leading manufacturers with certified lifetime warranties. Rhino has been honored to have won numerous categories with *House & Home*. We are striving to become the household name that homeowners know and trust.

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Joe Austin, Owner
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BEST of HOUSE&HOME in: Hardscaping



How many years have you been in business?
Over 75 years.

What separates you from your competitors?
We are family owned and operated. We always try to treat people the way we want to be treated.

How does it feel to be recognized among *House & Home*'s Best of Winners?
It feels great to be recognized that our effort has paid off; we will continue to try our best.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?
Every day is different, there is always a new challenge. Every year new products come out and change the way things work.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
Hard work pays off, sometimes things don't go easy, but when the job is done and we can see what was built, that's a great feeling.

Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?
In this crazy year of COVID a lot of challenges have occurred with supply lines. Because of that we have seen delays in new product releases. We are hoping things will continue to get better as we pull out of this pandemic.

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LandisBC.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 31 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.

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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 trucks 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 to the job site.

We consider our shop as a one-stop shop. Our staff is educated in all areas of construction including codes, installation techniques and hands-on knowledge of our products. We are here to help you figure out what is possible. We have a no-hassle approach; there's no pressure. Our staff doesn't get paid on sales so we keep it real and ask all the questions you need to be happy. That's what we do!

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.

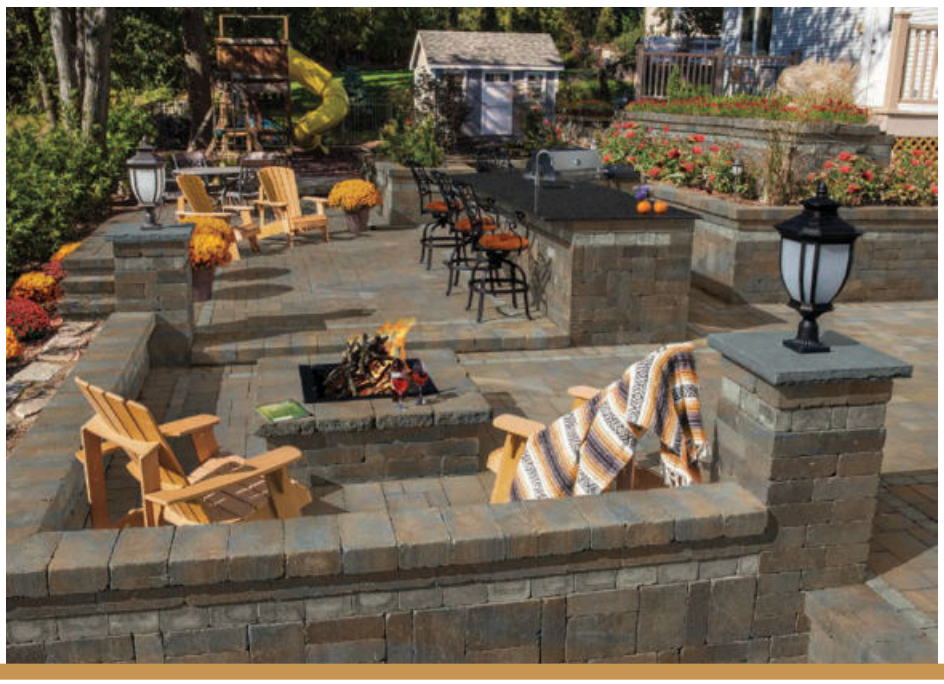
OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN PATIOS NOW. HOW DO I KNOW WHAT'S POSSIBLE FOR ME?

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 hardscaped/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.

We stand behind all of the materials that we sell. Let's face it, things happen, but we will do our best to make sure a happy solution is found. H&H



A finished basement can add valuable space to a home, but there are several important steps to take during the remodeling process.



UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

BY MATT COSENTINO



Even the closest of families sometimes need a little bit of time apart from one another. Whether it's young kids craving a dedicated room to play in, teenagers looking to hang out with friends, or adults requiring a home office to work in peace and quiet, finding the space can be difficult. More and more homeowners are looking downstairs to solve the dilemma.

Finishing a basement to create extra living space has always been popular, but since the pandemic struck and families were stuck at home more often, this type of remodeling project has become even more in demand. In fact, local contractors have seen a significant rise in requests over the past 20 months.

"Once the kitchen and baths are done, the basement is always next on the list, especially for a family," says Dan Dilworth of Dilworth's Custom Design. "It makes sense to finish off the basement and make it another living space, even if you only use it while the kids are at home."

Dennis Gehman of Gehman Design Remodeling starts a basement renovation the same way he does every project: by having an extensive conversation with the clients to discover exactly what they're looking to accomplish so he and his team can come up with the appropriate plan.

"Initially you have to ask the question, 'What do you want to use this space for?'" he says. "If it's a playroom for the kids, then all we need is drywall on the walls, a few lights in the ceiling, carpet on the floor and then we can paint the room and it's ready. But if it's a home office area, a home theater, a workout area or a bar, [it gets more complicated]. We've done them where it's basically a whole other house with a kitchen, a laundry, a bedroom, all those types of things."





No matter what the space is going to be used for, there are important precautions that must be taken even before the design is considered or construction can begin. *House & Home* spoke to several area professionals to learn more about these steps along with design trends and creative solutions to common issues.

STARTING THE PROCESS

After the decision has been made to finish the basement and the contractor has been hired, one of the very first concerns is addressing any mildew or moisture issues. Hurricane Ida recently served as a reminder that serious storms have become more frequent in this area, and water damage can have major implications regarding such an expensive investment.

According to Todd Prosan of '58 Foundations, groundwater problems are more prevalent in older homes, but leaks can happen anywhere.

"Through our 63 years in business, we've worked with many builders and had to have fixed thousands of leaky basements in homes under a year old," he says.

"The best time to waterproof the basement is before finishing it—even if it's precautionary. There are less expensive ways to prepare a basement ahead of finishing it that can be added to later at a lesser cost if a water problem presents itself. If there is a water problem, identifying the source of the problem and the solution comes from our years of experience, training, plus working with the homeowner—asking lots of questions and together creating a custom solution that fits what they are trying to accomplish in their home."

Kevin McCormack of McCormack Construction has completed many basement remodels and says the winter is a particularly busy time for such a project. Assessing any moisture issues is always one of his first priorities.

"You look around at the basement and see if there's been a history of seepage of water or direct water coming in through the wall," he says. "A lot of times that can be corrected from the exterior because the grade is sloping to the foundation and when it rains the water is collecting there. So you can change the grade by lifting it up with some soil and pitching it away from the house. That's the simple way to do it.

"It also might be a combination of doing that and waterproofing the basement by putting a French drain in around the perimeter before you do the remodel. If there's any sign that water has been there … it's silly to put in a remodel without putting a drain around the building and a sump pump. That would be a major mistake. You have to put a good plan together."

In addition to waterproofing, it also makes sense to examine the foundation before the renovations are started.


GEHMAN DESIGN REMODELING


GEHMAN DESIGN REMODELING

"While we're asking questions of the homeowner to better understand the home, we do a thorough interior and exterior inspection of the entire foundation," Prosan says. "Besides waterproofing, we provide foundation settlement and wall solutions. Many hairline cracks in poured concrete floors and vertical cracks in walls occur during the concrete curing phase when the house is first built. As long as these cracks aren't leaking or getting wider, they are probably fine to leave alone. If cracks leak, we can seal them. If they are expanding, are horizontal on the wall, or stair-step shaped in concrete block walls, this can be a sign of a potential foundation settling problem or external pressure problem on the walls. For either of these issues, structural supports may be necessary."

OTHER IMPORTANT STEPS

Once the moisture issues have been resolved, that doesn't mean the homeowner is in the clear just yet. There are other significant conversations to be had.

"The next big thing to think about is egress, especially if you're putting a bedroom down there," Dilworth says. "Some townships want an egress no matter what, in any enclosed space. That's basically a window of a certain minimal size or a door to get outside in case of emergency."

A Bilco door is a common method for egress, but there are some houses where adding a door or window is not possible because of the way the structure is situated. In those cases, Dilworth adds, the client may have to adjust plans for the space.

HVAC is another item to be checked off the list, but according to Gehman, that's not always as easy as some homeowners expect.

"Most people say they'll just tie into the existing HVAC, but generally speaking we are unable to do that because the existing unit was sized for a certain square feet of living space," he explains. "Let's say it's a two-story house and it has one HVAC unit; if we finish the whole basement we're basically adding 50% more space, and the one unit is not going to be enough."

Reuben Stoltzfus of EWBN believes this is where the expertise of an experienced contractor comes into play. "One of the most important aspects with your HVAC is knowing the system can handle the space," he says. "If it's too small there will be temperature issues and if it's too large, it is money wasted. Understanding and having familiarity with township regulations is key, especially when it comes to the timing of the project."

McCormack points out that because most basements usually don't get too cold or too hot, there are multiple options to consider. Air conditioning might not even be necessary.

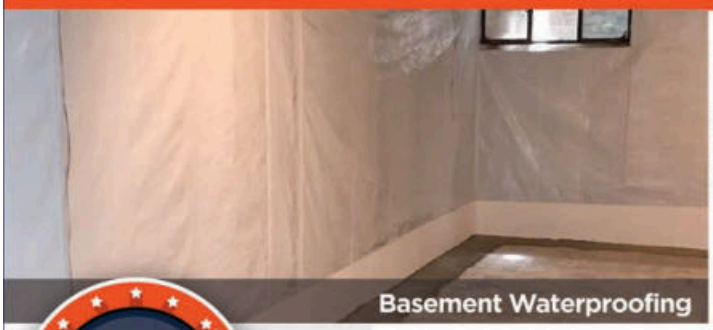
"The good thing about a basement is most of it is in the ground, so you're already insulated by the earth," he says. "In an attic, forget it, it's blazing hot up there. But the basement stays kind of cool so you don't really need air conditioning, and you can use other sources of heat without spending a lot of money. Not that I recommend electric heat, but you might only need a couple of sections which is very simple and you can put it on its own thermostat. Or you can do another boiler or a heat pump that does heating and air conditioning."

GETTING CREATIVE

Many basements have odd space configurations or elements that may not be a factor in other rooms in the house. Designers often take pleasure in using their creative side to come up with interesting solutions.

"The CAD [computer-aided design] program that we use is designed for kitchens and baths, but we can also use it for any room in the house, including the basement," Dilworth says. "We can put the walls anywhere we want: around support poles, around sump pumps, around strange structural configurations with the exterior cinderblock walls and stuff like that. … All of that can [be resolved] through the CAD system and you can draw it up as detailed as you want. … There are limitations of course, but at the same time, in the

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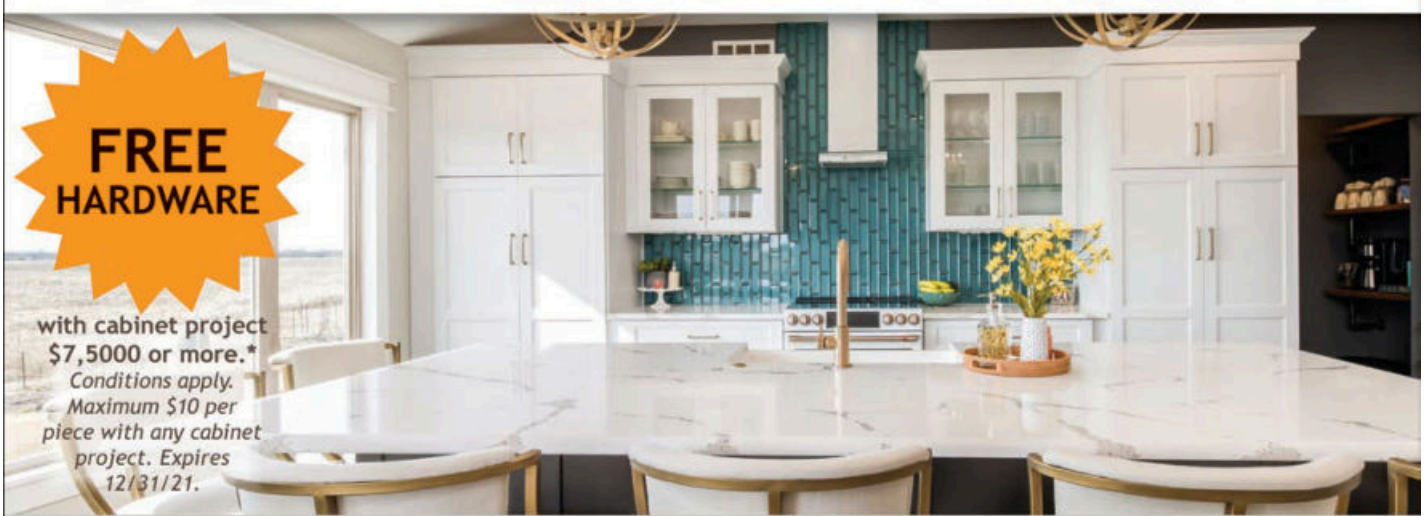
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UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

digital age you can draw just about anything."

Certain basements come with their fair share of challenges, but these idiosyncrasies can also make the space unique and something that stands out to friends and family.

"Sometimes, odd spaces can become a conversation piece," Stoltzfus says. "For example, last fall we did one basement remodel where the space under the stairs was converted to a kids' cave, which was an instant favorite with our clients' children. Other times, we have used custom cabinetry to fit the space and everyone could always use extra storage space. When creativity is needed, that is when projects become more fun, not just for me, but also the crew."

McCormack and Gehman have both been part of projects where lally columns were hidden in walls, turned into decorative aspects or even relocated.

"Sometimes there's a space that makes sense to put the big-screen TV and the seating, but you've got one or two columns in the way," Gehman says. "Most of the time people just work with them, but sometimes it makes sense and they're willing to spend the money for us to do some structural engineering to figure out a way to get those columns out of there. People ask us, 'Can you do that?' Well, bridges are made of beams and typically there's not a column coming down in the middle of it, so it can be done. But it's time and money and unfortunately both of those are limited resources."

THE END RESULT

Like any renovation project, a finished basement has obstacles to overcome, but when all is said and done most homeowners are thrilled with the extra living space they have added to their homes.

"One of the things we'll hear is, 'I'm sorry I didn't do this sooner. I don't know why I waited so long, I could have used this space even more when the kids were younger,'" McCormack says. "Or clients will say, 'I'm glad I have this space now away from family members where I can concentrate on my work more or have my man cave.' Everybody has a different angle and everybody is appreciative of our work because we're very detail oriented."

Stoltzfus and his team are just as pleased as the clients when they can deliver on their promises for the space.

"We get a lot of wows," he says. "No one ever anticipates the final look being as great at it is. It is the most joyful reaction and it brings our entire team so much satisfaction knowing the customer is a happy one." **H&H**

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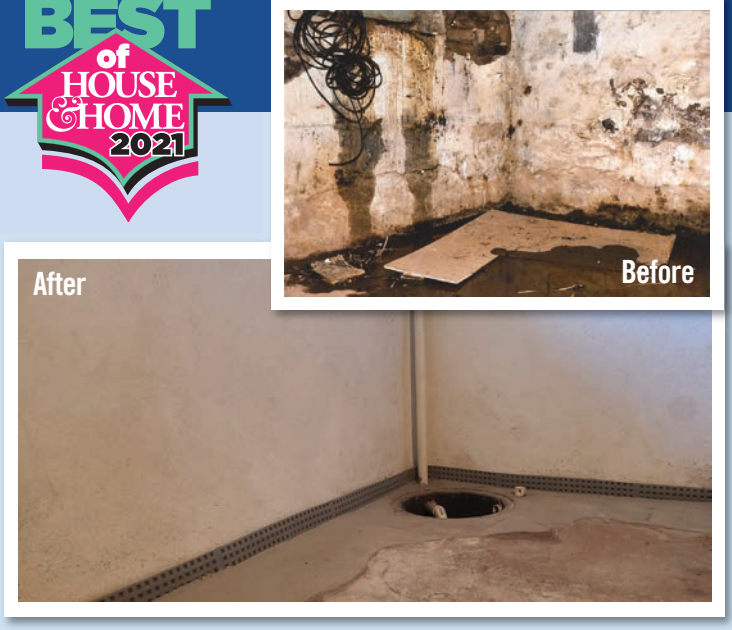
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BEST of HOUSE & HOME 2021

Basement Waterproofing Specialists



Family values, happy customers triumph over pandemic.

Nearly 50% of American businesses are closed temporarily, or operating at a loss, because of the devastating aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide economic slowdown. Many businesses have closed their doors forever. However, despite the bleak outlook for many, one local business is overwhelmed with new customers. In fact, it's in the midst of an immense expansion, including the conversion of a historic Collegeville home, built in the 1700s, into a second location.

Using a house as an office isn't new for Basement Waterproofing Specialists. Its main office, located in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, is also a farmhouse-turned-waterproofing headquarters. It's no coincidence that the company is converting a second home into a new workspace. "Our goal has always been to treat you like family. That's not a marketing gimmick. We teach our inspectors and work crews to treat every single client's home as if it were the house of one of their family members," says Ken Klinger, his wife Deb and daughter Anne.

This philosophy has paid off well for both the company and its clients. It's been a happy home to many pets. Employees are encouraged to bring their pets to work. Besides Ken and Deb's two giant, lovable Boz shepherds, Calvin and Clarabelle, the main office is also often host to a happy flock of dogs, cats, rabbits and birds.

Over the last seven years, the company has won awards for "Best Basement Waterproofing company" from Angie's List, *House & Home*, *Home Advisor Magazine*, the *Mercury Newspaper* and more. It currently holds an overall 4.6-star rating, based on over 200 reviews on Facebook, Google, Thumbtack and Angie's List. It also has an astonishing 6,200 followers on Facebook while competitors average under 500.

This award-winning service combined with extreme customer loyalty is the major driving force behind the company expanding while many are retreating. "Humble thanks to our amazing customers. We have been overwhelmed by so many referrals during the COVID crisis. Those referrals, plus Gov. Tom Wolf deeming us an essential business, have helped us expand into a second office to house our ever-growing staff," says Ken. "We are not only thrilled to help our customers solve their problems, but also happy to create new jobs for people in the area."

In March of 2020, Gov. Wolf determined that Basement Waterproofing Specialists is an essential business whose work is "necessary to help stop the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19." In addition to waterproofing, the company also removes mold and improves air quality. Its Ozone Generation technology is EPA-approved and can help eliminate not only mold and mildew, but also airborne pathogens in your home.

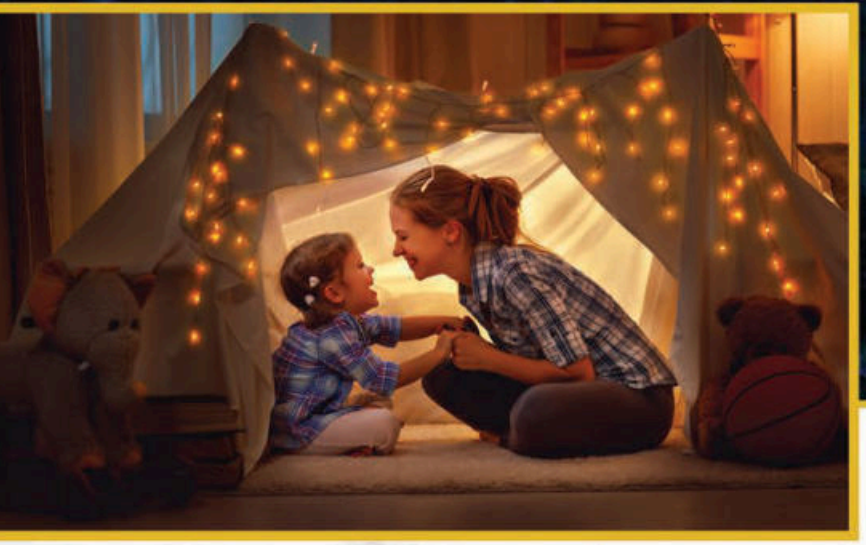
Basement Waterproofing Specialists' expansion is a bit historic, as well. Its new building, located at 109 River Road in Collegeville, was built in 1700, and was used as a hotel to help with the growing tourism to the area. The company plans to officially move into its fully renovated second home in April. This fourth-generation family business is eager to help your family enjoy a clean, dry, mold-free, safe basement. 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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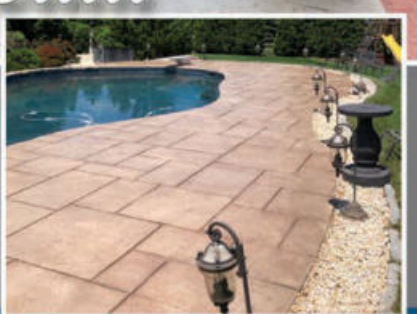
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Preferred Home Improvement

by Liz Hunter

YOUR GO-TO COMPANY FOR EXCEPTIONAL EXTERIOR REMODELING SERVICES

Not many people can take credit for starting a business while still in their teens, but Michael D'Amario Sr. can. He founded Preferred Home Improvement, offering roofing and siding services, at age 18, after witnessing the work ethic of his own parents. From day one, D'Amario committed to hard work, quality, craftsmanship and treating people right. In the business for 35 years, it's still going strong, and now includes his own son, Mike Jr., who is following in his father's footsteps.

"My dad has taught me the importance of hard work, and quality work, as well as giving good service," Mike Jr. says. "We also make sure to stay aware of the latest products, installation methods, technology and building codes." These tenets have contributed to long-term relationships with loyal customers who have become like family.

"We have a lot of customers who come to us for one thing initially, like a roof, and then come back for other projects," says Mike Jr. "People know that we provide good communication throughout the process and fair pricing on top-notch products. Our crews are friendly and extremely neat. They really have a sense of pride in what they do."

From roofing and siding, Preferred Home Improvement also offers windows, doors, stucco remediation, additions and decks in its repertoire of services. Its pedigree in the industry has earned it some of the highest designations from several prestigious manufacturers, including Owens Corning roofing and James Hardie siding.

"We are preferred contractors for both Owens Corning and James Hardie. To meet those



standards, companies must have installed a certain number of roofs/siding with those products to the manufacturers' standards and participate in best practices and continuous training. The designation gives us the ability to offer top-level warranties on these products," he says. "We feel these manufacturers have been at the forefront of innovation and technology and are the nicest on the market."

Mike Jr. says the company works all year-round, and he advises homeowners not to hold off on these remodeling projects. "Especially considering the supply chain issues happening now, certain products can take eight to 12 weeks or more to come in, so if there is a certain design or style you want, it's best to get the order in as soon as possible."

He also recommends coordinating several projects at once, if needed. "If you're having a new roof installed, it's always a good idea to consider updating the siding along with it to ensure everything ties together," he says.

Preferred Home Improvement's reputation has earned recognition in the Best of *House & Home*, for which the D'Amario family is grateful. Together, both generations look forward to carrying on their principles of providing their expertise and craftsmanship to future customers who will become family. H&H



IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

Customers describe their experience with Preferred Home Improvement

> **Finally a trustworthy contractor that does what he says he would do, and more!** Mike, Jessica, and his crew are as professional as you will find. I will be calling on Preferred for future projects as well as recommend them to neighbors, family and friends. Thanks Mike and team! —TOM & JUDY R.

> **The entire team at Preferred is professional, timely, kind and hard-working.** There is no other contractor I would recommend as strongly as them! He always let us know exactly what was going on and when things would be completed. Everything was completed exactly on the timeline that he promised. —JULIETTE & JOHN D.

> **The whole crew was professional and friendly.** They cleaned up after themselves. We actually had them back for gutters and trim work. Highly recommend! —CAROL M.

> **Mike and his teams at Preferred Home Improvement did a great job with our major home project,** which includes stucco and deck removals, installation of James Hardie Plank Siding, front door, windows, gutter and downspouts and the front door overhang with columns. Mike and his teams are very reliable, trustworthy and professional contractors. —DO K.

> **I highly recommend this company.** Mike was super professional and knowledgeable.The crews were very punctual, clean and respectful of my home. I couldn't ask for a better experience. —HARRY C.

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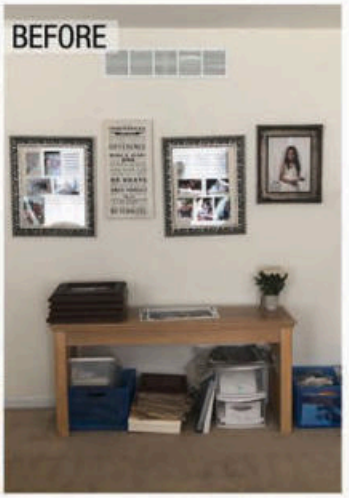


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