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Meet the local company that is changing the heating and air conditioning industry, one customer at a time *page 31*

Prime Projects

The lowdown on the latest in kitchen and bathroom remodeling

Inside: Annual Kitchen & Bath Directory

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page 14

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Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete

A third-generation business with the experience and materials you need to transform your outdoor space *page 29*

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Let's Face It

A cleaner and more organized approach to remodeling *page 11*

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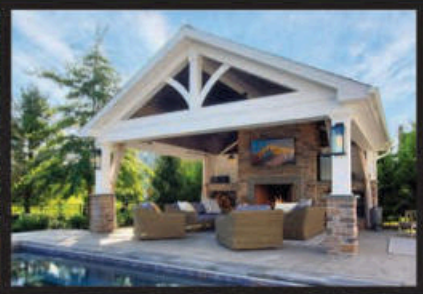
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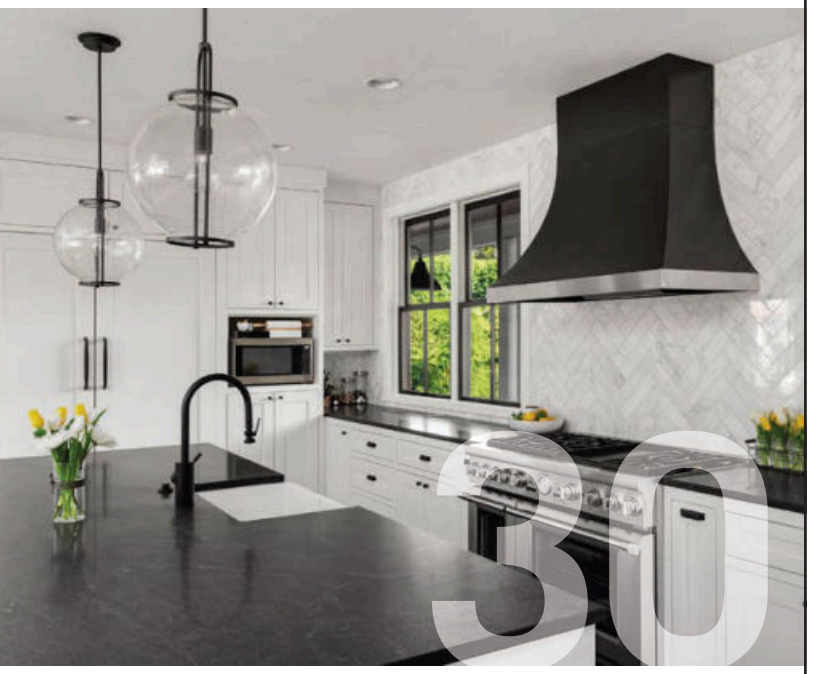
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contents

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

14 House & Home Annual Kitchen & Bath Directory
Sponsored by Family Heating & Air Conditioning

25 Total Comfort, Total Convenience
A residential elevator from Total Access is the next must-have home appliance

29 Outdoor Oasis
Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete supplies all your hardscaping needs to create an amazing outdoor living space

31 Family Heating & Air Conditioning
Where old-school values and new-age technologies meet to create the highest level of customer service and comfort satisfaction in Bucks and Montgomery counties

32 The Great Indoors
Despite supply-chain delays, homeowners are still riding the pandemic's ongoing trend of refreshing their living spaces with a focus on interior spaces like bathrooms and kitchens



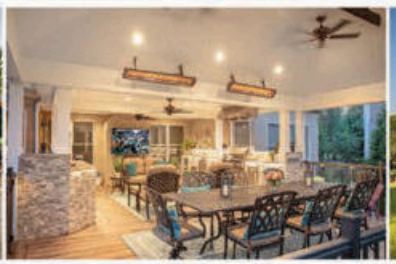
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About-Face

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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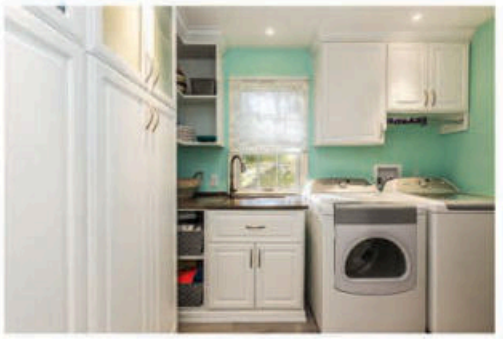
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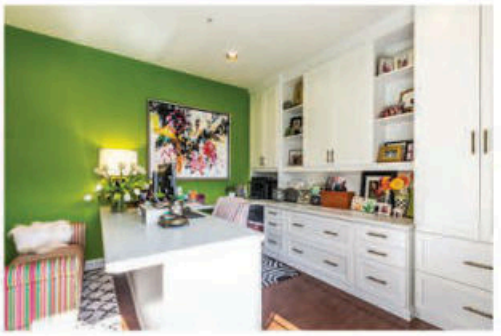
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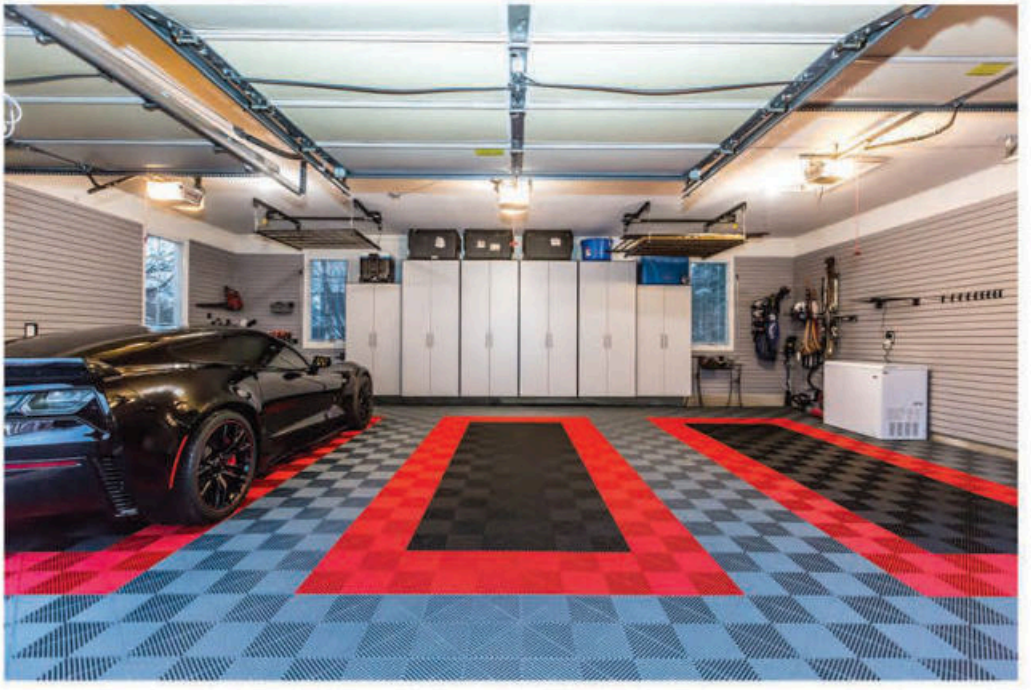
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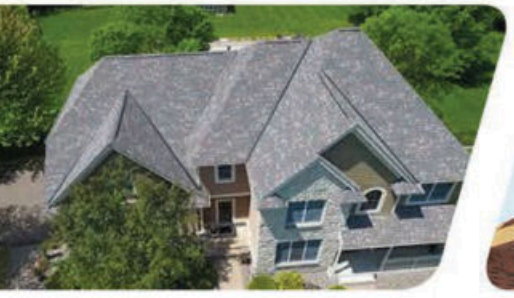
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3 Popular Misconceptions About Kitchen Cabinet Refinishing

The true story I'm about to share with you could reignite the love affair you once had with your kitchen.

When my brother Ivan and I were growing up in Pennsylvania, we used to watch Pop build cabinets out in the barn.

I guess that's what inspired us to work in the construction trades — And how we discovered an amazing new method of refinishing cabinets.



After a time building homes in Colorado and Montana, we decided that although we loved it out west, we wanted to be closer to family back in Pennsylvania.

A Radical New Cure For The "Dull Kitchen Blahs"
Right about that time, we heard stories about an innovative technology for refinishing cabinets that was literally transforming lives.

Yes, I know that's a bold statement. But imagine muddling along with a dark and dull kitchen for years. Then, within a matter of days, waking up to a bright and beautiful kitchen every… single... day. It was something you could cherish for years.

With this new process, we knew we could help a lot of our friends and neighbors back east enjoy their kitchens again. But first we had to help them clear up a few popular misconceptions...

"It's Messy"
"Dust over everything… Rude contractors taking over your home for weeks… Having to clean up every day after they go home…" These were just some of the concerns we heard. And rightly so, based on some of the old methods, or relying on general house painters.

However, the beauty of the special process we use is that our crews are in and out in just one week — from start to finish.

There's very little dust in the home because the doors and drawer faces get sanded and coated in our shop. The cabinet boxes, which remain in place, get a "wet sanding", which keeps dust to a minimum. So other than a careful removal and reinstallation process, there's very little disruption to normal life at home.

"It's Too Expensive"
There's no doubt, refinishing cabinets requires a considerable investment. Usually around three to five thousand dollars, or more depending on the size of the kitchen. The lifelong benefits, however, far outweigh the one-time investment.



Financially speaking, you can expect to recoup 70% or more of your investment in the value of your home. Not only that, consider how much better you'll feel in your own home every day. Waking up to a bright and beautiful kitchen can really make a difference.

And who knows.... With your gorgeously freshened up cabinets, you might even save money by entertaining at home more often!

"The Paint Won't Last"
YES — All of the terrible things you may have heard about peeling, chipping and cracking are 100% true and accurate… UNLESS, that is, the refinishing is done PROPERLY!

If you're going to paint cabinets yourself, or hire a local painting contractor who doesn't specialize in painting cabinetry, it's certainly reasonable to expect problems. If the surfaces aren't prepared just right... Or if the coatings aren't applied correctly… Or the right combination of coatings isn't used.

Unfortunately, there's a LOT that can go wrong...

The average homeowner or painting contractor who doesn't meticulously follow a proven system can easily miss a critical step leading to disappointing results that can last for years.

Durable cabinet refinishing requires that each piece is cleaned thoroughly to remove every spec of dirt, grease and grime. Each surface must be sanded to a dull finish to prepare it for coating.

Then finally, a specialized combination of coatings that bond together to form a film strength equal to or exceeding factory baked-on enamel must be applied.

The results WHEN DONE PROPERLY? A silky smooth and gorgeous finish that will last for years. And a bright, beautiful kitchen you'll love to show off and enjoy fixing meals in, day after day!

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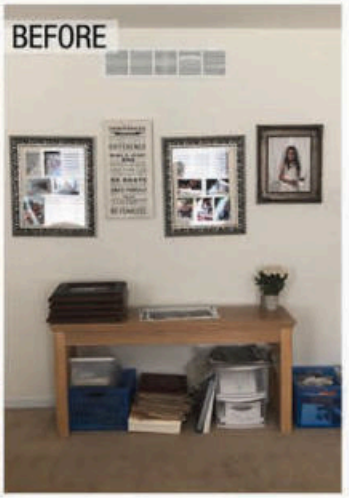


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Total Comfort, Total Convenience

A residential elevator from **Total Access** is the next must-have home appliance.

by **Liz Hunter**

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Outdoor Oasis

Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete supplies all your hardscaping needs to create an amazing outdoor living space.

by **Julie Shannon**

FALL IS HERE TO STAY, and unfortunately so is the pandemic, which means more time spent at home. With the cool, crisp temperatures setting in, it's the perfect time to extend your living space and spend the extra time at home outside with a new outdoor living area that includes features like an outdoor kitchen and fire pit to keep you warm.

The first thing to check off your list when designing a project is choosing hardscaping materials, and Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete is the one to help you make the best decisions. A third-generation, family-owned business with two locations in Lansdale and Souderton, they are the area's largest supplier of pavers, brick, stone products, flagstone and bluestone.

"Over the last 18 months people have relooked at their home space. Many are looking to give themselves a place to get away without leaving their home. We help people to determine how much they can or cannot do," says Vice President Jarrod Nyce. "Imagination, space and budget are what can determine the project."

Outdoor kitchens made with stone veneer are popular, and from there you can add all the bells and whistles to make it the ideal entertaining space.

"Outdoor kitchens are so much fun and really add to your home," Nyce says. "Imagine entertaining outside without having to go back into your house. From a basic grill kit to a full-blown kitchen with sink, ice maker and refrigerator, there are so many things that can be done in your own backyard.

"Time and time again we are seeing outdoor living spaces getting more like an oasis with waterfalls, sound systems, lighting and even outdoor TVs. Fire pits and fireplaces help to warm up areas with heat and light."

It's not too soon to think about installing a pool, and Nyce says there are many hardscaping options available for the pool deck.

"There are many options for pool areas from stamped concrete to pavers for your pool deck," he says. "Also, coping can be a fun area to explore different options, such as precast concrete and natural stone. We've also seen a lot of stacked stone being used for the natural look."



Nyce says patios are very similar to pool decks with many options for style and effect. "This versatility helps people turn a space into something very special," he says.

When it comes to retaining walls, Nyce says they are practical and have more than a few uses.

"Retaining walls sound boring but they're very useful," he says. "You can add areas to any project using a retaining wall to flatten out unusable ground. They can also be used for privacy or simple sitting walls."

Nyce says Cambridge Pavingstones with ArmorTec have proven to provide quality materials year after year.

"They continue to evolve with the times with new products and colors every year," he says. "Their line of retaining walls has also grown and evolved to adding new colors and styles. They have also maintained a steady lineup of tried and true products that have worked for over 15 years.

"We have a large supply of Pennsylvania bluestone and flagstone hearths. Natural stone never goes out of style."

Belgian Blocks, which are large blocks of stone, are used for many purposes. "They are made of granite and are very tough. They are mostly used for curbs or edging around gardens, but they can also be used for walkways or driveways," Nyce says.

Nyce says a recent trend he's been seeing is outdoor ceramic tiles. "These are just like the tile in your bathroom but a much larger format," he says. "They come in many different colors and styles and are safe for use in outside areas."

Like most companies, the pandemic has had an impact on Nyce Crete, but when you've been in business for 78 years, you're accustomed to dealing with various challenges and obstacles.

"Our family has been able to change and adapt over the years, and we have always stood behind our products," Nyce says. "We pride ourselves to be a complete resource for any questions that may arise. We also understand our products, keep up with new trends and understand building codes to help people do their project the proper way. We also try our best to be honest, deliver on time and sell quality products that we would use personally. We treat people the way we would like to be treated." H&H

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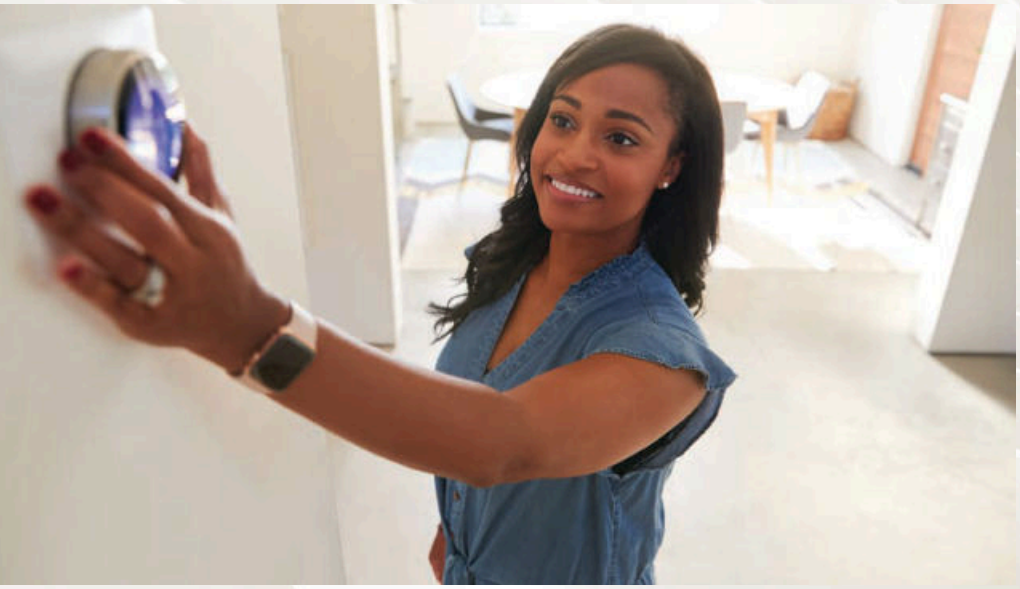
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H&H profile

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by **Farrel Shuster,** *president*



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THE GREAT INDOORS

Despite supply-chain delays, homeowners are still riding the pandemic's ongoing trend of refreshing their living spaces with a focus on interior spaces like bathrooms and kitchens.

BY MADELEINE MACCAR

After staring at the same walls, fixtures and accents throughout the pandemic's uptick in time spent at home, homeowners everywhere have been overhauling their living spaces. Whether it's all as one big project or tackled room by room, kitchens and bathrooms have not escaped house-bound families' scrutiny and desire for an interior refresh.

The area's experts took some time from their busy schedules to talk to *House & Home* about how clients can plan ahead for a smooth project timeline, managing expectations as supply delays are still creating a number of snarls along the way, and all the options available for lightly renovating or all-out remodeling two high-traffic areas on any budget.

BEGINNING A PROJECT

As the adage says, failing to prepare is preparing to fail, and home projects are no exception. While some clients are experienced at navigating the process, others are beginning their first foray into interior redesigns armed with only the knowledge that it's time for something new.

Whether you're working with a one-stop shop or a dedicated expert in kitchens and baths, the team you're trusting with the job can ensure you stay within your budget while planning a new layout, establishing a timeline and providing all kinds of expert insight as they bring your dream designs to life

"Construction is a journey," says Joe Sananes, who runs Cabinet Design Center with his wife, Yafit. "It can be fun and exciting, but it can also be overwhelming so you have to prepare a client mentally for the whole process. Hiring a company that will be transparent about that will help them be prepared for the journey and encourage them to look at their home like it's a blank canvas."

Whether that blank canvas will be filled in with new countertops and cabinets, a shower upgrade, customized accents, a full-scale remake or an addition, coming up with a layout design will help a homeowner visualize what their updated kitchen or bathroom will look like.

"We create a 3D layout on the computer so the customer can see a rendering of their new kitchen," notes Lorraine Sterl of Sterl Kitchens. "The custom layout/floor plan we create with the customer is based on the space they have available in combination with the use they have in mind. For example, [that could be] drawer bases, lift-up doors, spice racks, trash/recycling pull-out cabinets, islands, height of wall cabinets (from 30 inch to 42 inch, or stacked if desired higher), farm sinks, glass doors on cabinets, glass shelves, etc. There are so many options."

While the end result of any successful renovation project is making a lived-in room feel like a brand-new space that's more in line with your current tastes or modern trends, getting there takes a tremendous amount of proactive communication from beginning to end.


Kitchen Magic

"You have to ask the client questions to find out what their wants and needs are, like if they're a retired couple, if it's for a family with a new baby or if it's a rental home," explains Denneen Guidici, designer for Floors Just For You. "There's usually an initial design consultation and, depending on the client, it gets handled in a few different ways. Sometimes we go out, measure the space, and then put together a quick design and estimate—there's so much involved that people don't always know how much it's going to cost."

No matter the scope of the project, managing a budget is one of its most crucial elements.

"Set realistic expectations going into the project," advises JT Norman, product and design innovator at Kitchen Magic. "Budget depletion happens when the homeowner doesn't set a realistic and clear value for a quality remodel and product costs. … Choosing materials and items that fit your budget and allow for one or two must-haves that are within your budget allowance is key."

While some experts say that the ongoing supply chain delays are getting somewhat better, they remain an additional hurdle that homeowners will have to be cognizant of as their new kitchens and baths take shape.

"In the last six months, our management and designers have recognized the impact of both the lack of trained workers available in the manufacturing sector, and the inability to source raw materials that are used in production of cabinetry," says Barry Tarzy of CabinetTree Design Studio. "We believe this state of the business will continue to cause delays in some clients' orders early into 2022."

MODERN OPTIONS, CURRENT TRENDS

David Cerami, owner of both HomeTech Renovations and Let's Face It, says that homeowners have a wealth of options when it comes to redoing their living spaces, starting with the scope of their projects. Let's Face It has offered refacing as a greener, less-laborious alternative to completely reconstructing a room, and is generally the preferred option for folks who love the bones of a room but love its dated details a little less.

"We were one of the first companies to offer an alternative to the conventional approach of gutting the cabinetry and rebuilding the entire kitchen from floor to ceiling," he says. "Cabinet refacing is for homeowners who have a kitchen that mostly works for them in terms of its design, but they're tired of the colors, the door style, the hinging of their cabinets."

Even those homeowners who begin a project with the utmost confidence in their visions have been swayed by visiting a showroom to see their options for tile, flooring, countertops, cabinets, bathtubs, showers and more in-person and all under one roof. Actually interacting with the elements they'll potentially see every day for real-life assessments and comparisons is an invaluable asset to clients.

Spending some time in a showroom can also help illustrate just how many options there are for every budget.

"What I do is start out at a mid-grade bathroom and I let the customer go wherever they want to go with it," says Chris Hermann of Harmony Home Remodeling. "I give them a range of material pricing where I would say, 'Your shower wall's tile can be $4 a square foot, your floor tiles are $3 a square foot.' If they want to go higher or lower, then I tell them they can go to my showroom, pick out what they want and then they pay the difference. … I can get anything they want in any material, so it's a one-stop shop."

Hermann notes that his company specializes in additions, and that "90% of the time, if someone does an addition, they'll want other work done." That could be anything from turning bathroom closets into smaller storage spaces with matching vanities, replacing outdated small tiles with much trendier large tiles, installing heated floors and replacing a second tub with the stand-up showers that clients are still clamoring for.

Sophia Amiano, the design-build specialist at Amiano & Son Design-Build, adds that the freestanding garden tubs everyone wanted a few years ago are being replaced by cabinets and linen closets. She agrees that walk-in showers are still popular but that "the main focal point in any bathroom that I've been doing is definitely storage, as well as having that nice, spacious shower."

> **"If 2021 had an official color, it would be navy blue. … What's nice about it is that it can look a little nautical, it can look a little modern and it can look a little more sleek and almost glam."**
>
> –SOPHIA AMIANO, DESIGN-BUILD SPECIALIST AT AMIANO & SON DESIGN-BUILD

But she says the most prevailing trend she's noticed, from the western Pine Barrens to the Jersey Shore, is an in-demand, versatile hue: "If 2021 had an official color, it would be navy blue," she notes. "I and the other designer on our staff have been doing a lot of navy blue kitchens. What's nice about it is that it can look a little nautical, it can look a little modern and it can look a little more sleek and almost glam."

When it comes to outfitting those kitchens, Sterl says there is one countertop option that, hands down, delivers the biggest bang for your buck. "The best value for your dollar? Quartz countertops," she says. "They do not absorb bacteria or stains because they are non-porous, do not need to be resealed, are an extremely hard material, scratch-resistant,

THE GREAT INDOORS

warrantied and very beautiful because they are made from natural quartz stone."

Norman observes that homeowners have been outfitting their kitchens with multitasking amenities like islands, desk niches customized for specific uses and pet stations, plus designated bar areas for a wine fridge, glass storage and entertaining. "Function remains vital to the way a kitchen performs," he says.

Sananes notes that Cabinet Design Center has been creating a lot of farmhouse-style kitchens with less-is-more vibes and clean lines. "Our job is to listen to you and look to the future while correcting any missteps—we are designers by trade so we try to create a timeless look," he says. "If you invest in an item, like a kitchen island, that's too trendy, you're going to get tired of it. So we encourage the customer to be bold, but with items that are easily changeable. It's not a big deal to change paint colors, but to change a cabinet would be."


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Of course, no matter the trends, every good designer and expert wants every customer to be happy with the kitchen and bath they'll be seeing, using and living in for years to come, which means using their expertise to bring those unique wants and needs to life—and without compromising your budget or settling.

"If you're looking for a very specifically styled or color cabinet, there typically are alternative solutions within the stock cabinetry lines," says Amiano. "Right now, stock cabinetry is probably a bigger seller than semi-custom. The stock cabinetry nowadays is beautiful, with these great options in styles and colors."

With so many options on the table, it's important for an expert to get familiar with your space before the project begins.

"Getting a free in-home consultation and estimate can be a valuable first step in the remodeling endeavors," advises Norman. "Kitchen consultants come with a list of ideas and will give you a solution and quote for what your budget will allow."

No matter what direction you're taking your kitchen and bathroom, though, one of the best ways to ensure a project's success is to plan ahead. "Order early to prevent delays in planned construction and kitchen and bath installation," Tarzy says. "Make sure you select and secure all plumbing and electrical fixtures ahead of time so that when it is time to install, everything is in place with no delay caused by lack of products. Couple cabinet delays with the availability of a qualified professional to install—it has become more important than ever to plan ahead."

The other, of course, is to enlist the help of quality, qualified professionals who know how to turn the spaces of your dreams into a long-lasting reality.

"You get what you pay for," Cerami points out. "There are some very talented contractors out there, but they might not be good at communication or following up, they're not good with designs or suggestions that would yield a project that is flawless in the end. You wouldn't build a house without an architect or a plan; certainly, you wouldn't build out a significant kitchen without one." **H&H**

RESOURCES

Amiano & Son Design-Build
Tabernacle, N.J.
Long Beach Island, N.J.
(609) 268-5923
AmianoAndSon.com

Cabinet Design Center
Voorhees, N.J.
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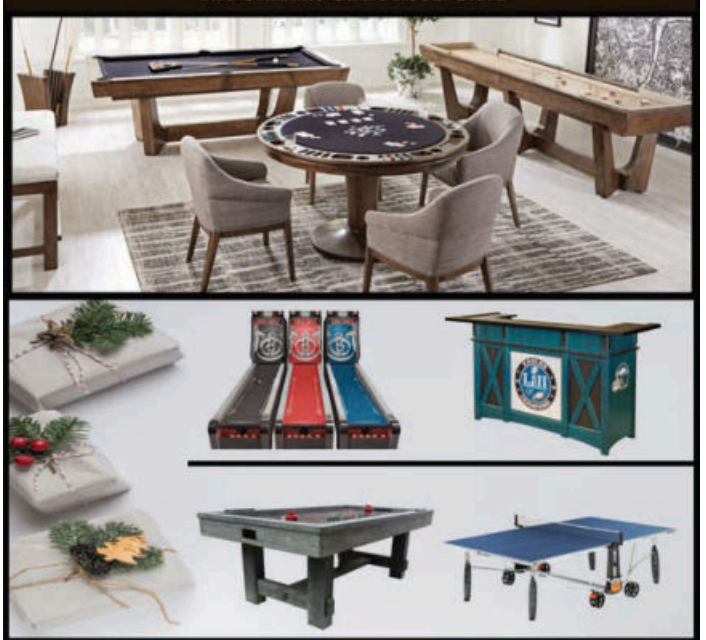
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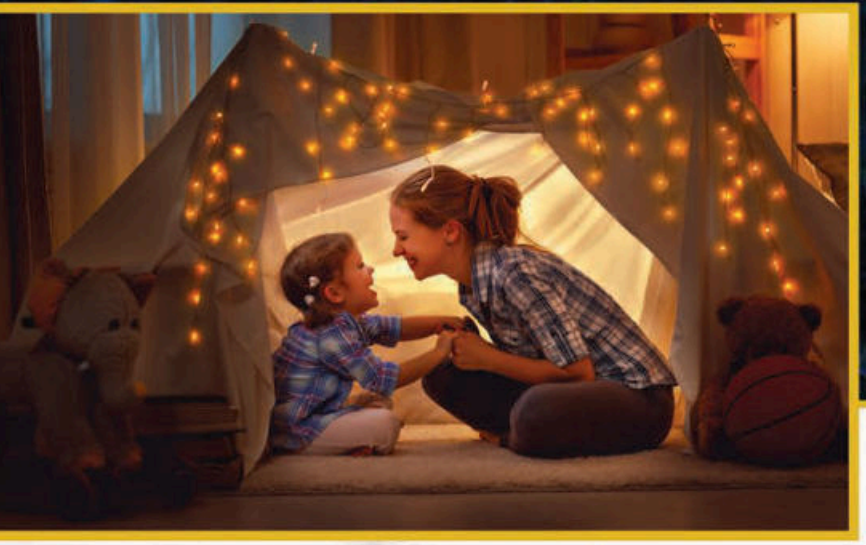
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