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Volume 23, Issue 8



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HARD CHOICES

A closer look at the latest trends in stone and tile

PERFECT POOLS

The bells and whistles that will enhance your swimming experience

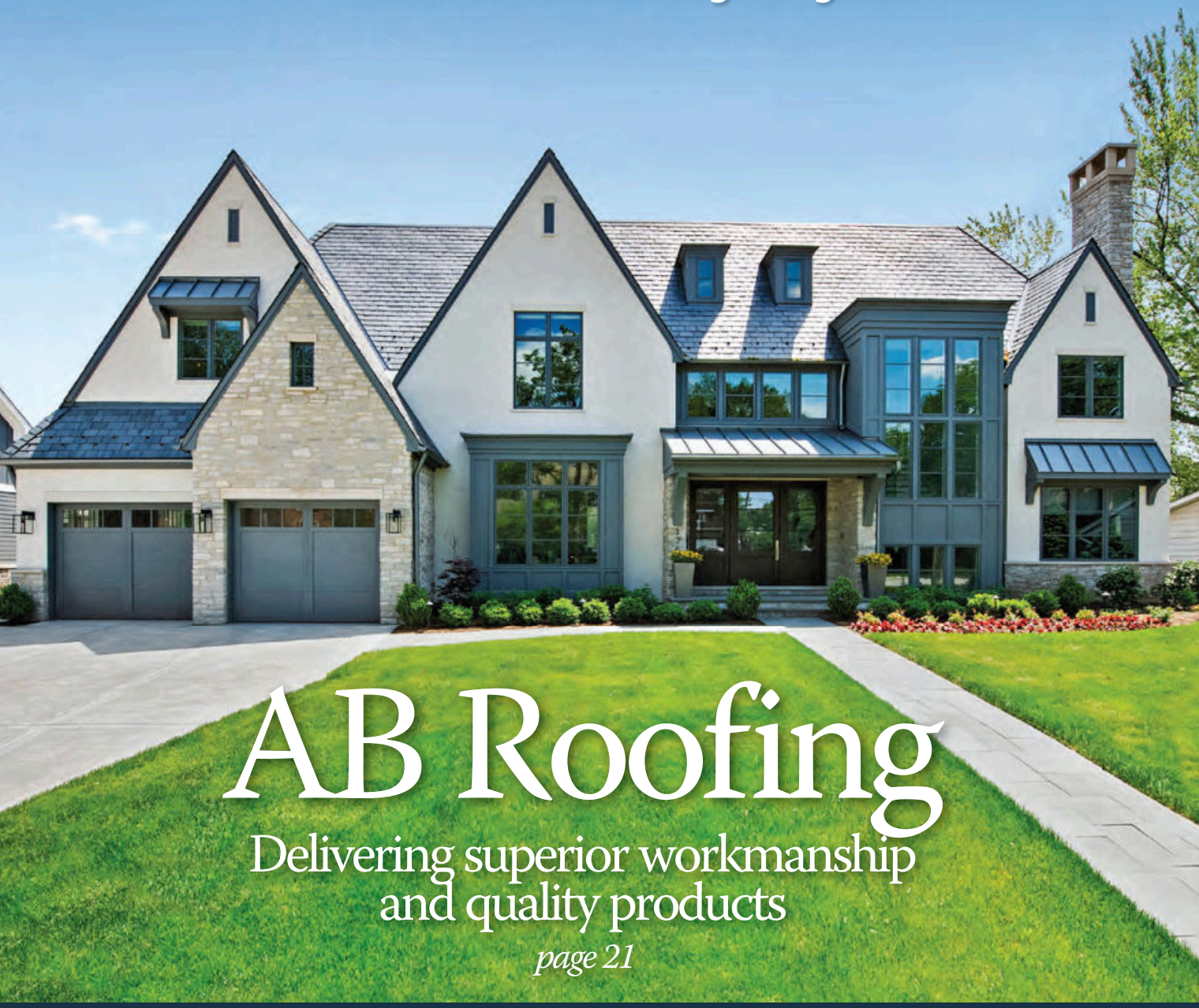
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page 21

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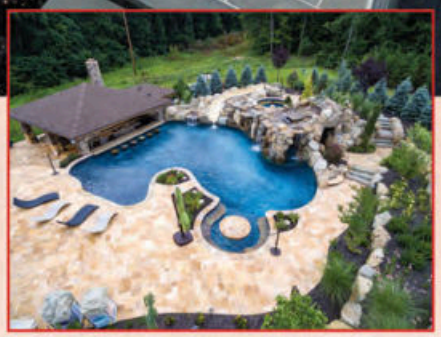


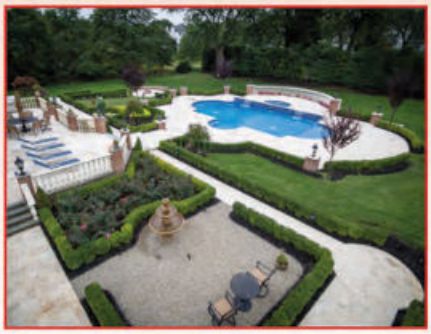
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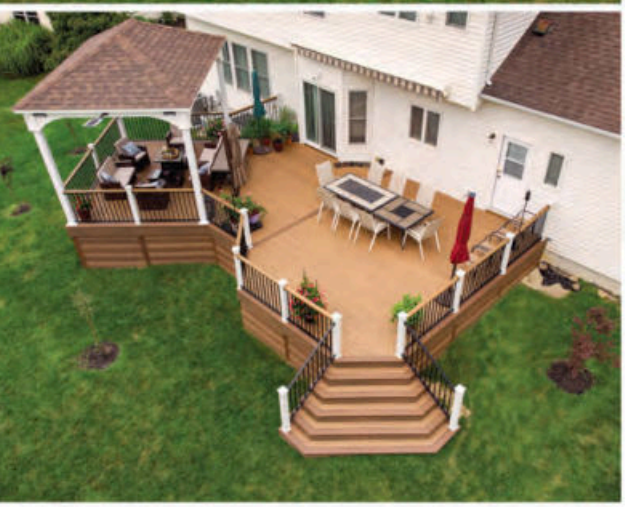
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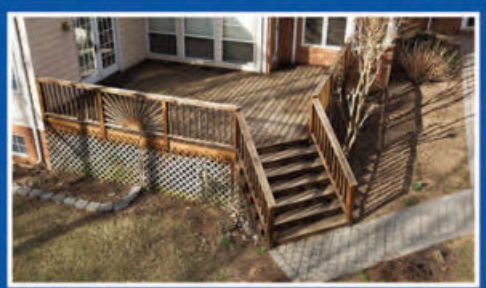


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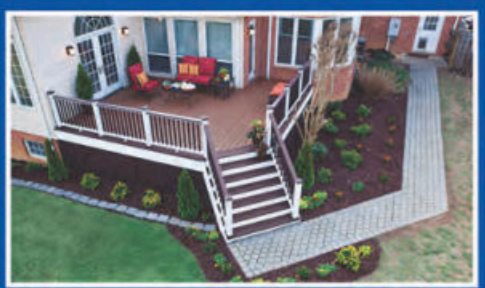
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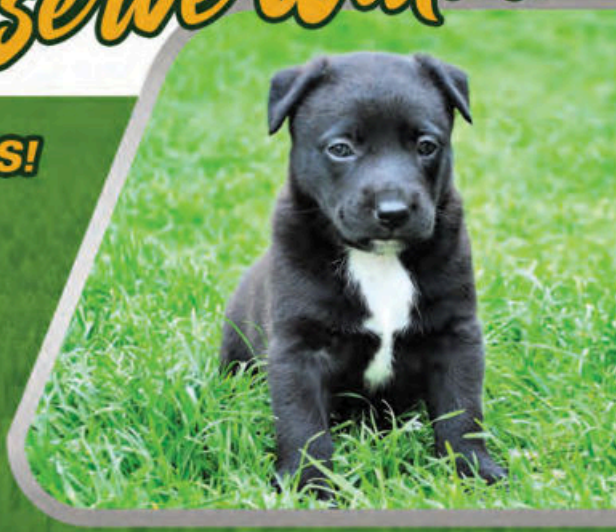
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HARD CHOICES



When it comes to choosing the right **stone for your project,** experts can help you navigate the many options.

By Carly Murray

CUSTOMIZED STONE RENOVATIONS AND ADDITIONS DO NOT HAVE TO COME AT THE EXTRA EXPENSE OF STRESS. With the plethora of options available in design and functionality, the most difficult step can be deciding what works best for the consumer's ideal space and lifestyle. However, local design experts are there to help from the beginning of template creation to the finished product.

Choosing the right style

This year, complements of blue and green are trending in kitchens and bathrooms to add a pop of color. For instance, blue or green cabinets or backsplash can be brought out by a material with patterns or textures that match. In contrast, natural choices like soapstone and granite can achieve a more traditional and classic look. Ultimately, it comes down to individual taste, and what fits with the ideal finished product.

"Whether someone is looking for colorful granite from Brazil, white marble from Italy, or white, gray or gold quartz countertops, we have something for everyone," says Kristine Kzelian, a sales representative and designer at Imperial Marble & Granite.

Online visualizers can assist in planning, and serve as tools for determining a color palette while experimenting with elements such as countertops, backsplash, floors



HARD CHOICES

and cabinets. That way, remodels don't have to be a risk—and the result doesn't have to be a surprise.

"Since we sell only quality cabinetry and countertops, any materials from inexpensive to expensive that customers select will be durable and attractive. While customers selecting the most expensive custom cabinetry we carry can be startlingly beautiful, the greatest impact making a kitchen renovation valuable is always the design first and the materials second," says Paul McAlary, president of Main Line Kitchen Design.

What's more, stone installation isn't limited to a bathroom or a kitchen, and can be a charming addition to outdoor bars, fireplaces and laundry rooms.

"We have state-of-the-art machinery that allows us to create intricate fireplace surrounds and mitered countertops," says Dino Vogia, president of Stone Tech Fabrication.





Choosing the right functionality

Design professionals can recommend materials to match visual and practical preferences. While quartz countertops remain the most popular choice in material, quartzite is gaining traction for its natural patterns and colors. No matter the preference, every material has its own set of advantages that, when combined with a favored visual aesthetic, can create the best possible result.

"Quartzite is a material that can kind of give you the same aesthetic look of a marble and that kind of soft pattern, but it has the density and durability that lends itself more towards granite. So it's kind of one of those materials that's the best of both worlds," says Mike Werner, sales manager at AAA Hellenic Marble.

As each individual is different, so is each material. Granite kitchen countertops are known to be great for people who like to cook because of their durability and heat resistance. Quartz, however, is easy to clean, and won't stain from oils or spices. And for a household with children, quartz can be favored because of its resistance to spills.

"Granite and quartzite are very popular choices for countertops due to their durability. Like all natural stones, they have to be sealed to prevent stains, which is always done by our team. Natural stones should be resealed once a year to make sure stone is protected from stains. Since quartz [countertops] are man-made materials, they do not require sealing. They are ideal for homeowners with busy lifestyles," says Vogia.

Each material has its own advantages, and there are always solutions to any potential issues. Ultimately, it's about proper research and education provided by professionals.

"Within design, educating clients is extremely important. They may find a product that they absolutely love, but if you don't have the experience to say, 'This product will fail or deteriorate or discolor or have an adverse reaction due to heat' … and then a year later it looks awful, you just killed the job. I always urge any person looking to do a kitchen or bath to seek out a true experienced individual that has been either accredited, or has been in the industry for a period of time and actually is familiar with installations," says David Cerami, president of HomeTech Renovations.

Choosing the best for each budget

Just because a preferred material may not be within one's budget, it does not mean that their dream kitchen or bathroom is no longer obtainable. With all of the choices available, there are always alternatives that are more beneficial toward each individual's lifestyle. Aside from materials, pricing will depend on the level of customization. "The investment that many people don't make to get a great kitchen is often not money, but their own time," says McAlary. He also advises that the key to smooth kitchen renovation is to "plan, plan and plan some more." Part of planning and budgeting is to figure out exact measurements so there aren't extra charges for excess material.

"We have a couple of suppliers that we've been dealing with for a couple of decades [and] we have a great relationship with them. They give us great pricing and great availability, so we have a whole list of colors that we get a square foot pricing on, as opposed to the requirement of buying a whole slab," says Lorraine Farkas at Sterl Kitchens.

Pricing can also depend on the source of the material, its appearance and its rarity. Quartz, for instance, can differ in cost for attributes like pattern and color. This is where options come in handy yet again, with local, national and international stones that vary in visual effect and lifestyle practicality. "If a stone's coming from halfway around the world—from Madagascar—that's going to be more pricey than something mined in Vermont," says Cerami.

Design experts can often help to recommend similar alternatives that achieve the same look and feel without causing the price of a project to skyrocket.

Choosing everything else

While in a home renovation mindset, additional services and products can be both tempting and seem like an extra hassle, especially if the project is "do-it-yourself." However, several businesses offer either recommendations or in-store products to further streamline the process.

Top image courtesy of Sterl Kitchens. Image below courtesy of AAA Hellenic Marble



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"Usually if there's a general contractor involved, they have the ability to have everything coordinated through that person. If they don't have that luxury, then we can help assist with plumbing services, removal and disposal of the countertops," says Werner.

It's also about knowing what products work together, and which do not.

"We also have sinks, so when they are getting their countertop, they can get their sink and their faucet. …Sometimes people don't realize they need to get a new sink just because they're getting a quartz or granite countertop, and they say, ' I have a sink already.' But it was a drop-in sink for Formica. They'll need to get an undermount sink to use with granite or quartz," says Farkas.

Compared to the limited options available in the recent past, stone renovations have been greatly innovated in the last decade. It may seem daunting to begin a room renovation, but the wide variety of both products and design experts can turn an idea into a reality. And for customers who prefer to be as "hands-on" as possible, there are stone fabricators that will allow a customer to make specific decisions every step of the way.

"Most clients have a vision for their remodel and our sales representatives offer our services to find the right countertop to bring our client's vision to life. When choosing Imperial for countertop services, we request clients to be present at both the field measurement and installation in the event questions arise from our technicians and to sign off at the time of our services," says Kzelian.

So whether you're ready to renovate the kitchen, add some modern elements to a bathroom or beyond, there's no shortage of stone and industry experts to help you create a functional space with tremendous aesthetic appeal based on your style, preference and budget. H&H

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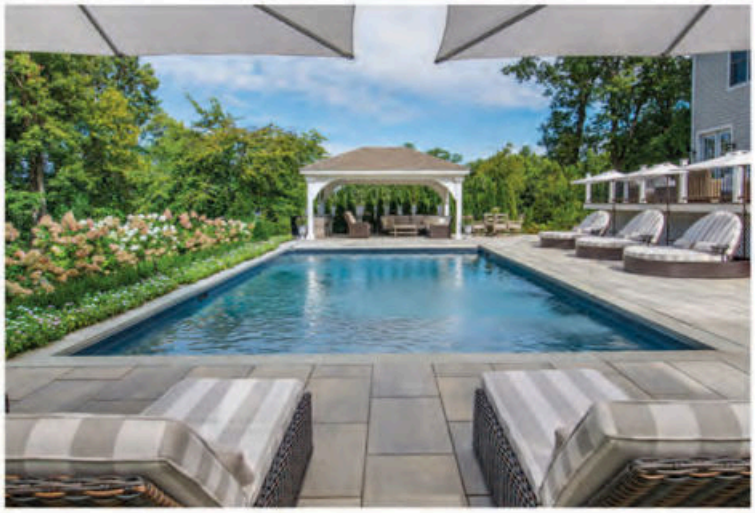


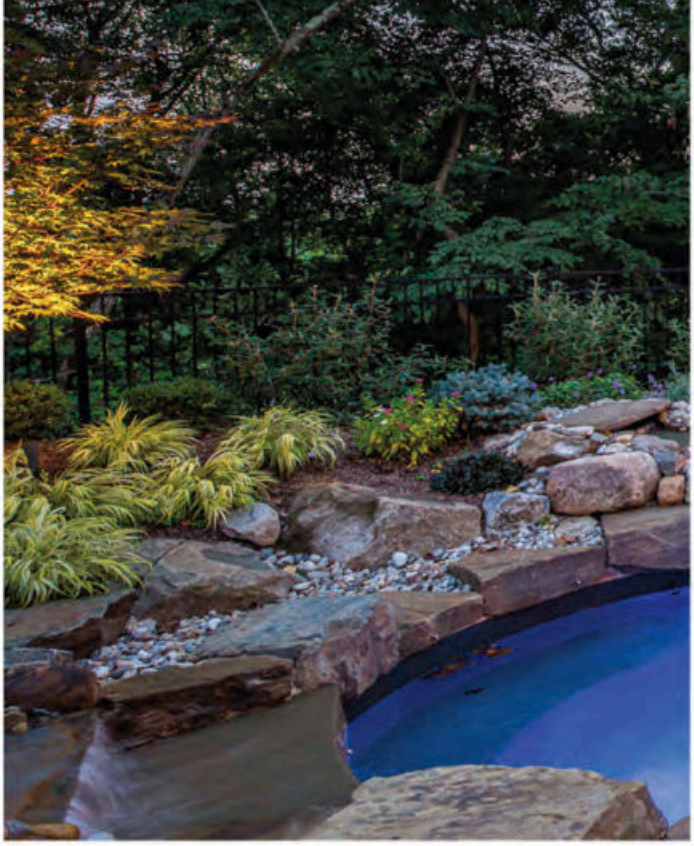
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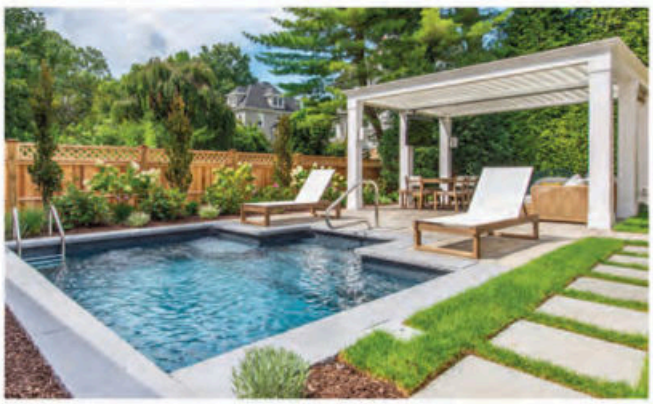
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Two Companies, One Vision

CLC and **The Pool Boss** are proving to homeowners across New Jersey that two is better than one!

by **Madeleine Maccar**

RICHARD CORDING SR. DOESN'T WANT TO TOOT HIS OWN HORN, SO THE OWNER OF CLC LANDSCAPE DESIGN CAREFULLY CONCEDES THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ORDINARY COMPANY AND AN EXTRAORDINARY ONE STARTS AT THE TOP. A stellar operation, he says, is shaped by leadership's passion, high standards, a willingness to try others' great ideas, and trusting and empowering employees to do what's best for their clients.

"Service and helping people is our core value," Cording says. "Most people who call our company call us for a backyard design with a swimming pool, but then realize they may also want a pergola, an updated deck and/or new plants, etc. We specialize in designing beauty, which is our niche—and we have a saying at CLC that 'Great landscapes start with great design ideas.'"



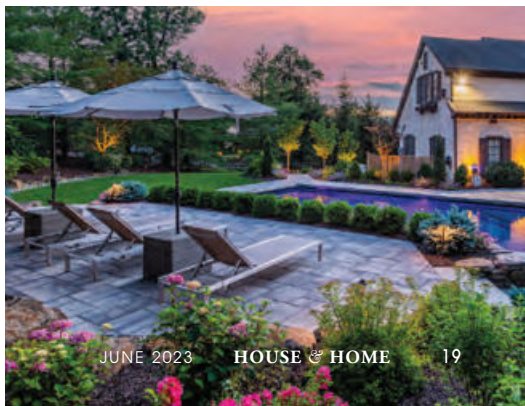
Master Pool Builder Chris Argenziano (left) and Rich Cording Jr., Master of Landscape Design, Columbia University

The Pool Boss' Christopher and Terry Argenziano, who Cording describes as an invaluable extension of the CLC family since 2011, specialize in building deluxe vinyl pools and are considered among the premier pool builders in all of New Jersey. The same great service that Chris has provided to many of the state's most famous clients, such as members of the New York Giants and TV celebrities, is what he gives to each and every client!

"Chris loves working with CLC because every job has a project manager assigned to it, working together in harmony to ensure impeccable service and a smooth, timely process throughout. The Pool Boss has his own processes to ensure the pool is built to the highest standards, combining our processes for both design and build portions of our company," says Cording. "Form follows function: You have to place a pool where it's going to be able to be integrated into the entire landscape, which means designing for things like traffic flow, different amenities, sun, shade, and privacy." And both Cording and Chris agree: "Our joy comes from helping our clients. We install high-end residential projects in beautiful settings, so our clients get their money's worth with the best design and the best results—and the process is always going to be fun and easy!" H&H

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When Quality Counts

AB Roofing offers superior workmanship and products that last.

by **AMANDA HAMM HENGEL**

Steve C. knows home maintenance can be a headache. It's not easy to keep up with all the projects that pop up, especially when they're unexpected and costly. That's why, as owner of AB Roofing, he does his best to make the process of replacing a roof as uncomplicated as possible.

"My main goal when I leave a customer's house is to make sure the customer is happy with the work we did," Steve, a 13-year veteran of the industry, explains. "We offer a long warranty, so we don't want to have any problems to have to come back to, and we want to make sure the customer is satisfied."

Certified by GAF—General Aniline and Film, the leading manufacturer of roofing and waterproofing materials—Steve has been through training to ensure he offers both a quality end-product and workmanship that lasts. He and his crew are on every project from start to finish, with no subcontractors to complicate the process, and they are available for the customer to ask questions at any time.

"We start a project and see it through to completion," Steve says. "We're on the site every day until it's done, and we'll answer the phone if something comes up after we leave."

While the roof of a home can often be overlooked due to its staying power, Steve says its durability should not be taken for granted. Homeowners typically see it as the "20- or 30-year project," when really, it should be inspected at least every five years to be sure there are no leaks in the arsenal, so to speak. In other words, a roof can be the cornerstone of a home. Until it isn't.

"Inspections for any flashing damage on pipes, chimneys and skylights are important," he notes. Missing shingles, weakening due to weather and damage from animals are also issues to look out for, and something a roofer can assist with repairing.



AB Roofing can also assist with other projects around a home's exterior, including siding, masonry and foundation services.

"We offer fair prices and a lot of options for customers to consider," Steve says. "We want to make sure to give the customers what they need—if they need a roof now, that is the priority. But two or three months later, if they like our work, we want them to call us back to do other projects."

Essentially, Steve is in the business of giving customers what they need for the long haul, not just the short term. It's not enough for him to say he stands behind his work 100%: He wants customers to see his commitment to every project.

"A lot of companies will try to save a dollar on something, but we don't operate like that," Steve says. "We use top-notch materials to give customers the best experience possible. The warranty we give is 50 years, so we want to make sure the materials used are the best so they will last." H&H

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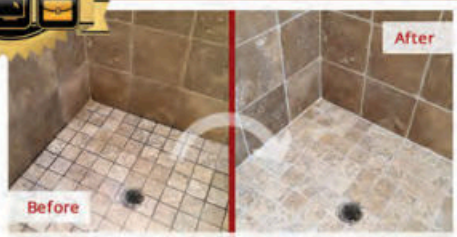
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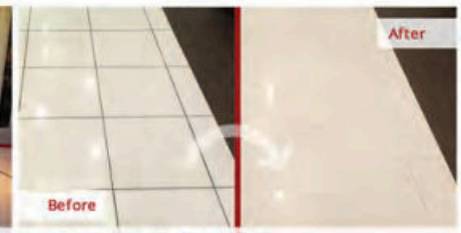
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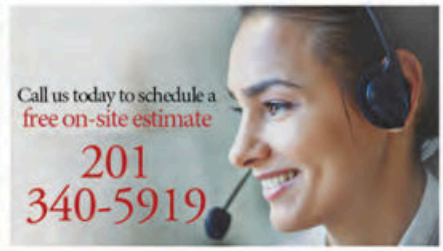
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UPSTYLE CHIQUE

Cecelia Mullen, Owner



How long have you been in this industry?
I started exactly 10 years ago, when I needed flexibility with the kids. At that stage I had totally furnished my house by buying furniture and making it my own … I transformed my kitchen cabinets.

Did you have another career before this one?
I was full-time stay at home mom to three kids.

When did you decide to go into business for yourself?
I wanted to get back working but I needed the flexibility with the kids, at that time it was three different schedules and schools. So I bought a quart of paint and started a Facebook page exhibiting all my work I had done for myself and close friends and family. The rest is history.

What about this industry appealed to you?
I stumbled upon the brick and stone staining by accident. My sister had an ugly brown brick fireplace with gold, which we decided to tackle. It totally transformed and updated her entire room and it still looks fabulous.

What has been the biggest obstacle to being a woman in business?
You're going to laugh at this one … my Irish accent. People love us in their homes, especially after COVID. A lot of people are still working from home and a lot of my customers are female, so they feel comfortable with us coming in. Plus we pride ourselves in our prep; we cover walls, furniture, everything with plastic.

Who has been your biggest inspiration?
My dad. He owned his own business, he was antique and furniture dealer. So way back in the day we used to help with French polishing furniture. I would also restore old Pepsi and Coke signs, so you can say it's in the blood.

What is the most rewarding thing about what you do?
Seeing the reaction on homeowners' faces. Folks saying they wished they had done it sooner. I still get Christmas pictures of their fireplace decorated as they love it that much.

Depending on size, we complete our brick artistry in one day. No demo, no mess. For exteriors, we use stain so it has a vapor barrier so it won't bubble peel or chip like paint. It's also so rewarding that you are adding lots of value to a home without spending lots of dollars. Another big plus is keeping the landfills empty. These factors all play a role. Going into a customer's house at 9 a.m. and leaving at 4 p.m., but leaving at 4 p.m. knowing our customers are just over the moon.

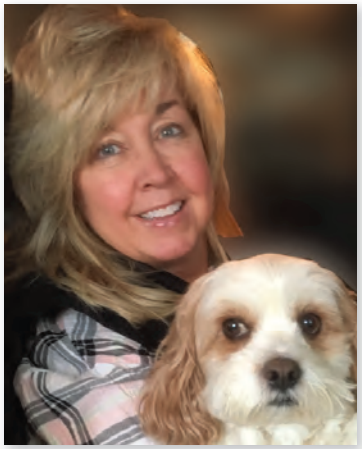
How do you define "success?"
We don't leave until you love it is our philosophy and we keep tweaking as we go with the customer's input. Then maybe they will want their exterior upstyled or their family might reach out or a neighbor. That's success.

What is something you can't live without?
My three little teenage darlings, they are my world. I'm a single mom, so my kids are my be all and end all.

How do you unwind after a stressful day?
Sitting on my deck with a coffee and catching up with my three kids. H&H

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Office Manager
D. Panetta Contracting, LLC

TAMMY PANETTA

How long have you been in this industry?
I have been working in this industry since 1999 when my husband founded the company, and I have been running the office ever since. His father had a landscape/construction company and he was brought up learning the trade since he was 15 years old. My husband is second generation to this industry and now both my boys are in the business.

Did you have another career before this one?
Yes, I worked for Nabisco for many years as a secretary and really enjoyed that job. I left Nabisco to be a stay-at-home mom raising three beautiful children, my daughter, Briana, and sons, Ryan and Tanner.

What did you find most challenging as you worked your way up in the industry?
The most challenging thing in this industry is our competitors. We want our customers to research our industry and be confident that they will see us as an honest and fair company that doesn't take advantage of people and is fair priced. They will also see that we are on top of all the new products in the marketplace. It is a magical experience to see a dry piece of land and turn it into a backyard oasis for someone's family to enjoy for generations. ... It makes it all worth it.

Who has been your biggest inspiration?
My biggest inspiration is my husband, Don. He opened his own company with just a backhoe and now he owns several after working very hard for many years, working days and nights and weekends. [Don] is a very driven person who makes sure he does the best job possible for all his customers. He is an honest, fair-priced contractor and when he is finished with his jobs, is proud to see his finished work and the customers' satisfaction on their faces. My husband has our two boys working for him, Ryan, doing our amazing 3D design work, and Tanner, our lighting design and installation expert. My husband Don, is not just a hard-working business man, but a great husband and father.

What is the most rewarding thing about what you do?
The most rewarding thing for me is when a job is complete and getting the final payment with a note saying what a great job D. Panetta Contracting's team did. To me, that is the most rewarding thing, knowing that our team has worked together to do a great job. The other most rewarding thing that I have done is raise our children and that our dog Charlie was a wonderful part of our lives. They are all happy, successful adults and I am very proud of them and love them dearly.

What is something you can't live without?
The most important thing I cannot live without is my family. My family is my life. I enjoy having family dinners and outings. We are all very close. We look forward to the arrival of our second granddaughter very soon and she will join her sister Eleanor, who can not wait to become a big sister.

How do you unwind after a stressful day?
After having a stressful day, for me to unwind is to have family time on the front porch with a glass of wine and just chat about everyone's day. Sometimes you have to take a negative and make it a positive to get over a stressful day. No matter how stressful a day can be, you have to think: it could be worse and be thankful for what you have. H&H

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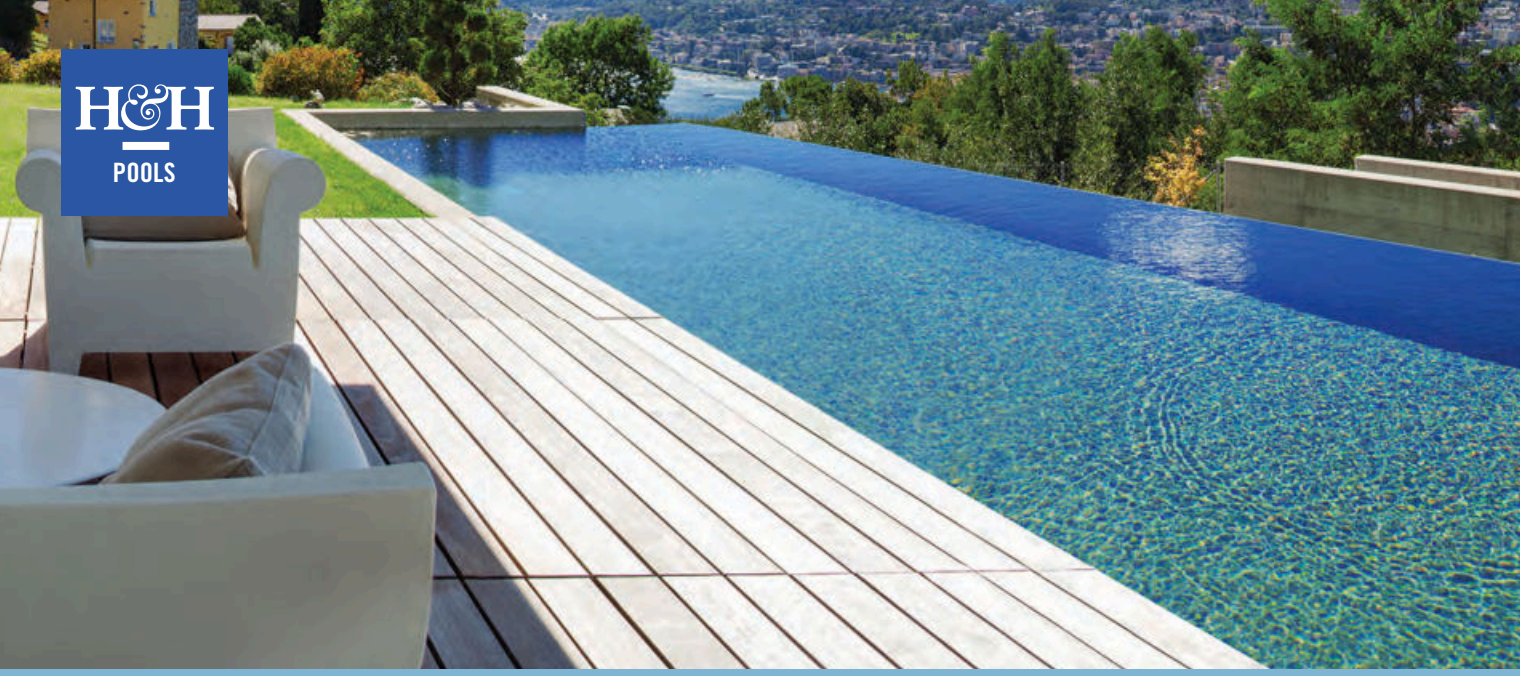
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SCAN ME



DIVE INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY:

Exploring the World of Extreme Pools

by **Kristen Jorgensen**

When it comes to swimming pools, most people envision a rectangular body of water surrounded by deck chairs, a place to relax and cool off during hot summer days. However, there is a breed of swimming pools that transcends the ordinary, pushing the boundaries of design, engineering and imagination. These extraordinary marvels are known as extreme pools. Join us as we dive into the world of extreme pools, where creativity knows no limits and aquatic adventures await.

Take the Plunge

Since living in a post-COVID era, homeowners are still finding the appeal in investing in home projects and creating escapism right in their own backyards. According to industry professionals, pool installations and custom design projects have increased over the last five years. "We have seen a vast range of projects over the past few years," explains Sam Waddell from SLS Landscaping. "We've designed and installed pools as small as 10 feet by 10 feet and as large as miniature water parks. It really comes down to the interest and budget of the client."

Bryan Hull from Del Val Pools & Spas concurs. "There are many new amenities from sun decks to swim-up bar tables that can be shared with people out of the pool, to gas-driven creative fire illumination. Waterfalls and fountains are long-lasting staples. It's about how to get the most out of your pool oasis."

A unique style of pool that seems to be growing in popularity is the plunge pool.









While traditional backyard pools are typically 15 feet wide and 30 feet long, plunge pools tend to be no larger than 10 by 20 feet. They are also flat-bottomed and shallow, usually around five feet deep, and less expensive to maintain and easier to build. "A plunge design allows for a pool to fit snugly into a sloped backyard without interfering with a 100-year-old live oak on the property," Waddell explains. "I think people that are drawn to plunge pools are looking for a smaller footprint because maybe they have more functional areas in their yard, which is also a more modern look."

Larger swimming pools don't allow for much else in the typical backyard, Waddell adds, while plunge pools leave space for dining and play areas. They can also "make your yard look and feel like a staycation spot."

Tanning Ledges

Don't let the name fool you, the shallow entry design of a tanning





H&H POOLS

ledge, or often referred to as a sun shelf, offers plenty of entertainment and options for adults, as well as kids too. So while you can use this feature as a spot to relax and to work on your tan, the benefits of a tanning ledge go beyond just catching a few rays.

For families with young children, tanning ledges offer babies and toddlers a place to splash and play without having to be fully submerged in the pool. It also gives little ones an easier entryway since pool steps can be difficult for young swimmers.

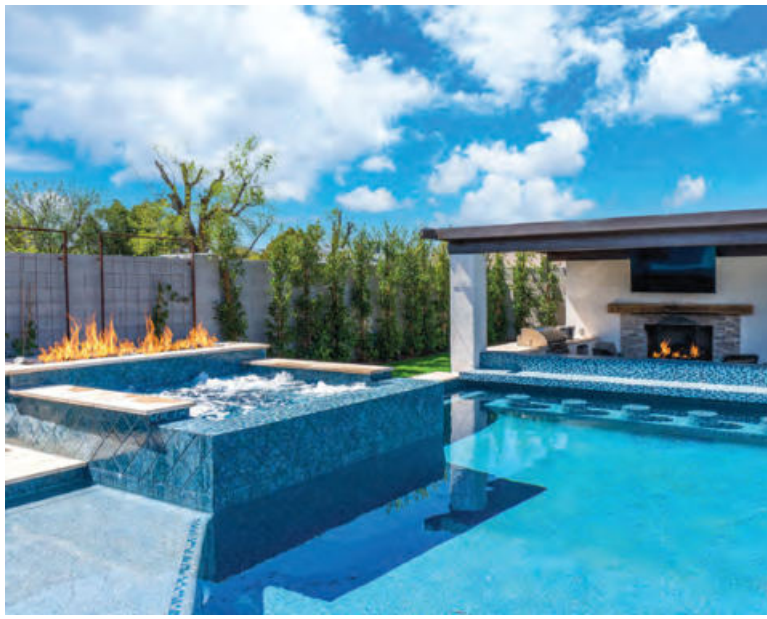
Tanning ledges can also be large enough for several pool-friendly lounge chairs to be partially submerged in the water, and umbrella stands can be incorporated into the design. It's like having a resort in your backyard.

Pools That Are Making a Splash

Freeform pools have also skyrocketed in popularity over the last few decades, and for good reason—they are a beautiful pool design concept. The freeform pool design is meant to mimic a natural body of water and to blend in with its surroundings, contributing to a more peaceful and natural backyard landscape.

"The benefit of freeform pools is the overall design flexibility. It doesn't matter what shape your backyard is, how much space you're working with, or whatever other unique requirements you have—a freeform design is a blank canvas, and you can make just about anything work," explains Andrew McFarlane of California Pools.

Another benefit of a freeform-style pool is all of the additional features you can add to the design. "We build a lot of freeform pools that feature everything from a classic large water slide to more unique additions like grottos. We also completed a project which was a freeform pool with a vanishing edge that looked off the top of the hill into the hillsides: A really stunning design and one of my favorite builds," says McFarlane.



Fire and Water Features

While outdoor fire features, like fireplaces and different varieties of fire pits, tend to be located on patios and decks, the latest pool design trends blend fire and water together. Both elements add drama that can elevate the look and feel of your pool. Whether you are looking for some added ambiance, warmth and lighting for nighttime swims, or a place to roast a few s'mores, there are plenty of ways to incorporate both fire and water features into your overall design.

"Rectangular pools with entertaining spaces, sunken bars, or fire pit areas, seem to be popular



and are also creating those social spaces homeowners are looking to gain when designing their pool," McFarlane adds.

Walk-in Pools

One of the most obvious upsides to a walk-in pool is the fact that you can just walk right in—it's right there in the name! You're replacing corner stairs with a long, wide slope. The slope in these types of pools means that it will get gradually deeper as you go. It's a lot like a wave pool you might see at an amusement park, minus the waves.

There's also no denying that walk-in pools can be aesthetically pleasing. Depending on what sort of patio you choose, you could make the whole space look just like a beach in your backyard.

The Spool

By blending the words spa and pool, you get a "spool." In recent years, pool builders have increased business with homeowners with tighter budgets and smaller properties who request water features that are smaller than traditional swimming pools but larger than standard spas. Many homeowners use a spool mostly for relaxation and entertaining—a place to soak and cool off on hot days or to enjoy drinks with friends on pleasant evenings. Spools may even have directional jets against which you can swim.

"Depending on how you outfit your spool, this type of pool will cost significantly less than a standard pool installation. Maintenance is also usually easier than with larger pools, but you will still have water chemistry and filter equipment to manage," explains Wadell.

Classic is Still Cool

With a world filled with architectural aquatic marvels, the classics have also had a resurgence according to Mike McCool from Swim-Mor Pools.

"Exotic pool styles are trending, but I have seen a major comeback in the classic Hamptons-style pool. Homeowners who are investing a lot of capital into their backyard projects are looking for longevity of style."

A great way to complete the Hamptons style aesthetic is to incorporate complementary landscaping. "We typically deck out the yard with landscaping and hardscaping native to things you would find in the Nantucket area. Plants like manicured boxwoods, hydrangeas, and variations of roses," says McCool

Extreme pools are not merely places to swim; they are architectural masterpieces, audacious experiments, and gateways to new experiences. From suspended transparent pools to infinity pools blending with the horizon; from natural wonders to underwater kingdoms; and urban oases defying conventions, these extraordinary aquatic creations take swimming to a whole new level. Whether you seek adventure, luxury or a harmonious connection with nature, extreme pools are designed to captivate and awe. So, dive in, explore the extraordinary, and let the magic of extreme pools transport you to a world where dreams become a reality. H&H

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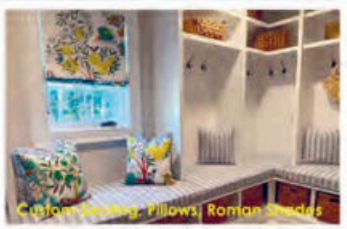
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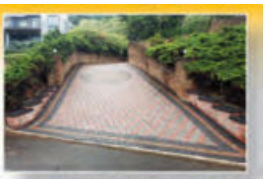
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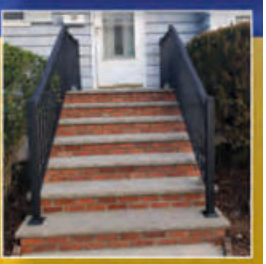
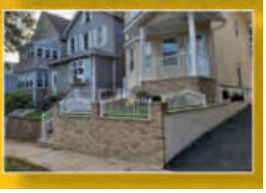
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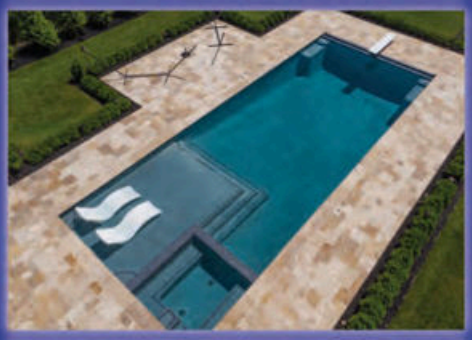
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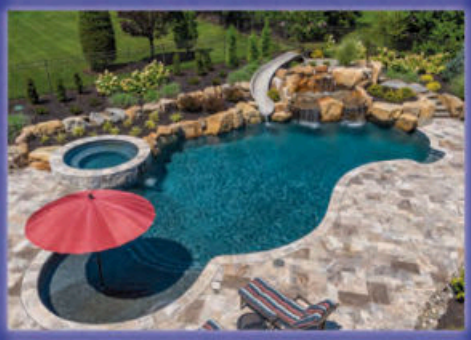
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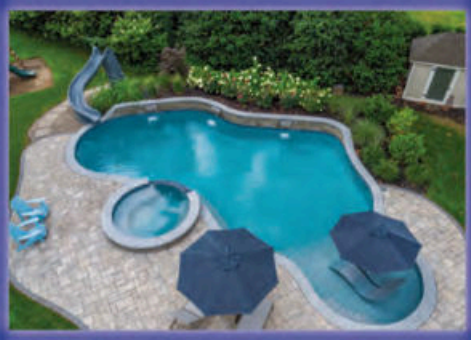


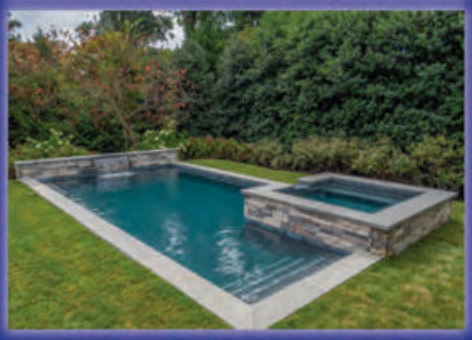


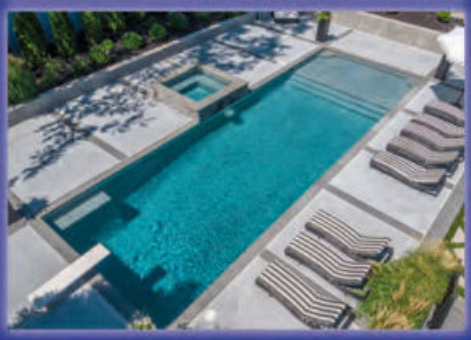


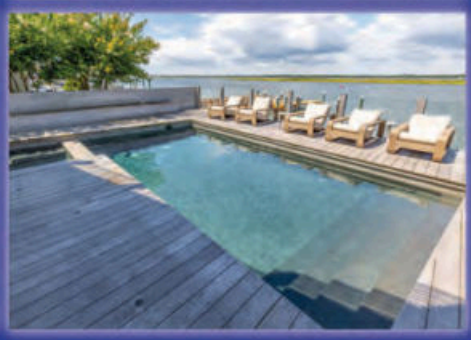












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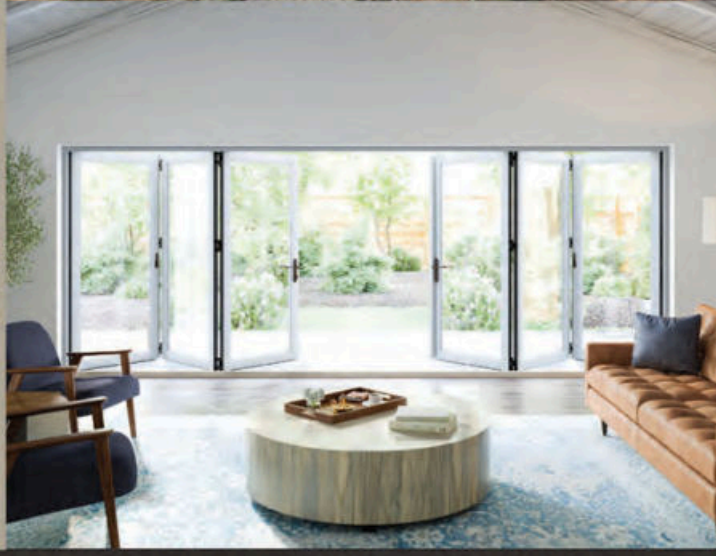
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