SHORE HOME

Volume 21, Issue 5

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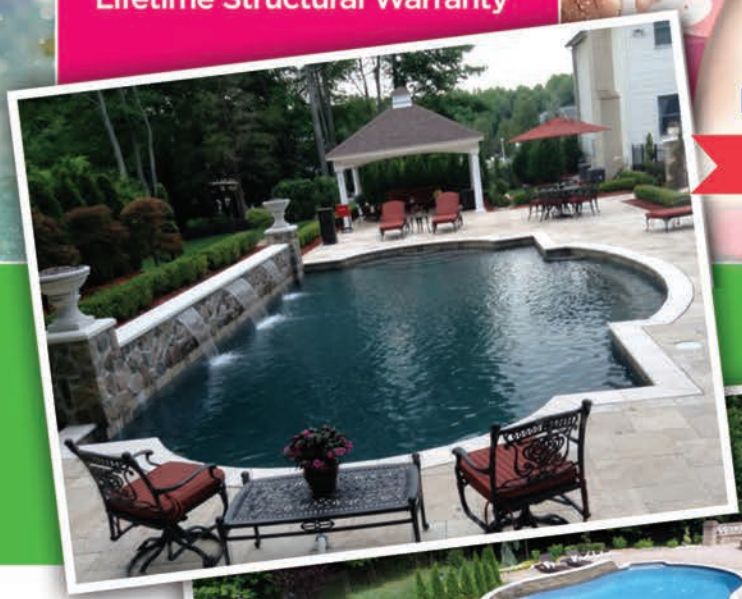

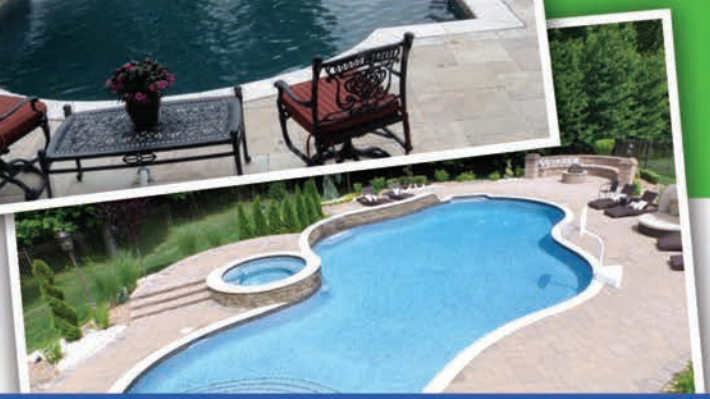

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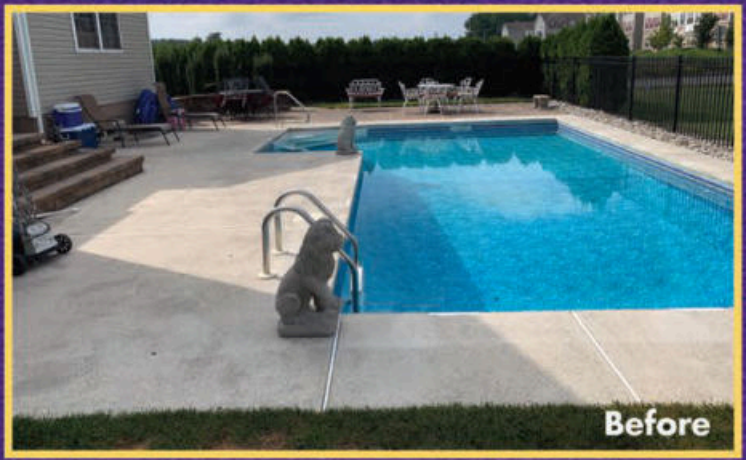

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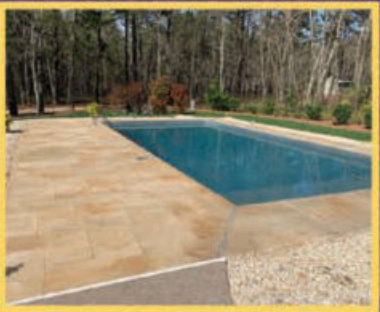

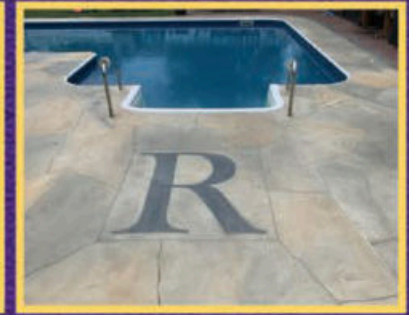

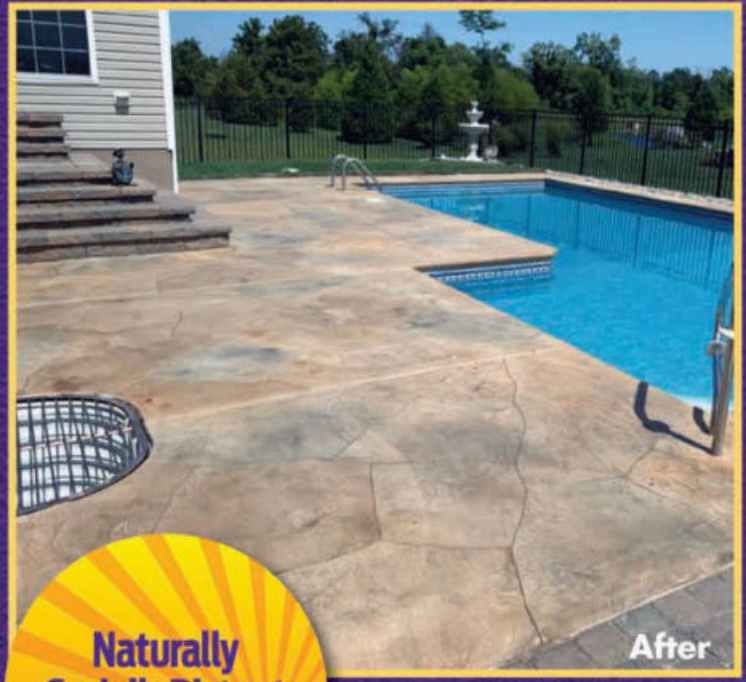

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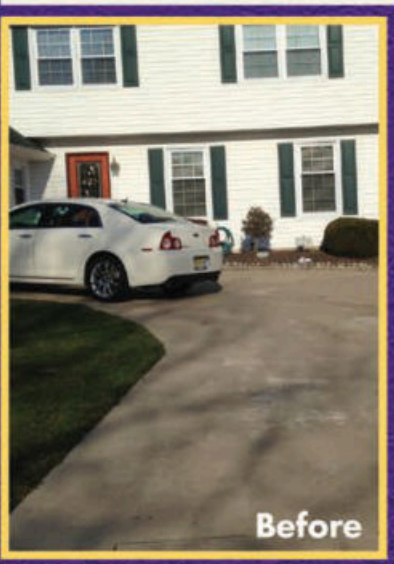

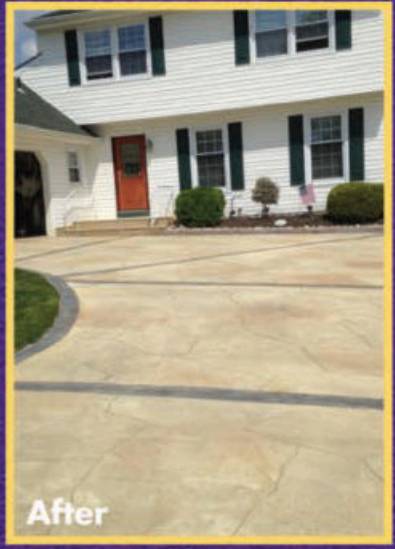

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PRODUCTS THAT WILL HAVE YOUR SHORE HOME LOOKING ITS BEST

IN SHAPE FOR *Summer*

by LIZ HUNTER

This coming summer is going to feel well-deserved after a challenging year that impacted vacation plans. With that in mind, your Shore home should be in its best shape ever to weather not only the elements, but the entertaining you're hoping to do. We spoke to some local professionals about the best exterior products for homes along the shoreline and how they will help extend your enjoyment this coming season.

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Shore homes put up with a lot more weather than a primary home, especially in the offseason when homeowners aren't there to immediately spot any damage.

"The blustery winter winds coupled with the strong storms that we experienced in the summer and fall keep us busy year round," says Scott Brock of Seashore Construction. "Shore homes are frequently exposed to harsh elements such as saltwater corrosion, moisture-fraught air and strong winds. Through the years we continue to see clients rely on exterior products known for withstanding the elements."

Brock highlights cement board siding, or fiber cement siding, as one such investment. This product can stand up against rain, high winds, harsh humidity and temperature changes—all common occurrences down the Shore. And because it's moisture resistant, there is little worry over warping or rotting.

Artur Wyrzykowski of Quality One Roofing recommends James Hardie siding. "Not only does it hold up to wind and rain, but it keeps the value and charm of the house," he says. "When you use higher-end products you will also increase its value and efficiency." Products such as James Hardie plank siding maintain that quintessential Shore home look without sacrificing protection.

In fact, low-maintenance products are trending across the board, says Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement. "We have seen an increase [in requests] including James Hardie siding, Infinity

IN SHAPE FOR *Summer*

Fiberglass Windows from Marvin and metal roofing. More and more homeowners are looking for low-maintenance products so they can spend less time fixing and more time enjoying their property."

Parnes says metal roofs are ideal for Shore homes since the interlocking panels make it nearly impossible for wind and water to get underneath like typical shingles.

However, Wyrzykowski says not to overlook cedar shake and synthetic slate products. Synthetic slate contains UV light inhibitors, meaning it holds up to the sun, and can last for up to 100 years, making it unlikely homeowners will have to worry about replacing it during their lifetime.

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> "THE HOMEOWNER HAS COMPLETE CONTROL OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT at the touch of a button without the maintenance and upkeep of a fabric awning."
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> **MICHAEL LLOYD, ALL WEATHER PERGOLA**

For windows and doors, Infinity Fiberglass Windows and Doors has been a huge trend down the Shore, Parnes says. "The fiberglass frame is durable and long lasting and doesn't bend or buckle under the summer heat. Since fiberglass is eight times stronger than vinyl, it allows Infinity from Marvin to produce larger windows and sliding patio doors to capture more sunlight and natural views," he says.

"We suggest avoiding vinyl windows due to the expansion/contraction of the plastic window frames in the hot summer months," Parnes continues.

With the demand for home improvement projects on the rise due to the pandemic, professionals say planning ahead is important.

"Fortunately, our industry continues to remain strong even during the pandemic," says Brock. "With more people spending time at home this past year, we have stayed busy helping our clients fall in love with their home again. Contractors have seen disruption in supply chains, but our stable relationships with vendors enable us to be nimble and adapt to change. We consistently find solutions to complete jobs in a timely manner with high-quality materials and workmanship."

All-Weather Entertaining

Protection from the elements should also extend to your outdoor living space. All Weather Pergola offers the Sundance louvered roof.

CEO Michael Lloyd is the fourth generation of offering patio protection, which has evolved from fabric awnings to this innovative and contemporary technology. Made of extruded tempered aluminum and a maintenance-free powder-coated finish, the All Weather Pergola louvered roofs are made to withstand up to 100 mph winds.

Lloyd says this product has been popular in Europe and is now

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IN SHAPE FOR *Summer*

ALL WEATHER PERGOLA

finding a niche in the U.S. "The homeowner has complete control of their environment at the touch of a button without the maintenance and upkeep of a fabric awning," he says. "With a fixed awning you only have shade but no protection from rain; and a retractable shade can't really be used in high winds. This smart pergola system gives you the option to completely close it for full shade or halfway for some sun protection or open it all the way. Any position is at the push of a button."

White is the most popular choice for Shore homes, says Lloyd, but the product is also available in black, adobe/gray and bronze. It can also be customized with more than one color. "Homeowners can customize their color, shape and size, and we can always add onto a system," he says, adding that they recently completed a 1,600-square-foot installation at Avalon Yacht Club.

Since the product is manufactured in South Jersey, Lloyd says homeowners can order now and have their pergola ready well before the summer season begins.

With the help of these professionals, your summer at the Shore is shaping up to be better than ever. **H&H**

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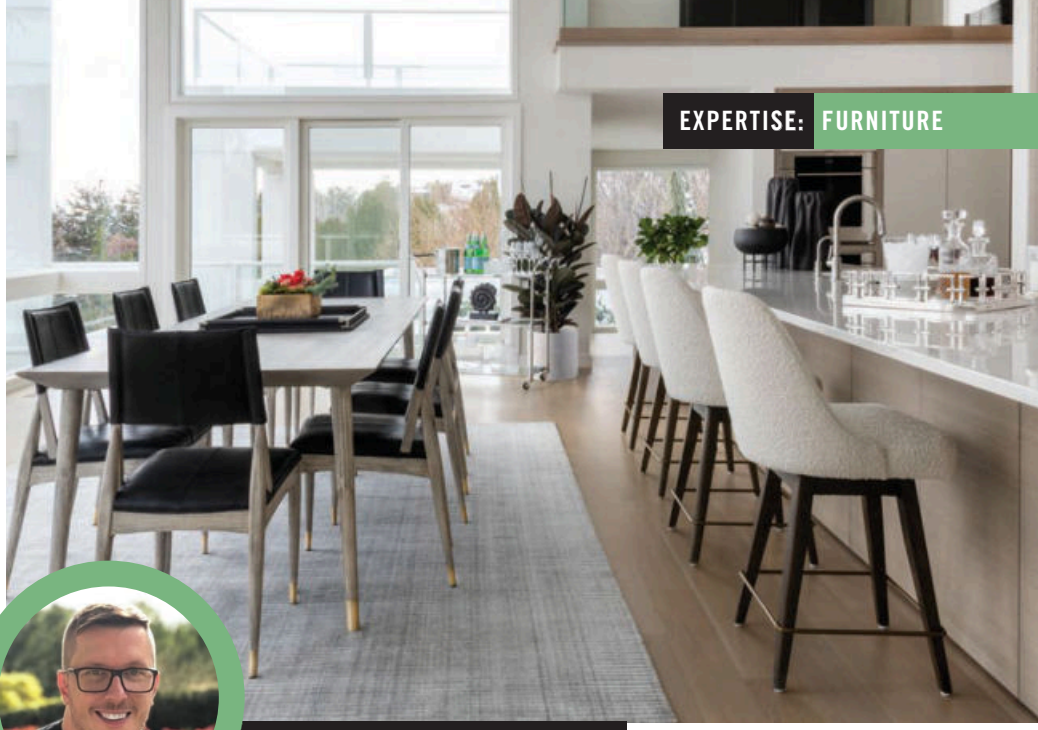

Monroe & Kent Home

by **Julie Shannon**

Richard Eib, group chief executive

For 25 years, Richard Eib has invested in or started businesses within the retail space, but it wasn't until his sister-in-law had a poor experience with a furniture company that he had his aha moment.

"Monroe & Kent Home was born out of a negative experience that my sister-in-law had with a national brand that refused to stand behind a $10,000 purchase when the furniture started to disintegrate after six months," Eib says. "My business partner [James Eib] and I figured there had to be a better way."

Started in 2017, Monroe & Kent Home offers a wide selection of furniture, lighting, rugs and all kinds of decor to put the finishing touches on furnishing your home and making fresh changes for 2021. Whether you are starting from scratch and designing an entire space or refreshing a room, Richard and James are full of ideas and solutions to get your Shore home ready for the spring and wow your guests.

House & Home spoke with Richard who discussed the ways you can give new life to old pieces, what you can add to make your home stand out and why you shouldn't shy away from adding color.

When should people start getting their Shore home springtime ready?

Now is a perfect time, even more so given the pandemic that we are living through. There are delays with a lot of furniture brands, specifically custom furniture. We encourage customers who use our complimentary design services to focus their attention and budget on the space or spaces where they are going to be spending the most time. Springtime and summertime [is when] we recommend starting with your outdoor spaces.

Instead of replacing entire furniture sets, what are some easy fixes you recommend?

There is so much you can do to repurpose furniture. Changing out the hardware and refinishing the piece in a new color are some examples. Both are services that Monroe & Kent Home STUDIO (our in-house furniture refinishing division) can assist with, but if you don't mind investing some time and effort, you can make a fun weekend project out of giving new life to an old piece.

What pieces can homeowners add to make their areas stand out?

Accessories! This is where so many homes fall short. It's like putting on a beautiful dress and not adding jewelry. After investing in gorgeous furniture, adding art, lamps and decorative accents is critical to finishing the look.

How much can a light fixture not only brighten the space, but change the entire look?

A light fixture can transform a space. Height, shape of the shade, bulb wattage and what the lamp base is constructed of can add interest to any space and the best thing is, this is an inexpensive change to any room.

What furniture colors are trending and what colors add a nice pop?

Pantone's color of the year for 2021 is ultimate grey and for only the second time in 22 years they have added another color—illuminating which is a yellow. These are great accent colors, but we're loving green at the minute. We have one sofa which is this beautiful shade of green that keeps flying out of the store. I personally love muted monochromatic colors for furniture and then bold accent colors with pillows, rugs, etc.

What sets Monroe & Kent Home apart from other furniture and decor stores?

We offer complimentary design services, a free five-year premium warranty (because why should you pay to insure brand-new furniture? It should last!) but more importantly—selection. We have access to more than 100 brands so we cover every possible design style and budget. H&H

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H&H POOLS

PLANNING YOUR New Pool

Whether replacing an existing pool or introducing a pool to your property for the first time, there is always something new to know.

BY DANIEL SEAN KAYE

A swimming pool can add so much to any home. From exercise to fun to relaxation, your pool is transformative, bringing facets of joy to your life you may not have known you were missing. There is much to know about the process, and you want to have the most positive experience possible, so here are thoughts of which you should be aware.

Replacing a pool

"Replacing an existing pool is pretty common," says Sam Waddell, president/owner of SLS Landscaping. "There are many old pools that don't meet today's pool code and are just outdated in design and function for today's lifestyles." He says it's important for companies to offer creative and functional designs that meet modern vision and lifestyles.

"Just like a new homeowner who is looking for a pool, you would need to pick a shape and size. It's really up to personal preference on style," says Chuck Ordini, owner of Joe Ordini's Best Fiberglass Pools. "Just make sure you understand what is needed to pay for a full removal of the old pool because you will have to excavate the old hole to accommodate the new pool installation."

If you want to replace a concrete pool, you'd need to renovate it to make it new again, unless there are major structural issues, says Dominic DiCesare, general manager of Blue Haven Pools & Spas by Calvitti. "For liner or fiberglass, you're removing it and starting over. And any replacement would require a design consultation to look at the pool and yard." He adds that knowing township requirements, understanding the property and presenting a design plan are important.

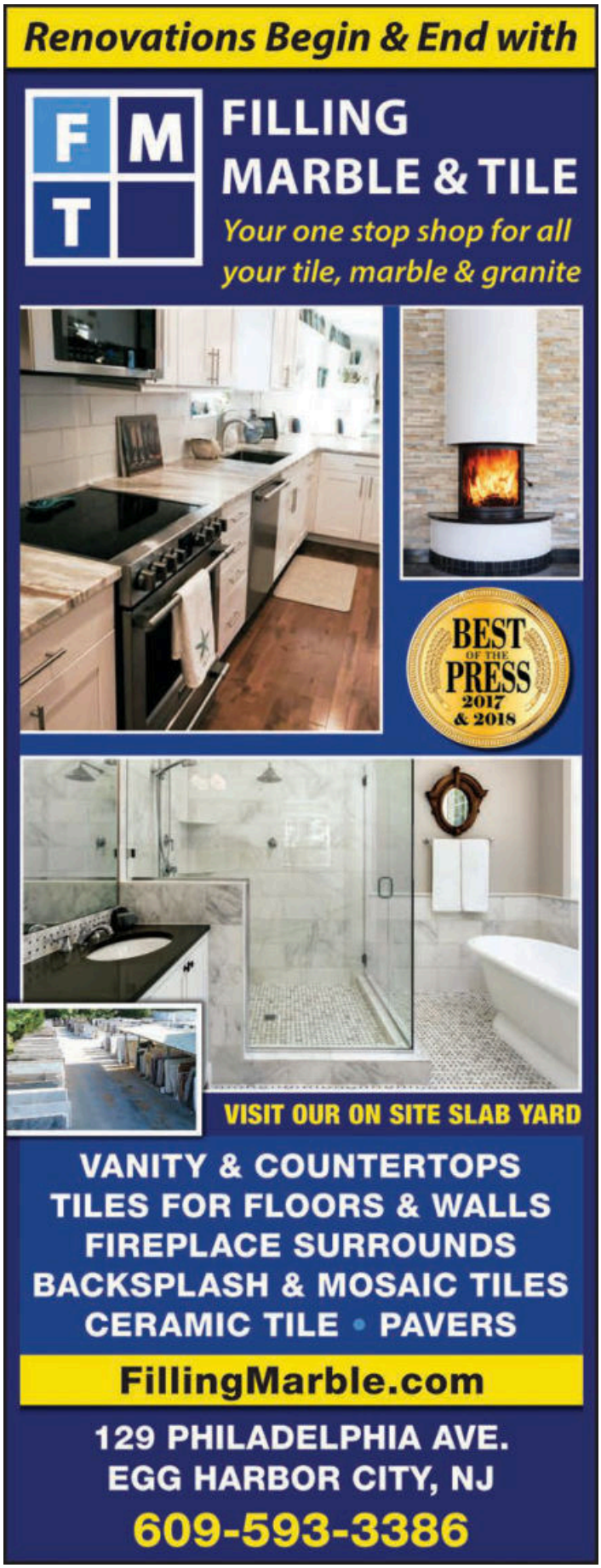
"You need to fully renovate what's already there. You need a clean slate," says Bryan Hull, one of the partners of Del Val Pools & Spas. "But you also have to know that the code is the code. Fences have to be 48 inches high. They need setbacks. They'll have to rip out and replace the existing pool. There's a lot to know."

> *You want to make sure you're dealing with a professional company . . . because it is major construction and you have to live with the outcome of the job.*
>
> —**DOMINIC DICESARE**, BLUE HAVEN POOLS

Installing a new pool

Start this process with a licensed landscape architect and designer (LLAD), says Rich Cording Sr., owner of CLC Landscape Design. "An LLAD can really see your whole property and can tell you what works, what doesn't, what can cause problems, etc. When I get calls to come help with a situation, it's often too late to make major changes without a real big cost. Maybe it's after the pool was put in and it was set too low and now there's a drainage problem. If you contact a landscape architect first, before having the pool put in, they can show multiple elevations, ordinances, rules of the township, and can add in extra things you need to know like regulations

Image above left courtesy of Blue Haven Pools. Image above right courtesy of Del Val Pools & Spas



and conditions. They can help create an area that works pragmatically and aesthetically," he says.

"What ends up being there depends a lot on the size of the property," says Hull. "What would fit? What's better—gunite or vinyl? Gunite is more custom, allowing for sundecks and benches. You can have a premier pool. You can put steps anywhere, add hardscape/landscape backyards. The options are endless. Vinyl pools are not as fancy and are less expensive. It offers fun in the sun, and a pool on a budget," he says.

Waddell agrees that good landscape architects and designers will meet with a client to discuss how the pool/landscape will be used—if it'll be mainly used for children or for adults. "The pool is just one element of the total outdoor space and commonly incorporates a pavilion with a kitchen and fireplace with seating and entertaining space," he says. Other design elements include pool terraces, pavilions and landscaping.

DiCesare adds that homeowners must be focused on what is going to meet their needs and work best in their yard.

The right company

Knowing which company will get you what works right for you is important. "I always suggest word of mouth and referrals from friends and family," says Ordini. "Checking the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for ratings and comments is always a good idea when purchasing a large dollar item."

"You want to make sure you're dealing with a professional company, and if it's a right fit for you because it is major construction and you have to live with the outcome of the job," says DiCesare. "You have a lot of small builders and landscapers that start pool projects that go upside-down real quick."

"For choosing a company, consider referrals and length of business," says Hull. "For example, we're a family business, so we focus on making sure that what you're promised, you're given. We don't believe in high-pressure salesmen. We're selling fun."

Hull believes the pool you get has to be based on your life, interests and plans. "What are you trying to do? Most people have basic

ideas—shape, size and usage."

"Pool styles are typically decided by the intended use of the environment," says Waddell. "Do the children want a water resort or is this a formal landscape where the pool be enjoyed more visually? All of these aspects [will] be discussed with the client at a design meeting."

"It's important that a client can ask the company everything and have a good relationship with them. The client needs to understand what's involved in the cost," adds Cording. "Since we are a design/build company, we oversee everything, every company that does the work. We are able to know what will be needed at every step." He says to create a "wish list" for the company, including how many people you're going to be entertaining. This assists the LLAD in coming up with creative ways to make the property work, to utilize lawn areas and better integrate the pool into the backyard. "You don't want just the easiest place to drop in a pool. You want to consider traffic patterns, views from inside the house and the patio. You want to know how the whole area will be seen."

Special features

"Today's trend is for salt pools. They reduce the need for the added chemicals during the season and leave the skin feeling softer and smoother than that itchy dry feeling with a traditional chlorine pool," says Waddell. "There are a lot of features that can be designed and built with the pool such as spas, waterfalls, sun decks and luminaries, to name a few."

And if money is an issue, "salt systems and most special features can all be added at a later date, for an extra cost of course," says Ordini.

There are many options, says DiCesare. "You have salt, UV/Ozone systems, water-fire features, waterfalls/grottos. If they can think of it and have the budget, a good builder can build it."

"Saltwater is incredible," says Hull. "It takes maintenance down to zero. It stops the pool from turning green and offers benefits across the board. There are also auto vacuums now that do everything. They work great. There's also lighting that offers mood changing, adds style and elegance, and spillover spas which are very popular."

Cording agrees that saltwater and various amenities are important aspects of today's pools. "All we do is saltwater, and most pools have sunshelves since they allow people to sit in the pool or lay in it," he says. "Today's pools have less to do with diving, so there are larger shallow areas. All have LED lighting and are controlled by their phones. There are plenty of square or irregular shaped pools, many with bars, grottos, even caves. The ideas seem endless and they help create a leisure location that adds to so much to people's lives." H&H

Image at left courtesy of Joe Ordini's Best Fiberglass Pools

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H&H ask the expert

Coast Tile & Marble Supply

by **Liz Hunter**

EXPERTISE: BATH/KITCHEN TILE DESIGN

Mike Eisele Jr., head of design team

Shore homes have always had their own distinct look. Meant to feel like a retreat away from the everyday bustle of a primary home, these beach town properties require a specific design knowledge of the best materials to use. Enter Coast Tile & Marble Supply—started in 1965 by Joseph Eisele, then passed down to his four sons and now moving into the third generation. With a focus on personal service and teamwork, you will always be dealing with an owner, either directly or as part of a team. As the tile industry evolved from offering only a few types back in the '60s, so has the company—expanding to a range of products including porcelain, marble, mosaics and even luxury vinyl, hardwood and fireplaces. Coast Tile & Marble Supply works with builders, architects, designers and homeowners for everything from kitchen and bath design to entire homes, especially those in the Shore communities.

House & Home spoke with Mike Eisele Jr., head of the design team, about which products and trends have left a lasting impact on Shore homes and which ones are newly emerging.

How do trends and styles differ in Shore homes?
Clients love neutral tones. Whites and grays are remaining very popular, and they lean toward porcelain over marble because it requires less maintenance. For the true Shore vibe, blue tones are huge to achieve the ocean feel. We've been introducing textured 3D geometric tiles, often creating designs that resembled crashing ocean waves. The industry has come so far in terms of unique mosaics, where it really feels like you're looking over the ocean.

Some of the newest things taking hold are large tile slabs—as large as 5 by 10 feet. It looks like one full slab with no grout joints, and the veins in the tile can be matched, so they flow across the wall. Full slabs like this used to only be available in marble, but now there is a porcelain option that cuts the price in half or more. We have one of the largest selections in the area, offering an extensive variety of color schemes. It makes your bathroom look like something you'd see on a high-end design show on HGTV.

Has the pandemic shifted any design requests as a result of people spending more time in their Shore home?
We've never seen an influx of people flocking to the Shore line like this. Remote work capabilities meant people could work from their Shore home, and we have seen a change in color tones, toward warmer colors and away from colder whites and grays. They want it to feel homier. Another interesting aspect is the increase of people from New York coming to the Shore bringing a different taste than people who come from Pennsylvania, for example. We've added products in our showroom that have gold and unique metals to represent those styles and tastes because we want to cater to everyone's design preferences.

Why is it important to work with a designer who understands the specific elements of a Shore home?
For a majority of clients, their Shore home is their second home, so they've been through a design process before and know what to expect, but that doesn't mean it's not unique and exciting. For their second home, they want to express themselves through their design. We provide a unique and diverse product line—products they can't find elsewhere—and put them together to make the home feel like a getaway through the theme, patterns and color scheme of the design.

How are you managing consultations under coronavirus protocols?
We are offering both virtual and in-person consultations. In advance of these consultations, we want to prepare as much as possible, so we ask clients to send us inspiration photos, home style, color schemes, etc. This all guides us in terms of what products to show them once we get to the consultation. Once they decide to move forward, we do recommend coming in for a short meeting to confirm choices because some colors never truly capture through the phone screen.

What else stands out about your business and its philosophy?
We truly focus on the service end. We're not looking to compete with the box stores—we want it to be a more unique experience. The process of designing and renovating your home is fun and exciting. It's an opportunity for people to show their personality and we provide the guidance to turn a boring space into a showpiece that makes them happy every time they walk into it. We go the extra mile, sketching designs or using renderings to help clients visualize the finished space. Once the project is underway, we're involved until it's completed. We understand that this is a big project—both expensive and time consuming—and we provide generations of expertise that is unmatched. Our goal is to turn a client's house into a home. H&H

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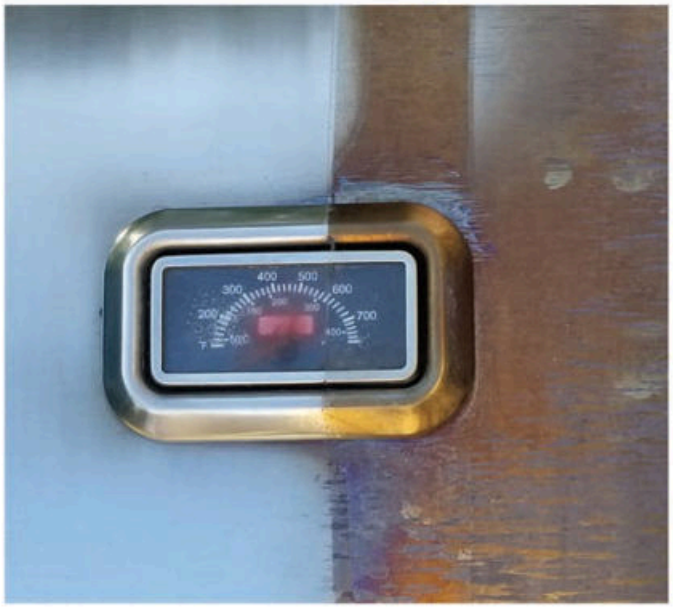

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BEST of HOUSE&HOME in:

Cabinetry

How many years have you been in business or in this industry?
I started in the cabinet business in 1968. The Cabinet Shop was established in 1990.

What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from competitors?
Many years of experience, expert design team, excellent customer service and having the area's largest showroom, which is constantly being updated.

How does it feel to be recognized among *House & Home*'s Best of Winners?
I am very honored that all of the time and energy spent not only by myself but also my employees has been recognized.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?
Seventy percent of our crew is family, the other 30 percent is our extended family. I work every day in a pleasant atmosphere where everyone's goal is to keep The Cabinet Shop successful not only now, but also in the future.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
The kitchen is the hub of the house. It is not only used for cooking, but also has become the gathering place for family and friends. It is rewarding to be involved with the area that makes a house a home.

the cabinet shop

Joe DiCicco, Owner
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It's All IN THE Details

A BATHROOM RENOVATION can add great value to a home, but professionals share the important steps to consider during the process.

BY MATT COSENTINO

As the interest in home renovations continues to soar, the room that usually comes to mind first is the kitchen. After all, it's where homeowners spend the most time during their daily routines and it is also the heart of get-togethers with family and friends throughout the year.

But while a kitchen remodel might be the star of the show, contractors remind us not to overlook a very important supporting character—the bathroom. A renovation in one or more bathrooms can not only add functionality and style to the spaces but also long-term value and return on investment.

"Bathrooms are probably even more popular to do than kitchens," says David Cerami of Home-Tech Renovations. "A kitchen project is obviously a little more glamorous because it's entertainment central when you have people over. But as far as need is concerned, there are two to three times more bathrooms than kitchens in suburban households so bathroom renovations are very popular."

A bathroom project probably won't be as burdensome as a kitchen either, adds Kyle Eisele of Coast Tile & Marble Supply Inc.

"A lot of times people will buy a house and the bathroom has been there for years and still has green or pink tiles on the wall," he says. "It's one of the projects people feel as though they can tackle relatively easily. Where a kitchen may seem like an overwhelming process, typically people feel a little more comfortable trying to redo a bathroom."

Still, there are many important steps to follow, and local professionals have shared with us their tips for ensuring a successful project.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

With plenty of competition in the marketplace, finding the right contractor to handle a bathroom renovation can be confusing, especially for homeowners who have never attempted such a project. Chris Fascella of Fascella Construction Corporation offers a list of qualifications to be on the lookout for in a company right out of the gate.

"No. 1 is they have to have a design professional to work along with the homeowner in conjunction with the contractor, preferably an in-house design professional," he says. "I feel that is a very strong piece. The next piece is they should be able to give you a list of client references and have good reviews. That's very, very important. Also, if they

come out to your home and they can't generate an estimate for a bathroom renovation within three to five days, they're not the right contractor because they're either too busy or very disorganized. Finally, make sure you get a certificate of insurance naming you as an additional insured for the duration of the project."

Mark Howell of Shore Glass and Doors adds that experience is a must and he is always willing to have past customers speak with new ones and share the story of their project.

"I would say important qualifications are how long the company has been in business, what kind of reviews they have on their website and if [the homeowner] has gotten any referrals from friends," he says.

Cerami agrees that experience is important but suggests that specialization in a particular area—in this case bathroom remodeling—is preferable over someone who has spent years as a general contractor. He also thinks homeowners should look for someone who has professional accreditations and belongs to organizations such as the National Kitchen and Bath Association and the National Association of the Remodeling Industry.

"I think a lot of contractors who take the time to be part of professional organizations generally are going to be a little more diligent about how they treat customers and what they do," he says. "Also, homeowners should interview at least two to three different people to see if there's a fit."

Since there are several different aspects to a bathroom remodel, having access to a wide range of materials in one place is also crucial, according to Mike Werner of AAA Hellenic Marble.

"It helps to be able to put all of the elements of a project together and be able to reference one another," he says. "In other words, you have a company that will supply the slab material for the vanity tops, the tiles for the tile installation and the cabinets. Having all of those different elements in one location can be very helpful."

SETTING REALISTIC GOALS

Many homeowners have preconceived notions going into a project based on their favorite remodeling shows on HGTV or stories they've heard from friends and family. One of the responsibilities of the professionals they're working with is to keep the budget and goals in check.

"One of the first things we do is set the expectations; knowing the look they're going for versus an allotted budget," Werner says. "Ultimately it's very important for the client when they come in to start making selections to have several different ideas of things they like. We've been doing this a long time and we can always offer guidance on the aesthetics of things, but we are a designer showroom so it's kind of difficult if the client hasn't established any kind of direction they want to pursue. Once they have that information, we can help guide a nice balance between aesthetics and the budgetary number."

Transparency from the beginning is another key factor, particularly when it comes to cost. For example, Eisele points to not just the price of the tile but everything that goes along with it, like grout and capping.

"A lot of times people come in and there's a bit of shock factor when they realize all of the little things that go into a project and add up to the total cost in the end," he says. "We're very upfront with people. … You want to be sure going into the project so you can properly prepare for it. It's not a quick thing either; a lot of people think they can get in and out but that's probably the worst way to do a bathroom remodel when you're going to be living with that bathroom for five to 15 years."

For that reason, Fascella explains that companies should be able to provide customers a detailed estimate and plan for the project.

"When we do an estimate, it doesn't just say, 'Renovate bathroom according to plans,'" he says. "It starts with permits all the way down through final cleanup. It includes general demolition, framing, electrical, plumbing. The whole thing is broken down to 20 or 30 different

Photography courtesy of HomeTech Renovations

It's All IN THE Details

line items depending on how big the project is. If a contractor does not want to break out the different phases … and show you the different costs, be wary."

MATERIAL SELECTION

Shopping for the materials to use in a bathroom remodel can be exciting for the homeowners but they should also do their homework. When it comes to flooring, vanity tops or shower tiles, there is more to the decisions than style and look.

"Color and pattern and all of that is one thing, but there's a whole other end to it which is the maintenance factor and the durability factor," Eisele says. "We provide that insight into navigating your entire bathroom selection. Do you want to be sealing your marble floor once a year or do you want to put in a porcelain tile that is just going to have to be wiped down here and there because it's much easier to maintain? Do you want to put in glass that might chip or ceramic that is less expensive? There are so many different parts and we're able to help them make the decisions based on their price point, cleaning factors and maintenance. That all comes with experience and knowledge of the products."

Presenting a client with all of the options makes for the best final decision.

"If somebody establishes a natural stone look that they really like, we all know that marble requires a little more care and maintenance, so a good alternative would be exploring a nice porcelain tile that offers the same look but it can be more moderately priced or just a fraction of the cost of the natural stone and holds up extremely well in the application," Werner says.

"But a lot of times when somebody falls in love with that particular look there's not really an exact alternative so what we will typically do at that point is educate the client, make them aware of what they're going to be up against having that particular material in their bathroom. We will guide them on the care and maintenance and everything that goes along with it."

A relatively new product that has been in high demand, according to Eisele, is 5 foot-by-10-foot porcelain tile, even though it is a bit more expensive to install. "People like the fact that it's not real marble slabs, it's easy to clean and there's no grout joints," he says. "Everybody comes in talking about how much they hate grout … and anybody who hears there is no grout joints jumps out of their shoes with excitement."

POPULAR REQUESTS

Fascella has noticed a major trend of people wanting to age in place, so they are either converting bathrooms in their own homes or in the homes of their adult children to be more accommodating. He and Cerami also agree that most clients are looking to remove soaking tubs in favor of walk-in showers.

"People definitely want larger, multi-function showers," Cerami says. "They're doing away with the fiberglass tubs that are jammed into a corner and they never seem to use. If there's space and the budget permits, they tend to go with the free-standing tubs that are more of an art piece within the room. They also want in-floor heat systems, architectural lightings, built-in medicine cabinets and things like that."

Howell's company specializes in the fabrication and installation of frameless shower doors but offers much more for bathroom remodels.

[People like] the elegance of frameless shower doors. They really enhance the look of the bathroom and they're very functional," he says. "We also do mirrors and accessories like towel holders, toilet paper holders, toothbrush holders, door knobs and hardware."

Eisele's company does a lot of business at the Jersey Shore so aqua colors will always be popular, but customers are also becoming bolder in their color choices.

"We're seeing some more powerful colors which is interesting, because for the last three to five years it's typically been white and gray consistently," he says. "Of course in the Shore towns everybody loves the ocean blues, but we are starting to get a couple more pops of color in the palette like mint green."

While the professionals say that most clients focus their renovation efforts on the master bath, others will invest in the guest bathroom to make

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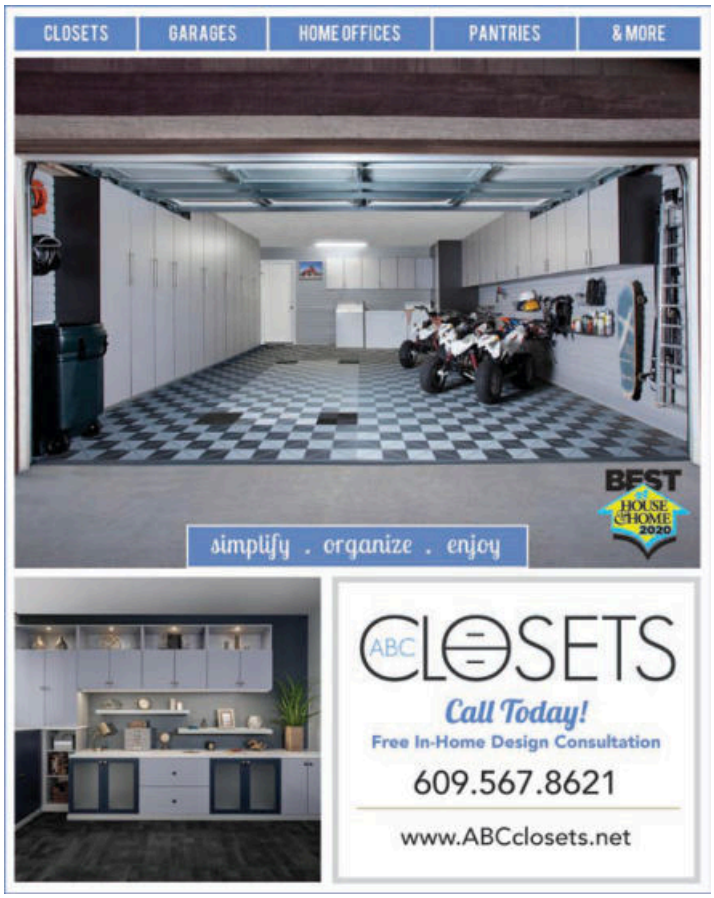

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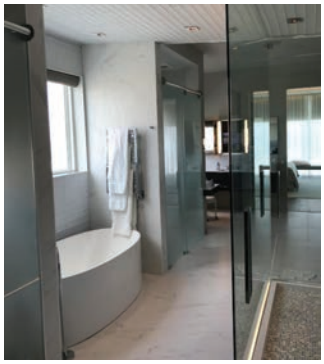

the space inviting for visitors. A powder room can also be a room to try some different design elements, such as wall-mounted faucets, vessel sinks or self-flushing toilets, according to Cerami.

"Powder rooms may have amenities that are more European, such as a toilet and bidet combination," he says. "We see things that are a little more unique in powder rooms and make them special. Wall treatments are also nice to do, depending on someone's style. We make these rooms more designer-oriented because all of our guests use them when they come over."

At the end of the day, whether it's a spa-like master bath or a stylish powder room, having a professional who can handle the entire project from start to finish will make for a pleasant experience.

"You may rip up a bathroom and find that you have five different problems you didn't expect," Eisele says. "You want somebody who has seen these issues, knows how to handle them and is going to be able to educate you through the process while not taking advantage of you or having to bring in someone else in the middle of the project. You want to be working with someone who is going to help you and guide you through every aspect of the job because it can be overwhelming." H&H

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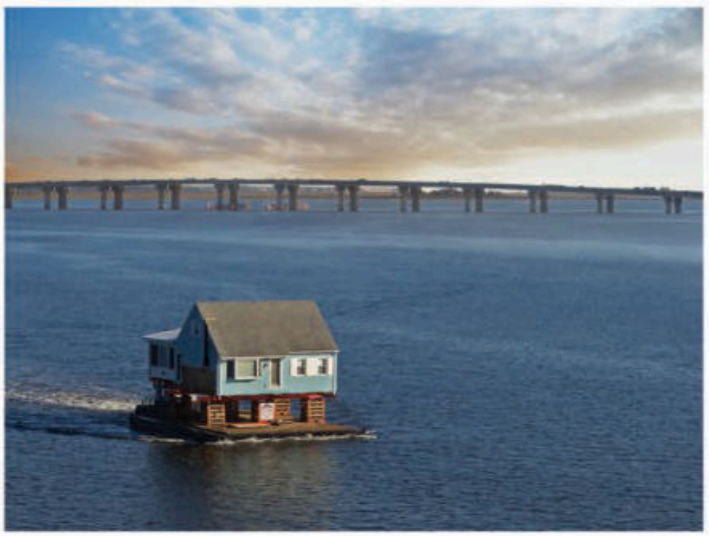

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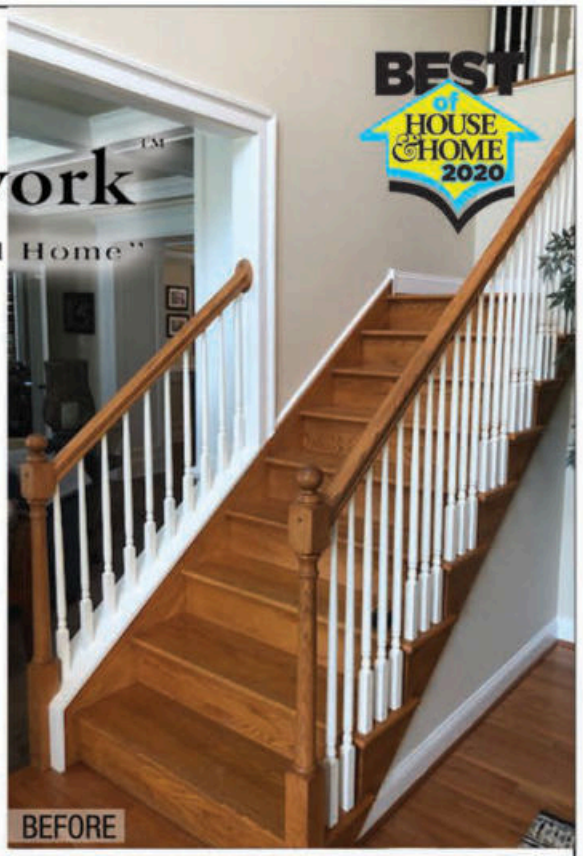

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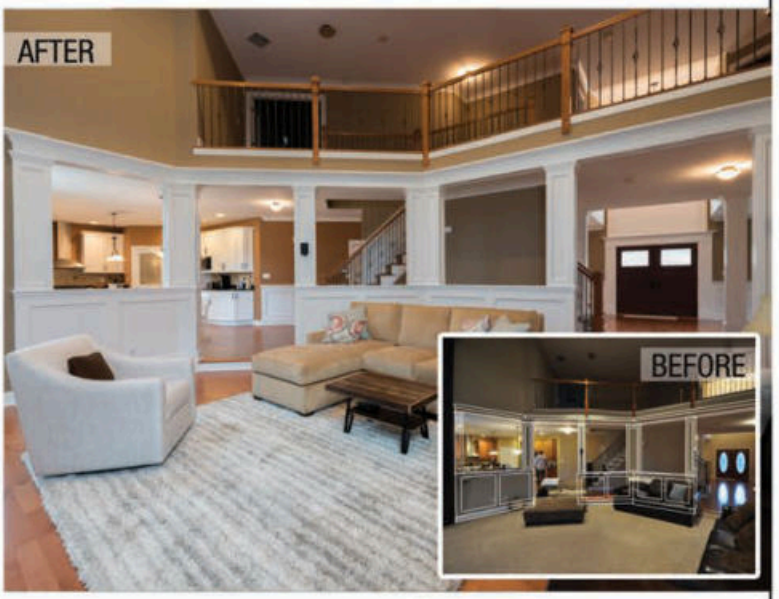

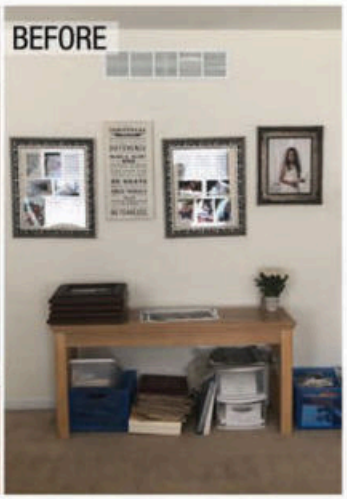

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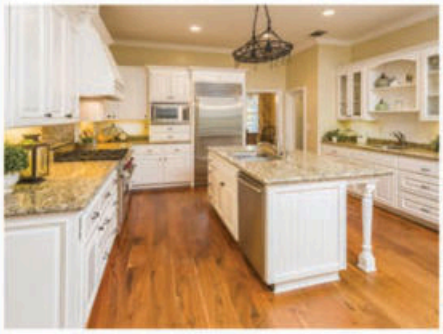
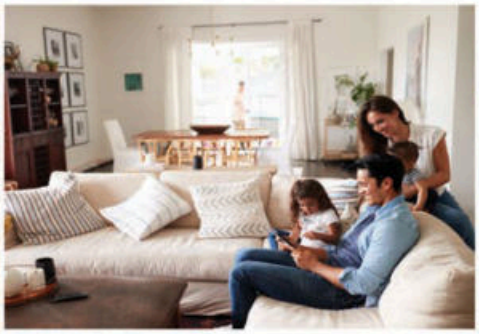

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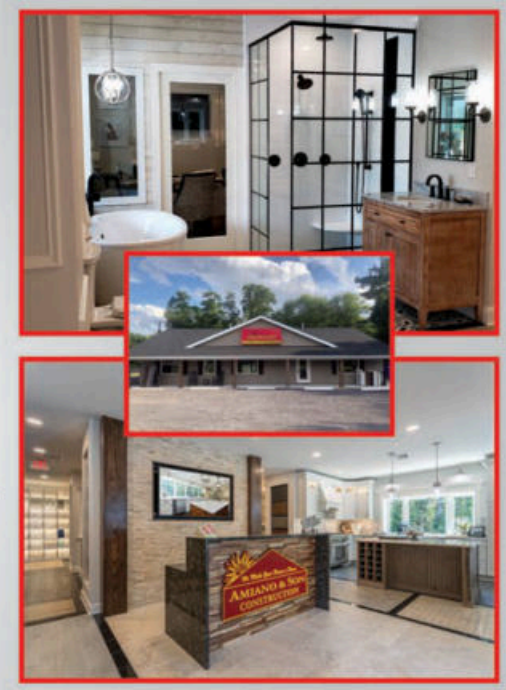

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H&H CLEANING

Careful Cleaning

COVID-19 has forced homeowners to be more vigilant about having a clean and safe home, and the experts we spoke with give tips on how to have your home disinfected and sanitized properly.

BY JULIE SHANNON

IN 2020, CLEANING, DISINFECTING AND SANITIZING BECAME PART OF JUST ABOUT EVERYONE'S EVERYDAY VOCABULARY. Thanks to the coronavirus, homeowners are now more vigilant and taking the necessary measures to disinfect and sanitize their home to get rid of airborne particles and viruses such as COVID-19.

The coronavirus has also changed the way homeowners think about how they clean their homes, especially when it comes to getting Shore homes ready for the season, as well as preparing week after week between rentals—forcing stricter

cleaning protocols at the Shore's rental properties. But what exactly should you do to keep your home clean and safe?

House & Home spoke with experts who discussed what you should consider installing in your home, what areas to pay attention to the most, and why you should hire a cleaning service.

"Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting—those are all words that have become common topics of conversation amongst family friends and coworkers," says Thomas DiNunzio, managing partner of Germ-Nix LLC. "Our homes are where we should feel shielded and protected from the outside world, but with the pandemic the threat has been brought into our homes. Keeping our homes clean and disinfected, and our families safe, has become a tougher job than routine cleaning and assigning chores."

Because of this, it's no surprise cleaning and disinfecting companies in our area have received several calls from homeowners inquiring about cleaning services.

"Inquiries for disinfection services have grown substantially since the start of the pandemic," says DiNunzio. "Our clients have gained an education about disinfection, some have had limited access to appropriate cleaning and disinfection tools at times, and many clients just need help keeping up."

Germ-Nix LLC is a health care-based disinfecting company that helps to kill bacteria, viruses and germs, and has transitioned to disinfecting homes as well.

"When it comes to disinfecting homes, we utilize the same approach used to disinfect health care facilities, whether it be an operating room, doctor's office or medical facility," DiNunzio says. "As a disinfecting company, we have not had to change what we do, we are just called upon much more often since the pandemic started in 2020."

DiNunzio says he finds homeowners are "most concerned about keeping a clean and disinfected home on a continual basis."

"It is hard to keep up at times and if you have a sick person at home, it is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to take extra precautions to clean and disinfect. It can be overwhelming without help," he says.

Rich Lorenzo, owner of A Shore Maid, says years of experience and using the most effective products available are a few reasons why hiring a cleaning company for your home is in your best interest.

"In my 26 years of house cleaning, I developed a lot of programs based on what I read

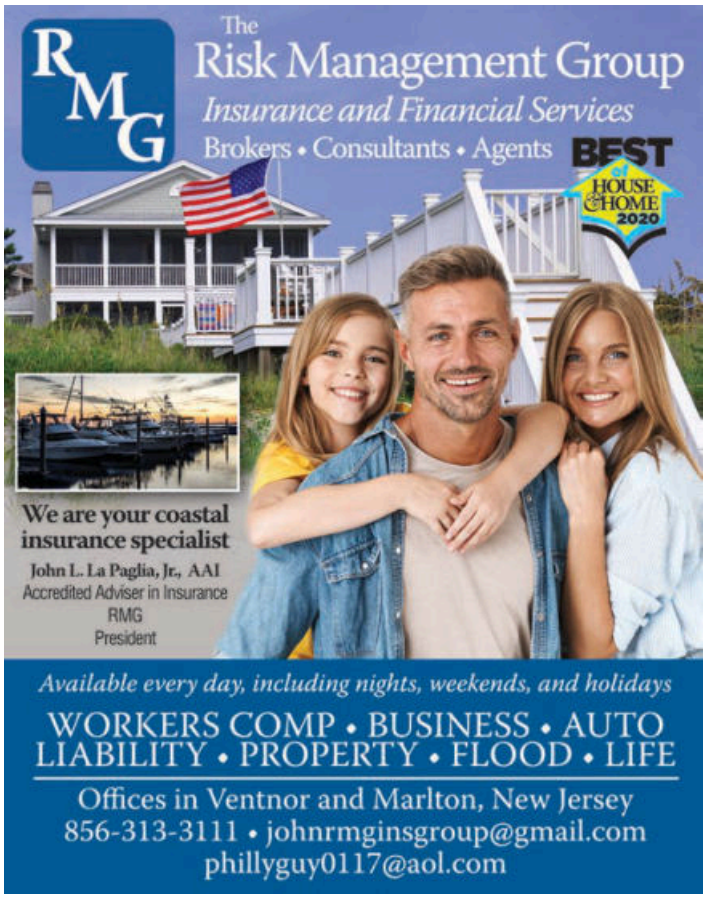

Image bottom right courtesy of COIT Cleaning and Restoration

Careful Cleaning

> **Homeowners are hiring companies with the tools and chemicals to disinfect their homes as a way to protect themselves and their families from the deadly infection."**
>
> —**THOMAS DiNUNZIO**, GERM-NIX

and learned," he says. "We have the right products, and it's not the peroxide you buy at the drugstore. I buy peroxide from a chemical manufacturer and it's highly effective. When you spray peroxide on any surface, in 20-30 seconds it will lift and all you have to do is wipe. It's extremely effective and quick."

"When it comes to COVID-19, it is time for the pros to disinfect your home and/or business," says Lori Topiel, co-owner, COIT Cleaning & Restoration. "We have been disinfecting homes and businesses for over 50 years. Our technicians are trained and certified, and proper disinfectants are required to kill the COVID-19 virus."

Topiel says there are quite a few things homeowners can do at home that are similar to what COIT does at its office.

"We have adopted a wipe in and wipe out policy in our office that homeowners can use," she says. "The first one in the office wipes down all high-touch points such as door knobs, door handles and light switches, and the opposite when we are leaving the office. An air purifier runs all night and weekly fogging is done on Fridays. HVAC air filters should be changed monthly using a high-filtering filter. If weather permits, open windows and restrict who is coming in.

"Some other tips you can follow at home are wash your hands, get your air ducts cleaned and change filters monthly and don't

share personal items like towels, dishes or bedding. Open windows, throw out clutter, frequently wipe down high-touch points, restrict who you are letting into your home."

"Using the appropriate products for cleaning and disinfecting is of utmost importance," says DiNunzio. "Change air filters on a regular basis. Increased hygiene practices of washing your hands frequently as well as disinfecting high-touch areas are not only important, but now necessary in an effort to keep your home safe from bacteria, germs and viruses."

Some of those high-touch points include door knobs, counters and table tops, light switches, shelves and racks, and bathroom fixtures and toilets. Companies have come up with unique ways to eliminate some of these high-touch points, such as door knobs. Alderfer Glass installs special door handles on existing and new doors.

"These handles are designed to be operated with a forearm or elbow to allow the opening of a door without use of the hands. This allows for the possibility of lower transmission through hand contact," says Ben Weaver, president of Alderfer Glass. "We have gotten good feedback on those that were installed. The urgency has abated somewhat as the timeframe of the pandemic has extended over the past year, but they seem to be popular throughout and will likely persist as habits change."

Lorenzo says when he cleans rental properties at the Shore, they take an extra step when it comes to cleaning these high-touch points.

"What we would do in addition to cleaning, after we would clean the rental homes on Saturday in between renters according to the Cape May County protocol, we did more than what we were required to do," he says. "We'd go around and re-spray all those surfaces—light switches, door knobs, door handles, cabinet handles, even the flush handle on toilet bowls," he says. "The idea is to let the peroxide dry on whatever we were spraying."

Protecting yourself, your family and your home from germs, bacteria and viruses has never been more important, and with the help of a cleaning and disinfecting company, you can rest assured knowing they will listen to your needs and take care of your home.

"Germs, bacteria, viruses and pathogens thrive in dirty environments," says DiNunzio. "Homeowners are hiring companies with the tools and chemicals to disinfect their homes as a way to protect themselves and their families from the deadly infection. We consult with all potential clients to understand their needs, review their processes and make recommendations before and after we visit the home. The days of routine cleaning, dusting, wiping and vacuuming the house are long gone." H&H

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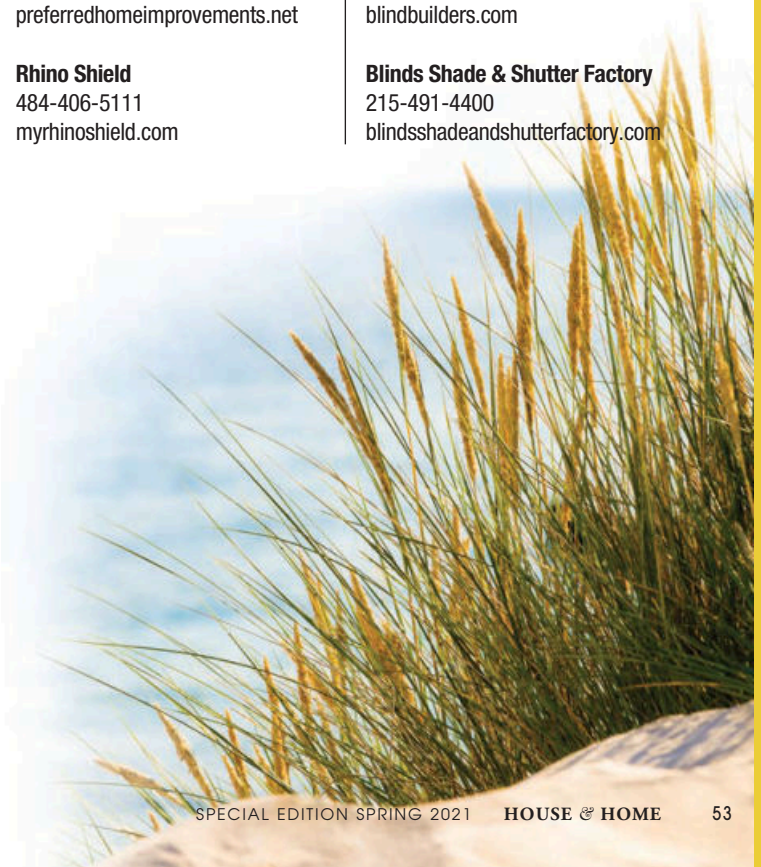

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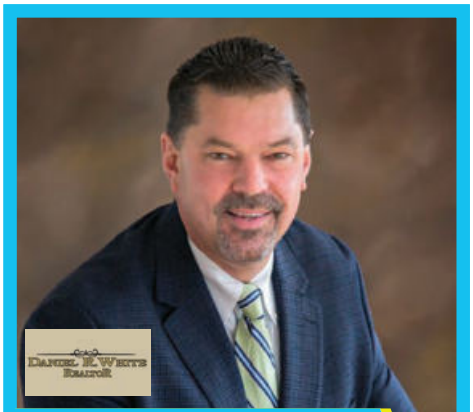

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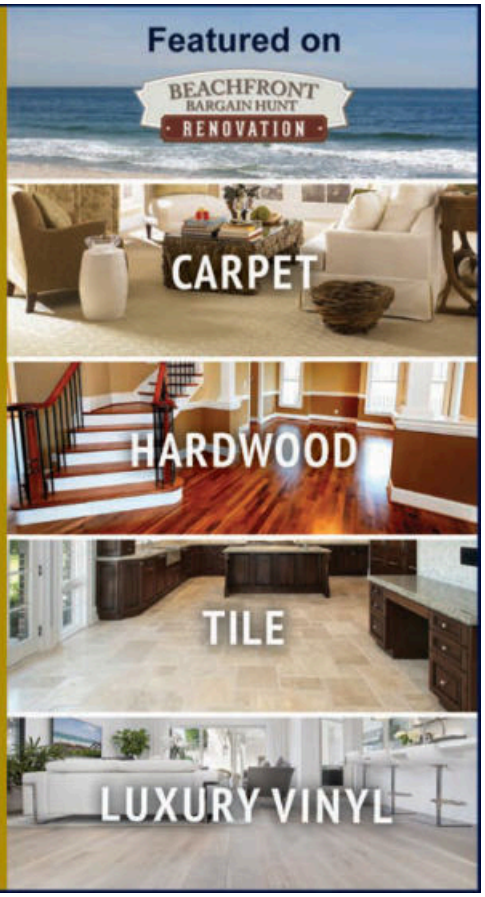

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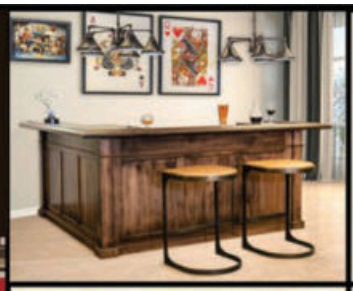

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