SHORE HOME

Volume 23, Issue 3

SPECIAL EDITION

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How your Shore home's exterior can make a real statement

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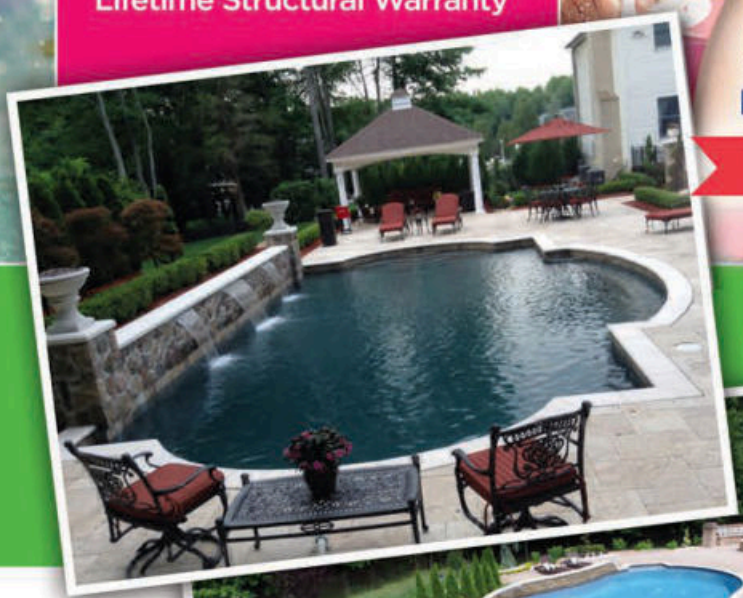
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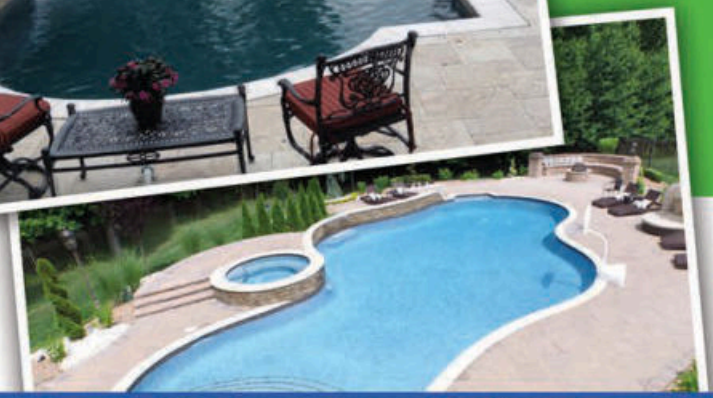
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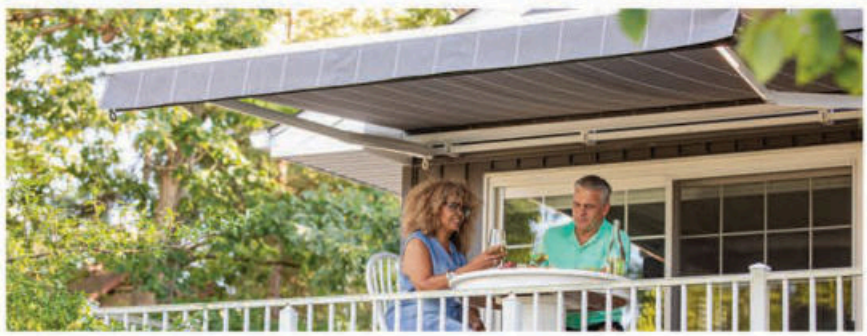
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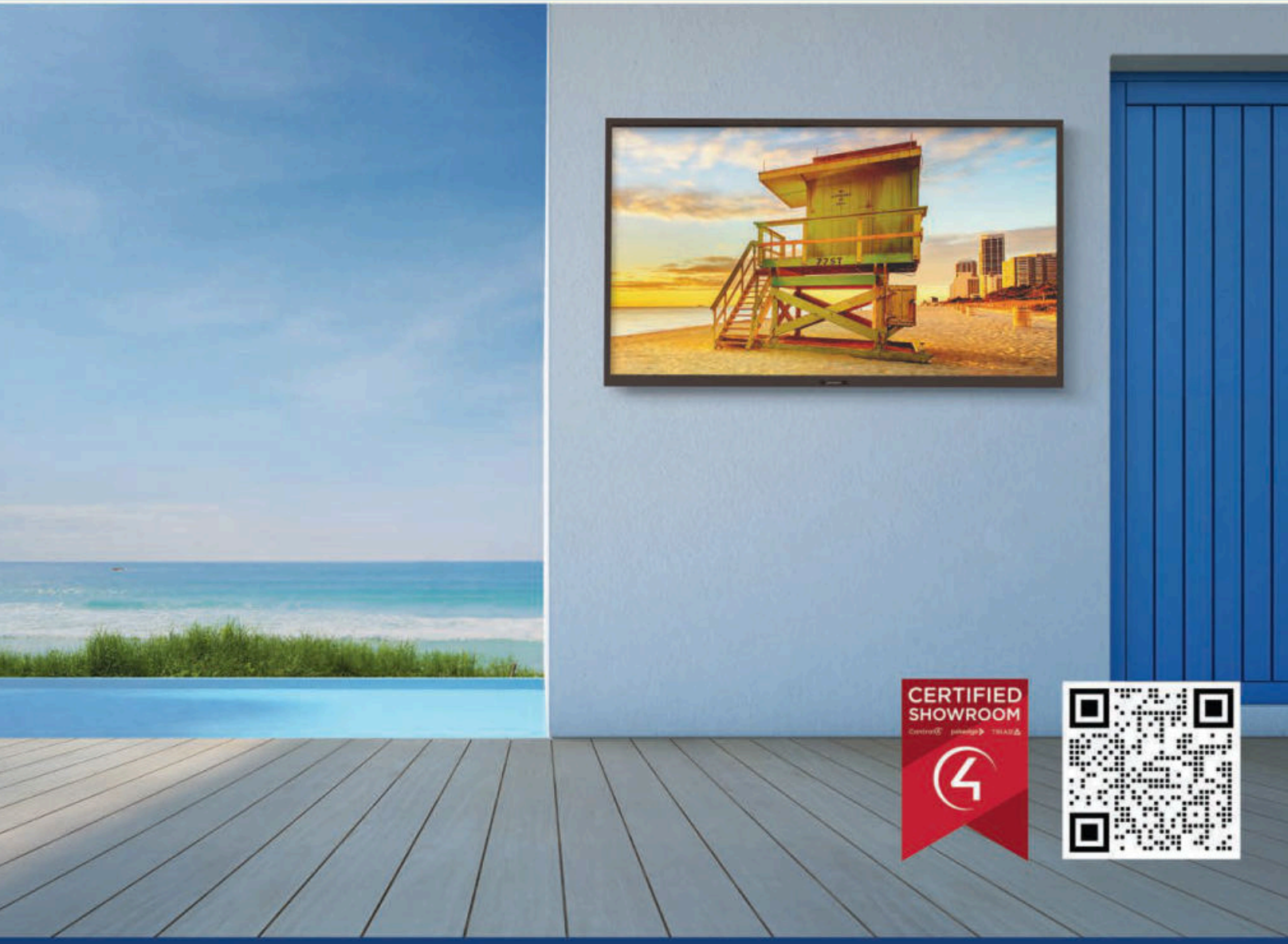


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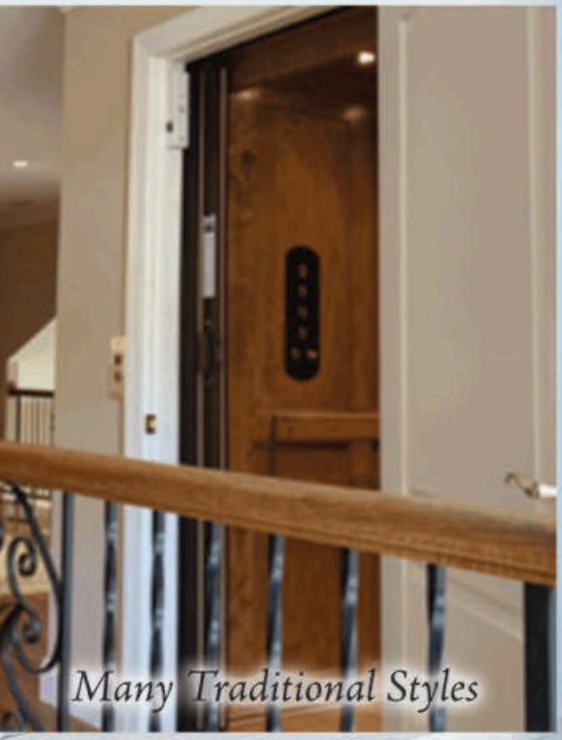
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Making a Statement

Shore homeowners are becoming bolder with their décor choices and looking to create stylish, personalized spaces.

BY MATT COSENTINO

There was a time when not much thought was put into the décor of a Shore house. After all, it was usually just used as a vacation home, not a primary residence, and days spent there were more about enjoying the beach and the outdoors than sitting inside. As a result, homeowners often went with the simplest solutions available, rarely got creative in their design aspects and ended up with interiors that resembled everyone else's on the block.

My, how things have changed. With remote work making longer stays down the Shore more feasible, people are more interested in creating a stylish space they feel comfortable in, and are working with experienced designers to bring the latest and greatest products on the market into their vacation homes.

"We're seeing a lot more people care more and more about making it personalized," says Kyle Eisele of Coast Tile & Marble Supply. "For a long time, everybody just wanted what was easy: They wanted to get it done so they could get into their home and start enjoying it. Nowadays, they're putting more time and care into making these selections because they're spending a lot more time at these vacation homes. It's not just an occasional weekend in the summer that they come down—they're spending Christmas down here and spending time throughout the offseason here, along with extended weekends in the summer. So they want it to be that oasis, that escape, the opportunity to get away from the everyday life and find that place where they can relax and call it their home away from home."

House & Home spoke to several local professionals about the recent trends in Shore interior décor, including accent pieces, appropriate furniture, the most sensible flooring options and the finishing touches that window treatments provide.



Photography this page and opposite page courtesy of Coast Tile & Marble Supply

KITCHENS AND BATHS

Coast Tile & Marble Supply is a third-generation family business that has been operating at the Shore since the 1960s. Eisele notes that the entire team has been energized by the recent push by homeowners to add exciting elements to their interiors.

"Probably in the last year, we've seen people come in wanting to make bolder choices and make things speak to their own personality and creativity, which opens up the whole showroom to us," he says. "We've spent a lot of time trying to bring in products that are more unique, different and exciting, and now we're finally seeing people who are more willing to use those looks and bring that home to life more. So it's been great for us and we're having a lot of fun working with these homeowners, designers and builders and coming up with something that is going to look different. They don't want it to look like their neighbors' anymore, they want it to speak to who they are and let their creativity show through in their designs."

Open concepts are quite common in Shore homes, many of which have kitchen and bar areas side by side as gathering places for friends and family. Homeowners are getting bolder in their choices for backsplashes and accent pieces in these areas, using materials such as tile, marble and natural stone in a variety of colors.

"We're seeing a big jump in the vibrant colors," Eisele says. "Because we're a beach town, we definitely play to the nautical tones, which are going to be your traditional blues and your softer pastel colors. The newest color schemes we're starting to see are greens, purples and pinks. People are definitely more willing to utilize that style to draw out the nautical theme in their kitchen and bar backsplashes."

That creativity carries over to the bathrooms, although since there are often multiple baths in a Shore home, they may have to pick and choose which ones to go all out in for budgetary reasons. Eisele says the master bathrooms and powder rooms are usually where homeowners devote most of their attention and dollars, followed by the kids' bathrooms and then toning it back in any additional baths. Whichever bathroom they are focusing on, there are options upon options.

"We have a two-story showroom and we probably have about 4,000 different products for them to choose from," Eisele says. "Each product can be combined with a variety of different looks to create an overall completely different vibe in each bathroom, so the possibilities are endless and they allow people to be creative. In our industry 25



"THEY WANT IT TO BE THAT OASIS, THAT ESCAPE, THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET AWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY LIFE AND FIND THAT PLACE WHERE THEY CAN RELAX AND CALL IT THEIR HOME AWAY FROM HOME."

Kyle Eisele
Coast Tile & Marble Supply

Making a Statement

years ago, you could pick between a handful of options. Nowadays, we could have 500 people walk in here and pick out something that's completely different. It's really a cool opportunity now for people to pick out something that is unique to them."

As for flooring, once again homeowners are no longer just relying on old standards but are branching out to stand apart from the crowd. "What's really fun is people are switching from that basic wood look to a variety of different larger formats, huge pieces of tile that have some character and texture and really speak to being unique," Eisele says.

He personally vouches for porcelain tile, which was a huge benefit in his own home when Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012.

"We got 27 inches of water in the house, and afterwards we just took a hose right to our porcelain floor and it looked like it did the day it was installed," he says. "From a durability and long-lasting perspective, you can't beat porcelain. There are thousands of different porcelain looks, so it's not like you're going to be limited to any options when you decide to go with a porcelain floor. When you're tracking sand and water off the beach and into the house, the easiest for care and maintenance is going to be a porcelain floor."



FURNISHING THE HOME

Therese Simon, a designer at Oskar Huber Furniture & Design's Long Beach Island location, shares Eisele's view that homeowners are spending more time in their Shore houses throughout the year, even hosting parties related to the holidays, weddings and milestone birthdays. She also has many clients who plan on one day retiring to these areas, so they want to create a space that is just like their primary homes with comfortable, high-end furniture.

Therefore, it's often a balancing act between choosing items that fit with a beach theme and those pieces that suit their overall style.



"Around this area, we get a mixture," Simon explains. "Some people say, 'I want to do coastal, but I don't want it to be kitschy. I want it to be a more sophisticated look, a more modern look.' Depending on the client, some people are going modern farmhouse, but the trend is definitely toward a more modern feel, cleaner lines, more minimalistic, less heavy on the accessories, but [using] bigger accessories: big, beautiful pictures, nice lamps, big vases, that type of thing. They're more statement pieces, and rugs are really important here too. They love a rug that expresses their personality and they tie it in with the furniture."

Shore homes often have unique footprints compared to other residences, and may have tiny nooks that can be filled with nautical bookcases, shelving, pouf tables or personal items brought from the primary residence, Simon adds.

With many different bedrooms to furnish, she says Oskar Huber clients often do a mixture of traditional bedroom sets with custom-made options from several Amish companies they partner with.

"People here tend to spend more on bedrooms now because they want quality, first of all, and also they want more choices," she says. "Where it used to be just white, now they want a distressed gray or something with different hardware or something that speaks to them and their style. So they're going more custom [in the primary bedrooms], but in the guest room that's not used too often they might use a bedroom set that doesn't cost as much."

The supply-chain issues from recent years are starting to be resolved, leading to fewer delays and better pricing for furniture. Simon says January is when preparation for the summer season really starts to pick up, with showrooms getting busier and busier in the months leading up to Memorial Day.

"I love every minute of it, even the crazy times, because you meet so many great, interesting people from all different walks of life," she says. "I love connecting with them, getting to know them, getting to know their style and filling that need for them. At the end of the process when their furniture is delivered, they end up loving it and they refer people because of that."

WINDOW TREATMENTS

DeSatnick's Window Fashions is celebrating its 50th year in business, and while the company will often travel to towns like Haddonfield, New Jersey, and Malvern, Pennsylvania, to work with loyal customers, the majority of its focus continues to be in the Shore towns of Cape May County. Owner/partner Chad DeSatnick, the son of the original owners, says window treatments of all styles are being used not only for homeowners spending more time at their vacation homes, but also as a way to attract renters in investment properties.

He says plantation shutters are among the most in-demand products because of the benefits they have in a coastal community.

"They're resistant to moisture, they're resistant to hot and cold temperature fluctuations, they're super easy to clean and they're durable," DeSatnick explains. "We say that once you install plantation shutters, you don't have to worry about another window treatment for the life of the

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window. It's not necessarily the style that 100% of the clients like, but when people start weighing out their options, they realize it's something that can give them privacy, light protection and insulation, and that plantation shutters are a great value for windows."

Of course, there are plenty of other options as well, and automation is always popular and available for most selections. "We use Silhouettes, which are sort of a blind and shade in one," he adds. "It gives you the option to roll the shade down, but it also has louvers that you can open and close. We do a lot of woven-wood shades that have bamboo, matchstick and hemp material options. We also have access to Roman shades, so people will pick out specific material and we can make some Roman shades or custom draperies."

The company is an authorized showcase dealer for Hunter Douglas, one of the leading names in the industry, and DeSatnick says that is helpful to clients not only because of the wide variety of styles available, but also because the products are made in the U.S., so if parts or repairs are needed, it's a quick turnaround time. However, they work with other manufacturers as well, especially in addressing unique window shapes that can often be found in Shore homes.

"It's actually interesting because a lot of times architects will design houses and they'll have an oval window in the master bedroom that faces east," DeSatnick says. "What people don't realize is once they get in the house, that oval window—which looks awesome aesthetically—has sun coming in at first light. So it looks great, but functionally what are you supposed to do to cover this window, because you at least want the ability for privacy or light protection. So we absolutely deal with specialty shapes and a lot of the manufacturers we work with have options, whether they're remote-controlled, manual or fixed. We can accommodate any type of window and there are certainly a variety of windows available in the market right now."

DeSatnick's can also be of assistance for any style of home, and it's rewarding to go from town to town or neighborhood to neighborhood and help bring a client's vision to life.

"I think that's the appeal for me to continue in the business," DeSatnick says. "You have the Southern California-style modern homes, the Nantucket-style beach cottages, and then you have the Victorian homes that were built 200-plus years ago. It's really cool to be able to go into these people's homes and see what they have done to modernize a 200-year-old home while also keeping the integrity and the look. A lot of times you see the outside of the house and they've used cedar shakes and they've painted it the right color for the Historic Preservation Committee in Cape May, but then you go in and there's modern-style tile or a kitchen that has Viking [appliances]. It's cool to see all the different styles that people choose from, and to help them out with what they need." H&H

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Kyle Staffa, Owner

Many homeowners, whether they are planning to move or stay long-term, are looking for new ways to boost their curb appeal. Staffa Stone owner Kyle Staffa has helped countless homeowners elevate their homes' visual presence in a variety of ways—in fact, he states that, on average in the New Jersey market, owners can expect to see an 8-12% uptick in home value just from an improved curb appeal alone. Not only that, but updating your backyard landscaping can be a boost to your overall property value, as well.

House & Home magazine spoke with Staffa to see what new and exciting updates homeowners are looking for to freshen up their property's appearance and take its curb appeal to the next level.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CURB-APPEAL PROJECTS HOMEOWNERS ARE REACHING OUT FOR?

Lately, the landscape of our business has changed a little bit. We are seeing all sorts of different curb appeal projects: There are projects that are very extensive that include paver driveways with intricate inlays, to basic decorative stone driveways with bluestone curbing.

One of the biggest ideas homeowners are doing is dressing up the foundations of their homes using veneer stone or brick. This is a timeless look. Raised flower beds using a nice Unilock estate wall system to give the home a three-dimensional approach. This draws the eye to a new focal point. These walls look exceptional when you add in the landscape lighting.



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Driveways can be a true statement piece to the home. What many people don't understand is all driveways require some sort of maintenance. Asphalt requires seal coating every other year to keep it looking fresh. In the Northeast, concrete must have an expansion joint for freeze/thaw factor. There is one major disadvantage with concrete, and that is cracking and spalding. Having an eye-popping paver driveway can be as little or as much maintenance as you choose. You can seal them if you choose, or you can choose an inline sealed paver. Unilock is making a few different pavers that are already pre-sealed. This means it prevents staining from your tires, motor oil and other organic materials, eliminating the need for yearly maintenance.



WHAT SHOULD A HOMEOWNER LOOK FOR IN A BACKYARD OUTDOOR SPACE?

When homeowners are looking to plan their outdoor living oasis, there needs to be some basic questions asked. A few of the considerations are: What are your needs and wants? What do you need now and what do you see happening with the space for the future? There needs to be a comprehensive look into the layout of property. Major issues can be averted by using a good designer who will shoot grade elevations to help with water runoff.

WHAT ARE NEW OUTDOOR TRENDS FOR POOLSCAPING THAT HOMEOWNERS ARE RAVING ABOUT?

When we move from the front yard landscaping to the backyard poolscaping, there are many things to consider. What type of pool coping should I use? What pavers should I use that won't get hot?

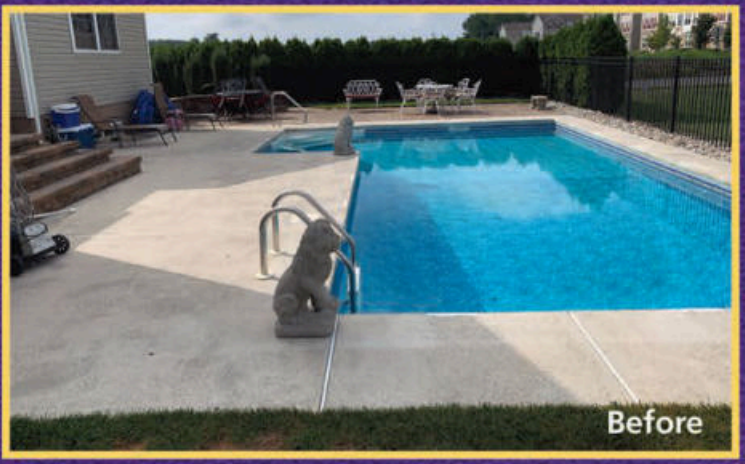
These are just the two most common we hear when walking homeowners around our display. Unilock is the only paver manufacturer that produces a solar reflect hardscape product. This helps keep the summer heat from burning the bottom of your feet. Many of the pools we see now are salt water, so we also try to recommend a dense product that will not allow the salt to eat away at the coping and patio.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO START CONSIDERING LANDSCAPE PROJECTS?

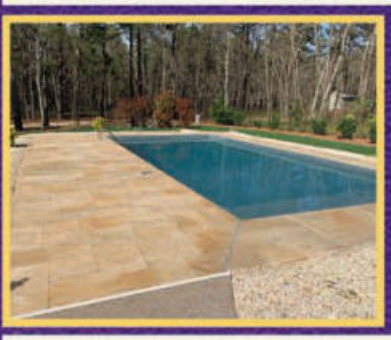
Wintertime is the best time to start thinking about your landscape projects. First off, if you have to hire a contractor or a designer you will want to get on the schedule sooner rather than later. Secondly, many of the hardscape products are in good supply now but, as spring approaches, these manufacturers have a hard time keeping up. H&H

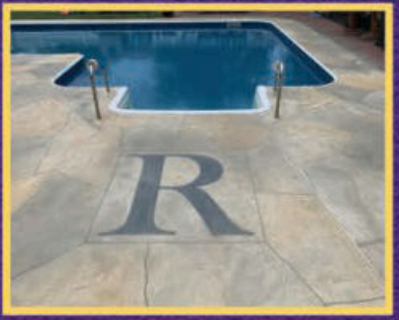
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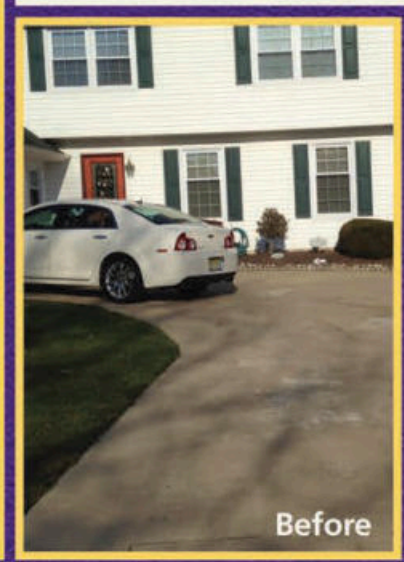
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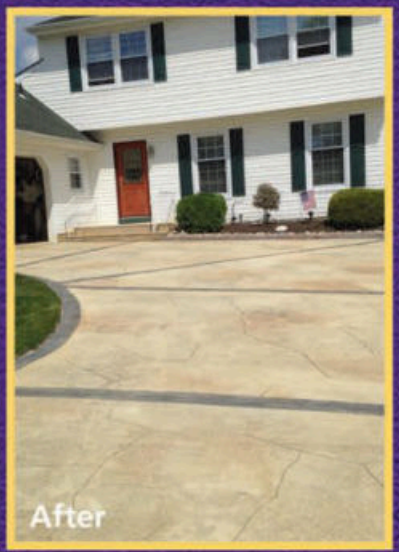






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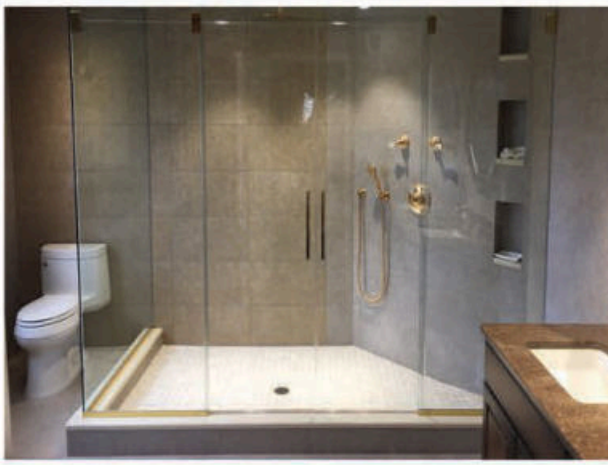
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aquaHALT by Water Automation

WATER DAMAGE AFFECTS NEARLY 14,000 PEOPLE IN THE U.S EVERY DAY AND RESEARCH SHOWS THAT OVERFLOWING TOILETS, CLOGGED TOILETS, FAULTY FILL VALVES, AGED GASKETS AND FAILING PLASTIC PARTS HAVE CAUSED OVER HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN REPAIRS. That could mean anything from new flooring to new Sheetrock, new finishes, mold remediation—and possibly even owner displacement while repairs are ongoing. All of this could lead to rising insurance premiums and unnecessary stress for homeowners and tenants.

There are several ways to avoid water damage, however, and aquaHALT is one of the most affordable and effective water sensors on the market. It is designed and patented to help lower insurance premiums and prevent water damage within your home, rental, condominium, co-op or investment property.

House & Home spoke with aquaHALT founder Greg Capizzi to learn more about the importance of installing a leak detection system.





WHAT DOES AQUAHALT PROVIDE TO ITS CONSUMERS?



Greg Capizzi, aquaHALT founder

aquaHALT is the first battery-operated, automatic shut-off valve for toilet bowls. When water is detected around the toilet bowl, the aquaHALT will close the water supply valve at the source without disrupting the rest of the home, building or fixtures in the unit.

It provides a sense of assurance and it is a top-quality product. We provide a product that has everything you need and if water is detected on the floor, the source is turned off immediately. It is that simple. aquaHALT was designed to install it and forget about it. With our busy lifestyles, we do not need another app to worry about regarding the possibility of a leak.

CAN AQUAHALT BE INSTALLED ON OTHER FIXTURES IN THE HOUSE?

aquaHALT was designed and patented specifically for toilet bowls. Current research shows that most water leaks in a household are from toilet floods and/or washing machines that do not have a water sensor device installed. Washing machines have a local power source, so it makes the most sense to have a hardwired electronic device installed for a washing machine. Since toilet bowls do not have a local power source, we wanted to provide a battery-operated device that could work for such an application.

HOW DOES AQUAHALT COMPARE TO OTHER WATER DETECTION SYSTEMS?

There are a couple of different water-sensing devices out there, which all operate in their own function. There are water-sensing devices that are installed on the main water lines for your home. Once activated they turn off the entire house. Such devices are costly and sometimes come with a yearly subscription since they are connected to an app for your phone. Most are Wi-Fi based and communication could be an issue since Wi-Fi is not a stable source for detecting leaks.

Water-sensing devices that are Wi-Fi based only send a notification. These systems cost much less, and have battery-operated sensors that are placed all over the house. Once activated they send a signal to the main unit, in turn sending an alert. So, these systems are sending you an alert while water is constantly flowing, creating more and more damage. Hopefully, you even get that alert since Wi-Fi is not a stable source for communicating.



aquaHALT is a DIY water-sensing device since a plumber or electrician is not required. It is battery operated and gets installed right behind the toilet bowl, below the toilet tank. The device can be installed in such a way that it is barely seen upon approach. It has a hardwired sensor to ensure a leak will be detected and stopped. It is non-invasive and is installed with 3M double-sided tape. Once the device is activated it will beep until it is physically reset. The device comes with all that is needed—an extra stainless steel water line, wired sensor and batteries. H&H



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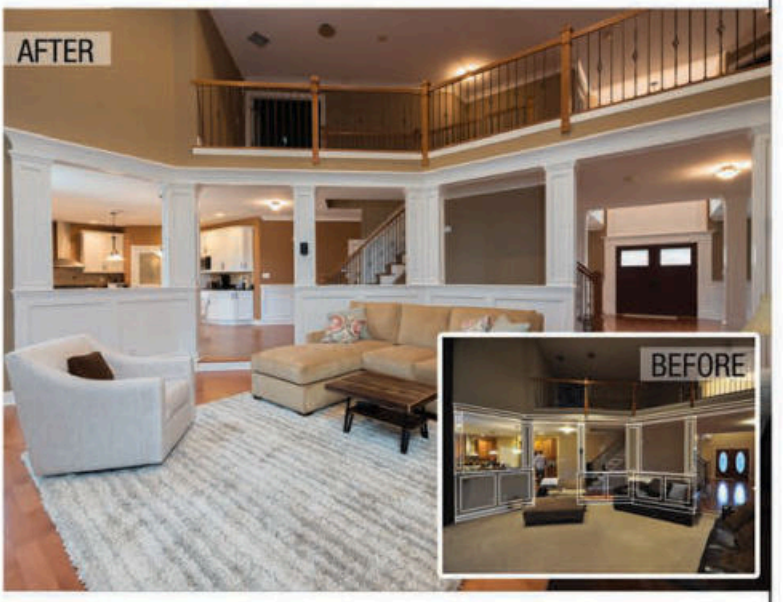
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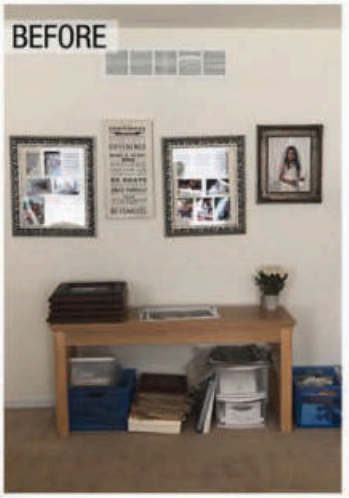
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An Outside View of Things

PROTECTING YOUR SHORE HOME'S EXTERIOR SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF YOUR SEASONAL CHECKLIST.

By Peter Proko

FOR MANY FOLKS, the Shore is their home away from home. A place to escape from the doldrums of everyday life and enjoy time with their loved ones as they dip their toes in the sand and soak up the sun. And with folks spending more and more time at their favorite seaside retreat, it's become increasingly important to bring all the comforts of home along with them.

But while homeowners may have recently installed new kitchens, laid down new flooring or added touches of décor to enhance the inside of the house, it's equally important to be mindful of the outside of the home as well. After all, being exposed to the Shore's elements—from the salt air to heavy winds and driving rains—can take its toll and so protecting your property's exterior is of the utmost importance.

These days, with the Shore's landscape lined with decades-old rancher homes sitting alongside sprawling, modern multi-story properties, there's no singular way to combat the elements since every home has different needs. But one thing that is clear is that without the proper planning, homeowners could be left to deal with the damage and quickly find themselves faced with several costly repairs.

"With all the different construction methods used over the years, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges many homeowners face down at the Shore with trying to protect their investment," says Chuck Rood, construction operations manager with Seashore Construction. "It's critical that they are working together with their contractor of choice and that price should never be the sole determination of that process."

Steve Hauck, president of SJ Hauck Construction, says a good place to start is by choosing the right materials. While folks may gravitate toward certain looks or products, the truth is the Shore's environment may not be conducive to their longevity.

"When talking about exteriors, you want to try and avoid wood products. Instead, you want to use a low-maintenance material," Hauck says. "[For instance,] when you talk about soffits, you'll see people will use actual mahogany wood; the weather at the Shore is really going to put a hurting on that quickly. Instead, there's a material called Versatex; it's a vinyl product that looks exactly like mahogany wood."

Hauck also advises against things like steel garage doors as the metal will rust over time. That also goes for nails used in projects elsewhere along the perimeter of the home, from the porch to the back deck. "Anything steel needs to be stainless steel or at a minimum it needs to be galvanized," he adds.

UP ON THE ROOF

Perhaps the most important exterior protection one can focus on is the roof. And there's much more involved than just choosing the color you think gives your home greater curb appeal. Everything from a high-quality, protective underlayment to the proper trim can be just as important.

But when it comes to the cosmetic side of choosing a new roof, there are options. Adam Parnes, vice president of marketing with Global Home Improvement, says the ideal approach for any homeowner is to match aesthetics with performance.

"The goal is to have a durable exterior that also adds to the home's curb appeal and

summer vibe. Due to high winds, asphalt roofs may require additional maintenance. We recommend metal roofing for the longest- lasting, maintenance-free solution," says Parnes.

While standard seam metal roofing has grown in popularity in the past 10-15 years, asphalt shingles remain the most prevalent choice due to their affordability and long-standing benefits. Jeff Kay, president and CEO of East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows, is quick to point out that not all shingles are created equal.

"When it comes to roofing specifically, the challenges in that environment are the wind and the rain. What happens if you don't install a proper roofing system is that you're almost guaranteed to run into leaks and have problems," says Kay. "It depends on what type of asphalt shingles you use and how they are installed. And the reason that matters is the wind. The wind takes a toll on anything, but if you use a low-quality asphalt shingle, it will not last down the Shore."

As more folks look to replace their old three-tab shingles with new architectural shingles, Kay recommends installing products made by GAF, North America's largest shingle manufacturer, which come with a 50-year warranty and are considered the industry standard today.

And for those looking to combine the look of both metal and shingle roofing, there are options according to Rood. "Using the metal on smaller, decorative areas, such as entryways and porches, can definitely add a nice look to the exterior for a reasonable cost vs. installing on a whole roof."

A CLEARER VIEW

Another key area to pay attention to when considering a Shore home's exterior are the windows. Cheaper, builder-grade windows may be friendlier on the wallet, but you will lose things like energy efficiency and increased functionality. You'll also want to look for specially rated windows that will stand up to the elements now and well into the future.

"Windows are pretty important, and something to consider is the DP rating. Standard windows come with a DP rating of 30, the ones we sell are 50—they are hurricane rated. When you have the wind and those extreme elements, you want something that is rated to deal with that stuff," Kay says, adding that the installation and insulation of the windows, as well as the flashing details are other key areas to pay attention to.

With so many options available, it's best to do a little homework to get a better understanding of what's out there and know that while cost is certainly worth considering, it shouldn't be the overriding factor in helping you make your decision.

"A good quality manufacturer of the products is the key here," Rood says. "While you may be tempted to get a cheaper big box product that has a similar style, the construction of the products is usually much different."

EXAMINING THE REST OF THE EXTERIOR

Elsewhere on the home's exterior, there have been great improvements over the years in vinyl siding and its ability to withstand extreme weather conditions. And some homeowners are getting creative, adding accents and different facets to make their property stand out. This could mean using cedar shake on the dormer of a house or maybe using board and batten where strips of wood molding are placed over the seams of wide boards.

"It's more about the design and the textures than it is about the colors right now," Kay says. "Homeowners will typically contrast the roof and the siding, there's a lot of designing that goes into it."

Bold color choices may seem appealing for your Shore home, but Parnes feels it's best to strike a balance between wanting something that pops and something that is practical.

"You have to be careful when choosing dark, vibrant colors be-





cause the salt air can cause fading over time. Pastels are great options for standing out and blending in at the same time," Parnes says.

Rood has noticed a trend of folks going with different, accenting styles of siding in more conservative colors to give a home a timeless look.

"Highlighting certain areas of a house's architectural design elements adds to the character of the home without using bold, loud colors. I think that adds more value and curb appeal at the end of the day," he says.

Gutter systems are also crucial in helping protect one's home. Because roofs are not waterproof, gutters play the role of catching the water that runs down the shingles and directing it. If the water were to pour directly onto the ground below due to faulty gutters, over the course of time the ground surrounding the foundation would get soft and start to sink.

"You'll see cracks in the foundation, basements get wet and then you get a bug infestation. It's a slippery slope and the longer you go without proper gutters, the worse it is," says Kay.

A HIGHER GROUND

One of the more common problems homeowners at the Shore are faced with is flooding. Ever since Hurricane Sandy, there has been a large increase of homes along the coast being raised up higher in an effort to avoid water penetrating the home and causing significant damage.

Home elevation has been a major part of Hauck's business for years and he says the current demand is high as folks look to raise older homes or are tearing down properties to build a newer residence that will sit up higher off the ground.

"Home elevation protects against flooding, but also the wind because it's put on a stronger foundation, one that can handle hydrostatic and hydrodynamic pressure," says Hauck.

With that being said, it's apparent there are lots of things to consider when looking to protect your Shore home against extreme conditions. But with the right planning and the guidance of a trusted contractor, you can increase safeguards while also improving both the appearance and functionality.

"Most homeowners need to be educated and aware of how the home's exterior envelope—roofing, siding, windows, doors, gutters, etc.—must work together as a system so that they are all in concert with each other," says Rood. **H&H**

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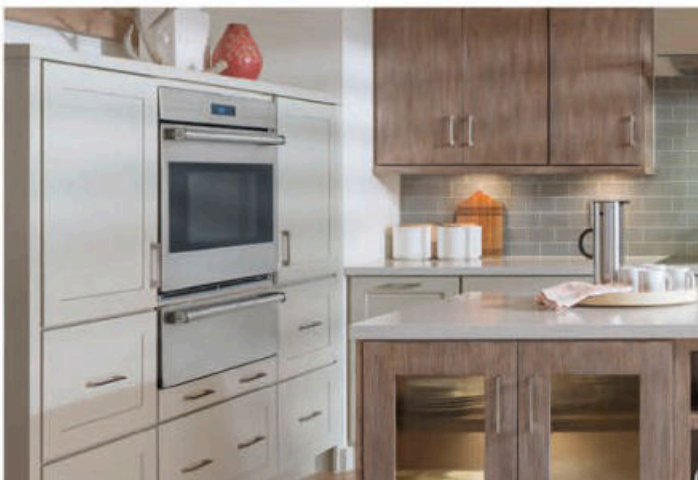
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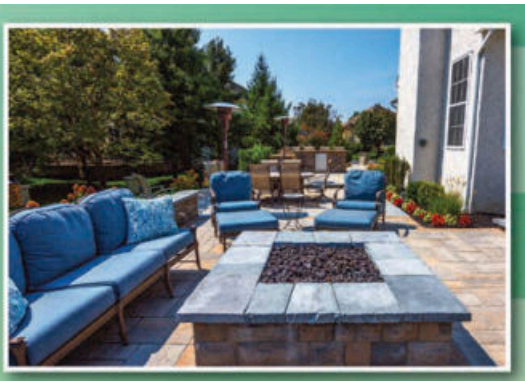
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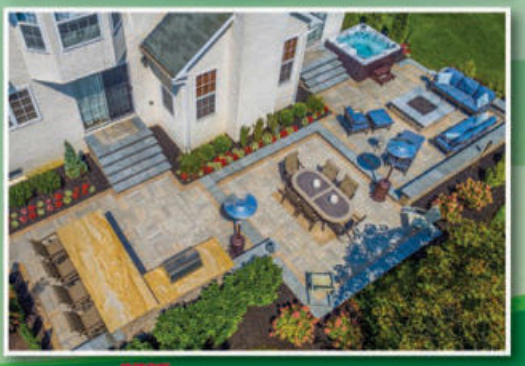
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Whether you're shopping for a new table lamp or looking to overhaul an entire room's lighting configuration, the area's design experts know how to navigate your wealth of options.

by **MADELEINE MACCAR**

Let There Be Light

NOTHING CAN CREATE DEPTH, MOODS AND ACCENTS QUITE LIKE SOME EXPERTLY ARRANGED AND SELECTED LIGHTING OPTIONS DO, and nothing can tie a room together quite like a light source that marries form and function by doubling as a statement piece, focal point or conversational element that lights up a room—both literally and figuratively.

With HGTV, social media and even others' homes all being sources of infinite inspiration to homeowners looking to freshen up their living spaces, to say nothing of all the ways lighting options have evolved in just the past decade alone, there's a veritable array of options available to those looking to make their interiors pop with some new or updated bulbs, lamps, overhead lights, recessed fixtures, sconces, chandeliers, pendant lights, track lighting and more. But all those possibilities can be a little daunting to take in, which is why *House & Home* turned to the professionals to shine some light on the topic.

Designing Around Variables

Like every successful interior redesign or refresh, it's crucial to take into account all the individual elements at play, like how a space is used, the overall design theme of a home, a room's spatial and technical limitations, and the client's budget and goals, just to name a few. These aren't just considerations that exist in a bubble, however, and need to be examined both on their own and as complementary aspects either playing off or impacting one another.

And while the experts are here to help, they emphasize that every project is informed by the homeowner's vision and space, as they're the ones who'll have to live with the end result.

"It all comes down to the project," explains Mike Noon, showroom manager for Billows Electric Supply Company. "If it's a new build or a complete remodel, we're seeing more of that recessed lighting plus the focal point: The recessed lighting will get you your everyday lighting and then that focal point will be the artwork, per se, of the room. If it's somebody that's just replacing a regular light, we don't really talk about recessed lighting because recessed lighting is an undertaking, it's not something that you can just add to a room without doing some major work."

Knowing all the options and having the pros offer their guidance on how to best mix and match for the desired effect is one way lighting experts are helping their clients stay true to their tastes while dabbling in contemporary trends. With the popularity and flexibility of layered lighting utilizing various sources to achieve a well-lit and visually balanced space, there are plenty of ways to bring that trend to life at any price point and with a variety of illumination configurations.

"It all depends on the individual," agrees Scott Fenton, Denney Electric Supply's regional showroom manager. "Price is a big thing, and so is their style. You might see a dining-room chandelier—or two, since some people who have long farmhouse tables like to put two chandeliers over them—and they also will put some recessed lighting around the perimeter, and then there's also cove lighting involved in that, so that's considered your layered lighting."

Relying on a combination of fixtures helps to ensure that a room's dimensionality, mood and degree of illumination can be endlessly adjusted and personalized for all manners of household needs.

"With layered lighting, it is all about the different lightning," Fenton says. "You can get dinner lighting out of it, you can get mood lighting out of it, you can get clean-up lighting out of it. It's all there."

Today's Trends

While layered lighting remains an in-demand end result, the design aspect that elegantly appointed light fixtures can bring to any project means they should not be overlooked as either accent pieces or as objects with the potential to become a focal point themselves.

"Right now, we're seeing a lot of mixed metals, not just everything brushed nickel," Noon observes. "That's a really big trend we've been seeing come out of last year and going into this year."

And while contemporary eclecticism is certainly an easy way for a homeowner to bring all of their tastes to one room without overwhelming it, the grand statement that a chandelier can make is having something of a renaissance these days.

"As far as chandeliers go, people are going back to that focal point," continues Noon. "People are looking for that piece that's really going to bring the eye right to that lighting."

Brightening up areas that once suffered from insufficient lighting is the name of the game for many, and has yielded a trend that the Denney team incorporated into their showroom displays.

"Under-cabinet lighting is one of the hottest things out there right now—everybody wants it," adds Fenton. "We have displays in all of our showrooms that show the differences in it. You can dim it all the way down, or you can raise it all the way up to get that bright, white-blueish light."

To further prove that trends can be tweaked to match every taste, Fenton says that "everything is LED right now," thanks to tremendous strides in the variety and intensity of LED colors and lumens.

He continues: "In the past 10 years, it's really changed big-time. Some people still think of LED as that blue light it was when it first came out, but now you can get all kinds of lighting levels from it."

Indeed, gone are the days of "cold, harsh" LED lighting, as Noon has also seen the energy-efficient lighting undergo a revolution of sorts in recent years.

"LED is very popular right now," he affirms. "What's nice about LED is that it's less energy, so the bulbs last a lot longer. You're not replacing bulbs every six, eight months: They last for several thousand hours of lighting, and there's all kind of color tones available."

And, of course, luxury pieces are always in style and bring with them a timelessness that matches their master-craftsman durability.

"I've been bringing in a variety of styles ranging from the most basic to the more upscale so there's something for everyone," says Fenton. "There's one company we deal with in Vermont, and they basically hand-forge everything they make: They work their magic with chandeliers, with ball sconces, with everything."

Illuminating Expert Insights

While both client taste and the type of lighting a room can sustain remain the primary drivers of where a lighting project goes, making time to not only educate but also have a conversation with customers is paramount for successful communication from concept to completion.

"Most people come in and know what they're looking for, whether it's a dining room chandelier, a kitchen light or table lamps with floor lamps to match, and it's up to us to help them find that item," Fenton notes. "Between talking with them about the overall design they want to accomplish and dealing with a good 100 manufacturers, we can find anybody almost anything they're looking for."

Working one-on-one with each client to deliver a final result that reflects their individual taste while tailoring a light-design element to a room's size, aesthetic and purpose is a surefire way to ensure a harmonious home-lighting design that the customer loves.

"The trends are what's getting them in the door, and then it really comes down to their personal taste," says Noon. "We do this every day, and we use our expertise to build client trust as we help them balance that functional versus decorative part of lighting." H&H

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How many years have you been in business or in this industry?
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What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from competitors?
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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.

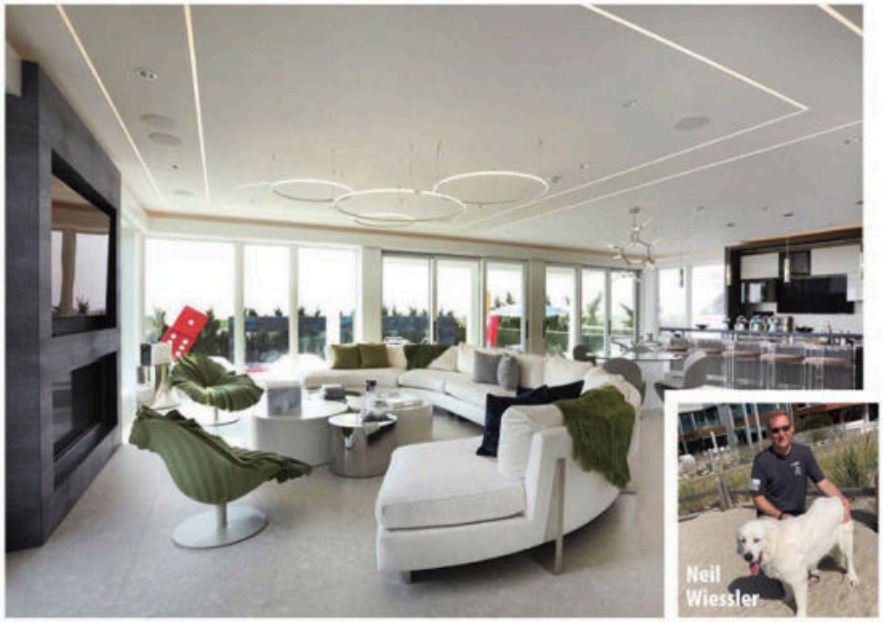
What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?
Seventy percent of our crew is family, the other 30 percent is our extended family. I work every day in a pleasant atmosphere where everyone's goal is to keep The Cabinet Shop successful not only now, but also in the future.

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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What keeps you motivated every day to do the work that you do?
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What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
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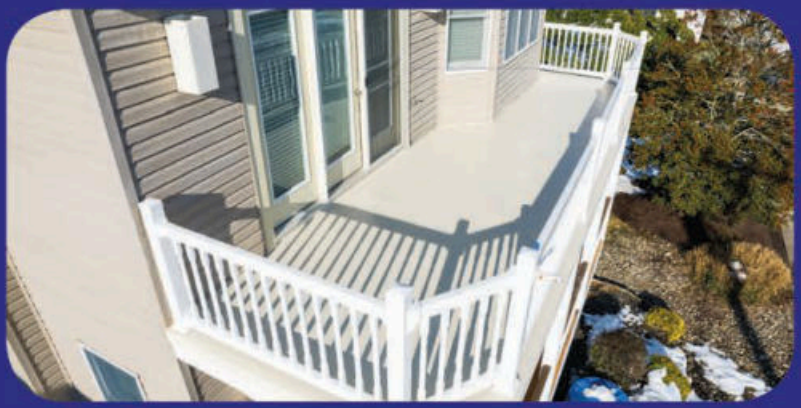
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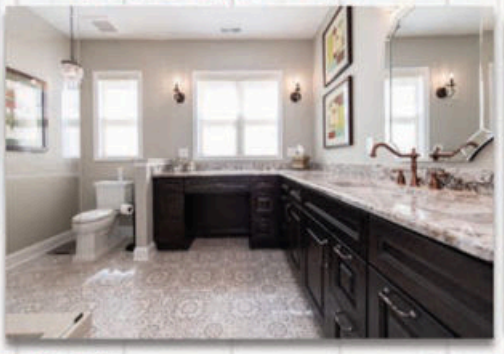
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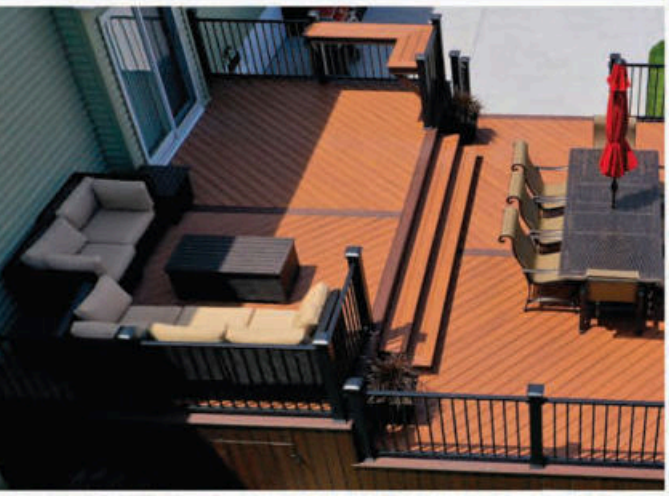
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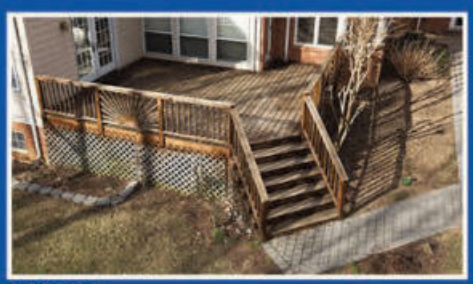




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