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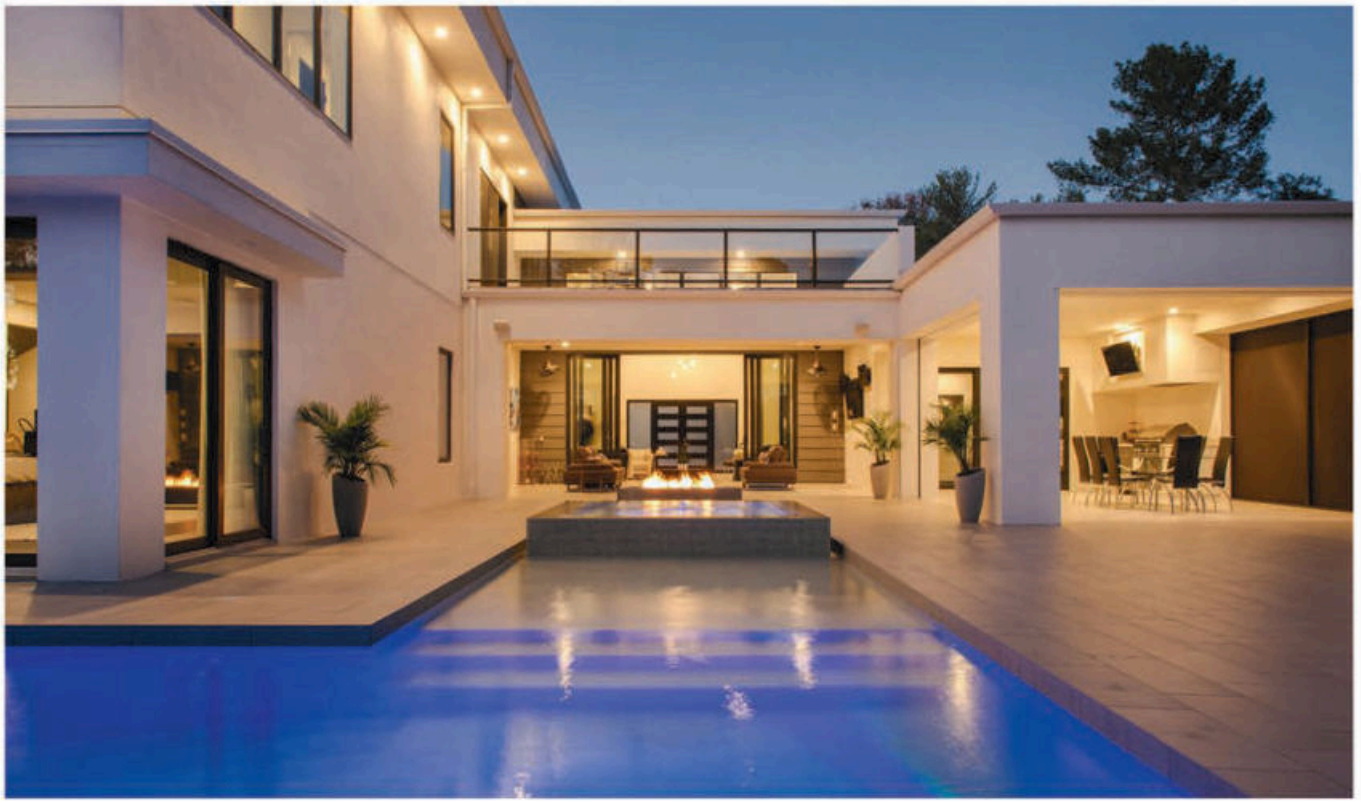
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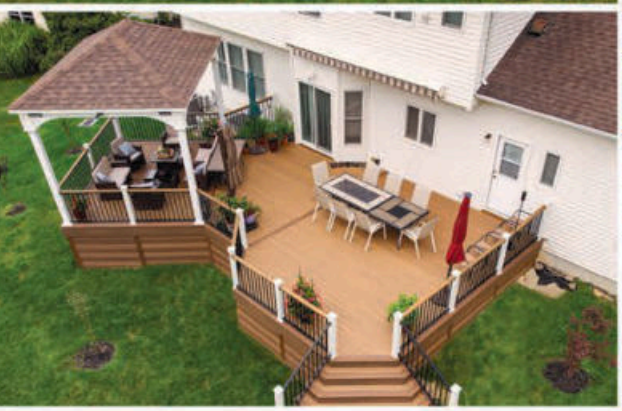
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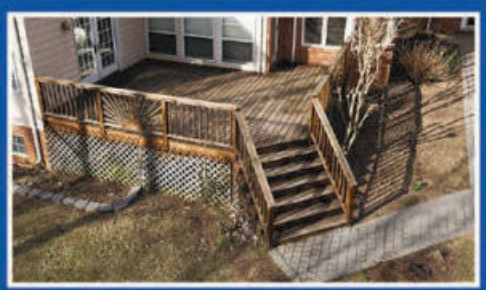




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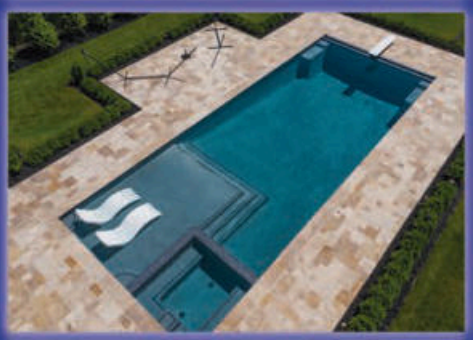
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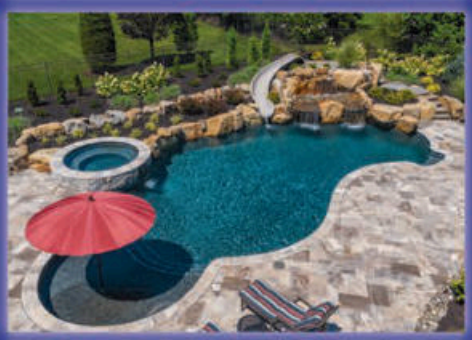
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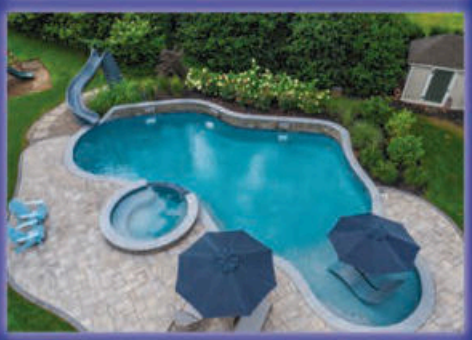


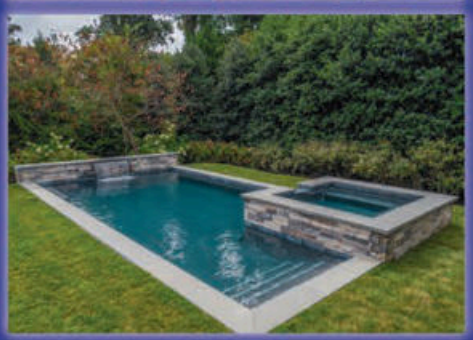


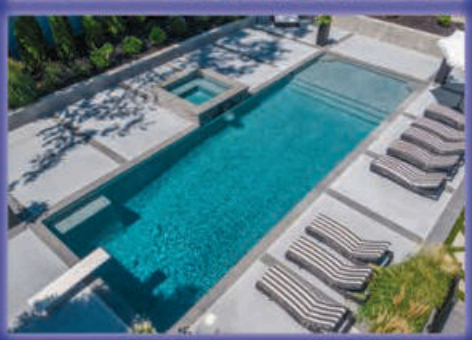


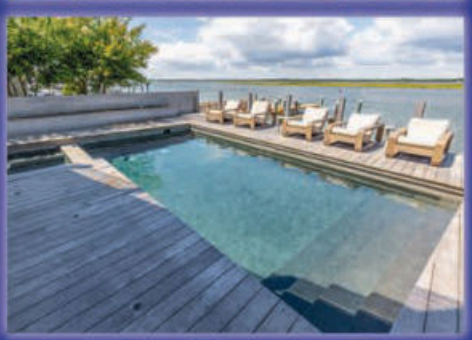












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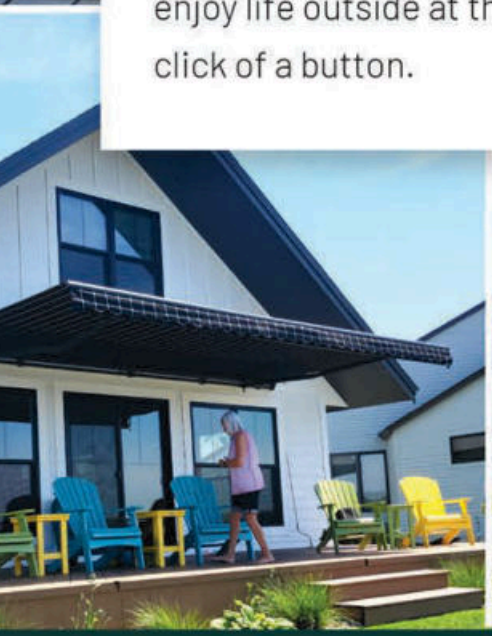
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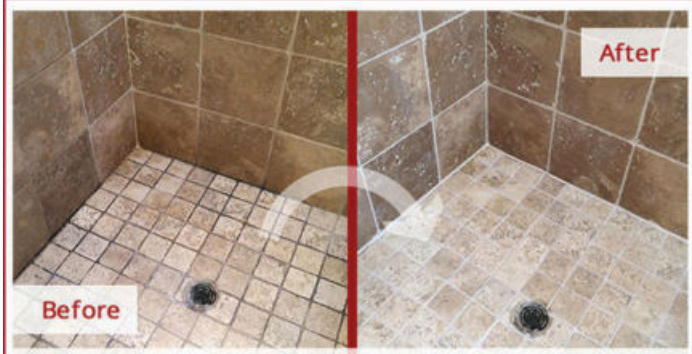
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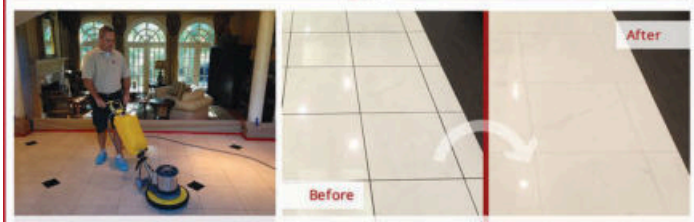
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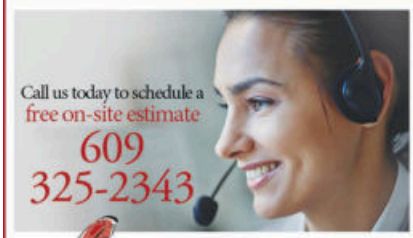


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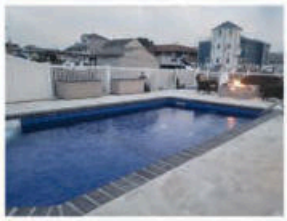
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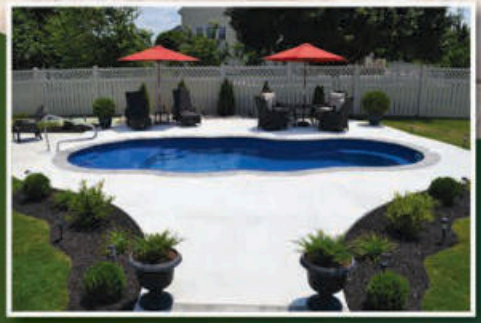
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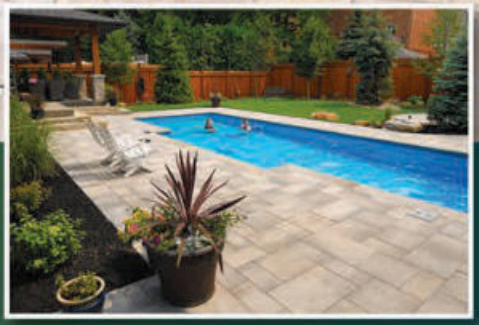
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A Matter of Trust

When it comes to finding the right contractor for the job, **Emmons Remodeling** offers clients both expertise and peace of mind.

When you need work done on your home—expected or not—you want to know that you can trust the contractor you've hired to get the job done well. After all, you're not an expert on what's involved in services like roofing, siding or windows, and you don't want to get taken advantage of as a result. Because of that, it's important to choose a company that you can feel confident is reputable.

But how exactly do you know a company can be trusted?

One important factor in choosing the best contractor is longevity. Only a company that performs great work is going to be able to stick around for the long haul. That's exactly the case with Emmons Remodeling, a company that has been offering expert care for South Jersey and the Jersey Shore area since 1996. They are a well-known name in the region—and for good reason. Their success was built upon a reputation of honesty, integrity and good work.

In fact, the company is an Owens Corning Platinum Preferred Contractor. That's not a designation that any old company can have. Platinum Preferred Contractors are in the top tier of a premier network of roofing professionals. In order to achieve this title, they must have passed a workmanship inspection, been professionally screened for financial stability and customer service, and continue to adhere to stringent guidelines set forth by Owens Corning. Fewer than 1% of roofing contractors in the United States are Owens Corning Platinum Preferred.

"It's a title that backs up our already strong reputation," says Stephanee Kelly, co-owner of the company along with her husband Matthew. "Only the most reputable companies are able to earn that designation."

Besides being able to feel confident that you've hired a contractor you can trust, this designation benefits homeowners in a more tangible way as well. That's because Platinum Preferred Contractors are able to offer 50-year warranties on their work—much longer than other companies can offer. According to Owens Corning's website, "because we stand behind these warranties, we need to make sure that we are backing up the best roofers in the business."

Protect Yourself Against Storm Chasers

Unfortunately, when it comes to contractors for roofing, siding and windows, there are a lot of fly-by-night companies out there and it's important for homeowners to protect themselves. In the business, many of these companies are called "storm chasers." They follow severe weather from area to area, knowing that there will be a lot of work.

They typically have no community roots and therefore no knowledge of local building codes. Their "rush job" often has shoddy work, and since they typically leave the area in chase of the next storm, they can't be reached when there are problems.

How can you spot a storm chaser? Stephanee says it's critical to be wary of contractors who may not have a physical office—again, an indicator that they may be a fly-by-night company. They'll do the work poorly and then disappear, leaving you with problems.

"We are a local small business in Williamstown with real people answering the phones—not an answering service," Matthew says. "We don't work out of a house and we do not have a 'virtual office.' Be wary of contractors that will not provide you with a physical address but instead only have a P.O. Box or suite number and only use an answering service."

Some of the worst storm chasers don't even carry the proper insurance and are therefore putting you at risk.

"We are fully insured and also carry liability insurance, which is required for roofing operations," Matthew says. "But many contractors carry cheaper insurance that does not include liability insurance, leaving you, the homeowner, liable if a worker is injured while working on your roof. Make sure the insurance certificate sent to you by your contractor's insurance agency specifically includes liability insurance."

Choosing Wisely

At the end of the day, your choice in roofing, siding and window contractors can be the difference between good, quality work—and a big headache. Stephanee says that the last thing Emmons wants to see is people in their local community get taken advantage of by unscrupulous roofing, siding and window contractors.

"You should be able to feel confident that you've chosen a contractor that you can trust— not one that is going to leave you with problems to fix after they've gone," she says. "At Emmons, you are not only investing in a new roof, new siding or new windows—you're investing in peace of mind." H&H

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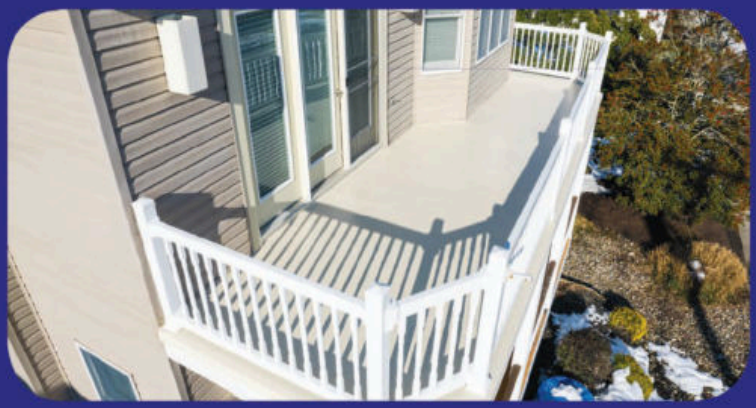
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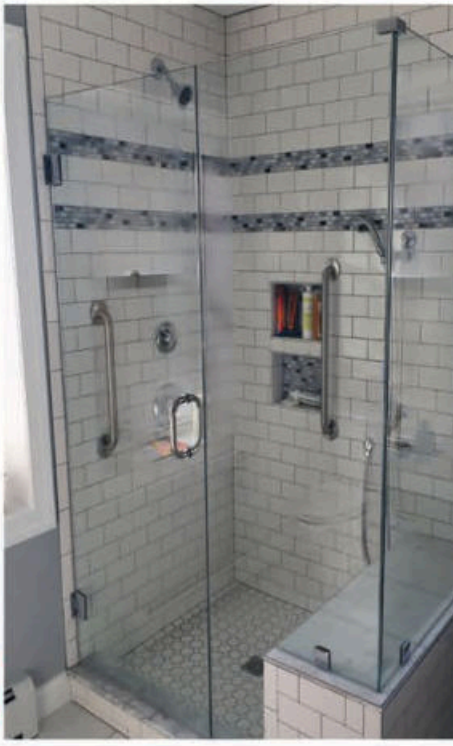
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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR



People spending time at the Shore want to be outside as much as they can, which is why elaborate and functional outdoor living spaces have become must-haves at vacation homes.



NOW THAT THE HOLIDAY SEASON HAS COME AND GONE, IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE WARMER TEMPERATURES OF SPRING AND SUMMER HAVE ARRIVED AND EVERYONE WILL BE CLAMORING TO GET OUTSIDE. THAT IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR THOSE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO OWN A HOME AT THE JERSEY SHORE, WHERE THE WHOLE IDEA IS TO SPEND TIME WITH LOVED ONES UNDER A CLEAR BLUE SKY.

Those opportunities are not just restricted to the beach or Boardwalk, either. Just as outdoor living has experienced a tremendous boom at primary residences in the past two decades, so too has the trend carried over to the Shore.

"It was always big but over the past 10 years it's really grown, especially when COVID hit and a lot of people were tied to their homes and were not able to go on vacation or go out in public," says Therese Simon, part of the sales and design team at Oskar Huber Furniture & Design. "They decided to spend the money at home and create these more elaborate outdoor spaces. It's grown even bigger because there's more product than ever before. A lot of companies have grown their product line almost into an extension of their indoor spaces."

BY MATT COSENTINO

Photo above courtesy of Telescope Casual Furniture



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Of course, there may be challenges unique to a vacation property, such as smaller lots or concerns about coastal weather. *House & Home* spoke to area professionals to learn more about what homeowners need to know while planning an outdoor living space at the Shore.

HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE

The first step in creating a stunning yet functional outdoor space is partnering with the right company. Before signing a contract, homeowners should ask for references, speak to previous customers, make sure their personalities mesh well with the team they are hiring, and find a comprehensive design/build firm that can handle all aspects of the project.

"No one wants to be calling 10 different contractors, so whether we're putting in a pool, patio, kitchen, irrigation, all the way down to planting the sod, it's a one-stop shop," says Nick Erman of Evergreen Pros. "From the irrigation to the pavers to the shrubs, you're dealing with one person, the main project manager, through the entire project."

Erman also advises customers to be honest about their budget, and he in turn will be upfront about what his team can deliver. A beautiful yard does not always mean they have to break the bank.

"Generally speaking, a person will put 20% of what their house is worth into their backyard," he says. "So if somebody has a half-million dollar home, 20% of that is what they're going to spend. My rule of thumb is you can make a $100,000 house look like a $1 million house or you can make a $1 million house look like a $10,000 one because of the way it's landscaped. You can make it look horrible or you can make it look beautiful."

Since the sprawling properties that many people have at their primary residences may not be realistic at their Shore home, where the lots are usually smaller or even oddly configured, planning ways to maximize the space ahead of time is crucial.

"If there's a concern about space—and I'll usually do this anyway—I'll go out to the house and measure the space, and I have a floor planner that I use," Simon says. "I input the measurements and we just start building off of that. We come up with the best solution for that space in terms of function, the use of the space, how many people are going to be using it on any given day in the summertime, and we try to bring all of those factors together and make it work."



Photos courtesy of Telescope Casual Furniture

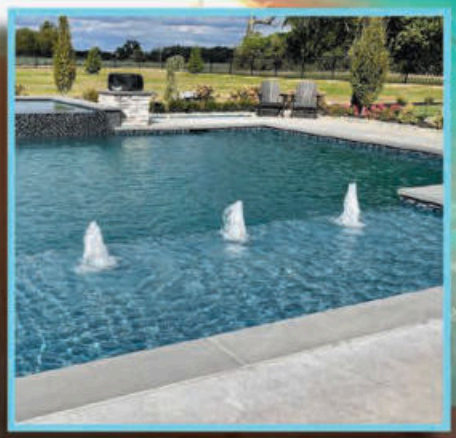
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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

MUST-HAVES FOR THE SPACE

As Simon notes, people spending time at the Shore want to be outside as much as possible, even into the nighttime since it stays light out much later in the summer, so their outdoor space should be able to suit a number of functions.

"Not every place, but some of the bigger homes probably have three or four decks, so they may have a couple of different dining areas," she says. "They probably have a seating area with a sectional and a fire pit, chaises by the pool, and sometimes they'll create a bar in the backyard with bar stools that coordinate all of the finishes together. Just like you would do custom indoors, we're doing that outdoors."

It's imperative to use the right kind of furniture that can hold up to the conditions of a coastal environment. Simon explains that the standard material many companies use consists of recycled plastic milk jugs, and it is designed to last for generations. She adds that some manufacturers are taking it a step further by using marine-grade polymer that is even harder than the milk jug plastics.

"It can hold up to salt and any kind of weather," she explains. "It's good because it's heavier, so in windy conditions it won't blow away. That's important, especially at the beach."

Pools are becoming more common on Shore properties as well, and Erman suggests that fiberglass is a solid option because it doesn't require as much maintenance as other pools and comes with a lifetime warranty. No matter what kind of pool a homeowner installs, however, he stresses that hiring an experienced contractor and understanding the varying site conditions at the Shore are both important.

THERE IS NO TIME TO DELAY

Since most people consider Memorial Day weekend the unofficial start of the summer and want their outdoor spaces to be ready for guests by then, it makes sense to start the process as soon as possible, whether it's an entirely new project or they're just adding new furniture or amenities.

"This is our peak season," Simon confirms. "It will go like gangbusters from January into May and early June. Knockdowns for most houses are in fall, and then they're ready to start ordering in January and their deadline is usually Memorial Day. So this is the time period for people to order outdoor."

Although this is a hectic time of year for Oskar Huber, Simon loves coming to work and helping people create an outdoor environment they can be happy to entertain or just relax in with family.

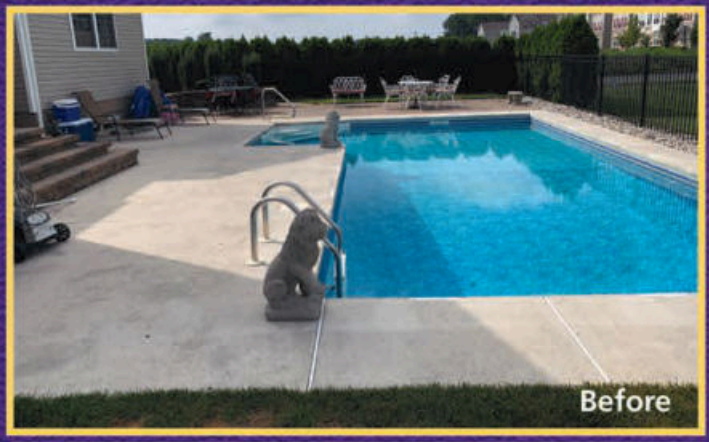
"Every project is different and you meet so many interesting people," she says. "Their needs are different and the whole process is so interesting. In the design process, I really enjoy getting into it with people and creating something that is uniquely them. I like them to get involved; I don't just want to pick for them, I want them to be involved in the whole design process." H&H

RESOURCES

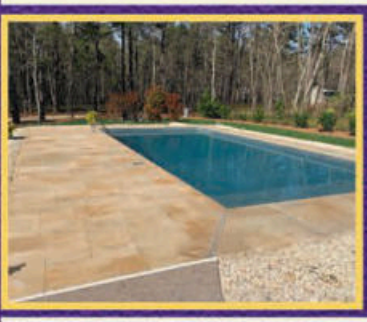
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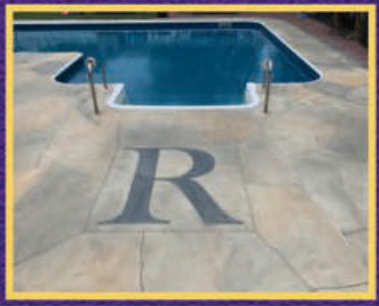
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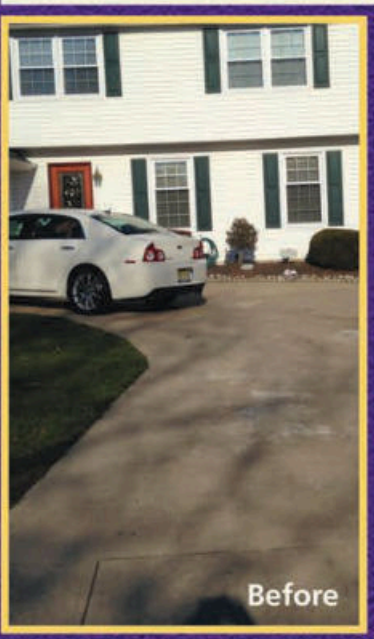
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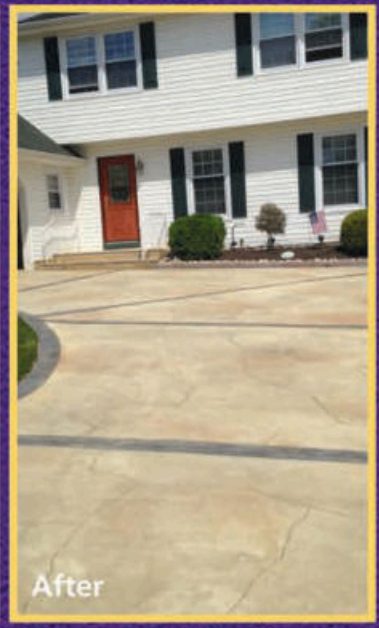






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Why Our Customers Love Us



For 34 years, **Gill's Landscaping** has been beautifying local yards with inspired designs and personalized customer service. *By* Matt Cosentino

Gill's Landscaping, a leader in the region for three decades, is kicking off the new year by continuing to do what it does best: providing beautiful outdoor projects and top-notch customer service for families and businesses across South Jersey.

A full-service landscaping and maintenance company, Gill's has creative designers and experienced professionals who are passionate about giving their customers the outdoor living spaces of their dreams, whether that includes lush green lawns, fragrant flowers, water features, stone walkways and patios or all of the above.

Gill's was founded on the cornerstone of customer satisfaction and has always gone the extra mile in listening to its clients' wants and needs and delivering the personal attention they deserve. That is why it is so satisfying for the company to receive positive feedback after a job well done. H&H



It was a pleasure dealing with your company from the initial call for an estimate to the most professional crew sent out to install the new irrigation system. Everyone worked hard and constant and there was no damage to the lawn. We just wanted to let you know what a first-class operation you have and we will definitely recommend your company." –JOSIE & HARRY

Thank you for the wonderful job performing a landscape service for us. Ed did a great job and he did so with little direction or guidance from us. He used his creativity and landscaping 'know-how' to create something very special to us. It was done professionally and just what we wanted. Thanks again for a great job!" –THOMAS & DAWNA

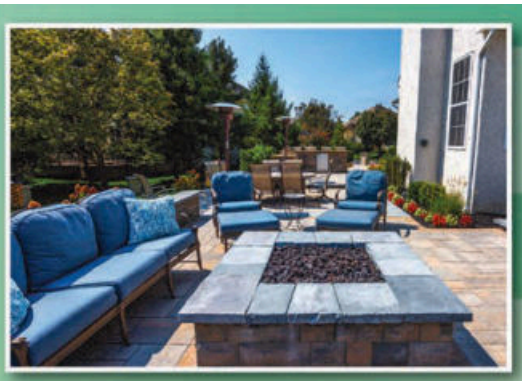
Mr. Gill, thanks for stopping by the job and introducing yourself. I knew from the minute your amazing truck pulled up to our house on time for the scheduled appointment we were off to a good start! After meeting with your landscape designer and when he came back with a plan, Gill's made our choice of contractors even easier. The quality and expertise of the work was incredible! Thanks for creating a paradise in our pool area." –MIKE W.

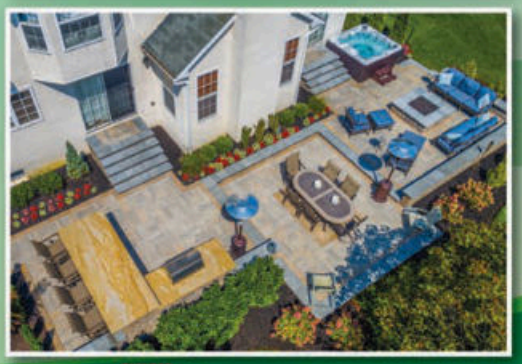
This is my second large project with Gill's and we couldn't be happier with the results. As with our first project, Ed came out to the house and presented us with his vision for our project. We were blown away with his ideas. Gill's employees were at my house bright and early every morning and diligently worked until the project was done. Mr. Gill also stopped by to introduce himself and thank us for our business. Our home looks like a different home! As with our past experience, we are beyond thrilled with the service we received from Gill's Landscaping." –MELISSA K.

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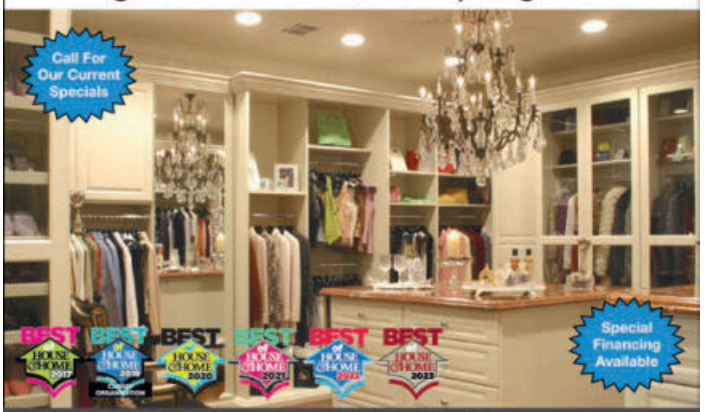
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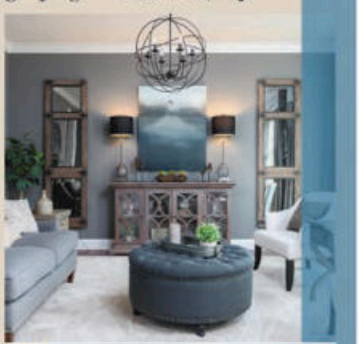
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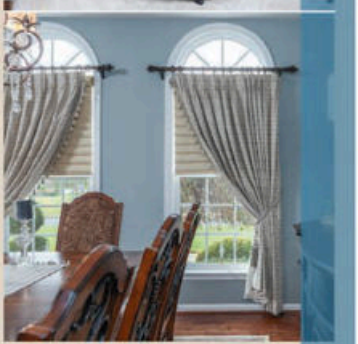
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WATER DAMAGE—IT'S A SCARY TERM FOR ANY WISE HOMEOWNER. Research by Travelers Insurance found that homes are **10 TIMES** more likely to be damaged by a water leak than by a fire. These leaks are no small issue. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency found that the average house leaks nearly 10,000 gallons per year. Without preventative measures, these leaks can lead to stressful situations, higher insurance premiums, resident displacement and costly renovations.

One of the largest contributors to water damage? Toilets.

Greg Capizzi, founder of aquaHALT, faced this exact issue after a toilet leak occurred at the condominium he manages, which necessitated renovations of four apartments and cost the condominium $320,000 in damages. It inspired him to create and to patent aquaHALT, a toilet leak detection system tucked discreetly behind the toilet bowl that stops toilet leaks by automatically cutting off the water at its source.

House & Home spoke with Capizzi about the importance of installing a leak detection system and how it could save homeowners time, money and frustration.







WHY ARE WATER LEAK DETECTION SYSTEMS IMPORTANT?


Greg Capizzi, aquaHALT founder

Water leak detection systems are another line of defense for home protection. Just like a smoke or carbon monoxide detector, leak detectors can avoid significant damages. The average water leak can waste from one up to 11 gallons of water in a single day and cost homeowners on average $11,098 in damages. In many cases, insurance companies aren't quick to pay for the damages. This could result in out-of-pocket payments, drawn-out back-and-forths with the insurance company and hours spent on the phone, before any work is even done. Once work begins, homeowners have to contend with potential displacement, repairmen in their homes and a mess. Dealing with a water leak is a nuisance and one that can be easily avoided with a proper water leak detection system. In fact, water leak detection systems like aquaHALT are so effective, many insurance companies are beginning to require them or offer discounts for households with them—so it not only saves homeowners money in costly damages, but also can even provide them discounted coverages.

WHAT MAKES AQUAHALT STAND OUT FROM OTHER LEAK DETECTION SYSTEMS ON THE MARKET?

There are different water-sensing devices out there, which all operate in their own function. Some are installed on the main water lines for your home that once activated turn off the entire house. Such devices are costly and sometimes come with a yearly subscription. Most are Wi-Fi based and can fail since Wi-Fi is not always a stable connection. Water-sensing devices that are Wi-Fi based also only send a notification. Therefore, these systems are sending you an alert, if Wi-Fi allows, while water is constantly flowing, creating more and more damage.

Alternatively, aquaHALT—recently named one of *TIME's* Best Inventions for 2023—is battery-operated just like other detectors in your home. This ensures reliability, as it requires neither electricity nor a Wi-Fi connection. In addition, aquaHALT will do more than send you an alert: Once a leak is detected, aquaHALT will automatically shut off the water locally to stop the leak while allowing your household to continue to use other water sources—minimizing the inconvenience. The device will beep to alert you to the problem until it is physically reset.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE PURCHASE AQUAHALT?

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WHAT OTHER PRODUCTS ARE IN THE WORKS FOR WATER AUTOMATION?

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H&H KITCHENS

by Kristen Jorgensen

THE SURGING POPULARITY TREND OF SECOND KITCHENS: A CULINARY REVOLUTION IN MODERN HOMES

In recent years, a fascinating trend has emerged in the realm of home design and lifestyle—the rise of second kitchens. Once considered a luxury reserved for expansive mansions or extravagant estates, secondary kitchens are now becoming increasingly popular in a variety of homes, ranging from suburban residences to urban apartments. This growing trend reflects a shift in the way people approach cooking, entertaining and the evolving role of the kitchen in modern living.

Granted, second kitchens are not necessarily a new thing, nor are they relegated just to upper-crust luxury homes. They've long existed in kosher Jewish residences, as dietary laws forbid the mixing of meat and dairy. Islamic halal cooking and severe allergies also necessitate separate areas for certain ingredients.

The COVID-19 pandemic also fueled a fresh need for a separate spot where we could unload potentially germ-laden groceries and store more quarantine supplies. Even though the panic of those years is largely over, the added storage still definitely comes in handy today. Add a sink or mini fridge to that oversized pantry and *voila*, the second kitchen is reborn.

Keith Eisele from Coast Tile elaborates, "Second kitchens we used to think were exclusive to large estates and the ultra-wealthy for many years, but with the shift in how we spend our leisure time sparked by the pandemic and the rise in home renovations, and second-home buyers, the concepts became more real for the people looking to update their living situations. With people starting to spend more time in the home and less time going out, the resurgence of the second kitchen took off."

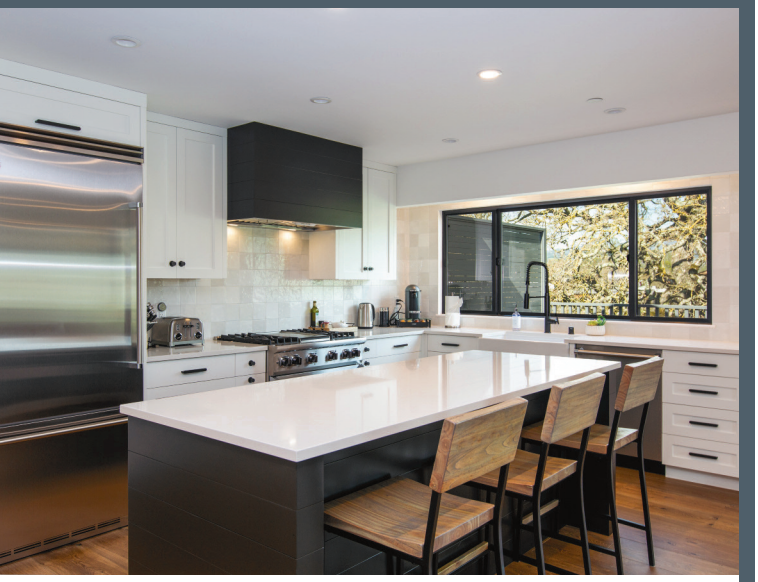
THE EVOLUTION

Second kitchens go by many names, none all that savory—scullery kitchens, working kitchens or simply "messy kitchens"—and the reason for their existence is to function as the original kitchen was meant to, but can't. *Why?* Because "Kitchen No. 1" has evolved to such a pinnacle of entertainment perfection that it's mostly just for show. "Kitchen No. 2," hidden behind closed doors, is where all the smoking, steaming, cooking and cleaning takes place.

Traditionally, the kitchen was a utilitarian space tucked away from the prying eyes of guests. "Kitchens weren't really the star of a home like they are now in the modern day. A lot of homes had smaller second kitchens to separate the non-cooking preparations of food provisions from the intensity of the actual cooking that took place in the large kitchen," explains Dennis Gehman, president of Gehman Design Remodeling. "We often saw smaller, second kitchens in homes that



Top photo courtesy: Joseph Hendrickson, Shutterstock.com



were built over 100 years ago, where their main function was to bring in and store the fresh vegetables, produce and meats, essentially away from the heat of the performance kitchen."

However, now as the focal point of the home, the kitchen has undergone a significant transformation. It has evolved from a functional area where meals were simply prepared to a social hub where families and friends gather, creating a demand for larger and more versatile kitchen spaces.

This modern lifestyle places a strong emphasis on entertainment and hospitality and ironically pulls a page from the past for more functionality. Homeowners are now investing in dedicated entertaining spaces, and a second kitchen becomes an invaluable asset when hosting gatherings.

This trend also aligns with the growing popularity of open-concept living, where kitchens seamlessly integrate with dining and living areas. The second kitchen allows hosts to prepare and to serve food without the intrusion of guests into the primary cooking space.

IS IT TRULY BENEFICIAL?

Two kitchens in one house may seem excessive to some unless it's a multifamily house. However, having a second kitchen installed could be just what your home and family need, especially if you are simply looking for more convenience.

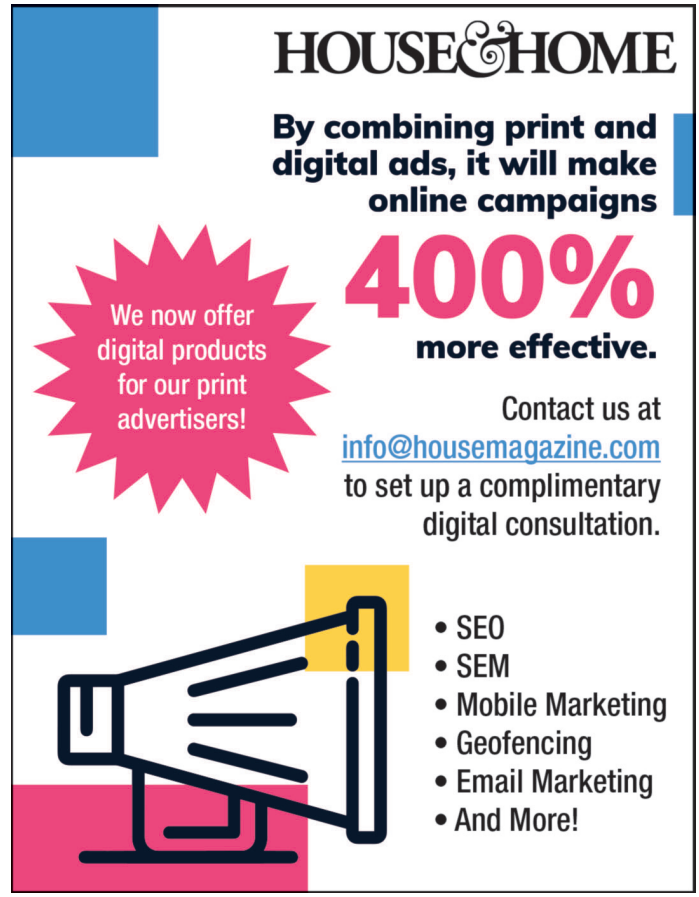
"The first thing that comes to mind is functionality. Especially coming off the holiday season, when hosting a group of people and preparing food for everyone, having more space is everything. Having a second oven, stove top, counter space, etc. It's essential in taking out the stress of the event preparations," says Eisele.

If you want to take it a step further, bringing in a catering company or a private chef to prepare food and drinks for a party can often be a challenging task. Having a secondary kitchen allows the event to have a more upscale feel and functionality for both the caterer and the homeowner.

Another key driver behind the surge in second kitchens is the increasing prevalence of multigenerational living arrangements. With more families choosing to live together under one roof, the need for separate cooking spaces has become evident.

"Second kitchens offer privacy, autonomy and con-







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venience for different generations sharing the same living space, allowing them to prepare meals without disrupting the daily activities of others. It really helps provide a more welcoming and adaptable atmosphere for in-laws or aging family members who may be sharing a living space," shares David Cerami, president of HomeTech Renovations.

ADDED PROPERTY VALUE

A kitchen is one of the most crucial parts of a home—so much so that having one can distinguish a place as a residence. Installing a second kitchen greatly increases the value of your home. This is also especially true, as mentioned earlier, with the number of multigenerational households increasing, as living expenses rise.

"During the pandemic, more and more people sought ways to make conducting their lives at home easier, such as by installing a home gym, another home office and a second kitchen. In spite of increased demand for homes with two kitchens, they remain fairly rare, so having a second kitchen installed can increase the value of your home.," Gehman says.

Eisele adds, "There is no doubt that a second kitchen increases the value of your home. A second kitchen is like a heated floor, once you have one, you cannot imagine life without it. It becomes a selling point for any realtor and a conversation piece for everyone who walks through the door."

Of course, when it comes time to find the right remodeling contractor to take on a project of this nature, you'll want to do your homework.

"Referrals are the best way to find a remodeling contractor," says Dan Dilworth, owner of Dilworth's Custom Design. "Ask your friends, neighbors and coworkers. Use social media. There are new 'neighborhood' apps that are increasing in popularity. You can use these to ask others in your neighborhood if they've had similar work done and how they felt about their contractor. Local lumber yards and realtors are other good sources."

Dilworth also stresses the need of having a budget in place from the onset of the project. "It's almost impossible to decide what options you want if you don't have a budget already in mind," he says.

The popularity trend of second kitchens signals a profound shift in the way people view and utilize their living spaces. Whether designed to address specific living arrangements, culinary pursuits or entertaining, the second kitchen has become a versatile solution to address the diverse needs of modern homeowners. As this trend continues to gain momentum, we can expect to see further innovations in kitchen design, catering to the evolving lifestyles and preferences of individuals and families alike. **H&H**

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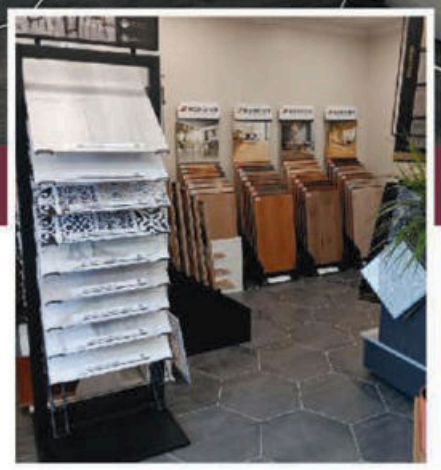
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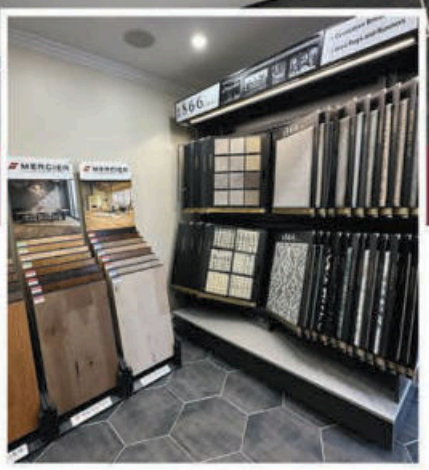


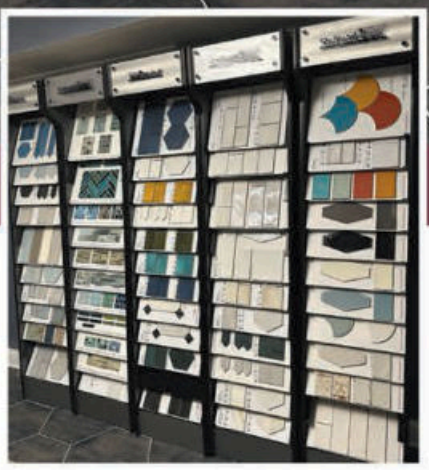
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What keeps you motivated every day to do the work that you do?
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What do you find most rewarding about this industry?
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Are there any new products or services you are offering that you'd like our readers to know about?
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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 your competitors?
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As the premier builder of pools at the Jersey shore, what kind of pools have the most appeal?
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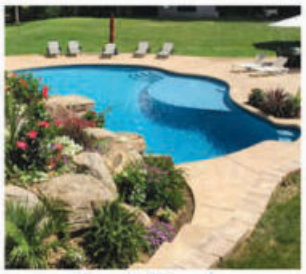
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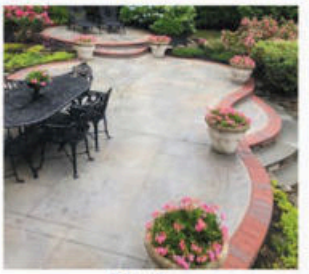
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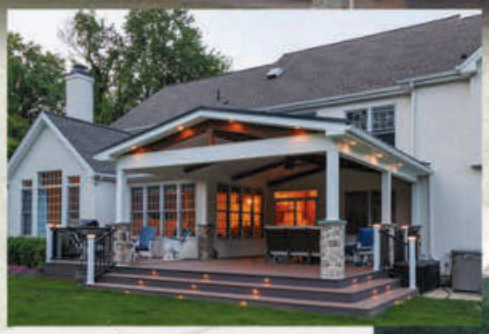
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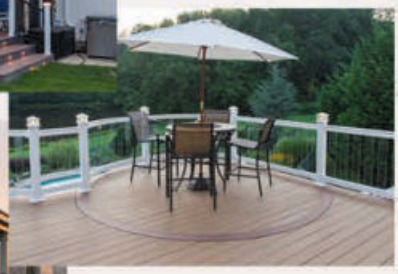
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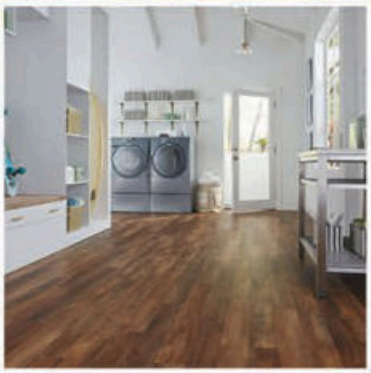
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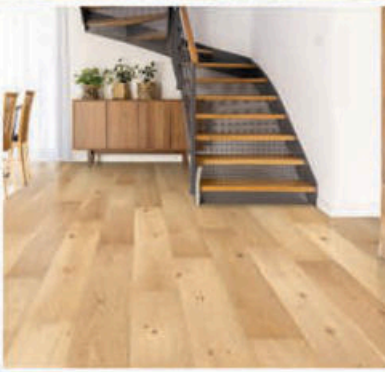
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