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Volume 21, Issue 6

Spring

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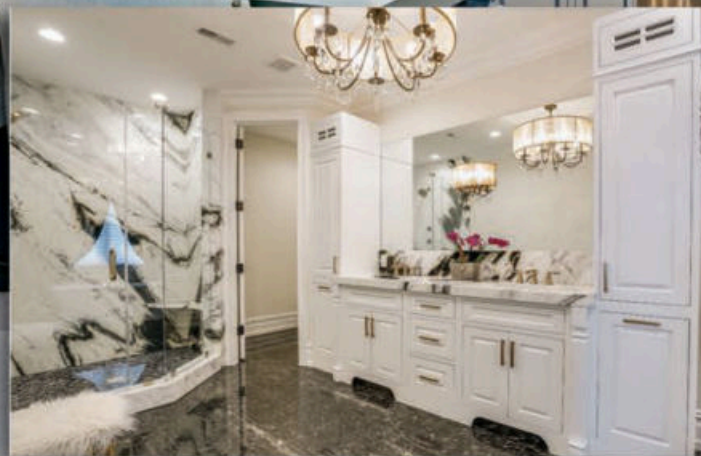
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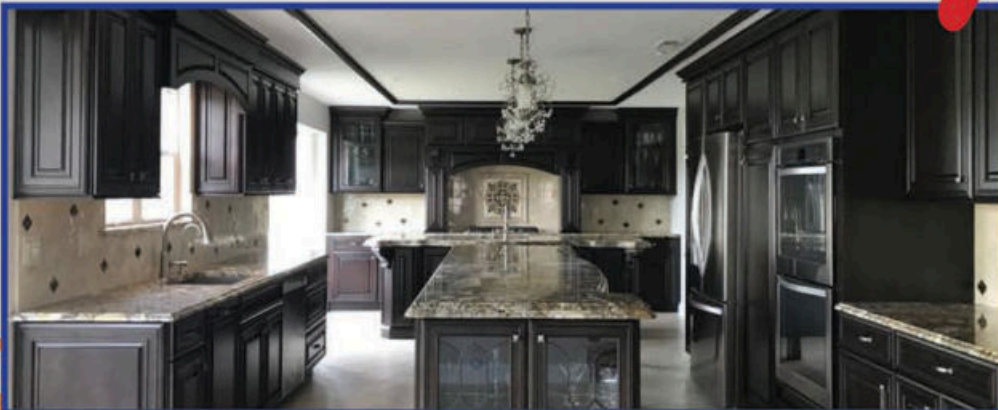
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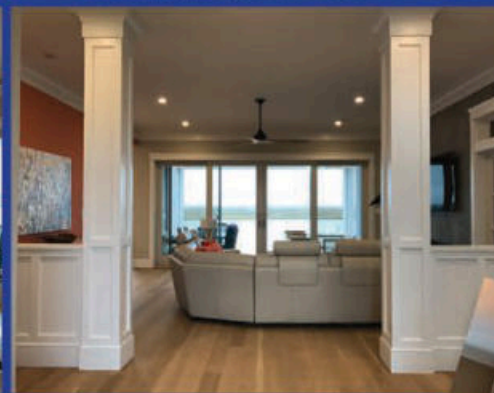
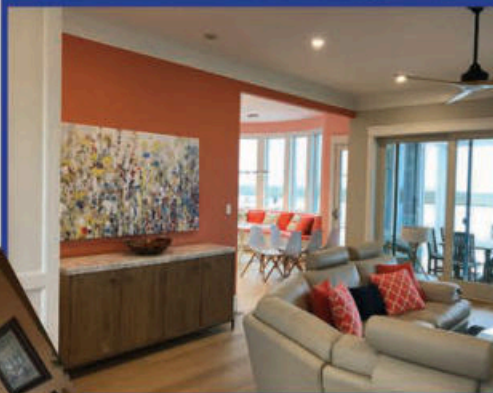
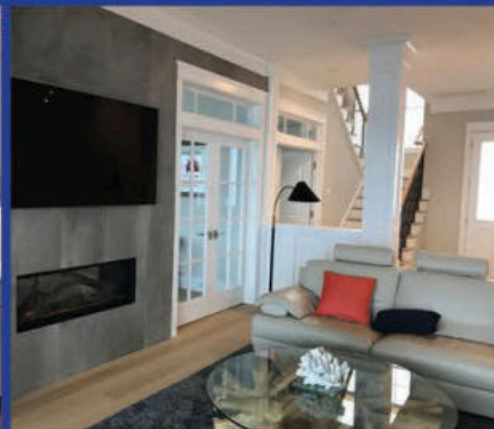
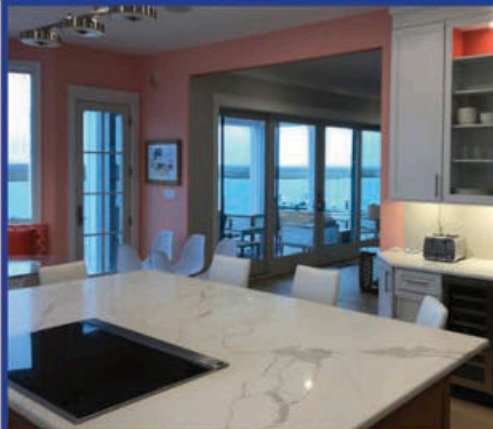
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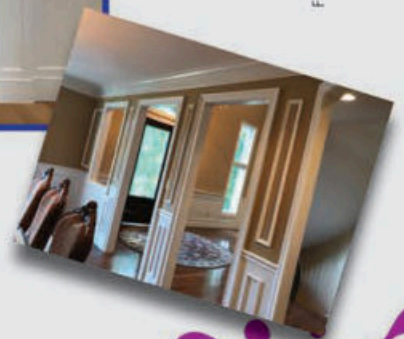


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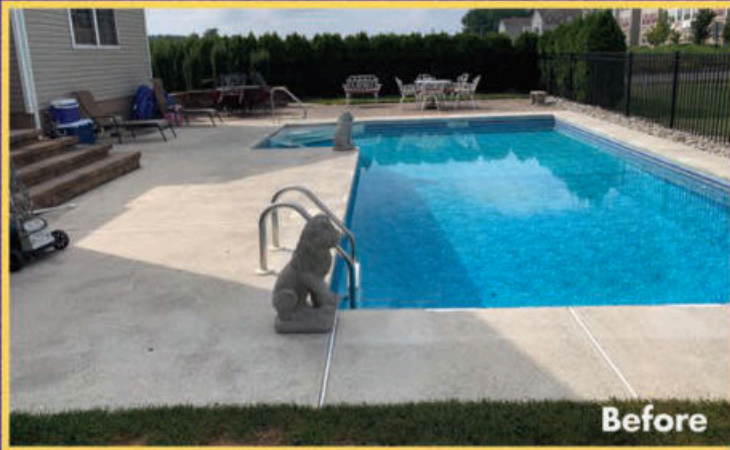
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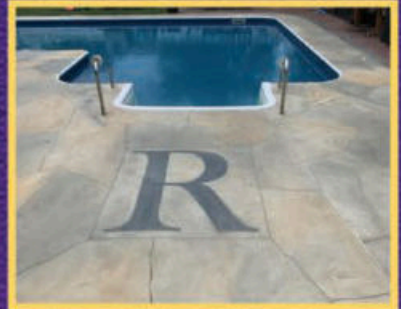
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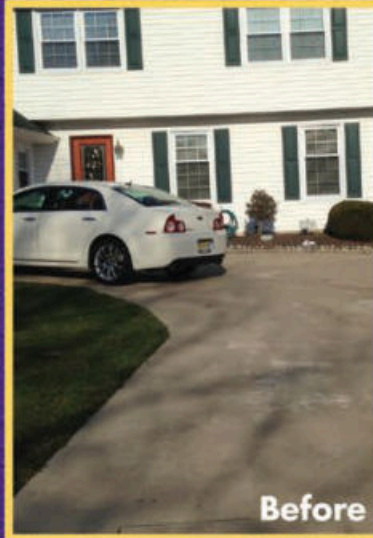
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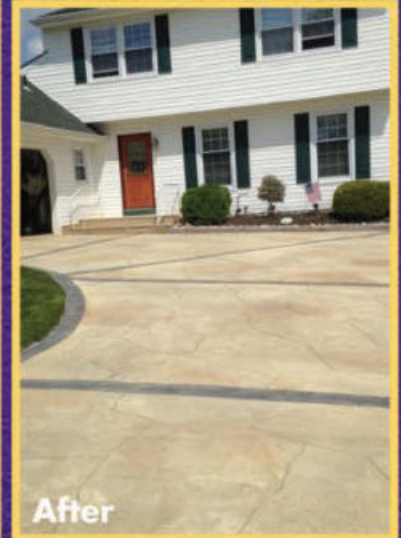


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On the cover:

With the help of Gill's Landscaping, homeowners don't need to worry about handling the hard labor of creating a beautiful outdoor living space. Experts with over 25 years of experience provide skilled designs and high-quality materials, bringing your vision to life. To learn more about this company's values and attention to detail, turn to page 10.
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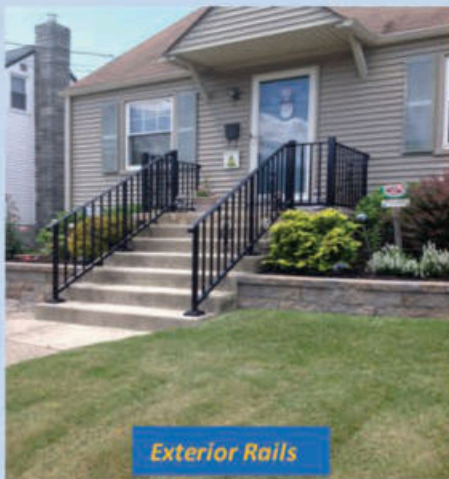


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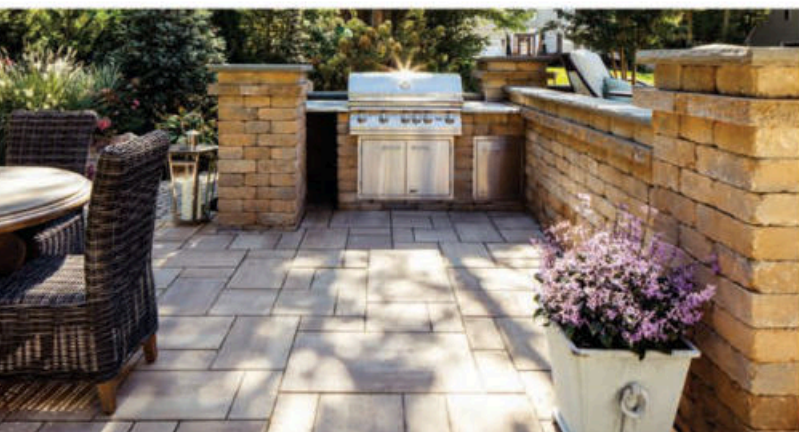
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- THOMAS L

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- DON C

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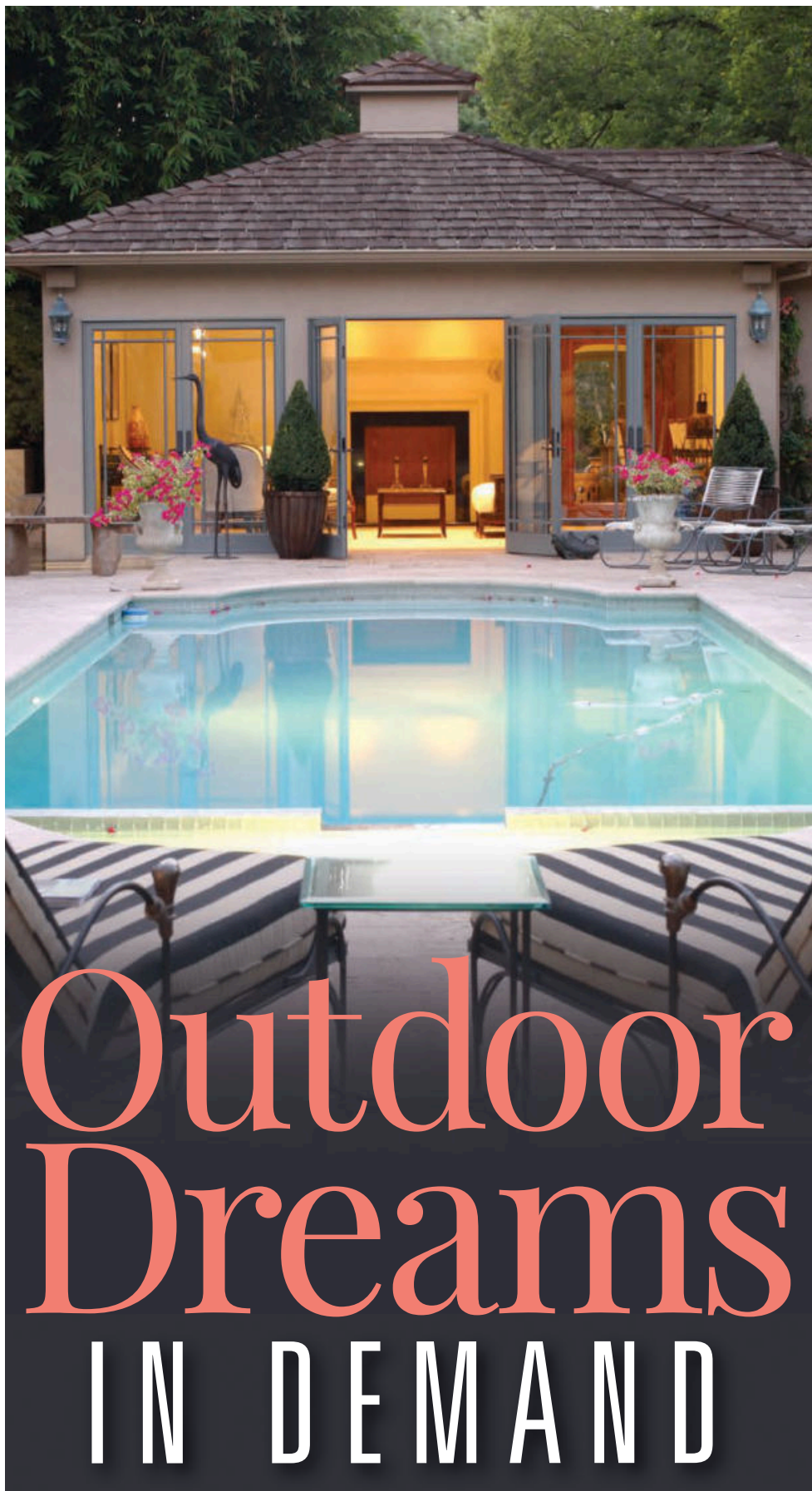
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Outdoor Dreams IN DEMAND

The popularity of outdoor projects continues to rise and experts say there is no time to waste in planning.

BY LIZ HUNTER

For years, homeowners have been building up their outdoor spaces into backyard retreats that feel like a destination getaway, and in 2020, that industry saw a surge like never before. Hunkered down at home for safety reasons, they invested money otherwise saved for vacations on pools, decks, hardscaping and more. This year is proving to be another record year for these projects as well, meaning homeowners have to act fast.

“As protocols and mandates were put in place and individuals became comfortable with [people coming into their home], demand skyrocketed, mainly for outdoor entertainment spaces which included pools, patios, roof structures, walkways, firepits, outdoor kitchens, etc.,” says Michael Pasquarello, degreed landscape architect at Elite Landscaping. “As we are in the beginning of 2021 the residential home improvement wave has still not crested and continues to build. I foresee it lasting clear into the middle of 2022.”

Sam Waddell, owner of SLS Landscaping, says it wasn’t just requests for new installations of pools, outdoor kitchens and patios he was receiving. “We have also been building add-ons to prior completed landscape and patio projects, including fireplaces and pavilions,” he says.

The pandemic has also contributed to material shortages, making them more expensive and delaying projects. “The one downside of this high demand is the availability of materials. Manufacturers cannot keep up and most items are on back order,” Pasquarello says.

“Good contractors are backlogged several months for work that requires permits,” adds Keith Frederick, owner of Environmental Landscape Associates. “Bigger builds are



being booked out six to eight months, but smaller non-permit work is about two to three months.”

We asked these professionals and more to chime in on project planning as the spring and summer approach. Whether interested in something small or a full-scale oasis, the consensus is not to wait to make the call.

Decks

One of the most requested elements of an outdoor living space, decks have come a long way from the standard square shape. And companies that specialize in decks have also evolved to incorporate more features into their design.

“We here at Keystone Custom Decks have evolved into an outdoor living company. We no longer strictly focus on just decks but really customize each design and project to what fits our clients’ needs the most,” says Marv Esh, manager/owner of Keystone Custom Decks. “For most projects that means combining a deck, porch and patio as part of their outdoor living space as well as features such as fireplaces, kitchens and stone features.”

Bill Wilson, co-owner of Amazing Decks, says the modern farmhouse is the dominant style for decks. “No one wants to have the ’80s McMansion cookie-cutter look. The farmhouse trend features black railings, darker decking—it’s more rustic,” he says. “I really like the way it looks.”

One piece that should be considered for any deck is coverage. “Our signature project is a deck with a porch structure. We hear feedback all the time from our clients that they use the covered areas so much more than they ever thought they would. A roof structure provides you protection from the elements and really just becomes an extension of the home in an outdoor setting,” says Esh.



“From there a majority of our projects get some type of fire feature which increases the outdoor living season. Another very popular item is ways to close off the porch. For that we implement a lot of motorized retractable features that when not in use are not seen but with the push of button your porch can be enclosed. When those are in use and we combine the fire feature and heating elements, you can really end up using your outdoor space almost all year.”

Wilson says he is also seeing a shift toward homeowners designing just for themselves. “It seems the designs are less for massive amounts of people and more for a smaller number of guests—cozier,” he says. “In the past people wanted a design that would accommodate others. Now they are doing it for themselves so at the end of the day or the week, they have a place to sit and recharge. With so many working from home, getting through the day is difficult so you need an outdoor environment for your sanity.”

Outdoor Dreams IN DEMAND

Pools

Frederick says pools are on the uptick. “With kids being home, not going on vacations, pools are a great activity for them,” he says. However, there are some considerations if a pool is on your wishlist.

The first is budget. To put it bluntly, Frederick says a full-scale custom pool design and installation requires at least \$150,000 to start the process. “There is permitting, plus stormwater control, grading, the pool and its decking, fencing for safety—before you know it you’re at that range,” he says. “I believe in openly discussing budgets with new customers. If you want the stars and the moon but you can only afford the moon, then you have to modify your wishlist or add more money to the budget.”

Frederick’s company is booking into 2022 for these types of projects, but there are options for a quicker turnaround and better price point.



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“These feel like a big hot tub and come in all shapes and sizes, and actually have a better longevity than a concrete pool which will one day need to be replastered and retiled through the freeze and thaw cycle,” says Frederick. “Fiberglass has no plaster or tile. We’ve sold a handful of them in the last six to 12 months.”

Additional enhancements

An outdoor living space is more than just decks and pools. There are



KEYSTONE CUSTOM DECKS

a bunch of details that add up to a completed environment, some of which can be incorporated in time for this summer.

First is giving some TLC to your hardscaping and landscaping. “We have enhanced a lot of outdoor spaces, such as paver patios that may have been dirty and neglected. A power wash, re-sand and a sealer can work wonders on that old, faded paver. Also, adding a nice colorful border to your old patio can bring it to life,” says Chris DeMato, owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing. “Naturally edged planting beds can be re-sculpted and re-mulched, adding some contrasting colorful plants to your planting beds can add a lot of interest. Hanging lights can make those summer evenings very comfortable, and fencing may give you the privacy you need or simply block an undesirable view. These are just a few additions or changes that you can make to bring that dull landscape to life.”

At-home entertaining can go up a notch too, he says, with the addition of a bocce ball court or horseshoe pit.

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Of course, every outdoor space needs fabrics, says Natalie Weeks Rossitto, owner of M.C. Weeks Window Fashions. “Outdoor draperies are a beautiful way to define space, adding style, design and color as well as privacy and shade. ... Our Hunter Douglas patio screen shades with designer screen fabrics can create drama or add a layer of light control to any covered outdoor space,” she says.

Outdoor fabrics also need to withstand the elements. “We represent thousands of quality outdoor fabric styles and patterns available through our showroom samples and resources, including lines by David Sutherland. Our Perennials fabric line is fade resistant, mildew and mold resistant and bleach cleanable for furnishings you can actually live on. Additionally we offer renowned fabric name brands such as Thibaut, Crypton, Sunbrella, Pindler and Stout Brothers to name a few.”

Tying it all together is technology. “There definitely is ‘an app for that’ when it comes to multiple elements which compose these outdoor spaces,” says Pasquarello. “The main thing to remember is to allow this technology to add to the convenience of a space and to still enjoy the outdoors and what Mother Nature has to offer.”

He says most features can be controlled via smartphone. “LED landscape lighting, outdoor audio, irrigation systems, infrared heaters can all be manipulated right from the palm of your hand. Unique Lighting offers LED Bluetooth color-changing bulbs which can be used to upgrade existing fixtures as well. Sonance manufactures outdoor audio systems with multiple speaker types and

configurations to deliver rich sound. Hunter Industries has irrigation controls which sync to local weather stations to only allow the system to operate when water is needed,” he continues.

No matter what your dream outdoor living space includes, the pandemic has driven demand for these projects. But rushing into it won’t serve homeowners well. “People should spend more time making sure the design fits their lifestyle and take the time to get it right,” Wilson says. “There is nothing worse than having to do it again and paying twice.” **H&H**



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Floors Just For You and Built Just For You Construction handle every aspect of a renovation project from start to finish, taking the stress out of the experience. *by Matt Cosentino*



It seems that everyone these days can relate to an unpleasant experience with a contractor. Whether it involves a lack of knowledge from the sales staff, miscommunication with the designer or issues with the work crews, it can turn what is supposed to be an enjoyable and exciting time in homeowners' lives into a hectic one.

When Damien Massa and Anthony DellaPia were introduced by mutual friends more than a decade ago, they immediately hit it off as they discovered each other's background in construction and their shared desire to improve the home renovation experience for clients. Now, as partners in the complementary companies Floors Just For You and Built Just For You Construction, they are committed to providing a wide range of services in a stress-free manner.

"We started out as a small general contracting firm but we decided to branch out, open up a showroom and make the vision we had even bigger," Massa says. "We have evolved into a full-service interior solutions company that can handle every aspect of your job from start to finish."

Floors Just For You and Built Just For You Construction specialize in kitchen and bathroom remodels, finished basements, additions, outdoor decking and even new home construction. No matter what they are hired to do, they aim to

make the process as streamlined and straightforward as possible for the homeowner. That means each client is paired with one point of contact who will act as a guide for the duration of the relationship.

"From the very first hello to your signing to your final cleanup, that person will be with you every step of the way," Massa says. "We do not push customers off after they sign to a warranty department or a service department or a construction department. Everything is custom tailored and it's a personal approach with your design executive."

"It makes it very easy for the customer. There's never any questions about who they need to communicate with. If for some reason something goes wrong, they know exactly who to call and they can have confidence that they're going to resolve anything that needs to be resolved."

Almost all of the work is done in-house—with very minimal subcontracting—allowing the team to control the quality, productivity and schedule. Material selection is all done in the showroom, which has everything from cabinetry, flooring and countertops to shower doors, tile and plumbing under one roof.

There are also two full-time designers on staff. Maura Midili-DellaPia started with the company in 2015 after earning her degree from The Art Institute of Philadelphia and brings a strong attention to detail and the ability to oversee all aspects of a project. "We hired her as a contract kitchen designer and we liked her so much that we actually brought her on full-time and she's been with us ever since," Massa says. "She's a seasoned designer and extremely knowledgeable."

Dee Scull has even more experience, as she has been in the industry since 1998. She came onboard in November and found her values to align with those of Massa and DellaPia. "I connect with every single person who walks through the door and try to lead them throughout the process," she says. "I like a challenge. I like taking a space and completely reimagining that space, and helping the customers

reimagine it as well before the execution. The material selection is my favorite part of the process, pulling all the finishes together and making everything cohesive. As far as my favorite types of projects, I'm a big fan of luxurious master bathrooms."

Scully realizes the great responsibility that they bear, especially with people spending more time than ever in their homes during the pandemic. "They want their homes to be beautiful," she says. "It's no longer just about function; we want to turn these spaces into an oasis. It's great to be able to take a project, start with a computer rendering and produce a final product that is almost identical. It's exciting for both the designer and the homeowner."

Massa adds that kitchens and bathrooms remain popular, but finished basements and additions have skyrocketed during the past year. "A lot of these spaces are being used as offices, but a lot are used as recreational areas for people to have an escape without leaving the comfort of their own home," he says. "We do basements that have full bars, sound systems, kids' playrooms—you name it, we've done it. I've had requests for spiral slides to be put into a basement from the first floor, so the children can slide down to the basement. People are really being creative with what they want to do in their spaces."

When all is said and done, being able to deliver those dream spaces—and going above and beyond the homeowner's expectations—is a rewarding feeling.

"When the customer sees the finished project and sees the idea they had in their head come to fruition," Massa says, "it's the best part of our job." **H&H**

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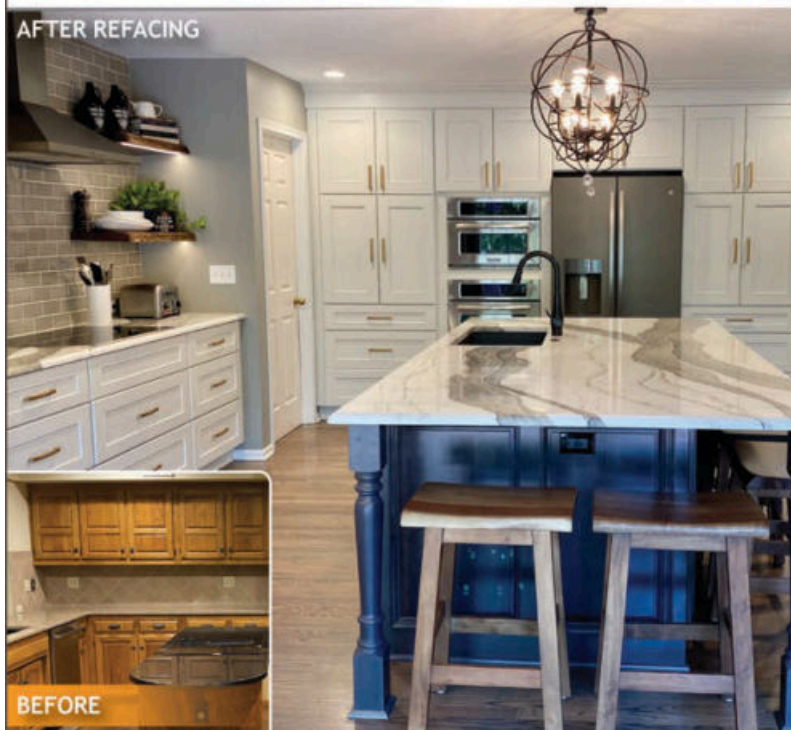
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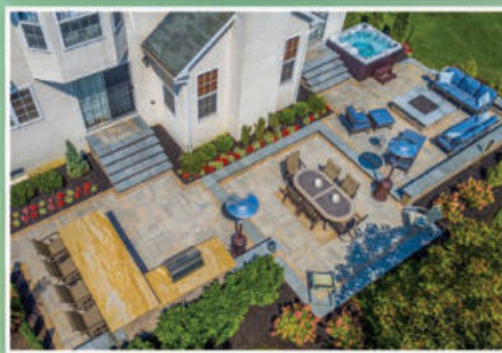
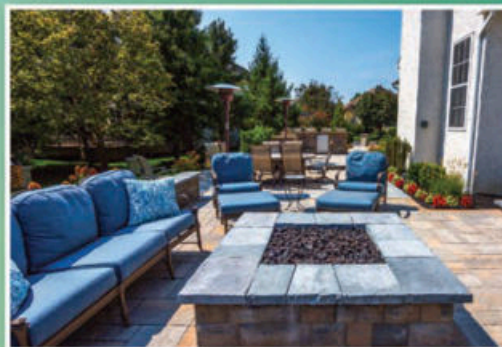
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Crucial Component

Cabinetry can make or break a renovation project in kitchens and baths, so it is important for homeowners to do their homework and listen to the experts.

BY MATT COSENTINO

WHEN IT COMES TO KITCHEN AND BATHROOM REMODELS—the two rooms that continue to be the most popular choices for renovations and updates—there is no question that selecting the right cabinetry is a crucial step in the process. In the kitchen, cabinetry will usually take up a significant amount of space and set the tone for the look and feel of the entire room. Bathroom cabinetry entails a smaller footprint but is just as important in storing everyday items while providing aesthetic value.

With many styles, colors and functional elements to choose from, cabinetry decisions can be a fun but overwhelming aspect of a project. We spoke to local professionals for tips that can help homeowners looking to make the leap to a brand-new kitchen or bath.



Clean lines and a minimalist style seem to be trending in cabinetry at the moment. Do you see that happening with your clientele?

“Kitchen design obviously changes year after year and it’s definitely moved from where it was eight years ago, when there were a lot of traditional browns and creams. Now there are a lot of grays and whites and straight lines. It’s more of a clean look and we call it a Euro look. I don’t think in the United States we’re at that full Euro look; it’s probably more in California than on the East Coast. A lot of style influence comes from West to East, so if something is coming out in California it generally hits us a year to a year and a half later. It’s starting to come over our way now and a lot of people are looking for clean, minimalist lines.”

Damien Massa

Co-owner

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What are the benefits to going with custom cabinetry over a stock product?

“No. 1 is the service that most times comes with custom cabinetry. If you buy a stock cabinet, the service is obviously very poor because the cabinet is made who knows where and there's nobody standing behind the integrity and quality of the cabinet. If you buy it from the local, custom cabinet shop, typically that's much better because you get better quality and better service. There's no fillers and they're all custom sized to fit your space, which is a much cleaner look in the end. Basically, the sky is the limit [with decorative elements]. There's an endless amount of custom, specialty details that can be added. We can design or craft something from a picture someone has seen in a magazine. It's not just a cabinet out of a box; anything you think of that can be made out of wood can be custom made.”

Jonas Stoltzfus
Co-founder
Sweet Water Woodworks
Narvon, Pa.
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Does custom cabinetry add significantly to the timeline of the project?

“The timeline varies from one company to another. If cabinets are only being supplied, not installed, then usually the delivery can be made more quickly. However, when dealing with a local cabinet shop it is best to have them do the complete install so if there is a quality control issue or fitment problem it can get remedied right away. You may have longer lead times to accommodate the install schedule, but it is worth the wait if you want more of a concierge service.”

Dan Dilworth
Owner
Dilworth's Custom Design
Phoenixville, Pa.
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Q

What styles are trending in the industry right now?

"Farmhouse is a term used as much as any term I have encountered in my 25 years in the business. [We're seeing] painted cabinets mixed with warmer wood tones to give the rooms a pop of color and warmth, almost leading into an industrial look with dark metals in shelving and framing in pictures or mirrors. The white kitchen with a wood-toned island or hood over the stove can bring in other parts of the home. If the dining room has a darker wood and the thought would be to remove it for something lighter, we can coordinate the wood tones to meld the spaces. If we are in need of a backsplash to pull the design together, we are using tiles with designs on them for added interest in the room. Our sales staff will show you many options to create the look you love."

Steve Matteo

Co-owner
Matteo Family Kitchens
& Flooring Inc.
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Q

Why is glide-out shelving so popular and what kind of problems can it solve in cabinetry?

"Our ShelfGenie glide-out shelving helps with accessibility and organization in any cabinet or pantry. The glide-outs utilize full extension rails so you can easily access your kitchen or bathroom's essentials in your cabinets. There is no more bending over and reaching the back of a dark cabinet to try to find something. Our experienced designers work with the homeowner to collaboratively design how the glide-outs will best meet their needs. We will ask how they use their kitchen, what problems there are and then review our solutions. We will then design a plan together that will exceed all expectations for better accessibility and organization."

Vaughn Hunsicker

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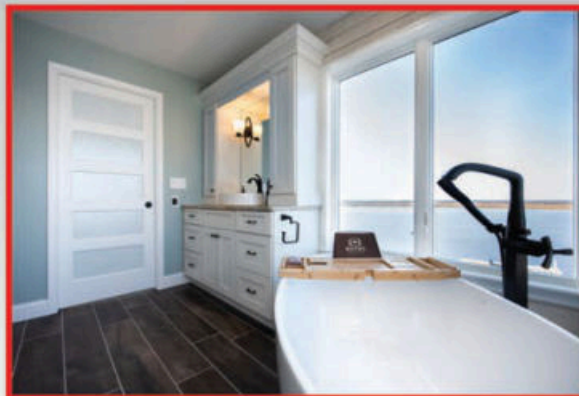
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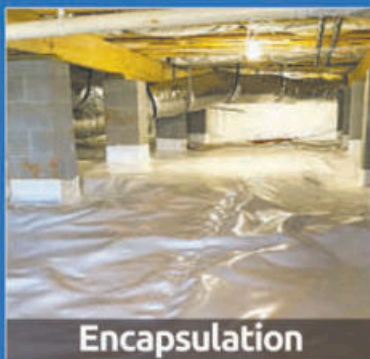
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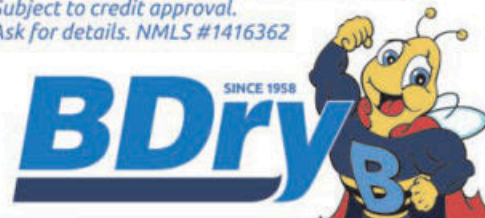
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Crucial Component



Do you think it's important for customers to visit a showroom so they can see different types of cabinetry rather than make choices based on a picture?

"I feel that a hands-on approach that includes touching and seeing the product is far paramount to just seeing it on the internet. Getting a good idea of what you're paying for helps anyone at any price point purchase with confidence. You want to be comfortable with what you're purchasing and what you're investing into your home. Having a real-time feel and real-time interaction not only with the designer but with the product is an important part of the process. (Some prefer] white cabinetry, whether it be a raised panel or more predominantly a shaker style, and it is becoming a timeless look for people in their kitchens. Bold colors have also been on the rise. It all depends on who walks through the door. We see a lot of different flavors, a lot of different ideas and a lot of different interests."

Buddy Ralston

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Restoring

from the Inside Out

New Castle Artisan transforms aging concrete into beautiful surfaces that will last. *by Liz Hunter*

Most home improvement projects come with their share of hassles, from permitting to disrupting daily routines. For this reason, homeowners often put them off. However, New Castle Artisan has a better way.

Family-owned and -operated, New Castle Artisan is helmed by Gwen Kunkel and her brother Paul Randall, who have 30 years of experience in the industry. Its core business is concrete resurfacing, a technique that can breathe new life into almost any existing concrete surface, whether it's your driveway, pool deck or patio. To ensure the project is the right fit for the process, the company offers a free inspection and estimate.

Concrete projects can be invasive on a property, and pouring new concrete doesn't guarantee the same problems won't occur down the line. "Instead of the usual repairs made to cracks, pitting and other issues, our resurfacing allows us to hide all of the repairs in a beautiful, custom upgrade," Kunkel says.

"You avoid all the hassle and mess of the demolition and repouring. With resurfacing, we add designs and carve the cracks into the existing pattern after we repair them, so you've got something that is more valuable financially and aesthetically."

Projects typically take three days to complete and don't require township permits—another headache avoided. Kunkel also says one day of bad weather won't set the project back either. "Each day is independent of each other, so if it rains one day, we extend the project one day. We don't need three consecutive sunny days."

Resurfacing has been used since the 1960s, and if applied properly, it will last a lifetime

with some routine resealing maintenance. "We use polymer cements because they resist erosion. They are absorbed into the existing concrete,

grow spines that expand, creating a new cement surface that is incredibly durable, as well as stain and chemical resistant," says Kunkel.

One of the most important aspects of the product used by New Castle Artisan is that it's naturally textured to be slip resistant, making it an ideal choice for pool decks.

Resurfacing a pool deck also comes with significant cost savings. "Pool decks, as they age, can have movement, creating cracks and unlevel pads. The heavy equipment

required to bring new concrete into a backyard is labor intensive, which makes the cost higher," she says. "On top of that, your landscaping and grass are damaged, your fence has to be taken down—our process is no mess. We use small pieces of hand equipment that can be carried in and out, causing no impact to your landscaping."

There is also a level of artistry with resurfacing. "Our products are applied by hand for a look that can be customized however you would like. We can add colors and sealants to make it look appealing," says Kunkel. "We utilize design to incorporate the repaired cracks into a pattern that can be managed. Should cracks reappear, they are blended within the design. If you try to repair other products, like stamped concrete, you'll never be able to match the color after five years. ...We've perfected this method, not only providing quality installation, but an investment that can always be remedied or managed." **H&H**



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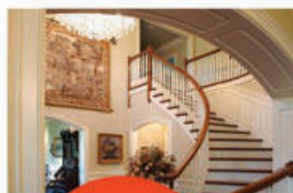
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With just about everyone spending most of their day at home due to the current pandemic, you may start thinking about making changes to your kitchen and bath. Adding an island to make sure every kid fits in the kitchen as they go to school remotely or adding a second sink in the bathroom are some examples of extending your space, updating things you have been putting off and most importantly, adding functionality.

Look no further than F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio to make sense of your space or for a complete makeover. Kitchen and bath are in its name and it's what the company specializes in, but F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio extends beyond kitchens and baths.

"We offer so much more than that," says owner Guy Henri. "We do anything else interior, such as flooring, painting and custom trimwork, and we do recreational rooms, basements and bars. We create rooms and we can turn one room into anything."

What makes F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio stand out is they have every professional under one roof—contractors, electricians, carpenters and plumbers—which means you have less to worry about dealing with many trade professionals.

"We cover everything and you are not running from one store to another. You don't have to run between 10 contractors and you can feel comfortable knowing everyone is on the same page," Henri says.

F+S Kitchen and Bath has a 1,500-square-foot showroom filled with everything from tile, backsplashes and flooring, to sinks, cabinets and vanities in a broad selection of styles—traditional, classic or modern to name a few—and materials from many different manufacturers. Henri and his team are able to put together anything in the showroom to show clients the possibilities that await them for their new space.

Henri says with homeowners spending more time at home, they discover what they were



Finding Functionality

F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio is the one-stop shop for all your remodeling needs. *by Julie Shannon*

missing to make their homes loveable and cozy.

"I'm currently redoing a client's kitchen and his hobby is woodworking. He told me he'd like to have a small desk in the kitchen where he can create designs for his woodwork projects, so we are designing his kitchen that incorporates the island with a desk and it's completely functional," he says.

Functionality carries into the bathroom as well. "One of the biggest complaints I get from customers is they never have enough drawers to put away or hide things," he says. "Many of them want more drawers installed. Having double sinks and adding a linen closet to store towels and other products are other popular requests, and it's partly because everyone is home more now."

When it comes to color, Henri says it's all about the color schemes, and the current trend he's seeing is whites, grays and blues. With the market changing over the years, manufacturers have made more choices available in every color and style.

"Manufacturers have been able to attach the old with the new and make something out of it," he says. "Ten to 20 years ago it was difficult to find the specific look one wanted. Now, the market is seen as very competitive as far as offering specific things. For example, if you want gray, you have many varieties of gray to choose from these days. If you want a darker color, there are many options such as walnuts, chestnuts and mahogany used for modern look items."

A current trend in flooring is full-body porcelain and luxury vinyl plank, especially for those who have pets. "It's pet-friendly, the floor won't scratch and is very durable," Henri says.

Henri prides himself on providing not just the best materials on the market, but the highest quality of care and building trusting relationships with his customers.

"With us, you get honesty from the beginning. We work with you from start to finish and put a budget and design plan together, and there's no pressure. We pay attention to what customers want," he says. "We are not just there to get a buck back, we put the customers' interests first, that's one thing that is very important. We build trusting relationships with all our clients."

"We make customers aware of the process if they aren't prepared and educate them. We give them professional advice and guide them through every step of the way so they can proceed with confidence in their decision-making."

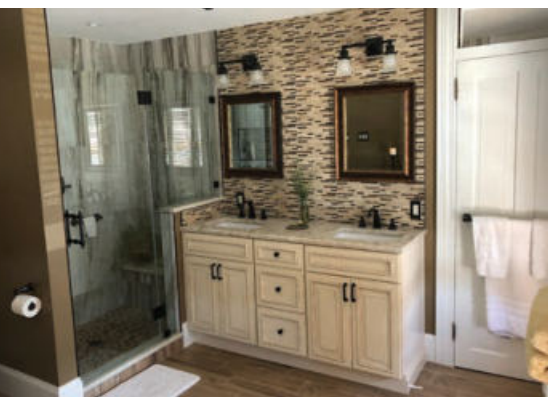
Henri's passion for building and remodeling comes through with every project and customers can see his care, craftsmanship and attention to detail. Helping homeowners achieve their dream house is his main goal.

"I like to do these projects for other people and see them enjoy it. I am passionate about kitchens and baths and every project I do, and my customers see it, too," he says. "When you build for people, it's a joy. I love having the opportunity to help people and see their dream come true."

"We start out as contractors, but leave as family." **H&H**

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Is your home
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SPRING REFRESH

Are you feeling like the exterior of your home is beginning to look tired or dated? Spring provides the ideal opportunity to get your home's exterior into shape with projects that will also give it major curb appeal. Exterior elements like your windows, roof or siding have a certain lifespan both in terms of aesthetic appeal but also durability and integrity. As some of these items wear out over time, it can be beneficial to replace them—and also reap the benefits of the wow factor that a total refresh will create.

Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement says that the exterior of a home is sometimes overlooked. Homeowners often think of renovations in terms of updating their interior spaces. But when it comes to curb appeal and wow factor—an impressive exterior is meaningful. After all, the exterior of your house is the first impression people will have of your home.

“For homeowners who want that ‘wow’ curb appeal, we suggest updating your home with metal roofing, James Hardie siding and Infinity fiberglass windows from Marvin. Not only are these products designed to last a lifetime, but they are designed with aesthetics

in mind,” Parnes says.

Dave Lyons, owner of DNA Roofing & Siding, says that an exterior refresh can completely transform a home.

“Siding replacement will make the exterior look like you have a new house,” Lyons says. “If you’re replacing your siding, it’s also a very good time to replace your windows.”

Joe Cunningham of Roof Maxx of Trenton says that it’s not uncommon for the roof to get overlooked in terms of updating an exterior. But this can be a vital element.

“An often overlooked ‘refresh’ for your home is to get your roof into tip-top shape showing no

discoloration and no moss or mold—which causes uneven dark spots here and there,” he explains. “Your roof makes up over 30 percent of what one sees when viewing your property, so having a good-looking roof improves not only the appearance, but also the value of your home.”

Roof Maxx is a company that helps refresh and extend the life of a home’s roof (not replace it). The company’s roof rejuvenation process will add five years to a roof’s lifespan.

“With Roof Maxx treatments, your roof will benefit in a number of ways,” says Cunningham. “First, before Roof Maxx treats your roof, they’ll repair any issues such as loose shingles, worn boots and unattached flashings. These conditions not only create poor roof appearance, but if left untreated, will lead to roof deterioration and leaks. Second, the Roof Maxx treatment restores the vitality of your shingles, helping them to perform as if they were new. Treated shingles will once again resist rain, wind, curling, cracking, breaking and loss of granules—the tiny beads you may

be finding in your downspouts and gutters as your shingles age. Third, the Roof Maxx treatment generally will restore shingles’ appearance, making them look more like when they were new. Of note, each Roof Maxx treatment provides a five-year transferable warranty.”

EXTERIOR TRENDS

The industry insiders we spoke with are constantly keeping their finger on the pulse of the latest trends. One of the biggest has been a shift toward using higher-quality, longer-lasting products. Homeowners understand that their exterior must stand up to the elements, which include harsh weather, and they want their exterior to continue to look and perform well.

In terms of style, Lyons says that he is seeing darker and more vibrant colors being used in siding choices. More homeowners are looking to make a statement and have that home on the block that stands out—not fades in with every other cookie-cutter choice.

Parnes adds that a trend they’re noticing is black windows with white siding. This is another trend

by **Lindsey Getz**



that really “pops.”

“For a dramatic contrast, we recommend going with Infinity fiberglass windows from Marvin, because the acrylic finish prevents fading and does not chalk like cheap, vinyl windows,” he explains.

REAPING THE BENEFITS

No matter how you go about it, when you update your home’s exterior, you get a brand-new look that you can be proud to show off. But these projects can also help with overall value. Whether you may be considering selling your home in the near or even distant future, you’ll also be pleased to know that these types of upgrades can have a great return on investment (ROI), which is obviously important to homeowners.

“One project with a particularly great ROI is adding a metal roof accent to your home, whether it’s over a bay window or your front porch,” Parnes says. “This design element can separate your home from the rest of the neighborhood.”

Lyons agrees exterior projects can have a strong ROI.

“New windows and siding usually gives you a very good ROI—plus you will also save money on heating and cooling with more high-tech and energy-efficient windows,” he says.

CREATING YOUR “HOME SWEET HOME”

By investing in your home’s exterior, you can create a place

that you’re truly proud to call “home.” This is perhaps one of the greatest benefits of all.

“Curb appeal is more than just a catchphrase,” says Parnes. “It’s a feeling that people get when they see a home and it can absolutely impact the value. The homes that are kept up with are the ones that can truly create that ‘home sweet home’ feeling before someone ever even goes inside. That’s important for not only the home’s overall value but also for the level of enjoyment and appreciation you have living there.”
H&H



RESOURCES

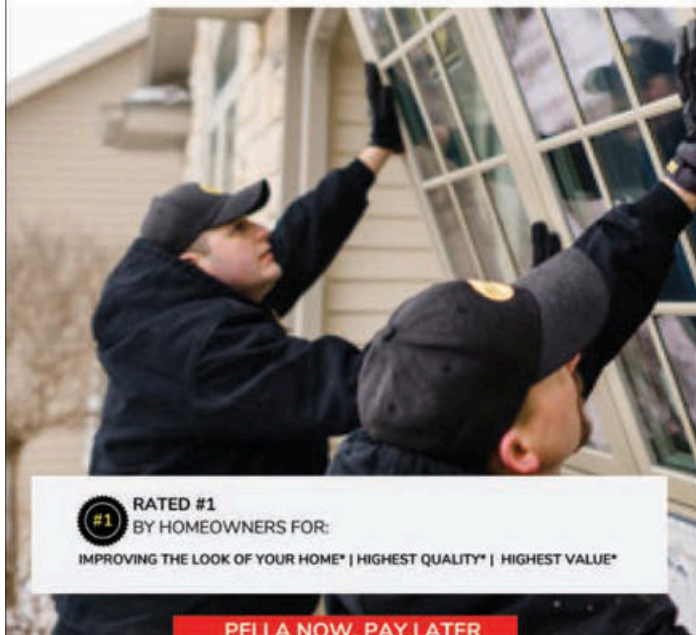
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ask the expert
by Julie Shannon

Monroe & Kent Home

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 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.



Richard Eib,
group chief executive

WHEN SHOULD PEOPLE START GETTING THEIR 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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