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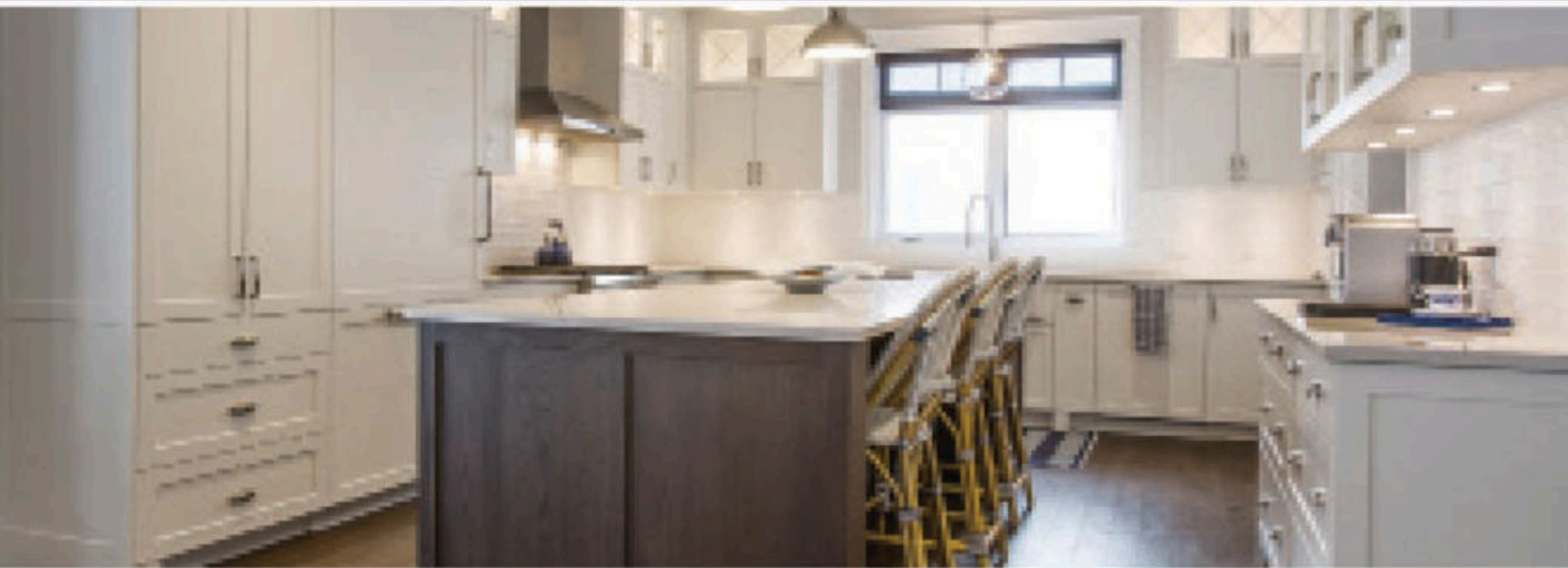
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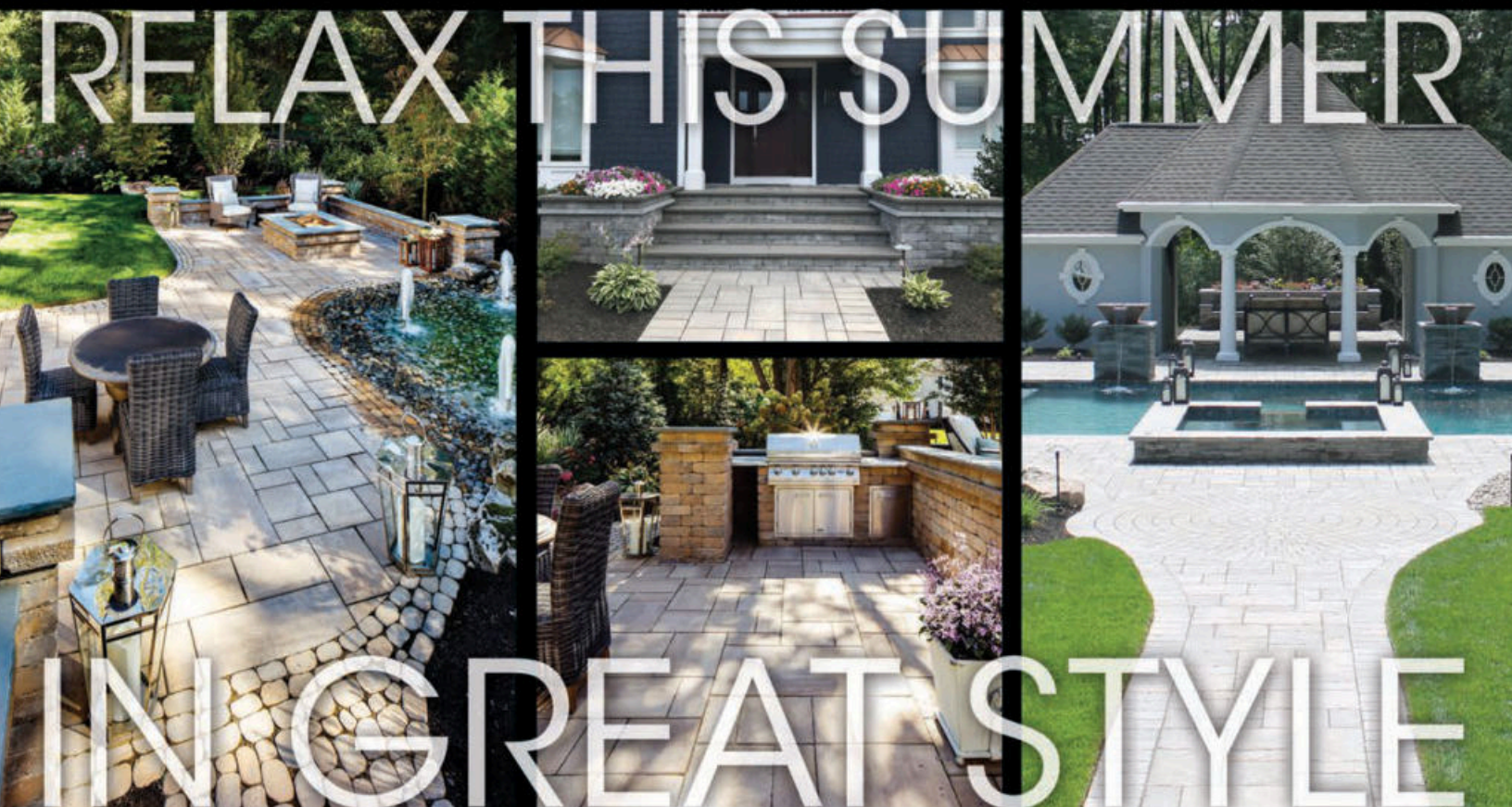
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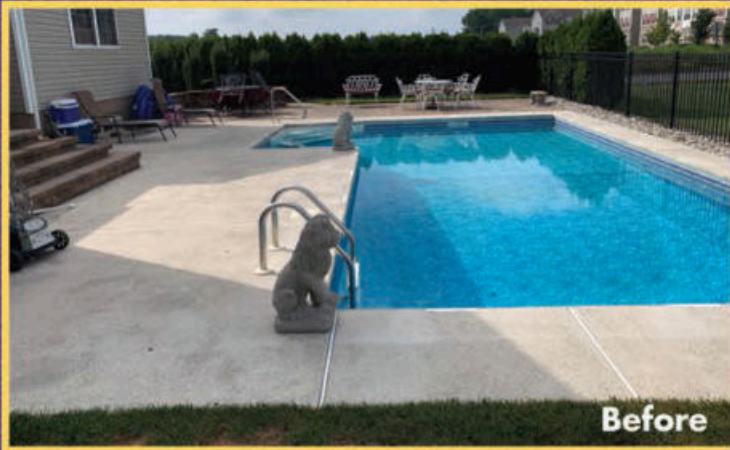


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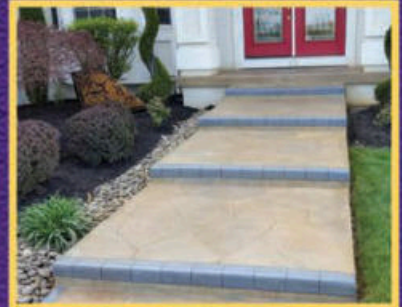
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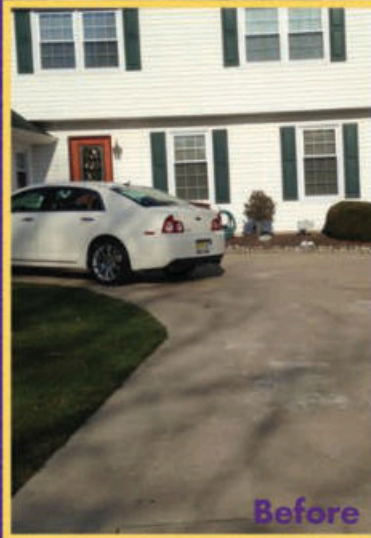
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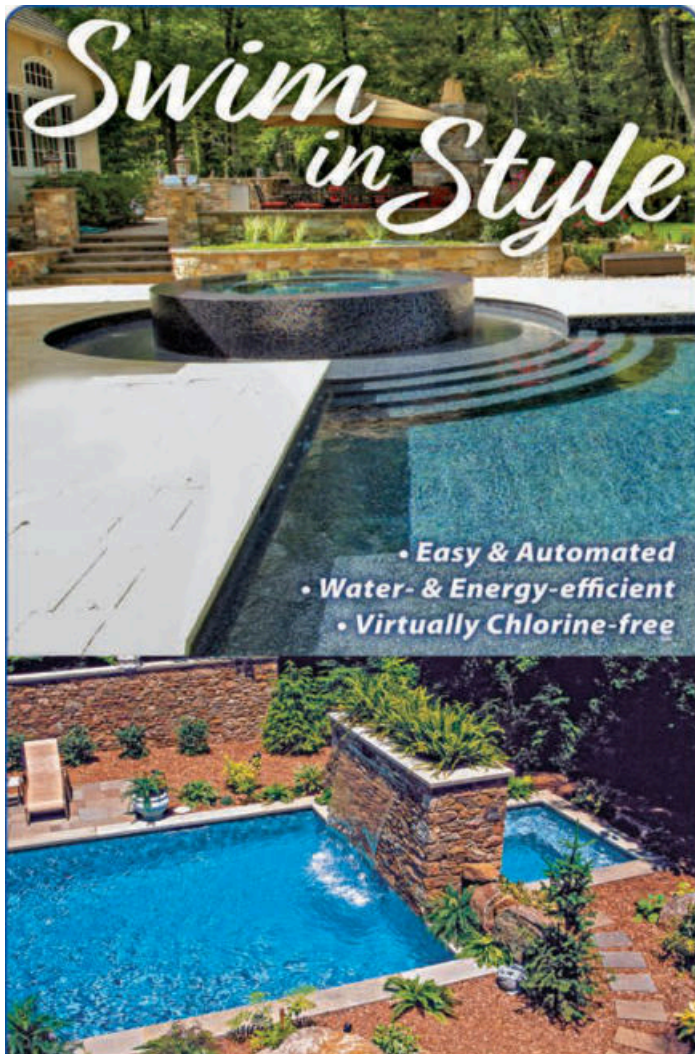
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National Sales Office:

HOUSE & HOME Magazine, LLC

700 E. Main St.

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Phone: 610-272-3120 x304 Fax: 610-272-2805

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your outdoor project destination

A visit to Sequoia Out Back puts homeowners on their way to the backyard paradise they've always dreamed of.



For years, outdoor living spaces have been one of the hottest trends in home improvement projects.

However, the past few months have shown that they are not a trend, but an absolute necessity. Homeowners have spent the majority of their spring and summer at home, and by all accounts, fall will bring more of the same, which is why you owe yourself a trip to Sequoia Out Back.

The 30,000-square-foot showroom has no comparison on the East Coast. The website doesn't even do it justice. An in-person visit feels like you are walking through a vision board of your favorite clippings and pins. It's the perfect spot to forget about the news in the world and daydream about the things you

could be enjoying in your own backyard.

"People will come to check our showroom out just for the experience," owner John Keller says. "There's nothing like it anywhere, so it's worth the trip for sure. No one who makes a long trip to get here is ever disappointed."

Sequoia Supply—one of the premier retailers of decking and railing products in the country—opened in 1998 and 10 years later it evolved into Sequoia Out Back, offering everything imaginable for outdoor living.

Dozens upon dozens of displays are set up in the showroom complete with decking, railings, furniture and a faux-blue sky overhead to give customers a genuine feeling about the products. The goal of the showroom was to

make it as life-like as possible. Displays are the size of the decks you would build in your own backyard to help customers get a good idea of how it will look and feel on their own home.

The showroom has been updated with the latest and greatest products on the market. In terms of decking, Sequoia works with all of the leading manufacturers—such as Trex, TimberTech, Wolf, Zuri and Fiberon—who continue to develop different styles and dazzling colors. Keller is also excited about the new composite boards being offered that are closer in price to pressure-treated wood.

"Trex and TimberTech came out with new composites at a lower price point that we have installed in our showroom. In addition to

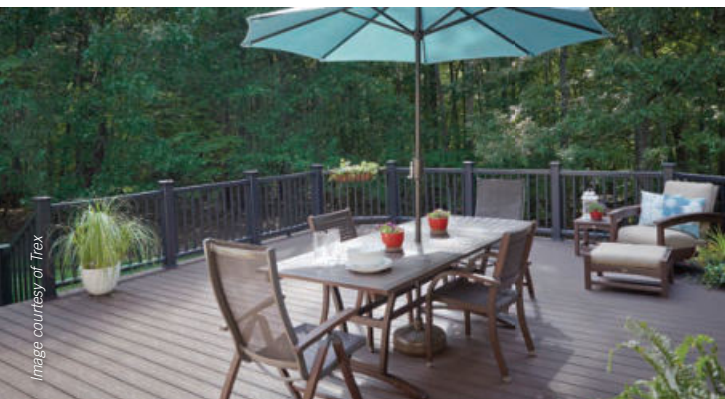
This stunning outdoor project showcases the range of products Sequoia Out Back supplies, including the decking, railings, outdoor kitchen and furniture.

Deck by Amazing Decks

being aesthetically pleasing, homeowners are drawn to these composites because there's a lot less maintenance than with pressure-treated wood," he adds.

Once finished, Sequoia has all of the amenities and furnishings for your deck or patio.

That includes beautiful furniture from



popular brands in all price points like Gensun, Tropitone, Winston, Lane Venture, Pride, Woodard and many more. Fire pits and outdoor kitchens continue to be in demand for outdoor living spaces, and all of the necessary components can be found at Sequoia, such as a full line of grills and smokers. No outdoor space is complete without a shade element, and Sequoia has you

covered with pergolas that not only add relief from the sun but an attractive design element as well.

The pandemic has resulted in some supply chain issues as most manufacturers shut down, and now demand has increased as people are working on these spaces. To avoid any delay in their project, customers are encouraged to put their orders in as soon as possible.

Sequoia welcomes customers of every type, from those looking to start a DIY project to those who have been sent by their contractor to make product selections. A knowledgeable and friendly staff is on hand to answer any and all questions.

"We can handle products for any scale of project, from a full backyard design like the one pictured above—with everything from the decking, pavers, pool house amenities and all of the furniture—to a simple deck on the back of a townhome where a family can enjoy a meal together," Keller says. "Most people need help and we are here to guide each one every step of the way. Backyards are big right now—everybody wants to be outside. We want to help them get the relaxing space they desire." **H&H**



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It gives homeowners the perfect place to take in some fresh air, bask in the sun and gather with family and friends for burgers and dogs on the grill or perhaps a strawberry daiquiri or two.

While that remains a popular visual, the fact is that decks are no longer just for summer. As the outdoor industry has exploded in recent years, so too have the possibilities for extended enjoyment. It is now more important to add certain elements to the space that will make it usable well into the cooler months—and maybe even year-round.

“Especially if you’re spending the kind of money that our clients do, you want to get the most out of it,” says Bradley Sensenich of Keystone Custom Decks. “Bringing in features and ideas that can extend the usable season of that space is a big priority.”

Keith Frederick of Environmental Landscape Associates adds that designers have had to adapt to customers’ wants and needs and approach every job with the mission of providing a space that can be enjoyed at all times.

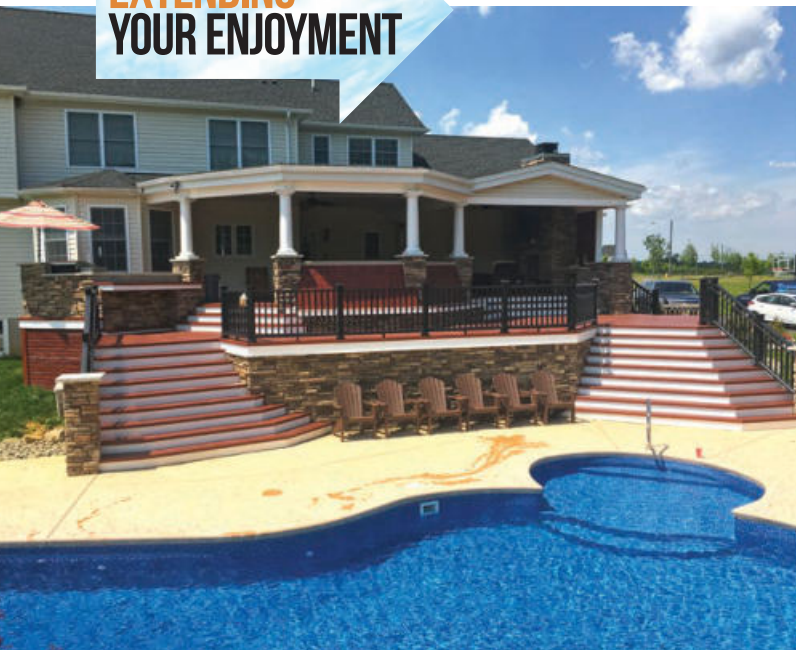
“It’s not just a simple deck project anymore; it’s more like a porch or three-season room,” he says. “It’s all based on the outdoor living lifestyle of utilizing the space 365 days a year, even if you’re not hanging out there for a long period of time. If you’re having a holiday party in the wintertime, people can still congregate out there and smoke cigars without freezing. We see a lot of our projects encompass those elements and a lot of folks are using them on a year-round basis. It gives you much more value for the dollar spent because you

YMENT

YOUR DECK WAY BEYOND THE SUMMER.

Photo courtesy of Keystone Custom Decks

EXTENDING YOUR ENJOYMENT



get a lot more.”

House & Home spoke with several area professionals to learn more about the options available for utilizing outdoor living spaces no matter what the calendar says.

TAKE COVER

Bill Lecorchick Jr. followed his father into the deck-building industry and now works side by side with him at Legends Home Improvements. One of the many tips he learned from his dad is that nothing adds as much value to a deck as a roof.

“The longer I do this, the more I believe it,” Lecorchick says. “In most backyards there’s no shade, so when you go outside the sun is beating down. You get an umbrella but that acts like a sun dial; you’re just following the shade. It’s a losing battle because you can’t put up enough umbrellas to make it usable.

“When you put up a roof and attach it to the house, it gives you automatic shade and you have the option of putting some blinds up for when sun is coming in through the side. If you set them up strategically and you know where the sun is going to be, you can enjoy dinner outside without getting blasted by the sun.”

Juan Cardona of Archadeck of Chester County agrees and estimates that at least half of the projects his company completes include some type of shade structure.

“If you’re looking for shade, I would say go with a roof,” he says. “A pergola is only going to offer you minimal shade unless you put a retractable awning underneath it or another method of solid shade. By the time you get done with that, the cost approaches that of a roof anyway. The roof is much more preferable because it keeps you dry in addition to giving you shade. If it’s a rainy day or a somewhat iffy day, you can always be under it, whereas with a pergola you really can’t.”

Both Lecorchick and Cardona believe that pergolas can add a nice focal point to a deck or other area of a backyard. The same holds true of a gazebo—just don’t expect the same advantages of a roof.

“A gazebo is mostly for people who cannot attach a roof to the house,” Cardona says. “They’re looking for solid shade, they’re looking for someplace to stay dry, but for whatever reason they cannot attach a roof to the house, perhaps because of how

the house is configured. Or maybe they just prefer a gazebo; some people like the distinct, octagonal shape of a gazebo. It can be a matter of aesthetics.”

AN OUTDOOR ROOM

The roof is the necessary first step, but it doesn’t have to end there. “You can also throw some screens on so there’s no sun and no mosquitoes,” Lecorchick says. “If you do glass windows instead of the screens and put in some heaters, you can be out there just about all year. You can just keep upgrading.”

There are several routes a homeowner can take depending on budget and lifestyle.

“Screen rooms and covered structures are extremely popular today,” says Joe Kalnas of My Deck. “We can install drop screens for an instant screen room under a roof structure or build a permanent screened-in area. We also offer a 4-track system that opens for 75 percent ventilation and still can close to keep out the rain, snow and pollen in the spring.”

Both Sensenich and Frederick have done home projects with retractable screens or windows like the ones common in outdoor seating areas at restaurants. Although a bit on the pricey side, these can be motorized or manual and allow the homeowner to easily adapt to the current weather conditions.

As for keeping the space warm in the fall and spring, there are a number of different heating sources.

“It depends on what the goal of the client is and how extensively they’re looking to heat the space,” Sensenich says. “If they’re just looking to spend time in the early fall, a fireplace is a great way to heat the space. If they’re looking to really extend the usability of their deck, a lot of times we’ll open the conversation up to installing actual heaters into the space. We do a lot of infrared heaters and that tends to heat up the room well.”

Infrared heaters can be mounted on the ceiling or the walls and Frederick offers a key suggestion.

“We typically use electric for residential applications,” he says. “Most commercial and restaurant applications use gas just because they’re usually burning for extended periods of time, whereas in residential applications you’re usually out there for an hour or two. It’s not like you need that space heated for an entire night or an entire day. It’s more economical to run the electric if



Top photo courtesy of Legends Home Improvements. Bottom photo courtesy of Archadeck of Chester County

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TIME FOR ACTION

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been crippling for many industries, construction is not one of them, particularly when it comes to outdoor living spaces. Just about every professional contacted for this article reported an uptick in business this summer, with Sensenich calling it "our busiest year by far."

"Everyone is spending much more time at home," Kalnas says, "so it makes sense that people are investing in their home."

Lecorchick points to people using their tax refunds and money saved from not eating out to update their spaces. Vacations have also been replaced by staycations. "If your new office is your kitchen table and you're staring out the door all day, you're paying a lot of attention to your yard. That's why we've been working the whole time and still have appointments scheduled for August."

"That's very much true this year," Cardona concludes. "Since people can't go on their regular vacation to the Caribbean or wherever they normally go, they have decided to upgrade their

outdoor space and vacation there. The way the market has reacted after COVID, that seems to be the case. People are home, they're looking at their outdoor spaces and they're looking to fix them up." **H&H**



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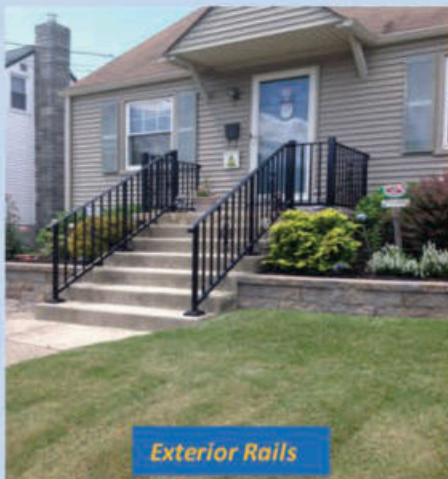


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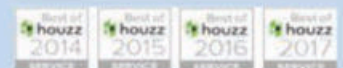
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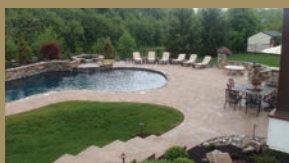
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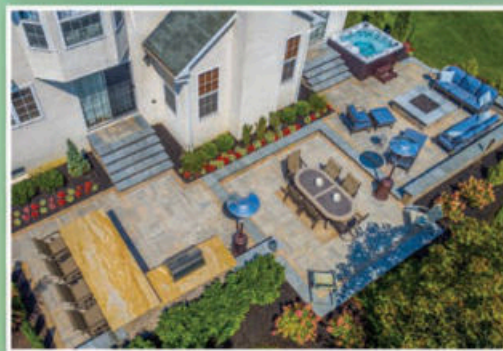
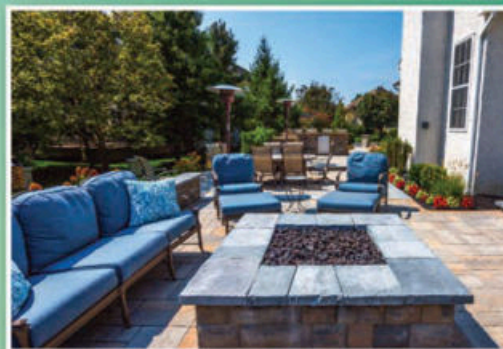
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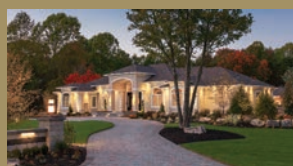


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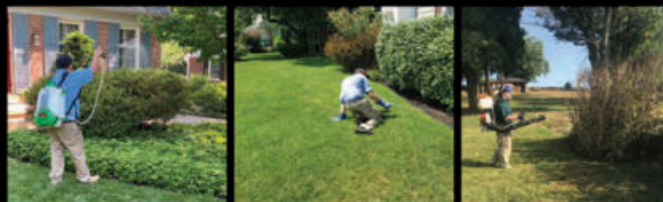


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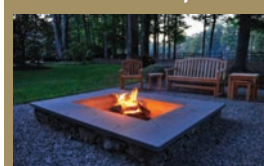
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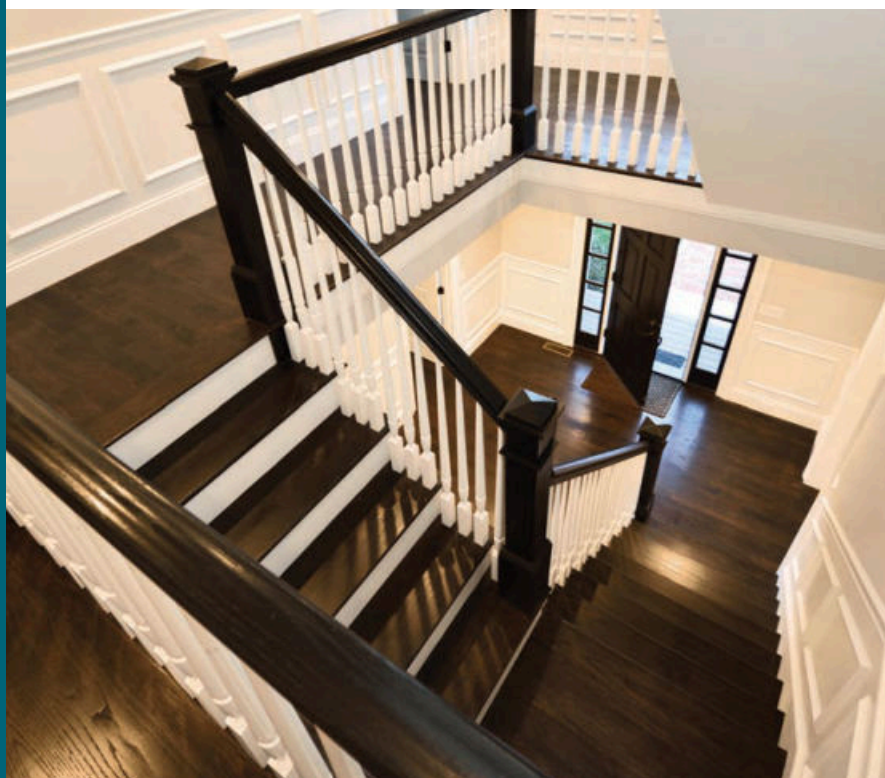
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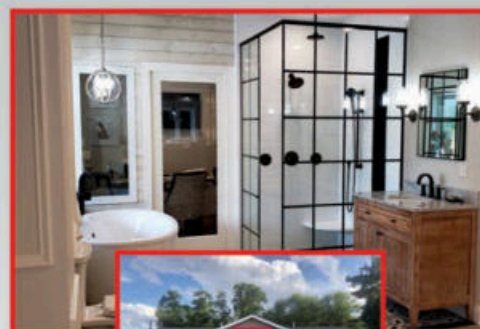
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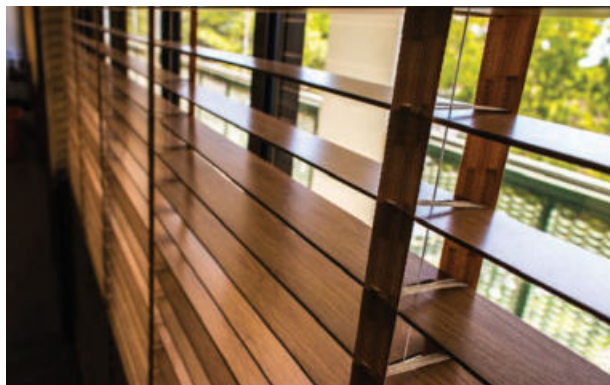


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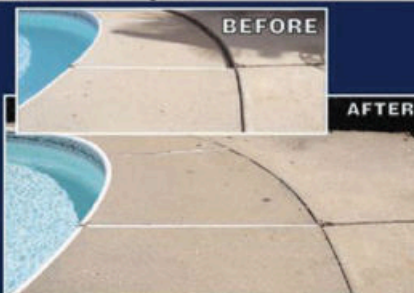
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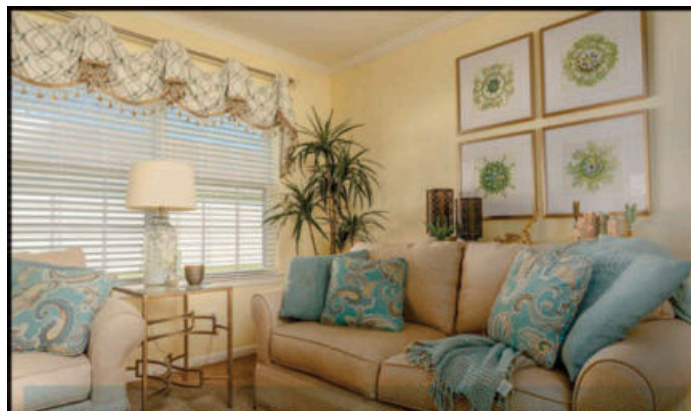
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New Castle Artisan

by Brittany Ann Morrissey

Over the years, harsh weather can cause cracks and other damage on a home's concrete surfaces. Homeowners may put off repairs due to cost concerns, but replacing that concrete is not always the answer. Gwen Kunkel, owner of New Castle Artisan, can breathe new life into your existing surfaces—whether it's your driveway, pool deck, patio; practically any concrete surface around your home—with improved products and techniques. *House & Home* spoke with Kunkel about the economic and aesthetic value of concrete resurfacing.

Why would someone want to resurface concrete versus replacement?

The benefit of resurfacing is instead of just fixing a problem like cracking, pitting or damage from mold, you can make a home improvement. Right now if you have concrete that's cracked or un-level, you can repair or replace it with new concrete, but you'll just have new concrete. It doesn't increase the curb appeal of your home. It doesn't increase the value of your home. With resurfacing, we add design and we carve the cracks into the existing pattern after we repair them, so you've got something that looks like you spent money to do a home improvement and not just a home repair. That makes it more valuable financially and aesthetically.



Gwen Kunkel and brother Paul Randall of New Castle Artisan

Why do you use polymer cements?

Our polymer cements are the best alternative for exterior projects because they resist erosion. Applied properly, they do not peel, flake or delaminate. 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.

How much experience do you have?

We've been doing projects for 28 years in the South Jersey area.

How long does your work last?

Resurfacing has been around since the 1960s. It is not new technology but I have personally had jobs down for over 25 years in South Jersey. We offer a two-year warranty that can be extended. If the bond is done properly, it will last a lifetime with some routine resealing maintenance.

You also resurface pool decks. How cost effective is that?

The cost to rip out and replace a pool deck is usually considerably more than resurfacing. Being that most pools are located in the backyard, just the concrete can cost up to 35 percent more because they have to wheelbarrow it in, which is labor intensive.

Will it ruin my landscaping or grass?

No. As a matter of fact, aside from it being beautiful, you wouldn't even know we were there. You don't have to take down any fences. We don't use any heavy equipment. Everything we bring is carried in and carried out, so your landscaping looks exactly the same.

Can you tell me about your flooring solutions for garages, basements and shower rooms?

Polymer cements are good interior options because they're highly durable and water resistant, which is great for basements and garages. Our products are applied by hand for a unique artistic touch that can be customized however you would like. We offer various styles from simple solid color flooring to textured finishes comparable to brick or natural stone.

What about your fireplace services and accent walls?

In the winter when we cannot be outside resurfacing exteriors, we do like to take on fireplace and accent wall projects. In as little as one day, we can transform an old brick fireplace to look like a beautiful stone custom centerpiece for your home. The same with our accent walls that can be designed to match existing decor or we can create a new style completely. **H&H**

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Summer Space

Summer is in full swing and chances are, you want to spend every spare moment outdoors. Wouldn't it be nice to simply enjoy your outdoor space without having to worry about keeping it looking good?

Enter Gill's Landscaping. An industry leader in South Jersey for more than 30 years, Gill's Landscaping has carved out a niche as the consummate full-service landscaping and maintenance company in the region, transforming yards into lush landscapes with blooming flowers, perfectly manicured trees and shrubs, tranquil ponds and accent lighting as a finishing touch.

Whether you require a comfortable garden or an outdoor entertaining space complete with a kitchen or a poolscaping project, Gill's can tackle projects large and small, including landscaping, irrigation, hardscaping and more.

One of the biggest differentiators with Gill's is the fact that they don't subcontract any work. "From start to finish, from design to the final piece of mulch, your project is done 100 percent through Gill's," says owner Brian Gill.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people are misguided by the 'fly-by-night' operations that offer to do the job 'at a great price,'" he continues. Gill's Landscaping's customer-oriented design process is meant to produce the best long-term implementation of a customer's vision. That's how they consistently produce results they can be proud of today, and customers can be proud of for many, many years.

Gill's offers free consultations with certified horticulturalists and landscape designers to help clients with the details of the space. They suggest ideas that can

make the space unique to a homeowner's style of house based on their expertise. "It's important that our customers are never left out of any step in the process of their project," says Brian Gill. "Collaboration with the client is key."

Ed Swietanski, Gill's sales manager, says, "We first want to meet with the client at their home and walk through the property. We'll discuss their vision for the space and bounce around ideas. This initial meeting should not be one-sided. We want the customer's interaction. It's important to know what they like, and probably just as important to know what they don't like. We're here to solve a problem, which might be adding curb appeal or replacing plants that have not grown properly. We'll put together a plan with materials we know will do well on your particular property."

Gill's wants to create a successful harmony of plantlife and outdoor living areas.

"Our goal is to create visual interest throughout the year," says Swietanski. "We don't want to create a static landscape that never changes. We try to choose materials that will bloom at different times. You might have a rose bush blooming in the summer, but then in the fall something else is providing that life and color to the yard."

"We're also doing a lot of hardscaping, replacing walkways with paver materials from Techo-Bloc or EP Henry. LED night lighting is also another popular feature that is becoming more economical and adds visual interest at night."

One of the most important aspects of any landscaping project is the materials used. Gill's ensures that each customer receives only the highest quality plant and bedding materials, says

Swietanski. "Inferior materials and mulch can lead to gardens with a short life expectancy and beds filled with unsightly weeds. Repair and replacements for shoddy work end up costing the customer more in the long term."

Gill's prides itself on educating clients on the best flower, plant and tree options for their specific property to ensure they will last for years to come.

"We treat every yard like it's our own," says Brian Gill. "Curb appeal is everything, especially if you're thinking of selling your home, and we will use the best quality products and plants that will thrive for decades."

Swietanski adds that it is important for anyone considering hiring a landscaper to check they are certified and licensed. Gill's Landscaping maintains a New Jersey Home Improvement Contractors License, DEP Pesticide License and an IANJ Irrigation license to ensure quality service and much-needed expertise.

That experience truly sets Gill's apart. "We have a full staff in the office to answer calls or questions, and Ed and the guys in the field are dedicated and knowledgeable." The company makes sure all of its staff take continuing education courses and are properly certified in all aspects of the job.

Gill says he attributes much of the company's success to hard work and determination, but he puts a bigger emphasis on the commitment and dedication of his staff. "For any business to succeed, you need to surround yourself with good people," he says. "My staff is the backbone of this company and my customers always have nothing but good things to say about them and I truly appreciate everything they bring to the business." **H&H**

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An Elite Outdoor Space

Using advanced technology, **Elite Landscaping** can virtually create their clients' landscape design down to the last detail. *by Kaytlyn Mroz*



For over 30 years, Elite Landscaping has been creating and constructing well thought-out and intricate landscapes for customers in the Delaware Valley. To say their customers have been satisfied would be an understatement. As one of South Jersey's premier full-service landscape design and installation firms, it's no wonder why their phones are ringing off the hook.

When clients come to Elite wanting a new design for their outdoor space, the firm's first step is to evaluate the site. Michael Pasquarello, a degreed landscape architect at Elite Landscaping, says they want to highlight any limiting factors which may be present on the property that need to be considered in the overall plan. Drainage and water flow on the property, town building and zoning codes, soil status and the client's "wish list" for the project are all things that need to be considered.

The next step is sketching out the design to show all of the possibilities in your new landscape. "Exterior landscape/hardscape design is a very fluid, ever evolving process which should not be rushed," says Pasquarello. "Spaces will be sketched out to allow for all 'wish list' elements to be accounted for and located. This will help spatially in deciding what can be incorporated and what can't."

Finally, the sketch is converted into the final site plan. "The conceptual images are now drawn in at the exact dimensions of the proposed project. This is the plan which will be used for construction, so precision is key," says Pasquarello. "All structures, hard surfaces, bed

lines, plant material, etc. are specified on these plans."

What's more, Elite goes a step further for their clients before any type of construction even begins. "For those who have trouble envisioning these overhead site plans, 3D imagery—and even virtual reality—experiences are available to create a realistic representation of what the project will look like before a shovel is even put into the ground," says Pasquarello.



"3D imagery—and even virtual reality—experiences are available to create a realistic representation of what the project will look like before a shovel is even put into the ground."

—Michael Pasquarello,
a degreed landscape architect at Elite Landscaping

"Specific vantage points can be manipulated and viewed through these images."

Since the majority of outdoor entertainment spaces that Elite creates can contain many elements that fall under township regulations and state construction codes, permits are first submitted to the municipality before construction begins. But prior to any excavation, Pasquarello says Elite has a utility mark-out come in and locate any buried gas, electric, cable, phone or water lines on the property. Once these steps are finalized, excavation and construction can begin.

"Typically any necessary footings or base materials are installed first followed by masonry elements, wood/composite structures, or segmental concrete pavers and wall systems," says Pasquarello. "When all of the hardscape elements are complete the finishing touches of landscape beds and lawn areas are added."

So how have Elite's designs and landscapes grown to the top of everyone's radar?

Pasquarello says he strives for "straight F, F, Fs." These are food, fire and fluidity.

"Grills, warmers, side burners, refrigerators, sinks, ice makers, pizza ovens and even beer meisters can all come together within your patio space," says Pasquarello. Incorporating fire into outdoor spaces has sky-rocketed over the last five years making it more and more popular in Pasquarello's designs in the form of outdoor fireplaces, fire pits or another element of fire. "Wood, natural gas or propane can all be used to fuel your inferno based upon preference," says Pasquarello.

And lastly, the sound of flowing water has a calming effect which can be a tranquil addition to any outdoor space, says Pasquarello. "Waterfalls, fountains and ponds each have their own unique attributes in providing this soothing atmosphere."

But if you think landscape design and construction is where the buck stops with Elite, think again. While their firm is definitely known for their vast designs of beautiful outdoor landscapes and con-

structing them effortlessly, Elite is a full-service landscape firm. Offering continued property maintenance such as cutting, pruning and cleanups, irrigation systems, fertilization, outdoor LED landscape lighting, holiday décor and more, Elite is well-equipped to handle all of your outdoor needs.

"Elite Landscaping also has a tree division with certified arborists capable of diagnosing disease/insect problems and determining if a tree can be saved with corrective measures or if it must be taken down," says Pasquarello.

Whether it's a complete redesign of your already existing outdoor space, some add-ons to really make your yard an extension of your home or maintenance that you are looking for, Elite Landscaping is the firm that can make it all happen.

"Put down those mobile devices [and] take a step back from the everyday grind," says Pasquarello. "Allow Elite Landscaping to bring you back outdoors again to enjoy the possibilities your property has to offer." **H&H**

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Fall Facelift

Experts recommend the latest innovations in curb appeal.

BY LIZ HUNTER



As fall approaches, homeowners are looking beyond their outdoor spaces when it comes to improvements.

Exterior projects such as siding, roofing, windows, doors and more can bring a boost in curb appeal, as well as extra protection for colder temperatures. Shopping around at this time of year could put you ahead of schedule, say experts.

Ben Weaver, general manager of Alderfer Glass Company, says repairs should never be delayed, but now is a great time to consider replacements. "On replacement, the best time is actually prior to fall as there is a lead time involved with ordering windows and doors, so late fall consultations will likely be installed going into the winter," he says. "We actually don't mind installing in the winter, and homeowners can find shorter lead times and good purchase options, but if looking for a fall replacement we actually encourage consumers to be shopping in the summer."



With the current boom in the real estate market, those who are thinking of selling will find a great return for these projects. "More and more, homeowners are realizing the difference exterior home improvements can make on resale value. The term 'curb appeal' is not just a catch phrase, it's what buyers see when they first look at your home from the curb of the house," says Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement.

process is thorough. "Our process from start to finish includes roof deck protection with GAF Deck Armor, which is used under the shingles and provides protection from wind-driven rain and trapped moisture; leak barrier, starter strip shingles, Cobra attic ventilation and ridge cap shingles."

When researching companies to handle a roof, Ianelli says to ensure they are not subcontracting the work. "You can't



Roofing Systems

The advancements in roofing systems make this one of the most important upgrades to a home.

As Chris Fontana, co-owner of Magnolia Home Remodeling Group, says, "A roof is a solid umbrella over a house, offering protection primarily, but also aesthetics in the various colors and styles available."

Where previous roofing systems had a 25- to 30-year lifespan, the standard now is 50 years.

Mike Ianelli, owner of M&J Roofing, has been installing roofs for almost 20 years. He can tell the age of a roof just by looking at it, and comes across the same issues in older roofs. "The previous generation did not install a water and ice shield or put ventilation on the roof. That causes humidity to build up leading to condensation and shingle damage," he says.

The leading roof manufacturer in North America is GAF. Ianelli says these products come with a 50-year warranty and have a host of colors to choose from. He says the installation

compare quotes apples to apples. If they are cheaper, they are probably forfeiting something," Ianelli adds.

Windows and Doors

If energy efficiency is a concern, Weaver says windows and doors should be at the top of your list. "A lot of energy can be lost through poorly sealing doors, or deteriorating old windows. If I had to rank between the two, probably windows are the most important as the typical home has many more window openings than door openings," he says.

Among the most common issues in aging windows is fogged glass. "This is a common problem as windows do have a service life, and a lot of windows installed in the last 20 years have some lower quality insulated glass installed in them. It is something that is very difficult to 'see' or evaluate when purchasing a home, particularly if the windows seem 'new,'" says Weaver.

"Failing windows can be for a number of reasons depending

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on age, but even some newer vinyl windows have lock and balance issues, trouble raising and lowering, or warped frames and poor installation(s). If a homeowner is noticing a draft or actual cold/warm air to the touch, and can feel moving air, this is something that should definitely be evaluated fairly promptly," he continues.

Parnes says windows are a great project for homeowners looking to add beauty and efficiency to their home. "Infinity from Marvin has a 100-percent fiberglass frame which is eight times stronger than vinyl. This allows for thinner, more narrow frames, adding more natural light and style to your home," he says.

A new entry door can also make a dramatic difference in your home's appearance. Michael Esh, field manager for E&E Contracting, says ProVia doors are a product with a lot going for it.

"We have a division devoted entirely to windows and doors and ProVia entry doors are one of the best in the nation with several

things that set them apart from competitors," Esh says. Each door can be customized in terms of size, shape and style. Esh says the doors are constructed of fiberglass, with high-quality insulation materials and structure, with a real-wood look.

"These doors have a 10-year finish warranty and they are just more solid than a typical entry door," he says. "They have incredible design and stain options, and decorative glass. Over the last 10 to 15 years of installing these, we've seen fewer issues and fewer repairs."

Siding, Stucco & Stone Veneer

When it comes to the largest surface area of your home's exterior, the most popular choice is vinyl siding. "Right now, there is a push for vinyl siding. It's super versatile and is an alternative to repainting," says Fontana.

His company works with a product called Prodigy from Alside. "It's a one-piece insulated vinyl



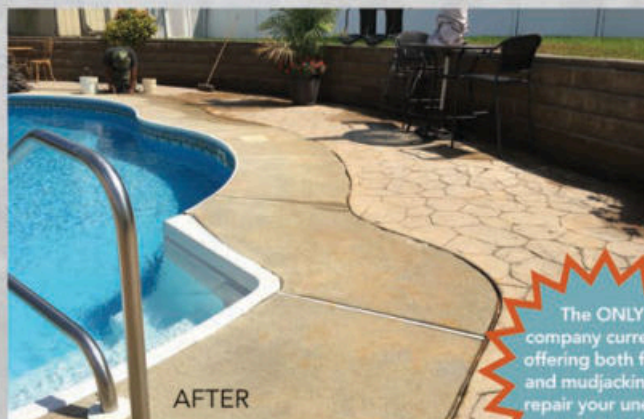
siding product," he says. "Customers are looking for low- or no-maintenance exterior solutions, and the insulation is an additional benefit with the siding to help lower energy costs."

Esh says James Hardie fiber cement siding is well known to the general homeowner and used in a lot of higher-end communities, but another product, LP Smart Side, has been gaining traction.

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“We’re excited about this product. It’s wood-based siding that is soaked with a mixture of waxes and resins to keep any termites or rotting at bay, and it resists woodpeckers,” he says. “It looks like wood but does not have the weaknesses of traditional wood siding.”

Stucco is another prevalent material on home exteriors in this area. Esh says stucco remediation is a main source of E&E’s work. “Not every stucco home has problems but if stucco was installed on top of wood framing and incorrectly flashed, this scenario invites water,” he says. “Since stucco is a full done facade, there’s no air movement and no drainage, which causes slowly rotting issues that can be hidden from the naked eye for years.”

As this damage continues, it will make its way to the facade of the home. Esh says water and moisture come out in the form of the black stains on stucco, indicating there is rotted or damaged wood creating the stain coming out with water.

Stucco can be removed and reinstalled, but Esh says a majority of people are shying away from it and choosing to go with vinyl siding.

For a truly appealing aesthetic, stone veneer can create a dramatic effect. Esh says they install a lot of Brandywine natural stone veneer, which is real stone cut into thin slabs. “This doesn’t fade like manufactured stone will over time to some degree. Manufactured stone is a good choice but natural stone is an amazing product and popular recently,” he says. “There are keys to know about installation, including correct flashing and house underlayment for proper drainage to allow water to drain and air to flow through to dry it out.”

Stone veneer can be installed as an accent up the entire front of a home or just up to the second floor, or over a porch to highlight the gable. Esh says the combination of siding and stone veneer can make for a truly stunning design. **H&H**



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Brian Iwano, owner

What new trends are there in your industry?

The overarching theme for all of the remodeling calls we've gotten in the last two months address the question: "How can we make better use of this space?" Whether it's inside or outside, our customers are trying to make the most of what they have. Some of what our customers are looking for includes small additions to add family gathering and workspace, and modifying interior layouts to improve utilization/flow. We've also experienced a significant increase in calls for large outdoor living space projects.

Why should a homeowner invest in their home now?

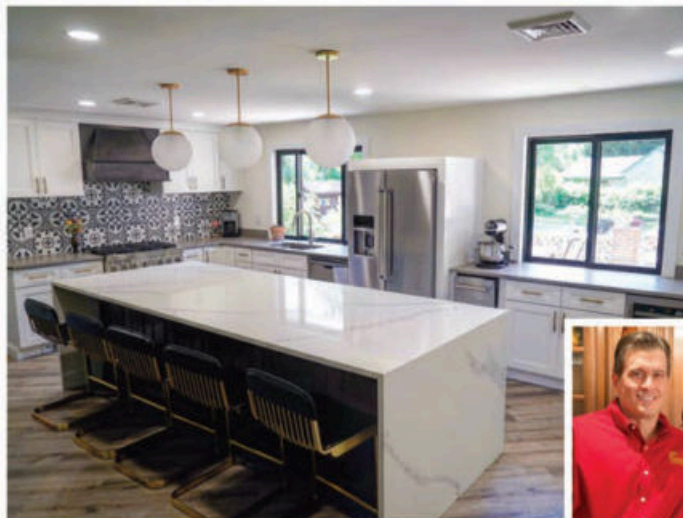
Many things have changed. We don't really know what will remain as it is today, what will "go back to normal," or what will change again. One thing (and possibly the only thing) we can all do as homeowners is make the best of the space we have and take care of the ones closest to us. Yes, our homes should be a place of comfort, rest and refuge. But today, our homes are a place of work, school, exercise; and—

if you have enough kids like we do—food service operations.

Why should a homeowner choose you for their next project?

Our utmost priority is to care for our customers, before, during and after the project. We're homeowners too, so we try to treat our customers in a way that we would like to be treated. You deserve a space that feels like home. We can help guide you.

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Designs byLou and
Wendy Amiano**What makes you the best in your industry while separating you from your competitors?**

This year we feel like our new showroom is going to be what truly separates us moving forward. The new showroom, with more space for product displays and live product selections, complements our process. Our design-heavy process created by Lou Amiano methodically leads homeowners through the overwhelming design process right down to the hardware that will go into the project. Our detailed design process helps to set our production team up for success. It also gives the homeowner a solid contract with pricing so there are no surprises or allowances to go over.

How does it feel to be recognized among House & Home's Best of Winners?

We feel accomplished. Lou and I have worked so hard to create unique processes for internal and external needs. When our clients recognize those efforts you gain a sense of accomplishment.

What keeps you motivated every day to do the work you do?

Our staff! We were once told we get too attached to our employees and need to step back from that. We never did. We are a small family-owned company. We are used to working together as a family unit and to be able to work that same way with our staff

gives us the motivation we need to succeed for our "Team Amiano" as well as our clients. A lot of thought and hard work went into the new showroom. We partnered with our manufacturers and suppliers to bring a complete design experience to the public.

What do you find most rewarding about this industry?

The most rewarding thing is creating a finished product that is visually amazing and having the knowledge that people will go into that space and enjoy a new beginning in their home together.

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