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Volume 24, Issue 6

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Matteo Family Kitchens & Flooring

The latest kitchen remodeling trends

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All Decked Out

The many ways to enhance your outdoor living space

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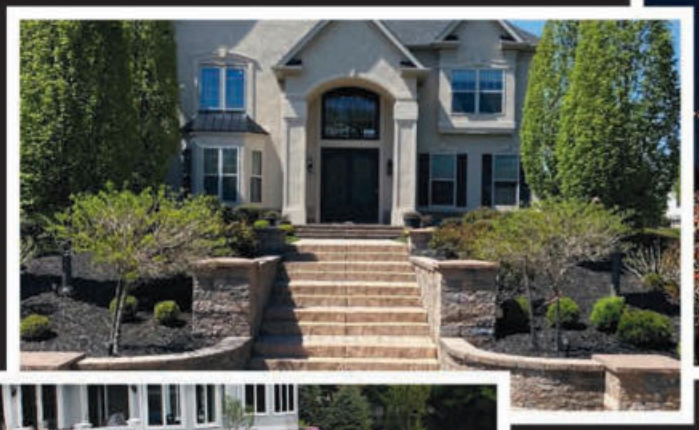
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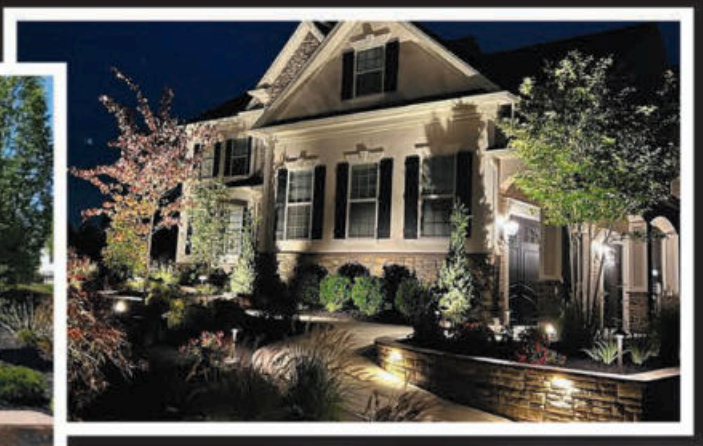
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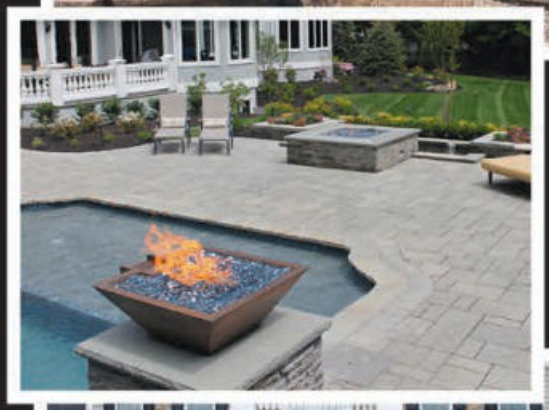
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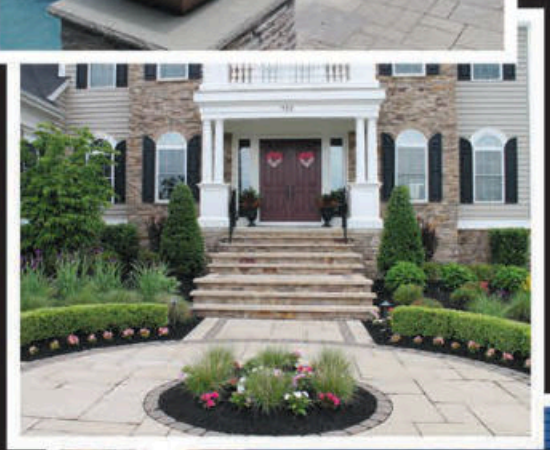
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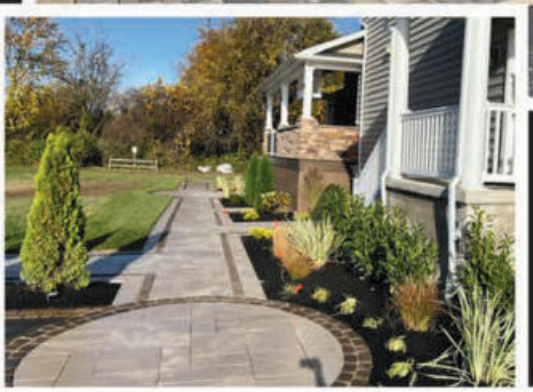
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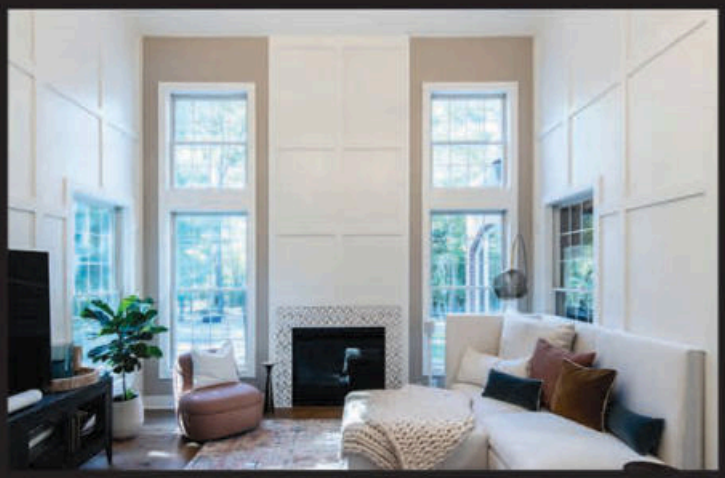
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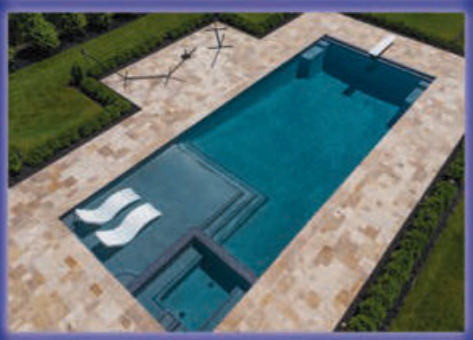
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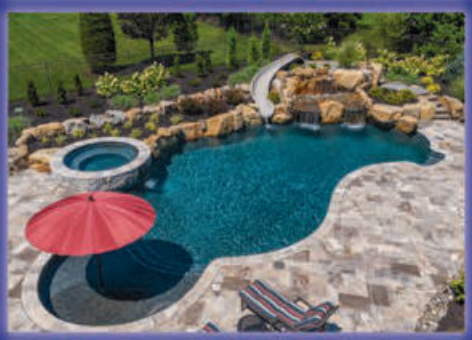
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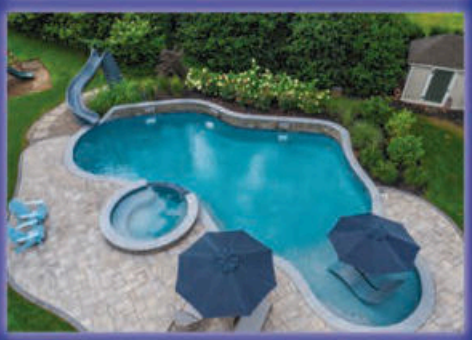


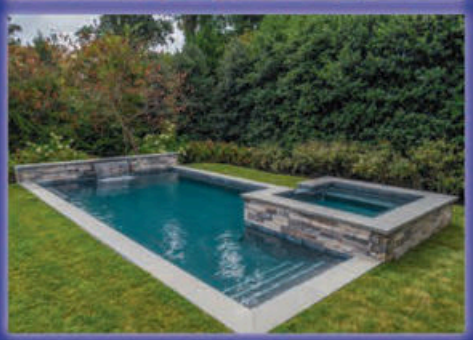


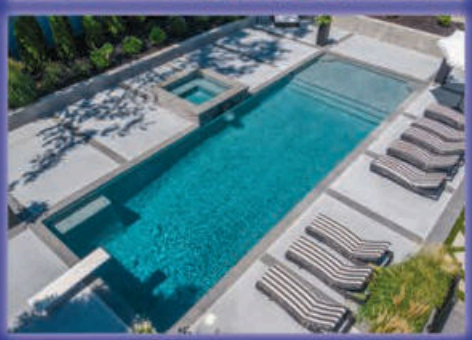


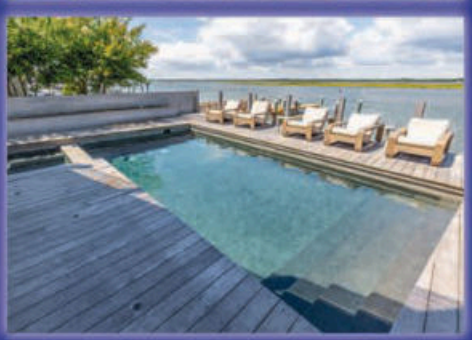












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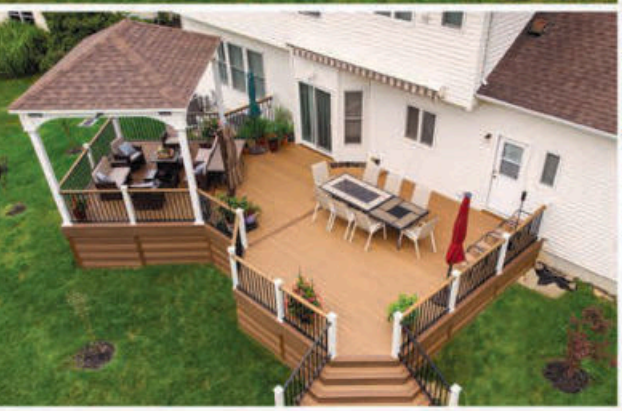
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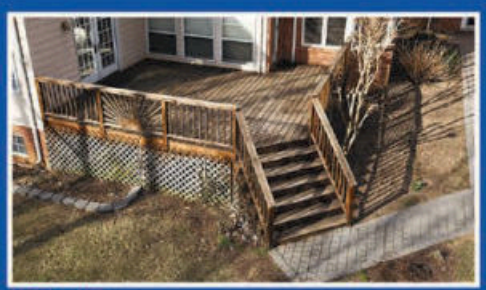




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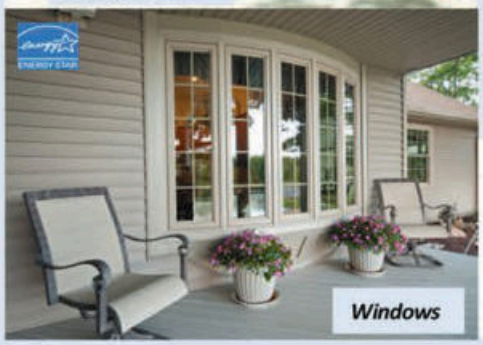
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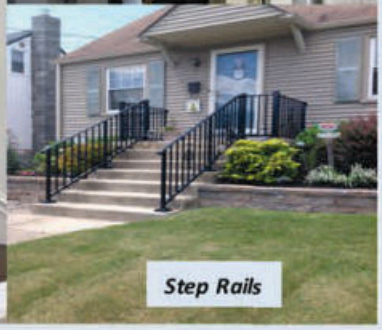
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A Matter of Trust

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 wellknown 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."

Emmons Remodeling has been providing interior remodeling service throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania for more than 30 years. The company has built its solid reputation on craftsmanship and exceptional customer service.

As the family-owned company grows, it has expanded the team that is available to help design and build your projects. Several talented remodeling industry professionals have recently joined Emmons to serve its over 6,000 existing customers and help expand the growing number of satisfied customers throughout South Jersey.

And the expertise is not limited kitchens and bathrooms. Emmons provides full-service remodeling and construction services for additions, interior renovations, porches, decks, windows, doors and basement finishing. The design team acts as your trusted advisor to help you make the right decisions on products, materials, colors and selections. They make it easy using a proprietary curated design concept, which is an industry first. It's an easy, affordable way to quickly get a custom designed project without the heavy cost of a design-build process.

You can always trust Emmons to provide exceptional value and design with quality project outcomes. Now with Krista (lead designer/project planning manager), Rebecca (project design consultant), Frank (construction project manager) and Pete (director of operations) teaming up with seasoned vice president of construction Chris Kelly, key project manager Eric Gilham and 20 trade professionals, you can rest assured that your project is designed and built right. A five-year warranty and a lifetime service guarantee back up the claim of quality and craftsmanship, while providing you with peace of mind that you made the right decision.

The experts at Emmons are always ready to help you with kitchen, bathroom, additions and deck solutions. They make remodeling your home easy and affordable with exceptional financing programs and realistic pricing. Trust Emmons with your next project.

After all, the Emmons' mission statement is: "Our customer's experience builds our business and defines our reputation, which is one of trust, reliability, integrity and value for every customer we serve."

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

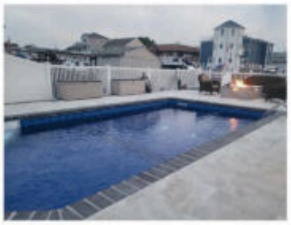
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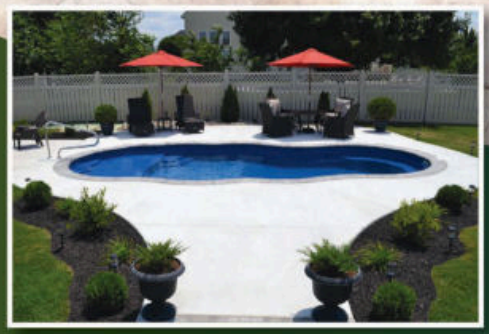
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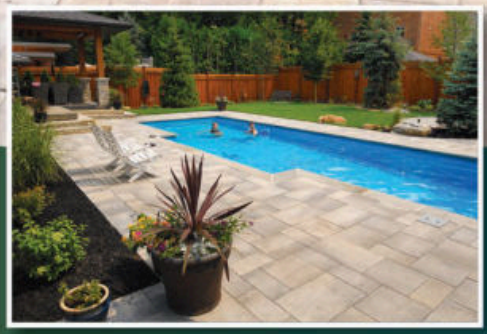
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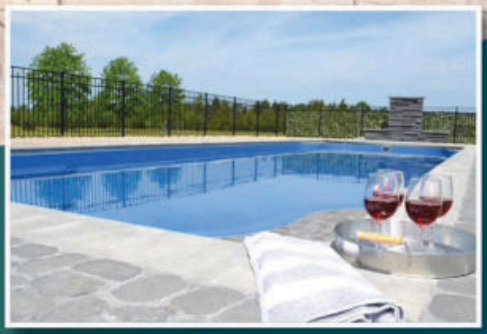
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ACCESSORIZING YOUR DECK IS AKIN TO ADDING THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO A MASTERPIECE PAINTING: IT'S ALL ABOUT SMALL DETAILS ELEVATING THE ENTIRE SCENE. A WELL-ACCESSORIZED DECK TRANSFORMS AN OUTDOOR SPACE INTO A COZY RETREAT, A VIBRANT ENTERTAINMENT HUB OR A TRANQUIL OASIS, ALL DEPENDING ON YOUR PREFERENCES.

Whether you're looking to create an inviting atmosphere for gatherings or a personal haven for relaxation, strategic accessorizing can make all the difference. We chatted with a few local experts on ways to unlock the full potential of your deck through thoughtful flourishes.

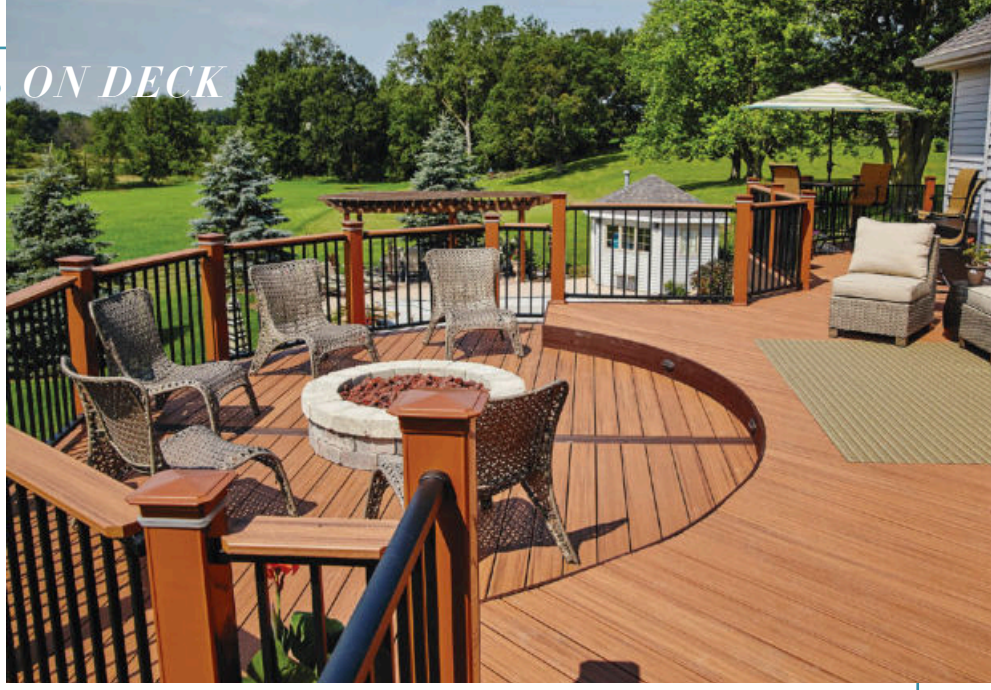
Define Your Style

Before diving into accessories, you'll want to establish the overall style or theme you want for your deck. Whether it's modern, rustic, coastal or eclectic, having a clear vision will guide your accessory choices and ensure coherence in the design. You should also:

Consider a Location: Just because you're at home doesn't mean you can't be anywhere else (in spirit, of course). You can base your patio area or deck on a favorite physical location. For example, if you love the beach, tropical prints and light blue accent colors could be a great way to recreate that vibe. Or, if you love the mountains, opt for a mountain-themed patio by incorporating a natural color palette and rustic furnishings.

Choose Colors You Love: A common way

BY KRISTEN JORGENSEN



to transform a patio area is by picking colors you love. And, truthfully, this option can be simpler and less overwhelming to achieve: All you need to do is select your base colors and then consider the tones they blend well with.

Incorporate Your Hobbies: Since our hobbies can help create an escape from the mundane, incorporating them into your patio area can provide some direction for your theme. Whether you enjoy sailing, painting, playing music or anything else, you can tastefully add your passions to your patio décor.

Curve Appeal

Straight lines and right angles give way to curves and flowing shapes in custom deck designs. According to Joe Oakes from First State Building & Design, curved decks are a top trend for 2024.

"Adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to outdoor spaces, a curved deck can soften the overall look of your outdoor area and create a more inviting and fluid space," he explains. "Whether it's a simple curved edge or a more elaborate curved design, incorporating curves into your custom deck will make a bold statement and set your outdoor space apart from the rest."



Maximizing With Multi-levels

In 2024, multi-level decks are gaining popularity as homeowners seek to maximize their outdoor space and create visual interest. Oakes elaborates: "By incorporating multiple levels into your deck design, you can create distinct areas for different activities. For example, one level can be dedicated to dining, while another can serve as a lounging area. Multi-level decks not only maximize the functionality of your outdoor space but also create a visually dynamic and engaging design."

Another example of maximizing your space is creating an escape you'll enjoy so much that it can serve a variety of purposes.

"We recently built a breakfast bar for a client that enjoys having breakfast outside in the late spring and summer. Ironically enough, it doubles as a great space for happy hour in the evening," says Shawn Covely from Ameritech Services, LLC.

Bright Ideas

Extend the usability of your deck well into the evening with strategic lighting. From string lights and lanterns to built-in fixtures and torches, there are myriad options to illuminate your outdoor space. Consider both ambient lighting for overall brightness and task lighting for specific areas like dining or lounging.

"When adding lights to deck spaces, we typically add them to the deck stairs. It gives a subtle illumination and helps to make your deck safer at dusk and into the evening hours," Covely notes, adding that builders also commonly install under-counter deck lighting. "If you have an outdoor grilling or cooking area, it's a great consideration."

Year-round Enjoyment

A covered deck is a trend that is here to stay. With unpredictable weather conditions, having a covered area on your deck allows you to enjoy your outdoor space year-round. Whether it's a pergola, a classic covered roof or a fully enclosed structure, a covered deck provides shade, protection from the elements and an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors even during inclement weather. And in 2024, covered decks are becoming more versatile and aesthetically pleasing, with design options that can be seamlessly integrated with the overall deck design.

"We've seen an increase of requests from customers wanting a portion of their deck covered so they can extend the use of the space," says Keith Fry from Amazing Decks. "The benefit of having an area covered not only protects you from the elements, it also allows the homeowner to add entertainment options like a fireplace or TV."

Another design style that offers more usability is what builders refer to as "the all-seasons" deck, an aptly named design that extends its usage beyond just the spring and summer months.

"We've been seeing an increase in folks looking to create a four-season deck," affirms Marcus Stoltzfus from Keystone Custom Decks. "It's something that is open (without windows) but still available to use year-round. We like to suggest products like Phantom Screens and any type of heater. Utilizing products like that can increase the time you spend outdoors and yet still feel comfortable."

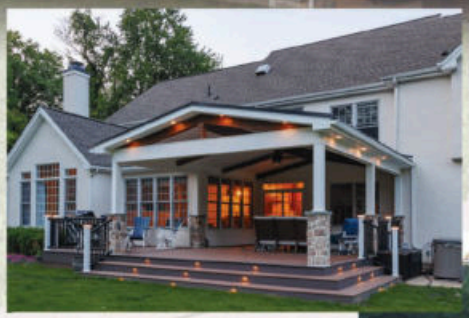
The Rise of Grills

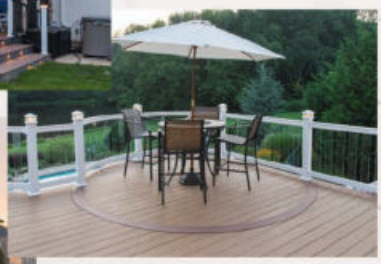
Grilling has always been a popular outdoor activity but it's taking center stage in today's custom deck designs as more and more homeowners opt for built-in grills that seamlessly blend into their current space. These grills not only are functional but also add a touch of sophistication to the outdoor space.

"A deck or patio is your extended home, an outdoor oasis that you can relax with the family, read a book or grill with friends" says Kristi Reading, a managing partner at

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OUTDOOR SEASON IS *ON DECK*

The Buxton Complex. "2024 is the year for backyard grilling. At Buxton, we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Big Green Egg grill. From smoking, baking, grilling, searing and roasting, you can do all your cooking on one versatile grill. With seven different sizes, there is an option for every family, no matter the size, and it's an excellent addition to any deck or patio."

She adds that another popular option for jazzing up your backyard oasis is the Gozney Pizza Oven. "Imagine having a decadent pizza that makes your mouth water in just about 90 seconds—the Gozney Pizza Oven does just that. Grab your favorite dough, add some sauce, cheese and toppings of your choice, and you can make pizza for the whole neighborhood."

Whether you're a grilling enthusiast or simply enjoy cooking outdoors, incorporating a grill or pizza oven into your custom deck design is a trend that will elevate your deck experience.

The Finishing Touches

The foundation of deck accessorizing lies in the right furnishing, and designers recommend considering the size of your deck and how you intend to use the space.

Opt for durable, weather-resistant materials like teak, cedar or metal for longevity. Lounge chairs, sofas, dining sets and benches are popular furniture choices, offering both functionality and comfort. Outdoor rugs also introduce warmth and texture: They not only anchor the seating area, but also add visual interest while defining different deck zones. When choosing a rug, go with something that complements your furniture and withstands outdoor elements.

Lastly, greenery and planters bring nature closer when incorporated into your deck décor. Potted plants, hanging baskets or vertical gardens add a pop of color while creating a serene ambiance. Select native plants that thrive in your climate and don't require excessive maintenance.

Accessorizing your deck is about more than just adding decorative elements: It's about creating a harmonious outdoor oasis that reflects your style, enhances functionality, and fosters both relaxation and enjoyment. By carefully selecting furniture, incorporating greenery, lighting up the night and adding personal touches, you can transform your deck into a welcoming haven for both intimate moments and festive gatherings. So, unleash your creativity and let your deck shine! H&H

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H&H SHOWCASE

by Lindsey Getz

Sequoia Out Back

helps homeowners take their backyard living dreams and make them a reality.





Be Inspired!

IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT US TO APPRECIATE THE OUTDOORS EVEN MORE. While backyard outdoor living areas have been soaring in popularity for years now, for many, the stay-at-home orders and the experience of being stuck indoors for so long have made homeowners absolutely crave these spaces more than ever. They are truly a must-have—a fact that's been increasingly evident at Sequoia Out Back, where owner John Keller says that he's seeing even more people come into the showroom than ever before.

From the moment that homeowners walk through Sequoia Out Back's front doors, the experience is really unlike any other. The 30,000-square-foot showroom has everything you could want for your personal oasis on display so that you can envision it in your own backyard.

When you walk through a typical patio store or a big-box store, items aren't usually set up or paired together the way they would be in your backyard so it can be difficult to visualize your finished space. At Sequoia, you can see an entire outdoor living space the way that you might set it up on your own patio. It inspires so many ideas.

The goal of the showroom has always been to make homeowners feel like they're stepping into a real-life outdoor space. This helps homeowners to make the best choices when it comes to furniture and decking supplies that will work for their own projects.

Pair these gorgeous displays with the knowledgeable and helpful team members who are ready to assist—and homeowners can really appreciate the showroom visit experience. Customers always leave Sequoia with a lot of great ideas and information.

Of course, in general, inventory has been a major issue since the start of the pandemic. Homeowners who have tried to purchase furniture and decking may have noticed limited stock. But Sequoia Out Back has been fortunate to be able to keep a lot of inventory in stock thanks to its relationship with manufacturers and its purchasing power, as well as having a large quantity from the start. Even so, with so many people coming through the doors, now is the time to start planning for the spring while inventory is still available.

After all, before you know it, the weather will be consistently warm, and we'll all be spending even more time outdoors. Homeowners want to make sure their space is ready now!

"The sooner you can start planning, the better," urges Keller. "The number of visitors coming to the store right now is higher than ever for this time of year. It's definitely not too early to start thinking about setting up your outdoor space."

As you start planning, Sequoia Out Back has all of the amenities that you might want to consider. This includes fire pits, patio furniture and all of the material supplies including decking and railing and hardscaping. Sequoia works with all of the leading manufacturers including TimberTech, Wolf, Trex, Zuri and Fiberon—all of whom continue to offer innovative products.

Whether you're a do-it-yourselfer or someone who was sent by their contractor to look for materials, Sequoia's showroom can accommodate everyone.

It's all about making the experience as easy and as enjoyable as possible for homeowners. As the true outdoor living experts, Sequoia and its team are ready to help make homeowners' backyard dreams come true.

"Outdoor living has been a trend for a long time but it's hotter than ever," Keller sums up. "I think we're all ready to start spending more time outside." H&H

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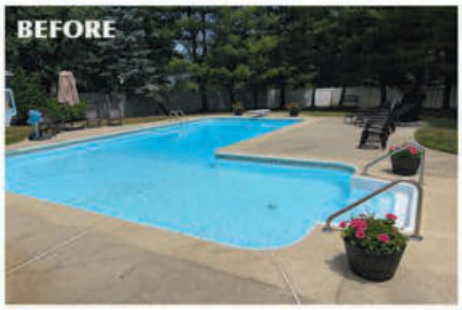


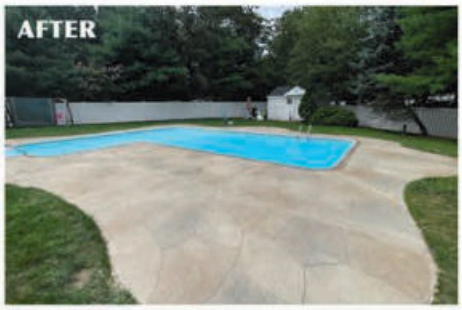
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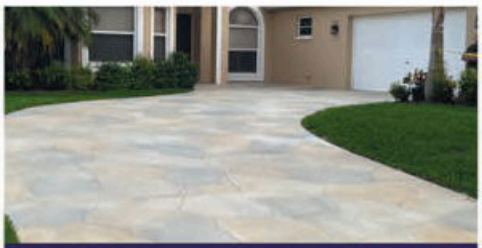
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New Castle Artisan transforms aging concrete into beautiful surfaces that will last.

by Liz Hunter

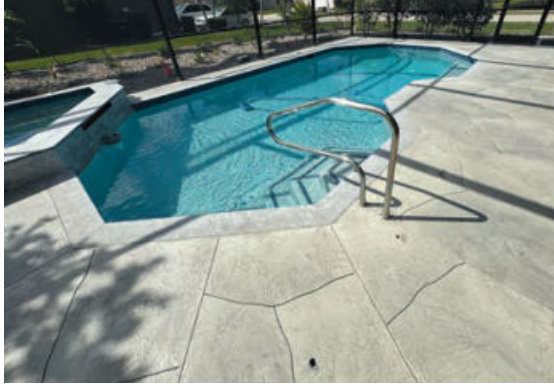
Most home improvement projects come with their share of hassles, from permitting to disrupting daily routines and creating additional unforeseen projects. For this reason, homeowners often put them off. However, New Castle Artisan has a better way.

Family-owned and-operated for more than 30 years, New Castle Artisan is helmed by Gwen Kunkel and her brother Paul Randall, who have a combined 50 years of experience in the industry. Its sole business is concrete resurfacing, a technique that can breathe new life into many concrete surfaces, whether it's your driveway, pool deck or patio. With summer on its way, now is the perfect time to have New Castle Artisan assess your needs with 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, tripping hazards 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 results that are 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."

Polymer resurfacing has been used since the 1960s, and if applied properly, adds beauty and aesthetic value without the expensive cost of installing all new concrete. What's more, 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 New Castle Artisan's resurfacing. "Our products are applied by hand for a look that can be customized to your liking. We can add colors and then finish it with rock hard 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 pavers, 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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Matteo Family Kitchens & Flooring

by Chelsea Valcourt



TRENDS ARE EVER-CHANGING, SO WHEN CONSIDERING A HOME RENOVATION PROJECT, IT'S IMPORTANT TO BALANCE WHAT'S "IN" WITH TIMELESS CONCEPTS to avoid continuously updating your space to fit the latest craze. Professionals, like those at Matteo Family Kitchens, work to stay in-the-know and are eager to help you strike that balance.

House & Home recently spoke to Matteo Family Kitchens' co-owner and store manager Steve Matteo about what's hot today and the changes he's seen in home renovations over the years.



Steve Matteo, co-owner and store manager

IN THIS ECONOMY, HOW ARE HOMEOWNERS' CHOICES SHIFTING?

We are seeing an increase in the reduced kitchen model. Instead of removing the larger walls between rooms, homeowners are choosing to create a new design within the existing kitchen walls in order to keep overall costs low. Today, our clients are focusing on finding the lowest price possible without sacrificing quality more than they have in recent years. This is largely due to the widespread inflation raising rates on everyday items, increasing financial stress on families and reducing remodeling budgets.

HOW HAVE KITCHEN AND BATH TRENDS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS?

Color trends are slowly on the move. The white and gray kitchens that dominated kitchen designs just a few years ago are slowly giving way to white or gray kitchens with the addition of wood tones. In relation, islands and auxiliary cabinets are starting to change to maple or oak wood tones to coordinate with the painted white or gray cabinets. We are also seeing some paint regret. It's easy to love the design of solid painted cabinets as they are very nice, but they show everything. Wood tones help to hide little messes.

WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR DESIGN CHOICES TODAY?

Clean, light quartz countertops with a vein of gray or tan continue to reign supreme, and we're noticing homeowners' opinions on tiled backsplashes leaning back toward patterns. Over the years, the tile industry removed 4-by-4 inch squares, but now the call for that textured look is back again. While tile choices range dramatically depending on a homeowner's individual taste, subway-style tiles are becoming the prominent choice for many.

HOW CAN COMPLEMENTARY FLOORING TIE A CABINET AND COUNTER DESIGN TOGETHER?

Complementary flooring can be the key to all design flow. In today's open floor plans we are using the same flooring throughout the main flooring areas, and with our eclectic styles in furniture it's hard to make that 20-year-old dining room set blend with the new-style color kitchen. Therein lies the help of a floor with multitonal qualities that can pull a little of each room's color to make a uniform design.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR FOLKS LOOKING TO START A REMODELING PROJECT?

Start by taking your time and looking through a site like Pinterest to get an understanding of what colors and style you like. Once you have that understanding, make an appointment with one of our designers so that they can meet you, see and measure the space, get ideas and see what needs to be done in a remodel to make the room your dream space. From there, give our designers time to put together a viable layout and design. We tend to say it can take us as long to design as it did for the client to produce what they might want—don't rush a good plan.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO START A REMODELING PROJECT?

As things seem to be settling down to pre-COVID times, we are noticing the rush for remodels for holidays and the slowdown that's normal with warmer weather. Keep in mind, a project from measure to design completion can take up to several weeks. Cabinet materials are back to normal, taking three to eight weeks depending on the vendor. And a good contractor should be booked for two to six months at a time, at least. If you want the new kitchen for Thanksgiving, you need to plan. It could take a few months before a project can be seen through to completion. H&H



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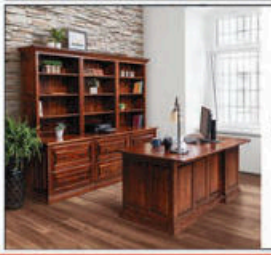


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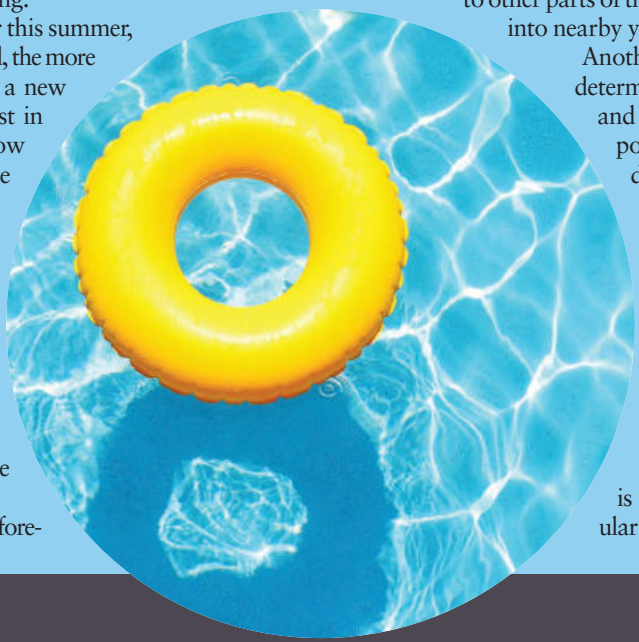
by **Carly Murray**

Locals are lucky enough to be just a drive away from the ocean, but they also may be yearning for something much closer to home—like going for a swim in their own personal backyard oasis. But cookie-cutter pools are a thing of the past, as homeowners and pool experts alike are opting for innovations in both design and functionality. Personalizing a pool and its surrounding area creates a one-of-a-kind gathering place for relaxation, for recreation and for entertaining.

While it may be too late to get started for this summer, planning for next can begin right away: After all, the more thought you can give your expectations of a new space, the better. Preparation yields the best in visuals and utility, and it is pertinent to follow property regulations that are often unique from one township to another.

"Summer to fall is the best time for homeowners if they're really considering a pool for the upcoming season to meet with their builder, get the contract, get that engineering done, have the builder submit permits so come springtime, we can start digging in as soon as we can," says Joe Perchetti, who co-owns Ted's Pools with his wife Carol. "I frankly plug this all the time: We want it done right the first time, every time."

He adds that engineering helps prevent any foreseeable issues by taking into account the location of the pool from the home, different parts of the yard and neighbors' properties. One such example is ensuring that any runoff from storms will not cause damage to other parts of the home and will not spill into nearby yards or basements.



Another part of planning is to determine a pool's size, shape and material. While freeform pools provide more unique design options, rectangular pools provide the most swimming space. This fits the reemerging trend of incorporating right angles that line up with the home instead of curves, according to Bryan Hull, co-owner of Del Val Pools & Spas.

Yet, if a homeowner is feeling whimsical, irregular shapes are a possibility—

Perchetti has even seen a guitar-shaped pool. Smaller pools, or "spools," are more adaptable to out-of-the-box shapes and sizes. The key for any project, of course, is attention to detail.

"[With] concrete pools, you can just draw a picture and we can put it in, it just goes by square footage. And a lot of people are putting sun shelves in where they can actually have an 8-foot area, or where they could put a lounge chair and only have a foot of water and then walk out into the pool from there," explains Walter Beyer, president and owner of Stardust Pools.

Concrete, vinyl and fiberglass are three options that offer differences in durability and maintenance depending on lifestyle requirements. Concrete is perfect for placing pool chairs and tables as opposed to vinyl lining, which can tear from the friction. Similarly, gunite is a concrete mix blended from sand, cement and water with plenty of potential for personalization.

"A custom gunite pool is affordable and allows the most flexibility, so we start there: Go gunite, go custom. It's what we are known for. From there, technology drives the newest changes each year. Customized lighting, heating and moving

> "Technology drives the newest changes each year. **Customized lighting, heating and moving water options that can be controlled from your phone are the expected norm. Automation, imagination and creativity drive everything else."**
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Making a Splash

water options that can be controlled from your phone are the expected norm. Automation, imagination and creativity drive everything else," affirms Hull.

The latest technology does greatly enhance a pool, including the water itself. In addition to smartphone-controlled lights, colors and movement, salt generators to replace chlorine and heat pumps to extend the swimming season are trending upward. Saltwater pools are also getting a lot of attention for being gentler on swimmers' skin—and their wallets, too.

"By putting a heater on, you're basically adding at least two months to your swimming season. This April was cold, but usually you could swim at the end of April [through] May, June, July, August and September," says Beyer. "Everybody's going with salt generators, it's just a money saver—just better swimming water and the savings on chlorine and shock that you'd have to buy. You don't need to buy any of that anymore."

The pool serves as the centerpiece of an outdoor living space, and the surrounding enhancement options are endless. Lounge areas on the deck can incorporate entertainment systems like speakers for music or TVs begging for an outdoor movie night. Outdoor kitchens, spas, restrooms and changing rooms can take a backyard to the next level, making it the new preferred place for pampering, hanging out and

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"Sun decks remain a very popular option, as do waterfalls and fountains. The sound of moving water is very soothing, and it's good for your pool. Lighting comes in a variety of options that allow one to change color, color patterns, brightness, and create all kinds of special effects. Fire balls have become quite popular and are a unique juxtaposition of natural elements—fire and water," says Hull.

He also points out that as the "core area of socialization" rather than simply a place to swim, pools can include seats in the water to accompany a swim-up bar accessible to those outside the pool. In addition to waterfalls and fountains, diving boards, aquatic climbing walls and slides add even more activities that appeal to any age, promoting both fun and exercise.

Coordinating all of these different components generates an atmosphere fitting homeowners' preferences. Change the water's color to complement different themes, like red, white and blue for Fourth of July, or change the pattern and speed of lights to accompany music for a DIY disco. Additionally, harmonizing the human-made features of an outdoor living space with the natural environment is a streamlined source of inspiration to decide which pieces look best and where they should be placed.

"We're all earth-friendly now; we're all very, very conscious about recycling. If I go to empty a pool, how is it going to affect wildlife and shrubbery downstream? So, we're very conscious of Mother Nature and Mother Earth. With that, we're seeing an increase in natural products, like a boulder waterfall feature," affirms Perchetti. "So, not only do you have a very nice visual in front of you, but you have that audible effect that is just absolutely beautiful. Just sit there and close your eyes, and you'll swear you're at a mountain retreat right next to a lake with a waterfall."

The No. 1 trend today above all else is summed up in one word: personalization. With the ability to both research and compare ideas from home improvement internet, television and print sources—as well as the range of experts available with whom to confer—one can witness their dream pool come to fruition. Afterward, there is no longer a search for something to do or for the perfect venue to host a party: The solution is right in your backyard. **H&H**



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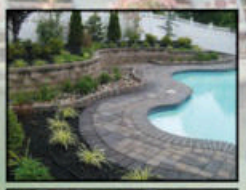
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