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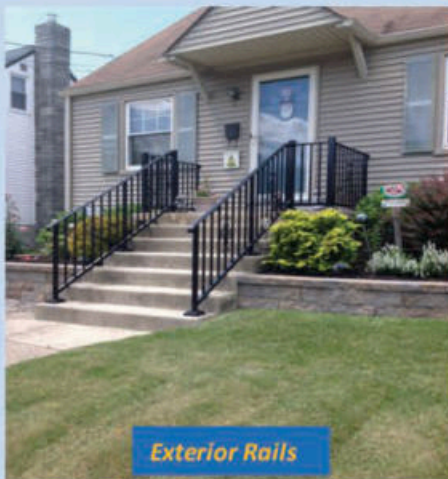


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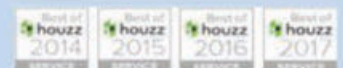
Iron Balusters / Panels



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Imperial Home Remodeling offers a range of services, including windows, doors, siding, roofing, decks and kitchen and bath remodeling. The company hold top-tier certifications with some of the most well-known manufacturers, and is a Master Elite Installer for GAF. To find out more about the company's experience, local commitment and financing programs, turn to page 21.

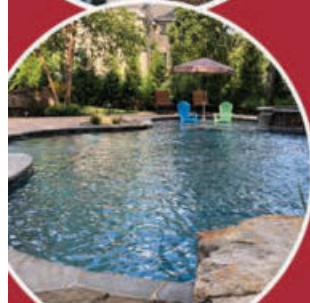
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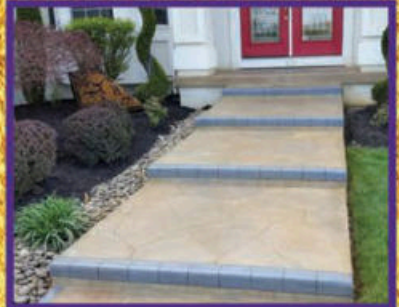


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Edward P. McCartney

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Peter Proko

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Liz Hunter

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Matt Cosentino, Julie Shannon

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Lindsey Getz, Brittany Morrissey

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Hank Alspach

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Brian Mikulski

DESIGNERS

Abby Lurty, Dori Shields, Lisa Zollinger

ACCOUNTING DIRECTOR

Darlene Versak

SALES DIRECTOR

Lindsay Gonzalez

SALES MANAGER

Jim Romano

NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPER

Chuck McKane

MARKETING CONSULTANTS

Rochelle Dodge, Frank Liantonio, Susie Smith,
Laramie Traina, Amy B. Weiss

ACCOUNTANT

Max Haggerty

DIGITAL MEDIA DIRECTOR

Leigh Stuart

PUBLISHER EMERITUS

Bob Doran

EXECUTIVE PARTNERS

Gerry Haggerty, Edward P. McCartney

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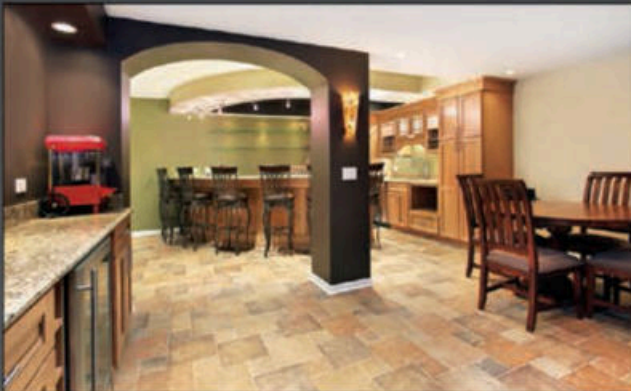
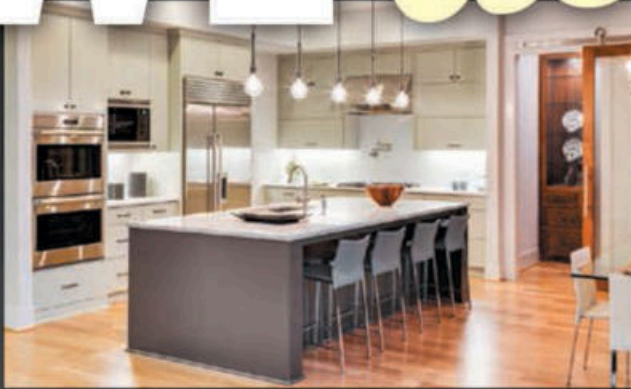
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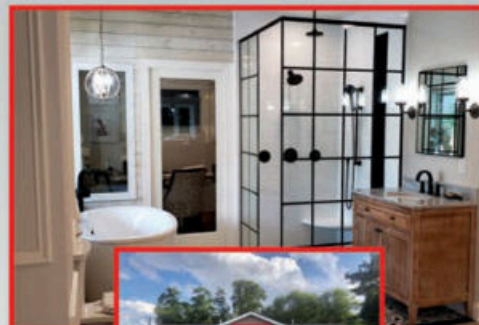
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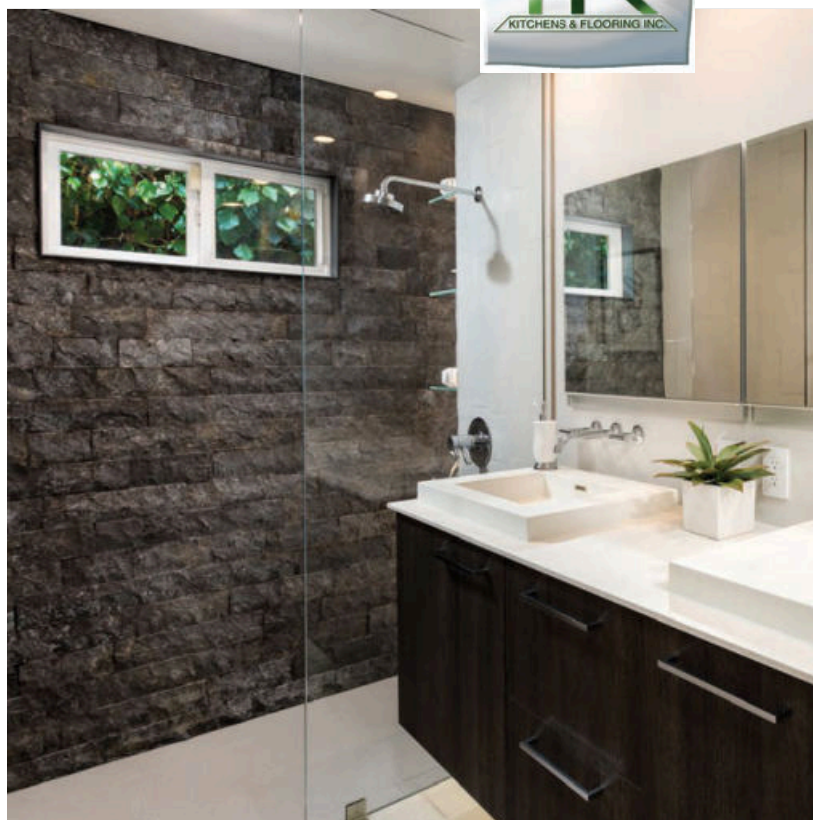
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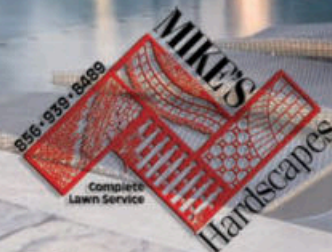
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Your Hometown Remodeler

Imperial Home Remodeling ensures experienced and local service for interior and exterior projects. *by Liz Hunter*



Two decades ago, Giovanni Esposito entered the home improvement industry as a window installer. As his career progressed, he gained training in roofing and siding, and held various positions as project manager, operations manager and ultimately, business owner, founding Imperial Home Remodeling in 2014.

As a fully credited, licensed and insured business, Imperial Home Remodeling provides a range of services, including windows, doors, siding, roofing, decks and kitchen and bath remodeling. Esposito says this time of year is ideal for contacting Imperial, as the brutal winter months approach.

“Due to the lack of winter weather last year, I feel as though this year will be extremely cold and unpredictable. Given the nature of the year we have had, homeowners need to take every precaution necessary to prevent winter damage to their homes,” he says. “We can help you protect the interior and exterior of your home from further damage and help to prevent costly energy bills by making your home more energy efficient.”

As the pandemic has created a boom in remodeling projects, Esposito says homeowners are realizing some things could use an

update. “The majority of our clients are looking to stay in their home, making it more energy efficient and aesthetically pleasing.” But the hot real estate market has also brought about a small percentage of clients looking to comply with the sale agreement of their property or investors flipping a property, he says. “Imperial Home Remodeling has options to fit everyone’s needs.”

No matter what project or budget, Imperial ensures the quality of its materials and partners with some of the most recognized manufacturers in the industry. The company holds top-tier certifications across the board:

- > Roofing: GAF Master Elite Installer
- > Siding: Mastic Vinyl Siding – VSI (Vinyl Siding Institute of America) Certified Installer
- > Windows: Slocomb, Andersen and Pella Certified Installers
- > Doors: HMI and ProVia Custom Entry Door System Certified Installers
- > Decking: Azek and Wolf Certified Installers

In particular, the partnership with GAF is especially notable—only 2% of contractors in the U.S. have the title of Master Elite Installer. “We have been partners with GAF for over a decade. We find them to be the most reliable as they have over a century of experience and are among the top leaders in the roofing industry,” Esposito says.

Product confidence is reinforced by Imperial’s double lifetime warranty on all installed

products and a 100% guaranteed satisfaction.

Perhaps even more than the products, it’s the people who make Imperial Home Remodeling stand out. Based in Blackwood, N.J., this local, family-owned business is staffed with knowledgeable and friendly people who have over 40 years’ experience.

“From our courteous sales reps to the expert installation crew, you can expect to be guided to complete satisfaction. Our installation manager works closely with each client to ensure their project is completed in a timely and satisfactory manner. Our customer service department receives calls daily, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to answer homeowners’ questions and to schedule appointments for cost-free consultations,” Esposito says.

This staff includes an elite team of expert installers who are all factory trained and certified, offering absolute precision from consultation to the finishing touches, and along the way, no homeowner is left on the sidelines. Sales consultants will be available to walk you through the entire process to respectfully address all your questions and concerns, giving you more peace of mind.

In his 20 years in the industry, Esposito has too often been called to jobs to repair or redo incomplete or poor work done by other companies. His advice: “Don’t pay for the same job twice. ... We are prepared to offer a better price and better product, with **FINANCING** programs for up to 12 years for qualified homeowners, and guarantees on our work so you get the most for your money,” he concludes. **H&H**



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 Remodeling your kitchen and bathrooms for **a more appealing**



Quality Investments



BY
LIZ HUNTER

Kitchens and bathrooms remain at the top of the remodeling list for homeowners, even during the pandemic. People are cooking at home more often, working and learning remotely (often using kitchen space) and the hot real estate market has some making updates to make their house more appealing to buyers.

In fact, the National Kitchen and Bath Association released its latest Market Outlook, and it confirms this trend, showing that the percentage of homeowners actively working on remodeling projects increased significantly, from 19% in this year's first quarter to 36% in the second quarter.

Guy Henri, owner of F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio, says when the pandemic came, he was sure the market for home improvements would crash. "Instead, there was a spike in demand—kitchens, baths, renovations. Now that they've been home, they see the missing parts or the outdated things and want to make changes," he says.

"With the reduced travel and vacation plans for most homeowners, they are taking those funds and investing them into their homes," says Linda Fennessy, Kitchen Magic public relations and print manager. "The staycation is becoming more popular, and they are investing the vacation fund into their kitchen and bath remodels."

House & Home spoke with some of the top companies who have invested years in remodeling kitchens and bathrooms to find out what design elements are coming to the fore and what advice they have for anyone about to embark on this adventure.

Photo courtesy of Holcomb Cabinetry

KITCHENS:

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

In kitchens, the overall desired look remains something simple, clean and soft.

“Homeowners are looking for materials that are easier to clean—simple door styles without a lot of detail, which tend to pick up dust, lint and grease. Shaker door styles remain popular, but flat panel doors are gaining traction.” —*Meg Schultz, The CabinetTree Design Studio*

WHAT'S OUT?

Busy wood grain (oak and cherry) cabinets

Ornate wood hoods with corbels and heavy lintels

Soffits above upper cabinets

Drop-in sinks and built-in soap dispensers

WHAT'S IN?

Quartz countertops

Blue accent cabinets

Clean and simple door styles

Prep islands

Roll-out racks, drawers and shelves

Built-in USB chargers

“Seventy percent of homeowners are choosing some form of white. Grays and light woods follow in second and third places. Our flat-center-panel Shaker styles are the most popular. These door styles are from our Prestige Collection and are all at the lowest price point of all our doors. The material is a maintenance-free laminate, allowing homeowners to clean them with just a wipe for easier care.

“Almost all homeowners are adding efficiencies like prep-islands and smart storage solutions like roll-out spice racks, pot drawers and shelves to create a more efficient cooking experience.

Many of our customers are choosing cabinet refacing, saving almost 50% over new cabinets and reinvesting the savings they incur for these upgrades.” —*Linda Fennessy, Kitchen Magic*



this in suburban homes, but another color popping up is blue. It goes so well with things—you really have to see it to believe it. I think in 2025, gray will look like an outdated color. We’re already starting to see it fade with some vendors, and see more colors come in, even green.

“Another one coming to the forefront is countertops with Microban. People often cut on granite or quartz without damage, but this also protects it from bacteria seeping in. In the last nine

months this has definitely been something people are more interested in.” —*Daryl Holcomb, Holcomb Cabinetry*

“If you are thinking of doing your kitchen, you might think new cabinets will cost too much, but imported cabinetry is affordable and offers a great selection of materials and semi-custom designs, which can help you stay on budget for projects. Fabuwood and Cubitac are two brands, for instance, where you can really have a nice finished look without being extravagant.”

—*Guy Henri, F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio*

BATHROOMS:

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

In bathrooms, homeowners want openness, as well as practicality.

“The No. 1 feature we hear from customers is the open and airy feel that all-glass frameless enclosures help create. The bathroom feels bigger and more luxurious. It also helps in viewing the tilework on the shower, in many cases which has been a significant investment by the homeowner.

“We are generally seeing increased popularity with ‘Euro style’ sliders, or sliders with exposed rollers. In a door or closet situation you would see them called a ‘barn door’ style. We are also generally seeing larger shower enclosures, and in many cases incorporating large fixed panels of glass to accommodate the increased size.” —*Ben Weaver, Alderfer Glass*

“If committed to staying in the home long term, people want to make the master bath personal. They lean toward a fresh, transitional contemporary style, removing the confines of a narrow toilet room, but still looking for privacy with a partial wall or obscured glass. Freestanding tubs can also be like a work of art in the space and come in a variety of materials.

“Hall bathrooms are often ignored when discussing bathroom remodels. Hall baths serve a different purpose, usually for children and guests. It should include a tub, especially if there is not another tub in the home, because parents likely aren’t bringing their children into the master to bathe in that tub. Trends aren’t much different than the master bath—clean, neutral whites, grays and navy blue or natural wood for vanities.” —*Dave Cerami, HomeTech Renovations*

“All-glass frameless shower enclosures add a great look and value to your project. We can enhance the look with heavy ⅜-inch or ½-inch clear tempered glass to show off accent tiles, or choose from different types of patterned or custom-tinted glass.



WHAT'S OUT?

Built-in Jacuzzi tubs

Small tile

Narrow toilet rooms

WHAT'S IN?

Spa-like master baths

All-glass frameless shower enclosures

Freestanding tubs

Floor-to-ceiling window panels with contemporary glass blocks

Floating vanities

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MORE ADVICE FROM THE PROS

"Don't get overwhelmed. Look at pictures online of kitchens, bathrooms and areas that you like and would like to incorporate into your home. Pick out specifics from those photos and go from there. If you don't have a direction that you would like to go with before you start, you will have an overwhelming amount of options in front of you." —**Wendy Amiano**

"Really consider all the different interior components that are more readily available these days to make your cabinets work harder—drawers with built-in USBs to charge devices but keep them hidden away and off countertops for exam-

ple. Ask the designer to recommend storage options to make the most of the renovation." —**Meg Schultz**

"I am a firm believer that the installation of a shower makes all the difference to a successful product. The value of experienced and highly trained installers cannot be overstated, as there often are no two bathrooms that are completely the same. Glass has very little room for error, so you know that experienced companies and techs have years of practice honing their craft." —**Ben Weaver**

"Share specifics of your lifestyle to designers and contractors. With all of the technology and products available, if you tells us your grandkids are over all the time and playing with the cabinet doors, or if you cook a lot, or if you're moving in five years and don't want to spend a lot, or if you're never moving—you can never share too much. All of that allows us to create something tailored just to you." —**Daryl Holcomb H&H**



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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."

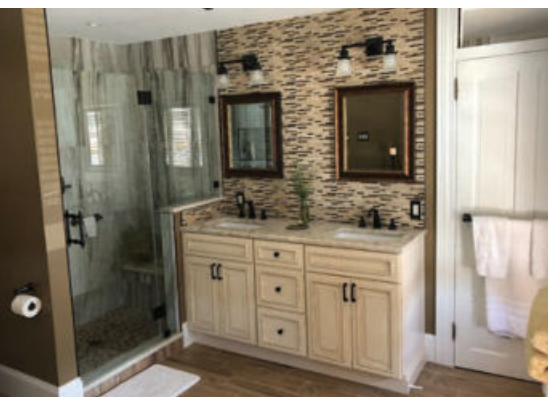
Henri's passion for building and remodeling comes through with every project and customers can see his care, craftsmanship and attention to detail. Helping homeowners achieve their dream house is his main goal.

"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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RENOVATIONS

The Smarter Real Estate Partner

Whether buying or selling, people have the latest technology and high-end service at their fingertips with **HomeSmart First Advantage Realty**. *by Liz Hunter*

The real estate market is experiencing something it hasn't seen in decades. Mortgage rates are at a near-record low, prompting buyers to strike while the iron is hot, and sellers—seeing the increased demand and lack of inventory—are entertaining multiple offers, many of which are above asking price.

Navigating this market takes an enhanced level of skills and familiarity with technology and tools that can respond to buyers' and sellers' needs in an instant. HomeSmart Real Estate is the ideal agency to handle this unique time. Founded in 2000, HomeSmart streamlines technology and minimizes redundancies to make agents more efficient, thereby raising the level of service provided to clients.

The success of this model is proven in HomeSmart's expansion of brick-and-mortar offices across the state of New Jersey. Hakan Karahan is the president and broker of record at HomeSmart in Cherry Hill, the main headquarters. Offices are also located in Voorhees, Turnersville, Howell Township, Bloomfield, Clifton and Beach Haven. Karahan says the agency is projected to open additional offices in Bergen County, Manalapan, Toms River, Vineland, Burlington Township and Mullica Hill, all within the next year.

With coverage from top to bottom, HomeSmart can assist buyers and sellers anywhere in the Garden State in person. "Right now we have over 232 agents. Our team and staff are out there to support every transaction from day one. Nobody gets left alone during a transaction," he says.

Karahan has been in real estate since 1994 and worked in several national firms before purchasing his first franchise in 2005. In 2015 he opened a franchise of HomeSmart and says it's like nothing else in the industry.

"The biggest reason we open a lot of offices is because we are the highest paying commission agency. One-hundred percent of commissions go to the agents," Karahan says, pointing out that agents in other brokerages must pay a set amount of their commissions to the company before they can begin collecting their full commissions. The difference at HomeSmart is agents only pay a set transaction fee ranging from \$399 to \$599. "Compare this to an agent

at another firm who sells a \$400,000 home and makes \$12,000 in commission. That agent would owe \$4,000 to the brokerage, but with us, they would only owe a maximum of \$599. We're the most agent-friendly company," he says.

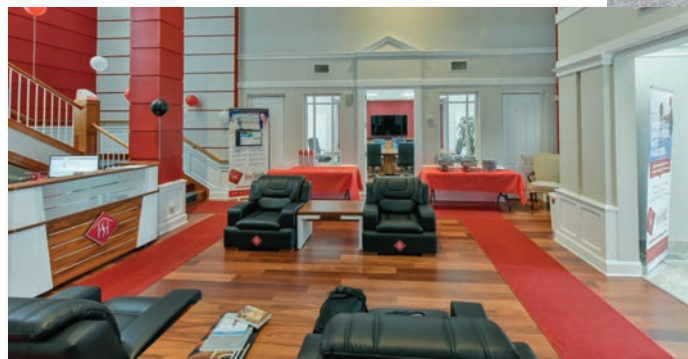


This "low-fee, high-value" structure translates to better service for clients. HomeSmart provides support, training, systems and tools to agents that afford them the time and resources they need to devote to clients. Its proprietary technology stands apart, says Karahan.

"Every agent has their own portal online and everything can be done through the portal, which makes HomeSmart 100% paperless. For every seller, we take professional photos and drone videos, then we use the tools on the portal to create brochures and marketing materials that can be pushed out to Google and over 1,000 websites with the click of a button," Karahan says.

As a result of the pandemic, agents must be equipped to handle the fast-paced real estate market. "It's a sellers' market and buyers are out there. We're seeing properties go on the market and in one day receive five to six offers. Ninety-nine percent of properties are selling for more than asking price. It's getting crazy out there," he says.

HomeSmart agents don't just play the role of realtor, but they educate in the process as well. "We talk to sellers about the list price, and the pros and cons of each offer, such as what type of mortgage the buyers have. We help buyers find the right property and navigate home inspections. For buyers and sellers we are there from the day you sign the contract until



HomeSmart First Advantage Realty Owner Hakan Karahan and General Manager Murtaza Gurcanli

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If real estate agents would like to get more information on HomeSmart Real Estate, they can go to www.whyHomeSmart.com.

closing," Karahan says.

Karahan says his own real estate sales team sells one home every two days currently. "Being one of the mega producers in New Jersey, we have seen many different cases. We train our agents properly, so they are top and mega producers as well," Karahan says.

Those who are ready to make a move during this unprecedented time can feel at ease with HomeSmart's services and market knowledge, and trust that their input will be valued in the process, Karahan says. "We are a guide but ultimately, you are the decision maker.

"Per HomeSmart, agents come first, and per agents, the clients' best interests come first," Karahan adds. **H&H**

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A Team Approach

With a focus on communication and collaboration, Amiano & Son Design-Build makes the renovation process as smooth as possible for homeowners. *by Matt Cosentino*

In his two decades in the construction industry—serving as a union electrician for a large portion of that time—Keith Blose has found himself in many chaotic situations where organization was not always top of mind. Too often he has been on job sites where the project was segregated, and different trades or departments were not aware of what the others were doing.

He finally found the stability and collaborative environment he was craving five years ago when he joined Amiano & Son Design-Build, which has been beautifying homes with custom kitchen and bath renovations and additions since 1968.

“At Amiano, everyone knows what everybody else is doing because we work together as one whole team,” he says. “You don’t see a family business thrive for 50 years very often anymore. [Owners] Lou and Wendy Amiano put a lot of hours and hard work into this and they have a great business to work for. They’re very successful at what they do and the procedures they put into place allow them to succeed.”

As soon as a customer signs a contract with Amiano & Son until the final hammer is swung, the entire team is on the same page. That includes not only the sales department, designers and production crews, but also the finance professionals and office personnel. The courtesy extends to the homeowners as well, as they are kept up-to-date through every step of the process.

“Communication is the biggest part of any renovation or construction project,” Blose says. “If you don’t have good communication, you’re not doing your job correctly. As a company, as an individual, that is key. That can be the difference between being a successful company or not.”

With that in mind, Amiano & Son stresses the importance of getting the project off on the right foot with a pre-construction meeting. Blose—who serves as production manager and oversees all of the company’s project managers—runs the meeting with the homeowners. Also present are the designer and the

project manager who is assigned to the job.

The pre-construction meeting ideally takes place about one month before the job starts.

“It’s extremely important and sets the tone for the job,” Blose says. “I thank the client for choosing us and it gives me an opportunity to formally introduce myself and the project manager. We tell them how we’re going to protect their home, explain in detail what to expect and give them a chance to ask any questions.”

It is during the pre-construction meeting when the homeowner should point out any valuable items that need to be protected during the renovation, such as artwork or a

they know what to expect so we don’t see many frustrated homeowners.”

The communication continues throughout the duration of the project. Several years ago, Amiano & Son adopted Buildertrend, a cloud-based, construction management software program, and that tool has made the process even more streamlined.

“It allows us to monitor the jobs without having to be on-site at all times,” Blose says. “We also used to have set weekly meetings with the homeowners, but it could be difficult for them to attend because they were taking care of their children or dealing with hectic schedules. Now we take pictures of each phase of the project and upload them to Buildertrend so they can be updated on the progress. Our entire company also has access, so everybody knows what’s going on in every project, every single day—not just the project manager and myself.”

During his time with the company, Blose has learned how crucial these procedures are because Amiano & Son has such high standards to live up to in terms of quality of work and customer satisfaction. When the project is completed and homeowners are left with an



family heirloom. Blose also confirms the schedule as agreed upon in the contract, discusses warranties and prepares them for the disruption to their everyday routines.

“A renovation can be stressful,” he says. “We try to make it as hassle-free as possible for the homeowner. There are so many layers to a pre-construction meeting, but once we go from the beginning to the end of this meeting,

expanded and updated kitchen or spa-level master bathroom, they are grateful for the experience.

“Believe it or not, the feedback is amazing,” he says. “Even toward the end when the homeowner is getting tired of dealing with a big renovation, by the time we’re out all the clients are ecstatic. The end product is always magazine worthy at Amiano & Son.” **H&H**



SWEATER WEATHER

This coming winter is bringing more uncertainty to end the year. The Almanac predicts wet, wintry mixes in December and January, and the potential for a blizzard in February. Is your home ready? We asked professionals about how homeowners can best prepare for the weather with repairs, replacements and innovative products.

Protecting your home from the season ahead.

By Liz Hunter

Q:

What would you say should be the top concern for homeowners on their exterior and why?

The No. 1 concern homeowners should have with winter approaching should be your roof. The roof is the main point of entry for exterior elements such as rain, sleet and snow. If the roof is not addressed properly, many issues may occur. Insulation and sheetrock can become wet, which in turn could cause a mold restoration issue. These issues could carry throughout the entire home making for more costly repairs. ➔



Q. Before having a new roof installed, what should homeowners be aware of?

When purchasing a new roof, they need to be aware of several items that can extend the life of their roof and increase the value of their home. Ice and water shield, counter flashing and pipe flange replacement, along with synthetic underlayment, should all be considered when purchasing a new roof. All of these options will increase the longevity of your roof and keep the interior of your home protected from exterior elements.

**Giovanni Esposito, owner
Imperial Home Remodeling
Blackwood, N.J.
(856) 302-6207
ImperialHomeRemodeling.com**



Q. Why would it be a good idea to consider new siding on my home now?

Homeowners should consider new siding as winter approaches because siding is often forgotten about as an essential part of home protection. Siding is more than just material on the house, it is a system that involves underlayments, flashings and j-channel that tie into the roofline, soffit and gutters, as well as windows.

Now is a great time to install siding because our crews are less busy than in the spring and can oftentimes lead to additional savings.

Has vinyl siding changed from a decade ago?

Vinyl siding has improved over the last several years with better insulation options, more vibrant and longer-lasting colors and better aesthetics for homeowners.

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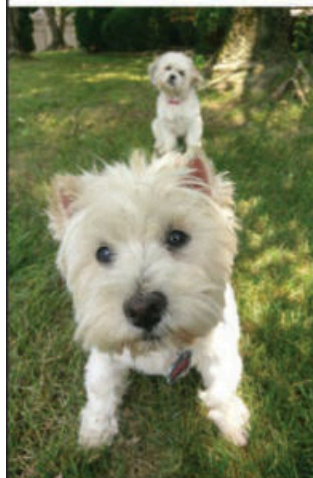
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Q.

What steps can a homeowner take to survey their home for potential damage?

Walk around your house and do a ground-level inspection of your roof and siding

for leak prevention. Flat roofs with a single-ply membrane offer the greatest potential for leaks. Clean your gutters. Regular cleaning prevents garden-bed washout and ice damming during colder months. For some homeowners, this task can be DIY, but professional services are recommended depending on gutter height. Should you choose to tackle the job yourself, prioritize safety. Make sure your ladder is sturdy, stable and on level ground, and that its height exceeds that of the gutter. When in doubt, call a professional to schedule an appointment.

Seal air leaks by caulking windows and other openings. Add insulation where needed. Consider replacing the front door. Doors offer the highest retention for investment, and will keep your home warmer inside.

Why are local companies the better choice for contracting this type of work?

Be wary of fly-by-night solicitations from out-of-area contractors. The job at hand may be the first and last time you'll see them. Workmanship warranties may be compromised if the

contractor is based on the other side of the country. A local company will have greater immediacy and responsibility should there be a problem or installation concern.

**Chad Kazaba, service and warranty director
G. Fedale Roofing & Siding
Wilmington, Del.
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Image courtesy of G. Fedale Roofing & Siding

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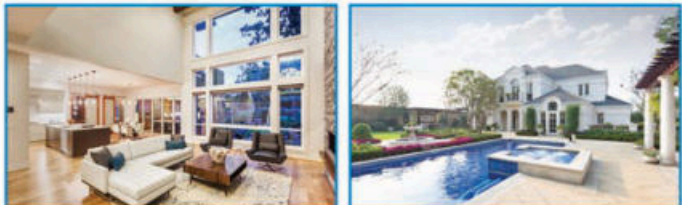
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Q: Do homeowners often overlook the impact of a garage door when it comes to winterizing?

When temperatures start to bend and the air gets colder, it's always important to check the weather seal around the opening and at the bottom of a garage door. The bottom seal should be pliable, not hard. Also check the door for lubrication so it's easy to open and close.

Are new garage doors built more efficiently to reduce these issues?

We have doors with varying degrees of energy efficiency, some with polystyrene insulation, which can range from a 6.9 R-value to 9 R-value. Clopay garage doors have a proprietary polyurethane insulation that increases the energy efficiency to 12.9 R-value.

There are various looks of garage doors—carriage style, raised panel, faux finishes that look like real wood but are insulated steel, and all colors and window styles, which are also insulated.



**Scott Smolar, owner
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Image courtesy of Smolar Garage Doors



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DON'T LET YOUR LANDSCAPE

Fall FLAT

by Michael Pasquarello, Degreed Landscape Architect, Elite Landscaping

Now that summer is unofficially over, staycations are at an end and schools are back open to some extent, it is a great time to evaluate your lawn and landscape to see how it fared over the summer months. Extreme temperatures, lack of rain and high humidity are all culprits that put a beating on lawn and landscape plantings. The most visibly affected at most properties throughout the Delaware Valley is the turf. Let's talk about what can be done to bring back that lush, green, golf course of a lawn you had back in April and how to also take advantage of the seasonal holidays to add some much-needed interest and color back to your landscape.

LAWN. Fungus was the quick spreading killer of grass over the past few months fueled by heat, humidity and the over-watering suburban homeowner. Fungus first appeared as some yellowing areas which rapidly took over the lawn if not treated properly. The first inclination was to crank the irrigation up and even have it come on multiple times throughout the day. This was only adding to the problem and making it much more difficult to correct with fungicides. Once this fungus is kept at bay it's on to the next step—fall lawn renovation.

Don't despair, in a few steps your lawn can be brought back to its former beauty. The lawn will first need to be thatched to remove all built-up dead turf blades and debris. This can either be done manually with a metal tined rake for those ready for a workout or by machine to be quick and efficient. The soil will then need to be aerated to remedy compaction and allow air, beneficial nutrients and water to reach the root zone easily. Any excessive bare spots are to have a peat moss/soil mixture spread throughout to provide the seed a stable germination medium. Lastly, grass seed is to be applied, along with a starter fertilizer for that extra boost. Make sure new seed receives adequate water throughout its growing cycle to becoming a mature, hardened-off blade.

FLOWERS. Now that your lawn is the envy of the PGA Tour, some much-needed seasonal color should follow suit. Mums are the staple fall flower that when planted in masses can create a stunning effect, but

just don't stop there. Kale, cabbage, asters and sedum will all add that vibrancy back into your landscape once the petunias and impatiens have all lost their appeal. Some of these are even perennials, which means they will re-emerge each year for your enjoyment. I can't stress enough that planting in masses will help you achieve that wow factor. Quantities of three are good, five are even better and seven-plus are a knockout!

DÉCOR. Halloween and Thanksgiving are close enough in proximity that outdoor décor can be displayed to cover both. If ghouls and goblins aren't your thing you can still be festive in the season and arrange pumpkins, multi-colored gourds, straw bales and corn stalks. These all evoke the feeling of the fall harvest and are a nice addition to entry ways and landscaped areas. As with flower plantings, more is better! If you typically only purchased two pumpkins in the past then this year get nine of various sizes and arrange in multiple groupings throughout. Corn stalks are a great accent to any vertical elements of your home and landscape such as light poles, doors and tree trunks. The best aspect about all of these items is that they are relatively inexpensive so you can go all out without breaking the bank.

Fall is associated with the end of the growing season, but no need to just sit back and watch things die off. Elite Landscaping has been providing these services for over 30 years. Please contact us to schedule a free consultation and finish up strong in a blaze of oranges, yellows, purples and burgundies. "*Autumn ... the year's last, loveliest smile.*"—William Cullen Bryant **H&H**



Michael Pasquarello is a degreed landscape architect with Elite Landscaping. Email him at MPasquarello@EliteLandscaping.com or call (856) 753-1944. Visit EliteLandscaping.com for more information.



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