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F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio

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page 21

ASK THE EXPERT



Del Val Pools and Spas

Why a gunite pool is the best fit for your family page 11

Inside: Annual Kitchen & Bath Directory

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TriCity Kitchens

Celebrating 50 years of exceeding customer expectations in all aspects of kitchen design *page 29*

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Amiano & Son Design-Build

A one-stop shop that brings together designers, builders and materials under one roof *page 33*

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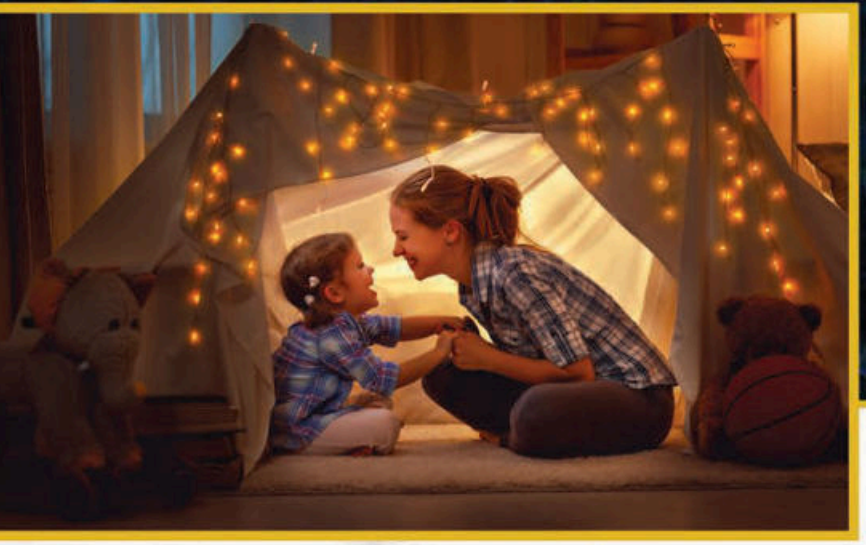
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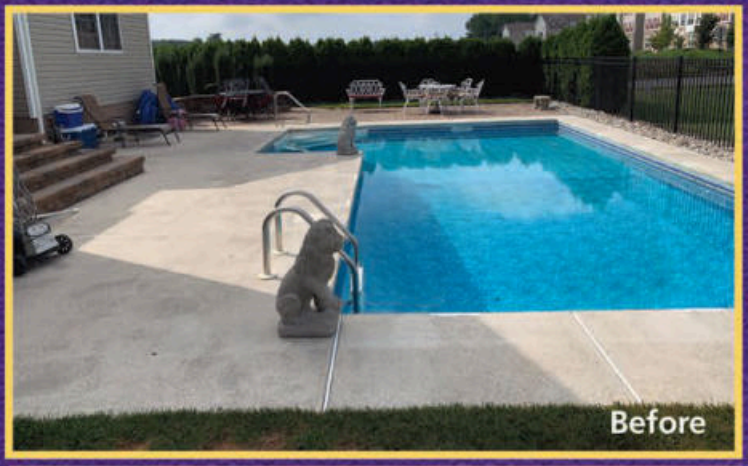
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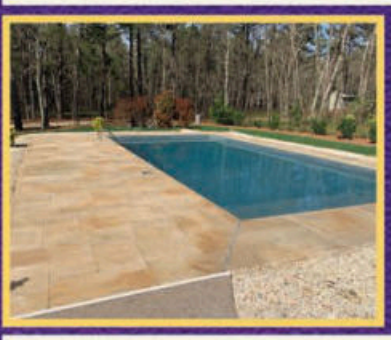
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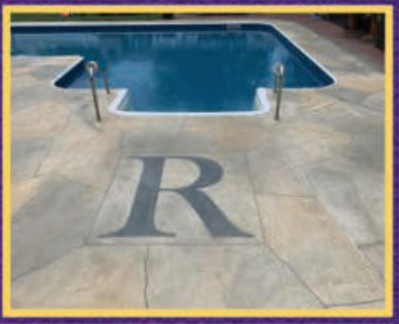
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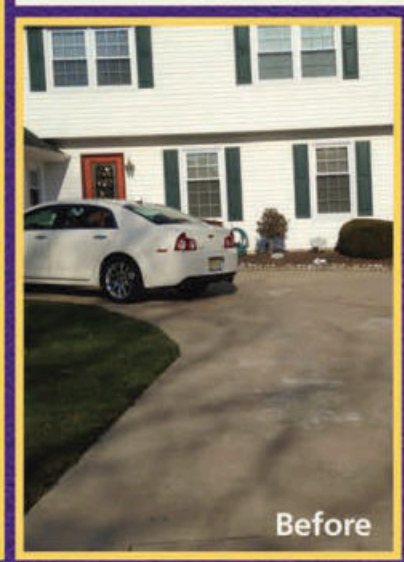
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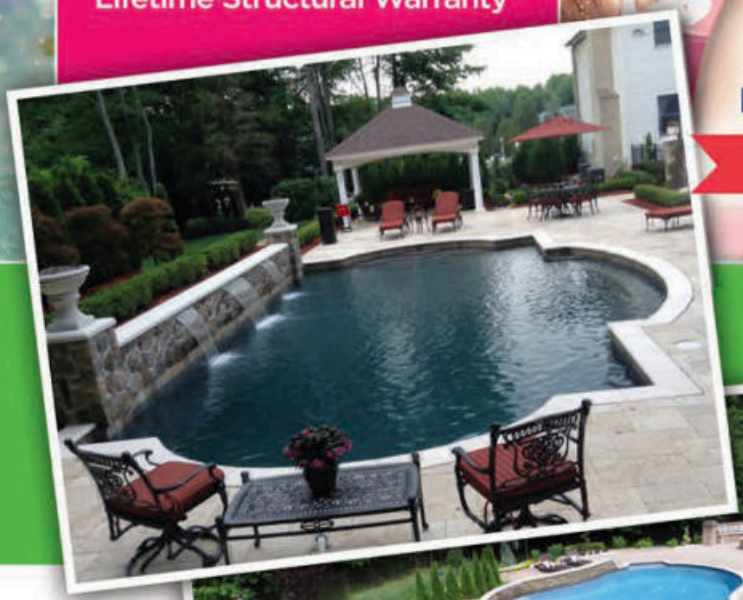
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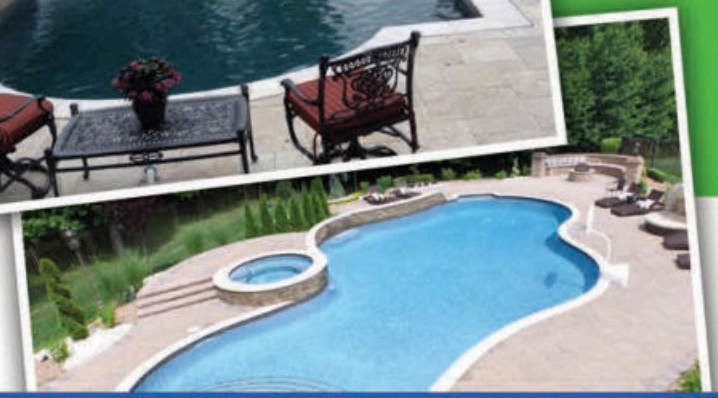
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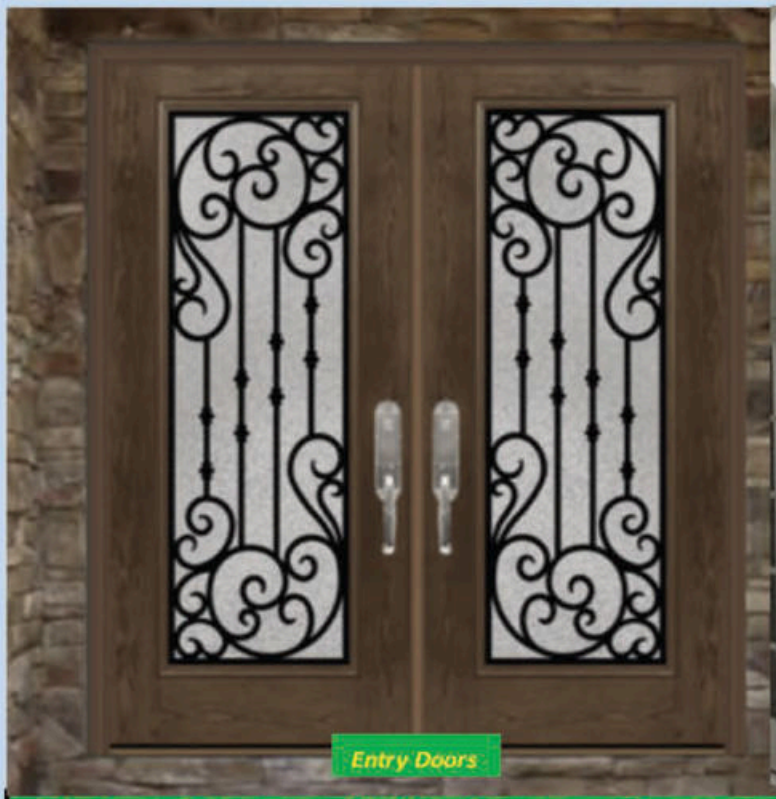
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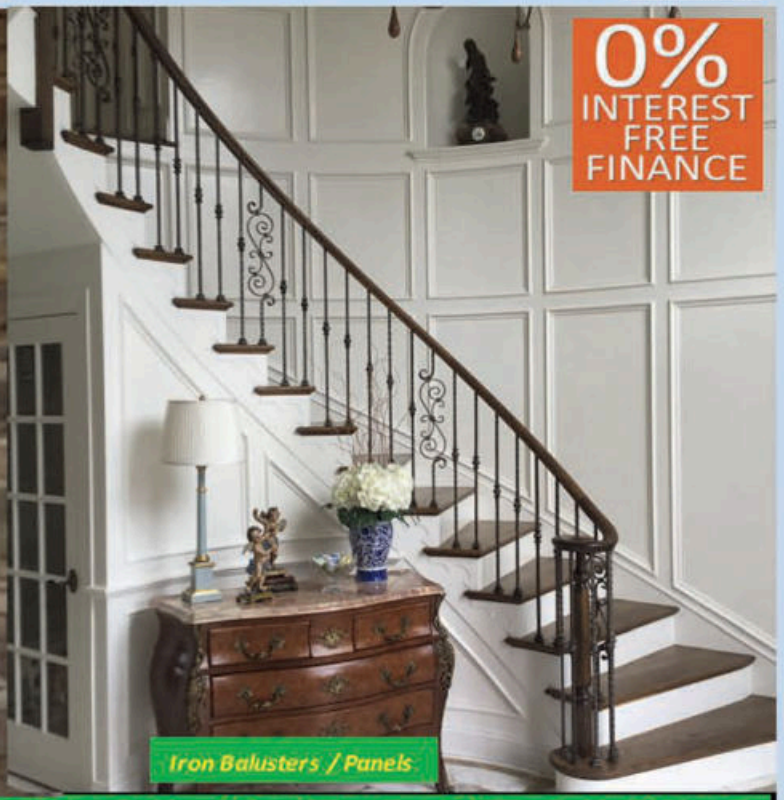
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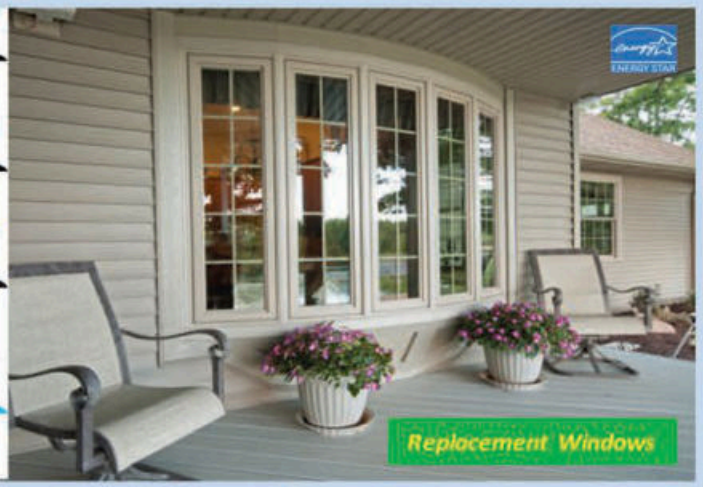


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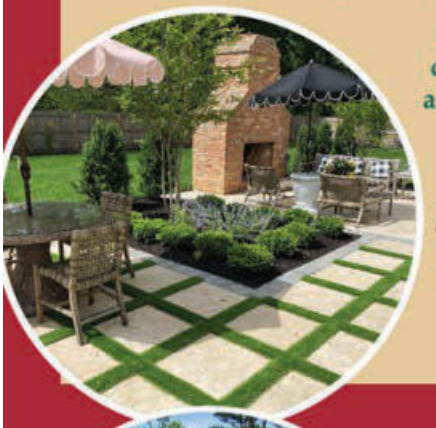
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Del Val Pools & Spas



WITH MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF EXPERIENCE AND THREE LOCATIONS, the family-owned and -operated Del Val Pools & Spas has been a trusted name in South Jersey for custom designs and installation, consistent service and seasonal pool openings and closings.

As the second generation at Del Val, partner Bryan Hull thought he had seen it all—until the pandemic completely transformed the industry and created a surge of new construction never seen before.

"We are in the biggest pool boom in history," Hull says. "Everyone is staying home; no one wants to travel, and they're building paradise in their own backyards. It's become quite busy over the past two years, but we're handling the demand and the equipment shortages well and still giving our customers the service they expect and deserve."

Del Val Pools & Spas continues to rise to the occasion for homeowners, many of whom are embracing the advantages of custom gunite pools. They have created a niche with unusual pool construction at the Jersey Shore and are well-known for creative engineering in small spaces.

House & Home spoke to Hull to learn more about their custom pool capabilities and how his company brings clients' dreams to fruition.



Bryan Hull, Partner

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO HAVING A GUNITE POOL INSTALLED RATHER THAN A VINYL OR FIBERGLASS POOL?

Most people choose gunite because it's a custom pool and there is more freedom with design. With a vinyl or fiberglass pool, the shape and style are fixed. With a gunite pool, you can freehand a drawing and we can build it. We can customize the steps and add a sundeck—which everyone is loving right now—and add custom benches in the deep end. The answer is always "yes" if you want to add to a gunite pool.



IS GUNITE A MORE DURABLE OPTION?

Absolutely. It's a premier pool. You don't have a liner to worry about or fiberglass splitting or degrading over time. We frame the pool with steel rebar rods in 12-inch squares. The more steel one uses and the thicker the gunite, the stronger the pool. We are well-known for our superior construction techniques.

HOW DOES THE COST COMPARE TO OTHER STYLES OF POOLS?

It's a few thousand more than a fiberglass pool and about $10,000 more than a vinyl pool, but it's hard to compare dollar to dollar because you're receiving a lot more with a gunite pool. If you're looking for an affordable pool with some options, vinyl is a great way to go. But if you're looking for the full custom pool with all of the features you desire, gunite is the best choice.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER POPULAR AMENITIES REQUESTED BY YOUR GUNITE POOL CUSTOMERS?

There are many unique features that can be added to a custom pool. If you want to put Adirondack chairs on the sundeck or have a custom shaded area with an umbrella, we can do that. People are asking for saltwater generators, umbrella holders, color-changing lights and bubblers, waterfalls and raised spillover spas. Each year technology advances and brings new ideas to the industry. You add tremendous home value with a gunite pool, and it's creating an oasis in your backyard.

WHY IS A GUNITE POOL BETTER FOR HOMEOWNERS WITH DOGS OR OTHER PETS?

Many of our customers love their dogs and gunite is better because there are no liner tear risks. Liners have definitely become thicker over the years, but if you have a bigger dog or live in an area where other animals can gain access to the pool, it will tear. Having a dog step on a sundeck in a vinyl pool is a big no-no.

DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WITH GUNITE POOLS?

We've worked with gunite for many years. Most companies don't own gunite trucks or spray equipment. We do. We also do our own plaster finishing. We can control things better than when relying on subcontractors. For example, if a customer calls and wants to know when the pool is being plastered, we have an immediate answer.

DEL VAL POOLS IS A PROVEN NAME IN SOUTH JERSEY. WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES YOU STAND OUT IN THIS INDUSTRY?

We are a multi-generational, family-run business and have been building pools for 35 years. We've crafted pools for the same customers three times over—whether they moved or bought a house at the Shore. The same Del Val staff returns year after year permitting us to have a family feel at all three of our locations. When you call, you speak with someone who can make a decision rather than go through the channels to find someone. Simply put, we excel at what we do and with the third generation rising through the ranks, we are a firmly established business with a wide range of capabilities and rapid turnaround time on services. H&H

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IN THE WORLD OF HOME IMPROVEMENT, kitchens and baths continue to reign supreme. Survey after survey shows that these spaces can add the most value in a home. Homeowners who are ready to make the investment in upgrading their kitchen or bath can simply look on the following pages to find qualified professionals in various specialities from marble and granite and cabinetry to remodelers and designers. With the help of this *House & Home* Directory, we hope the design of your dreams can soon become a reality.

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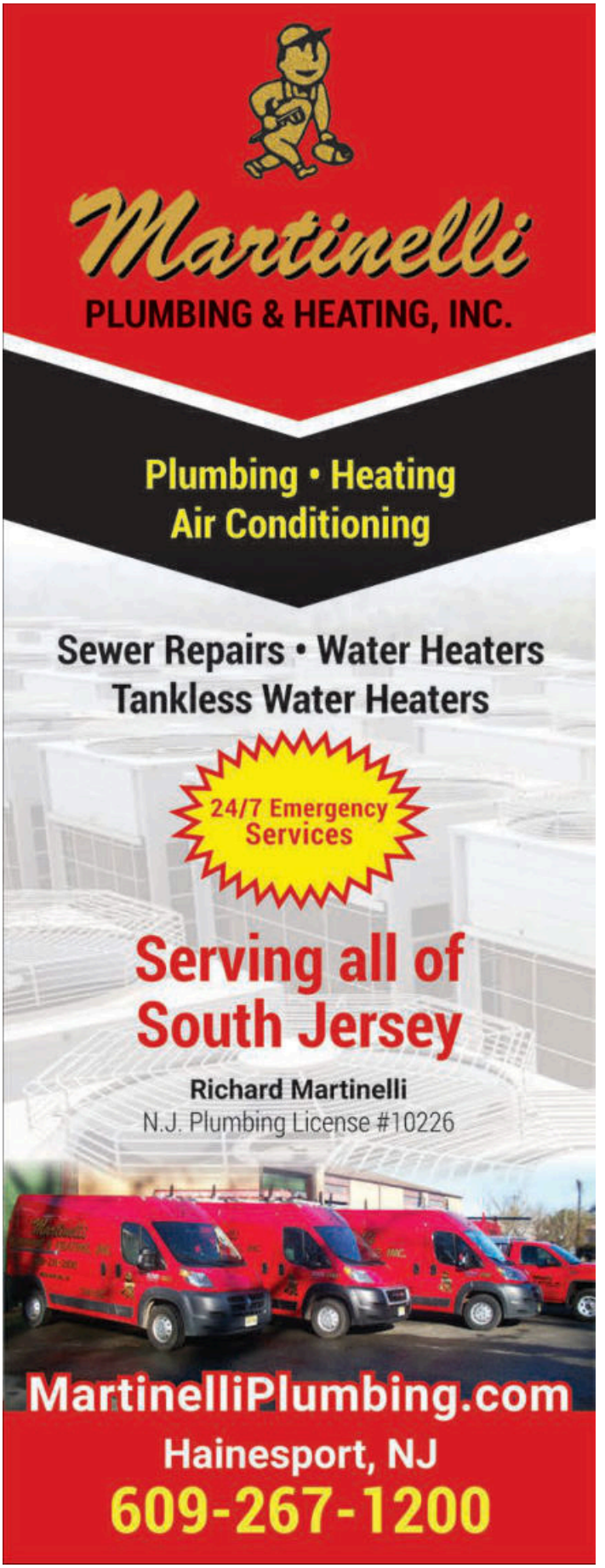
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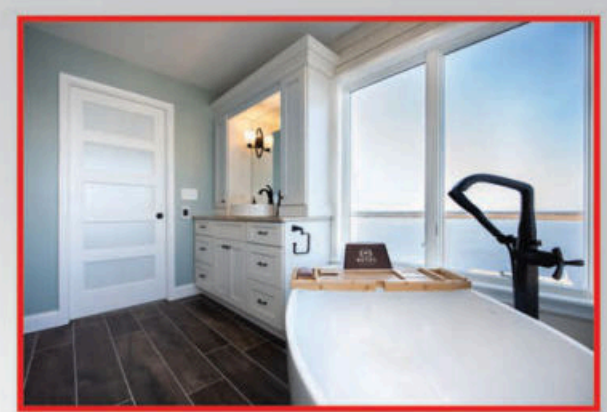
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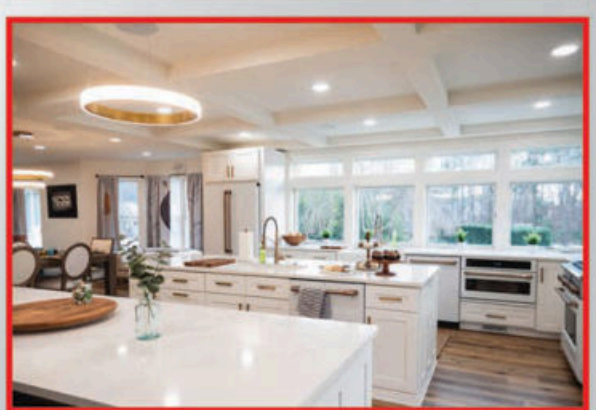
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Professional Advice, Stunning Designs

Whether looking for a total remodel or an updated facelift, **F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio** provides everything from concept to completion under one roof. by **LIZ HUNTER**

Approaching a kitchen or bathroom remodel requires professional advice. Even the most handy among us could benefit from the guidance of a professional with decades of experience and training. For those who would rather not take on the project themselves, F+S Kitchen and Bath Design Studio can play a part in the process of breathing new life into your space.

Owned by Guy Henri, F+S Kitchen and Bath is a full-service, licensed contractor specializing in various areas of home improvement, not limited to kitchens, baths, basements, flooring, painting and trimwork, and offers a full range of products and accessories for sale. Along with all of these services under one roof, customers will also find every trade professional they may need, including contractors, electricians, carpenters and plumbers.

Customers will be greeted with a warm welcome at F+S Kitchen and Bath's 1,500-square-foot showroom. "Our showroom is open to help customers with their material selections for any project, which needs to be scheduled by appointment," says Henri.

Henri doesn't try to pressure customers into contracting with F+S. "We know some people like to DIY, but we can help with the design if needed for a fee, and provide advice for the project."

When working with F+S Kitchen and Bath, customers can expect a partnership from start to finish. From the initial appointment, a design professional will listen to a customer's ideas and ask questions about the project and their lifestyle, making appropriate suggestions, Henri says, tweaking until they are satisfied with every component and selection.

Once a design is agreed upon, then the fun begins: browsing the showroom. Customers can look through displays of tile and stone, backsplashes, cabinets, vanities, sinks, etc. "We then walk them through to make selections and we confirm that everything flows well with their decor and lifestyle. We'll select cabinets, countertops, backsplash, flooring, lighting and any kitchen gadget and upgrade according to their needs: pull-out trash cans, lazy susans, spice racks, appliance garage systems, roll-out trays," Henri explains. All the selections are then used to generate the project cost and eventually finalized with a contract, if may be the case.

Henri says mindful consideration is given to the timeline before starting any project, which is why F+S Kitchen and Bath will not begin demolition until it is certain the cabinet delivery date is confirmed with the manufacturer. "We don't want to gut your kitchen and then leave you waiting." F+S Kitchen and Bath works with a wide range of cabinet manufacturers, which has helped the company keep projects moving forward even during this ongoing supply chain crisis, including two American-made brands Crestwood (semi-custom to custom) and Kabinart (semi-custom).

"Before we set a homeowner up with a particular kitchen cabinet product, we make sure the delivery timeline is acceptable for the customer. We advise customers to plan ahead if they want a project completed in time for a special event," says Henri.

In response to its customers' tastes, F+S Kitchen and Bath will be adding more hardwood flooring to its selection. "I've noticed a change of people moving away from tile flooring toward wood floors and we want to upgrade our selection," Henri says. "People are going for that natural look in their whole house and want a wood floor even in the kitchen, and with wider planks. This is something we're going to be focusing more on in the near future."

For a homeowner who may just be looking for a kitchen facelift, F+S Kitchen and Bath also has a wide selection of quartz countertop slabs, currently on promotion. "If you want a new look but don't have the budget for a full remodel, a new countertop and backsplash are a great way to refresh your kitchen or bathrooms and increase the quality of the space," says Henri.



It's evident that Henri listens to customers and it's a reflection of how important their relationship is to him. "We prove our customer service values through our qualified staff and our product lines," he says. "We're here to be a resource for homeowners. Even if you're two or three years away from planning a renovation, we are here to help you with ideas."

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

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THE GREAT INDOORS

Despite supply-chain delays, homeowners are still riding the pandemic's ongoing trend of refreshing their living spaces with a focus on interior spaces like bathrooms and kitchens.

BY MADELEINE MACCAR

After staring at the same walls, fixtures and accents throughout the pandemic's uptick in time spent at home, homeowners everywhere have been overhauling their living spaces. Whether it's all as one big project or tackled room by room, kitchens and bathrooms have not escaped house-bound families' scrutiny and desire for an interior refresh.

The area's experts took some time from their busy schedules to talk to *House & Home* about how clients can plan ahead for a smooth project timeline, managing expectations as supply delays are still creating a number of snarls along the way, and all the options available for lightly renovating or all-out remodeling two high-traffic areas on any budget.

BEGINNING A PROJECT

As the adage says, failing to prepare is preparing to fail, and home projects are no exception. While some clients are experienced at navigating the process, others are beginning their first foray into interior redesigns armed with only the knowledge that it's time for something new.

Whether you're working with a one-stop shop or a dedicated expert in kitchens and baths, the team you're trusting with the job can ensure you stay within your budget while planning a new layout, establishing a timeline and providing all kinds of expert insight as they bring your dream designs to life

"Construction is a journey," says Joe Sananes, who runs Cabinet Design Center with his wife, Yafit. "It can be fun and exciting, but it can also be overwhelming so you have to prepare a client mentally for the whole process. Hiring a company that will be transparent about that will help them be prepared for the journey and encourage them to look at their home like it's a blank canvas."

Whether that blank canvas will be filled in with new countertops and cabinets, a shower upgrade, customized accents, a full-scale remake or an addition, coming up with a layout design will help a homeowner visualize what their updated kitchen or bathroom will look like.

"We create a 3D layout on the computer so the customer can see a rendering of their new kitchen," notes Lorraine Sterl of Sterl Kitchens. "The custom layout/floor plan we create with the customer is based on the space they have available in combination with the use they have in mind. For example, [that could be] drawer bases, lift-up doors, spice racks, trash/recycling pull-out cabinets, islands, height of wall cabinets (from 30 inch to 42 inch, or stacked if desired higher), farm sinks, glass doors on cabinets, glass shelves, etc. There are so many options."

While the end result of any successful renovation project is making a lived-in room feel like a brand-new space that's more in line with your current tastes or modern trends, getting there takes a tremendous amount of proactive communication from beginning to end.

"You have to ask the client questions to find out what their wants and needs are, like if they're a retired couple, if it's for a family with a new baby or if it's a rental home," explains Denneen Guidici, designer for Floors Just For You. "There's usually an initial design consultation and, depending on the client, it gets handled in a few different ways. Sometimes we go out, measure the space, and then put together a quick design and estimate—there's so much involved that people don't always know how much it's going to cost."

No matter the scope of the project, managing a budget is one of its most crucial elements.

"Set realistic expectations going into the project," advises JT Norman, product and design innovator at Kitchen Magic. "Budget depletion happens when the homeowner doesn't set a realistic and clear value for a quality remodel and product costs. … Choosing materials and

items that fit your budget and allow for one or two must-haves that are within your budget allowance is key."

While some experts say that the ongoing supply chain delays are getting somewhat better, they remain an additional hurdle that homeowners will have to be cognizant of as their new kitchens and baths take shape.

"In the last six months, our management and designers have recognized the impact of both the lack of trained workers available in the manufacturing sector, and the inability to source raw materials that are used in production of cabinetry," says Barry Tarzy of CabinetTree Design Studio. "We believe this state of the business will continue to cause delays in some clients' orders early into 2022."

MODERN OPTIONS, CURRENT TRENDS

David Cerami, owner of both HomeTech Renovations and Let's Face It, says that homeowners have a wealth of options when it comes to redoing their living spaces, starting with the scope of their projects. Let's Face It has offered refacing as a greener, less-laborious alternative to completely reconstructing a room, and is generally the preferred option for folks who love the bones of a room but love its dated details a little less.

"We were one of the first companies to offer an alternative to the conventional approach of gutting the cabinetry and rebuilding the entire kitchen from floor to ceiling," he says. "Cabinet refacing is for homeowners who have a kitchen that mostly works for them in terms of its design, but they're tired of the colors, the door style, the hinging of their cabinets."


Kitchen Magic

Even those homeowners who begin a project with the utmost confidence in their visions have been swayed by visiting a showroom to see their options for tile, flooring, countertops, cabinets, bathtubs, showers and more in-person and all under one roof. Actually interacting with the elements they'll potentially see every day for real-life assessments and comparisons is an invaluable asset to clients.

Spending some time in a showroom can also help illustrate just how many options there are for every budget.

"What I do is start out at a mid-grade bathroom and I let the customer go wherever they want to go with it," says Chris Hermann of Harmony Home Remodeling. "I give them a range of material pricing where I would say, 'Your shower wall's tile can be $4 a square foot, your floor tiles are $3 a square foot.' If they want to go higher or lower, then I tell them they can go to my showroom, pick out what they want and then they pay the difference. … I can get anything they want in any material, so it's a one-stop shop."

Hermann notes that his company specializes in additions, and that "90% of the time, if someone does an addition, they'll want other work done." That could be anything from turning bathroom closets into smaller storage spaces with matching vanities, replacing outdated small tiles with much trendier large tiles, installing heated floors and replacing a second tub with the stand-up showers that clients are still clamoring for.


Cabinet Design Center

Sophia Amiano, the design-build specialist at Amiano & Son Design-Build, adds that the freestanding garden tubs everyone wanted a few years ago are being replaced by cabinets and linen closets. She agrees that walk-in showers are still popular but that "the main focal point in any bathroom that I've been doing is definitely storage, as well as having that nice, spacious shower."

But she says the most prevailing trend she's noticed, from the western Pine Barrens to the Jersey Shore, is an in-demand, versatile hue: "If 2021 had an official color, it would be navy blue," she notes. "I and the other designer on our staff have been doing a lot of navy blue kitchens. What's nice about it is that it can look a little nautical, it can look a little modern and it can look a little more sleek and almost glam."

When it comes to outfitting those kitchens, Sterl says there is one countertop option that, hands down, delivers the biggest bang for your buck. "The best value for your dollar? Quartz countertops," she says. "They do not absorb bacteria or stains because they are non-porous, do not need to be resealed, are an extremely hard material, scratch-resistant, warrantied and very beautiful because they are made from natural quartz stone."

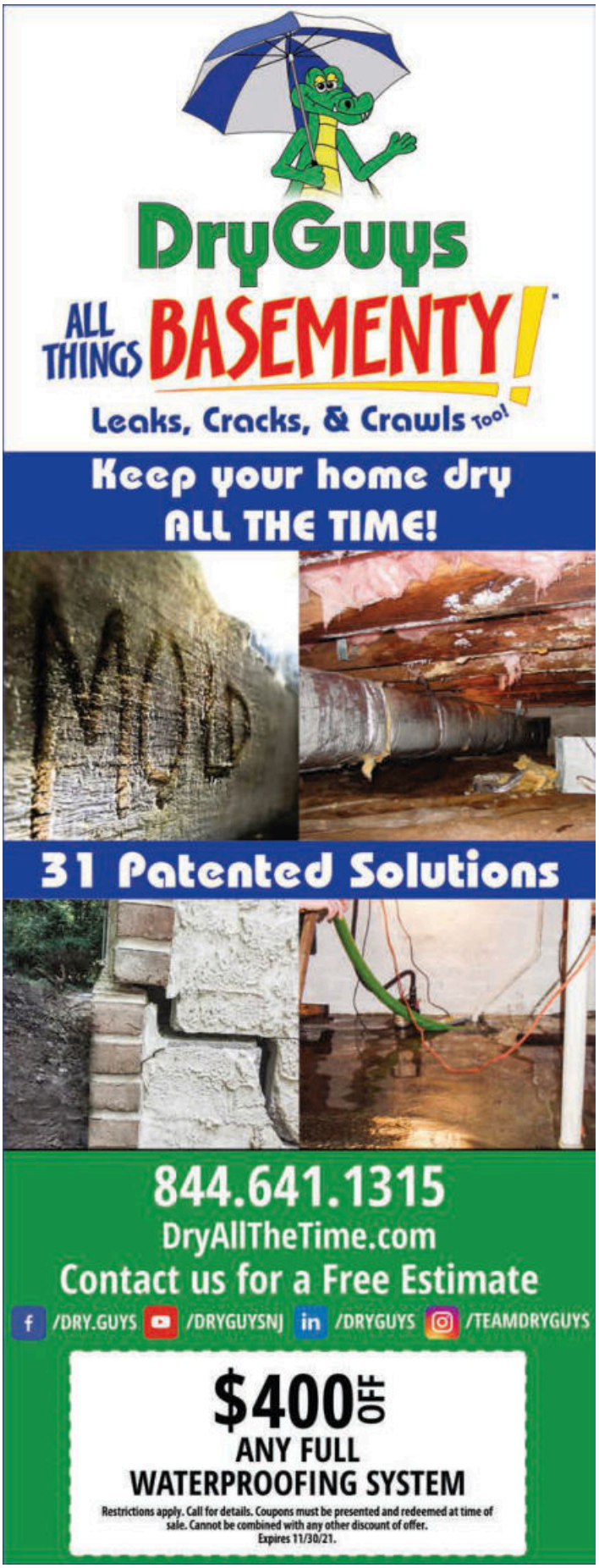
Norman observes that homeowners have been outfitting their kitchens with multitasking amenities like islands, desk niches customized for specific uses and pet stations, plus designated bar areas for a wine fridge, glass storage and entertaining. "Function remains vital to the way a kitchen performs," he says.

Sananes notes that Cabinet Design Center has been creating a lot of farmhouse-style kitchens with less-is-more vibes and clean lines. "Our job is to listen to you and look to the future while correcting any missteps—we are designers by trade so we try to create a timeless look," he says. "If you invest in an item, like a kitchen island, that's too trendy, you're going to get tired of it. So we encourage the customer to be bold, but with items that are easily changeable. It's not a big deal to change paint colors, but to change a cabinet would be."

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Of course, no matter the trends, every good designer and expert wants every customer to be happy with the kitchen and bath they'll be seeing, using and living in for years to come, which means using their expertise to bring those unique wants and needs to life—and without compromising your budget or settling.

"If you're looking for a very specifically styled or color cabinet,




Amiano & Son Design-Build

there typically are alternative solutions within the stock cabinetry lines," says Amiano. "Right now, stock cabinetry is probably a bigger seller than semi-custom. The stock cabinetry nowadays is beautiful, with these great options in styles and colors."

With so many options on the table, it's important for an expert to get familiar with your space before the project begins.

"Getting a free in-home consultation and estimate can be a valuable first step in the remodeling endeavors," advises Norman. "Kitchen consultants come with a list of ideas and will give you a solution and quote for what your budget will allow."

No matter what direction you're taking your kitchen and bathroom, though, one of the best ways to ensure a project's success is to plan ahead.

"Order early to prevent delays in planned construction and kitchen and bath installation," Tarzy says. "Make sure you select and secure all plumbing and electrical fixtures ahead of time so that when it is time to install, everything is in place with no delay caused by lack of products. Couple cabinet delays with the availability of a qualified professional to install—it has become more important than ever to plan ahead."

The other, of course, is to enlist the help of quality, qualified professionals who know how to turn the spaces of your dreams into a long-lasting reality.

"You get what you pay for," Cerami points out. "There are some very talented contractors out there, but they might not be good at communication or following up, they're not good with designs or suggestions that would yield a project that is flawless in the end. You wouldn't build a house without an architect or a plan; certainly, you wouldn't build out a significant kitchen without one." **H&H**

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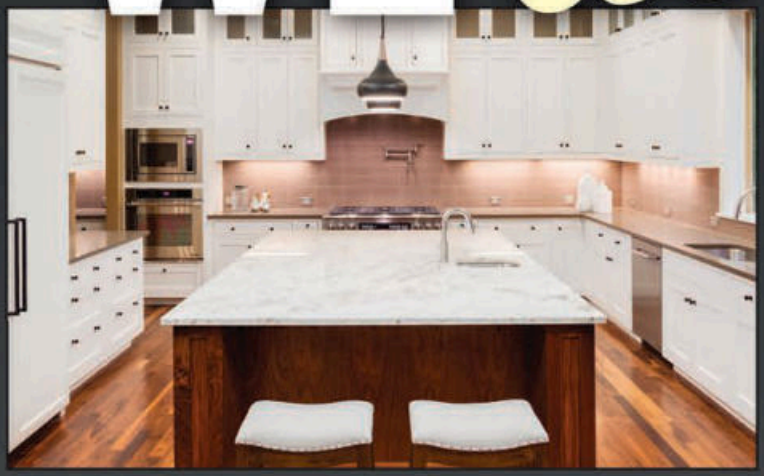
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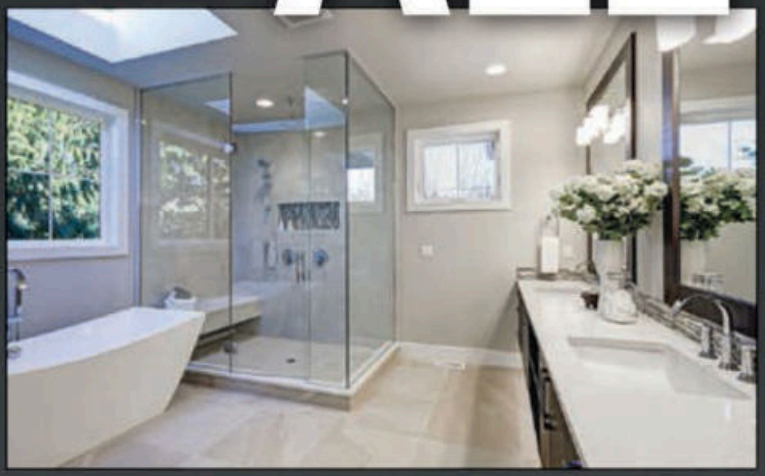
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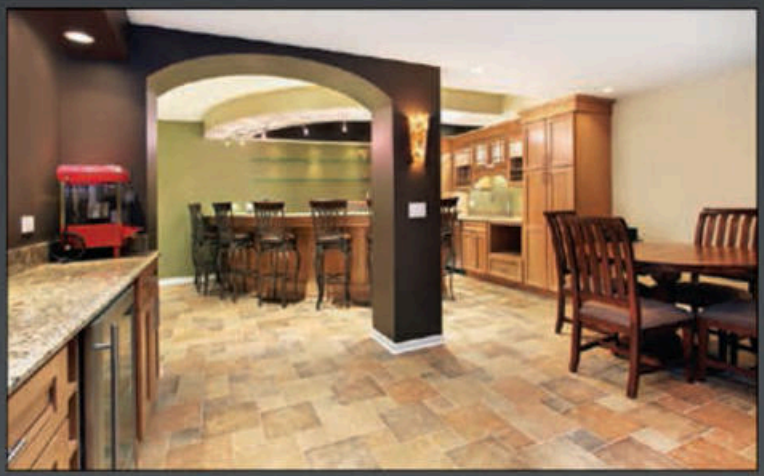
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TriCity Kitchens

Elevating expectations.

by **Amanda Hamm Hengel**



LONGEVITY. IT'S AN ATTRIBUTE LONG REVERED BUT NOT OFTEN ACHIEVED IN THE BUSINESS WORLD. With so many companies—big box included—in the mix, it can be difficult to stand out and endure the test of time.

That being said, it's no small feat Vineland-based TriCity Kitchens is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. What started as a lumber company in 1971 has grown into a kitchen cabinet-focused entity where customers have come to expect the best. And President Keith Bernhardt Jr. says TriCity Kitchens aims to provide nothing less.

"In today's world, you have to find a way to be specialized and be extremely good at something," he says. "We were always good at kitchen design, so we decided to make that our focus over and above general lumber, and we've really been able to capitalize upon that."

With a core group of five designers and eight installers, TriCity Kitchens is able to offer customers an array of services that match any budget or remodeling goal. Working with manufacturers such as Plain N Fancy Cabinetry out of Lancaster, Pa., along with nearly 10 others, TriCity Kitchens is able to truly develop the kitchen of each customer's dreams.

"We also have our own shop where we're able to do some custom pieces," Bernhardt adds. "This way, we're able to supplement some of our more basic orders with a custom piece to give the homeowner their own unique product."

TriCity Kitchens also boasts one of the largest cabinetry displays in the Mid-Atlantic area, and Bernhardt says being able to offer customers so many options is part of the reason he looks forward to heading to work every day.

"I think helping homeowners find ways to make their homes better is one of the favorite parts of my job," says Bernhardt. "Figuring out how to make something work better, or look better, or offer something more for design or storage or cooking is what really makes my job enjoyable."

A testament to the quality service TriCity Kitchens provides is the number of repeat customers the business has seen over the years. In fact, many customers who have had TriCity Kitchens help remodel their homes return to them—even when they move out of state.

"With the help of our manufacturers, such as Plain N Fancy Cabinetry, we have been commissioned to do work up and down the East Coast for both new and past clients," Bernhardt says.

While kitchen cabinets are now the company's focus, Bernhardt adds TriCity Kitchens also installs bathrooms, home offices, closets and more.

"With the pandemic, people are trying to make their home adapt to this change in life, and we are here to help with that," he says. "People are spending more time at home, more time in front of the computer and comfort is really the big word right now.

"We're helping to make it easier to get on a Zoom meeting from your kitchen, or to help design a home office," Bernhardt adds. "Whatever they need, we can help make it happen."

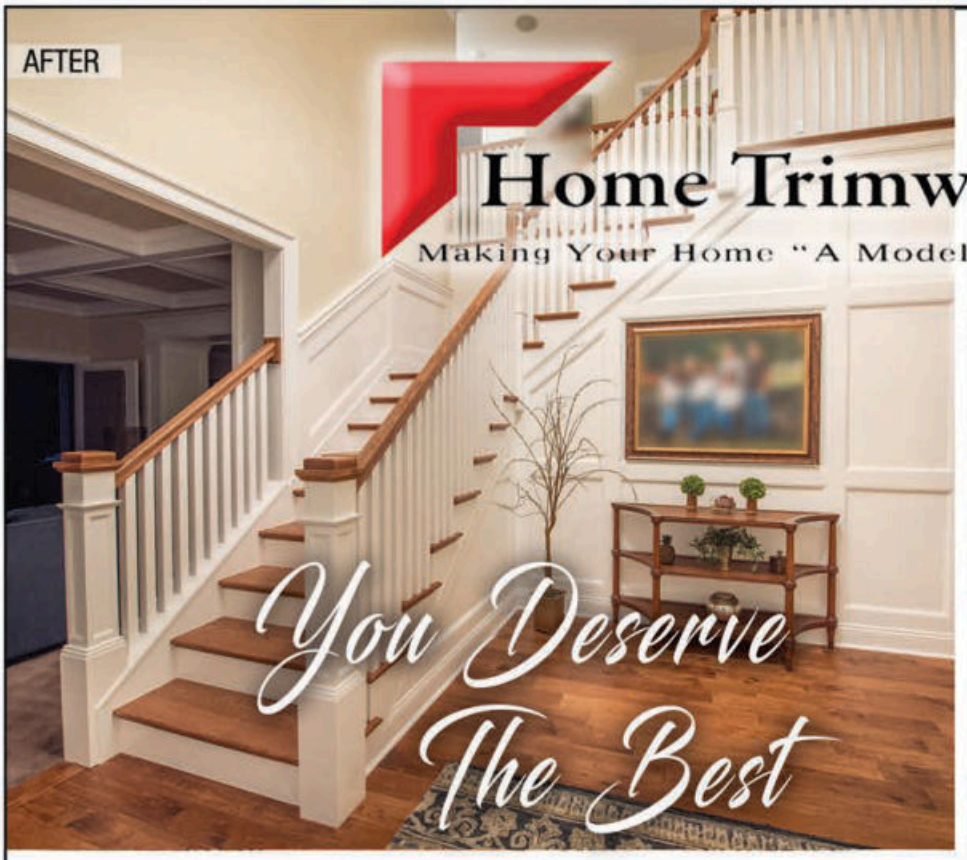
TriCity Kitchens has worked with many customers over the past 50 years, and anxiously awaits the opportunity to work with many more in the years to come.

"The experienced group at TriCity Kitchens is looking forward to developing more relationships and finding solutions for everyone," Bernhardt concludes. "The pandemic has left people searching for better cabinet and storage solutions and we welcome the challenge and are poised for growth in the coming years." **H&H**



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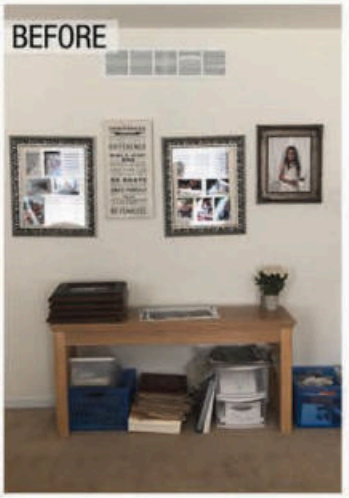


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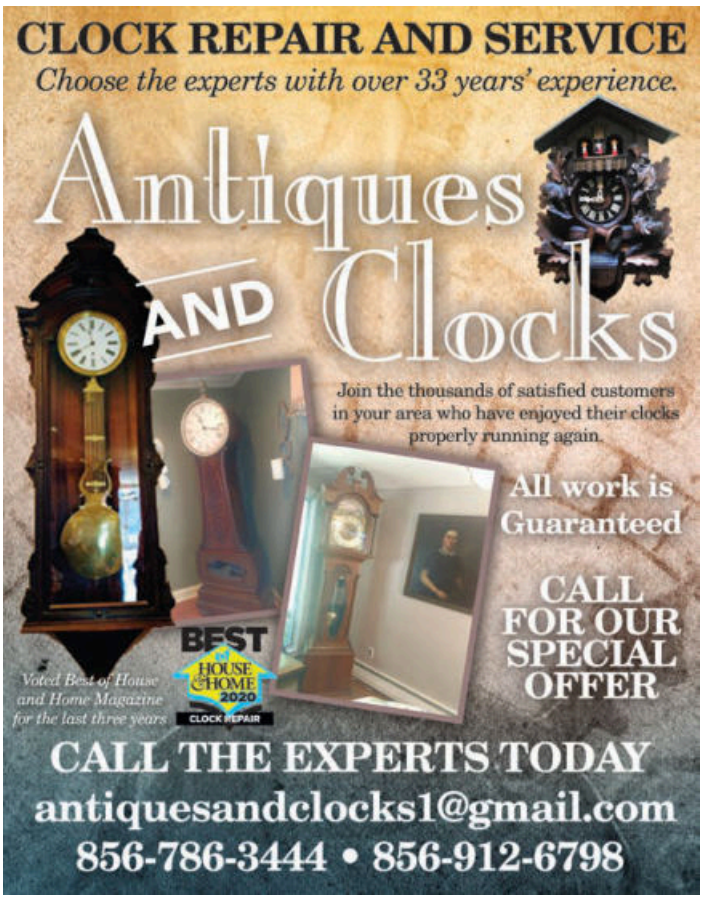
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H&H profile

All Under One Roof



Amiano & Son endeavors to take the stress out of home remodeling and renovations with its full-service kitchen and bath showroom and design center, skilled construction team and expert designers.

by **Madeleine Maccar**

Anyone who's remodeled their home, no matter the scale of the project, knows that it is a massive undertaking from beginning to end. Even before the work commences, a homeowner needs to select the flooring, tiles, cabinetry, plumbing fixtures and more that will make their newly redesigned spaces feel even more like home.

The selection process alone can become a daunting task if a homeowner is driving all around the region to find complementing, harmonious elements, as well as hiring the right builder and trusting that everything will come together successfully in the end.

That's why a one-stop shop that brings together designers and builders, kitchen and bath options, and a sprawling showroom can make the whole process not only less stressful but also downright enjoyable.

Enter Amiano & Son Design-Build, a full-service design and remodeling firm that has it all under one roof. Since 1968, the South Jersey team has been working with the region's homeowners to bring their visions to life. It currently has two locations, with a 3,500-square-foot building in Southampton being home to the showroom that allows clients to examine, compare and literally get their hands on the elements they want to bring together in their home.

"There's a stress-reduction factor when working with a showroom remodeler because you're able to be in one single location and work with one familiar person throughout your entire design process," says Wendy Amiano, vice president of Amiano & Son. "You're not getting a lot of hands in the pot because you're working with one designer."

Rather than relying on a cherry-picked team of designers and builders who may lose track of details as they communicate things like measurements among themselves, working with the Amiano team means all the information about your home project stays in-house.



"When you're working with a remodeler who doesn't have a showroom … you'll go to pick out your cabinets at one location. Then they're going to send you to another place to pick out your tile, and hopefully you have a sample of your cabinet door that you can hold up to the tile, or you're trying to match it to photos of your backsplash that might not be in the right lighting," she explains. "Our design team comes out to your house to take a look at the job on multiple occasions, and they also come out with a field member if there are questions on how a certain product could work in the remodel or how it will fit. Our designers work with our production teams."

Amiano says that while many clients walk in already certain of what they want, plenty more only know that it's time for something new.

"When they come into the showroom, we have TVs that are running with past jobs and we can pull up jobs that we've done as examples," she says. "Maybe someone is doing a kitchen remodel of their bi-level, so we're able to maybe pull up a couple other by bi-levels, take a look and see what works."

That expansive showroom is well-stocked with plenty of inspiration, ideas and items. You'll find different cabinetry lines and all kinds of fixtures, flooring, tile, tubs, toilets, glass samples for things like shower doors, countertop samples, sinks galore and edge samples for a truly custom room design. There are even exterior products, including Chicago brick, as well as ideas for other parts of the house, like mudrooms.

Amiano also has the software to render prospective renovations in a 3D "live mood board," which helps demonstrate how an array of colors, finishes and materials look in different lighting, from different angles and in a more realistic illustration than a 2D design.

All these time-saving services contribute to the convenience, expertise, proven track record and peace of mind that accompany working with a one-stop shop.

"At the end of the day, is not traveling all over the tri-state area to look at all different products worth it for you?" says Amiano. "Do you want to run around and be your own middleman while you're trying to make all of these decisions about the new kitchen you're going to spend a lot of time in with an untrained eye? Or would you rather have that trained eye, who was also then coordinating with the actual field or production or construction team of your project?"

The fact that Amiano sees a healthy amount of returning customers is proof that the team's methods, attention to detail and respect for their clients' homes set them apart from the rest.

"We have a lot of repeat business because they enjoyed the experience so much," Aminao confirms. "They're able to peruse at their leisure and not worry about rushing off to somewhere else. We're giving them that convenience, and the feedback we get is tremendous." H&H

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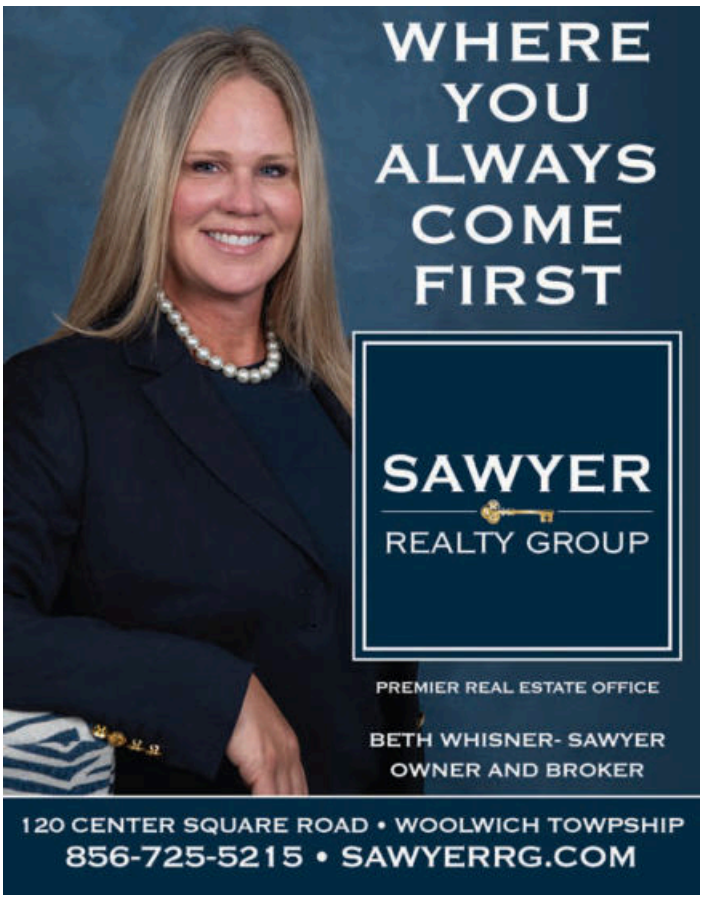
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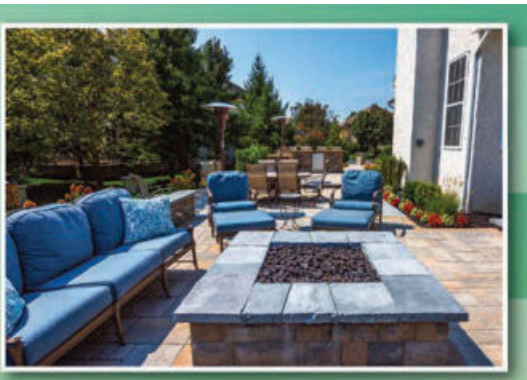

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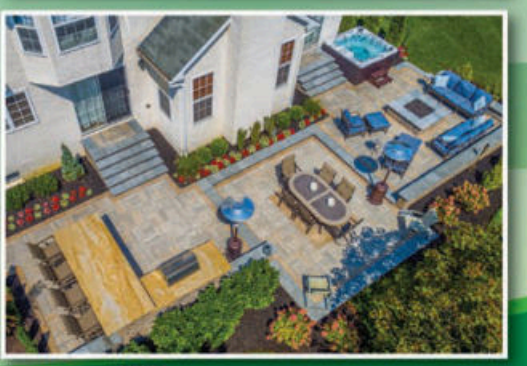

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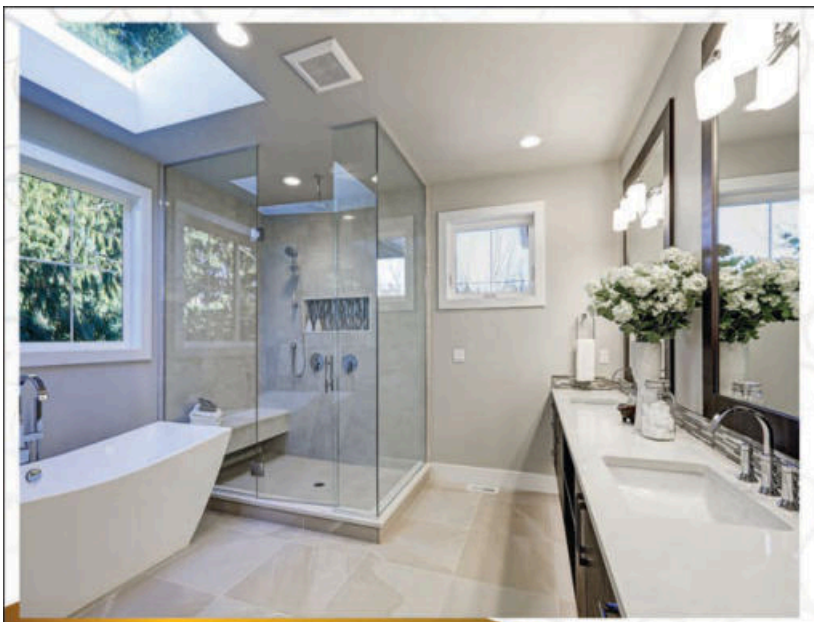


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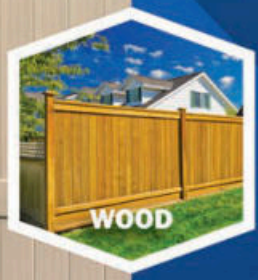

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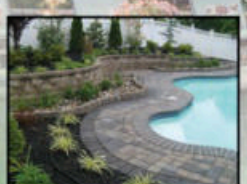
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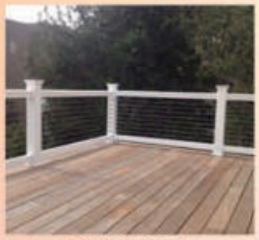
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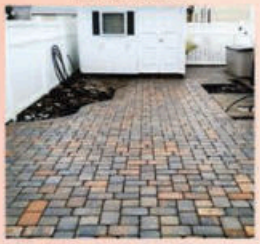
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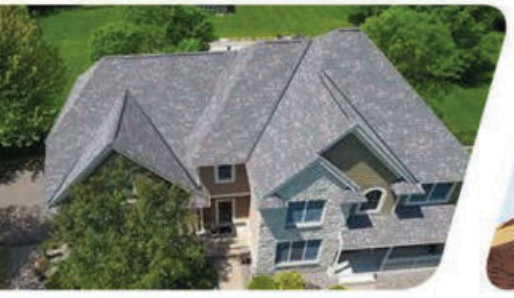
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