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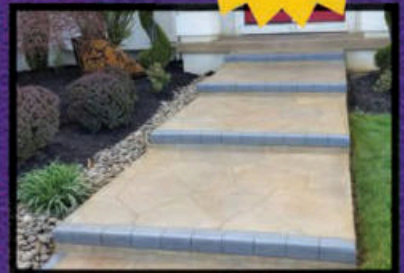
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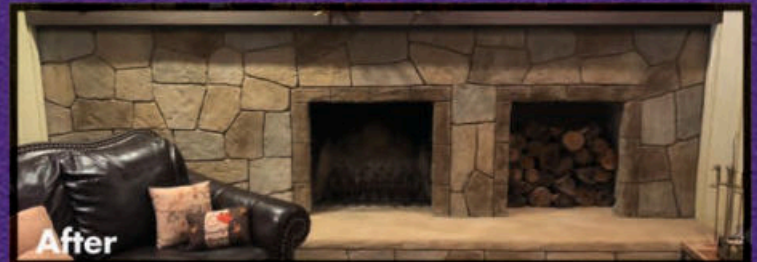
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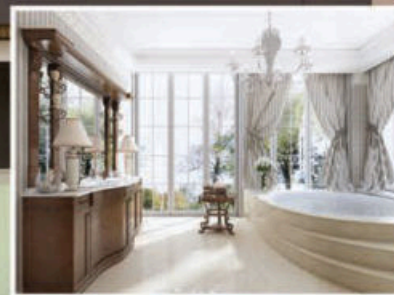
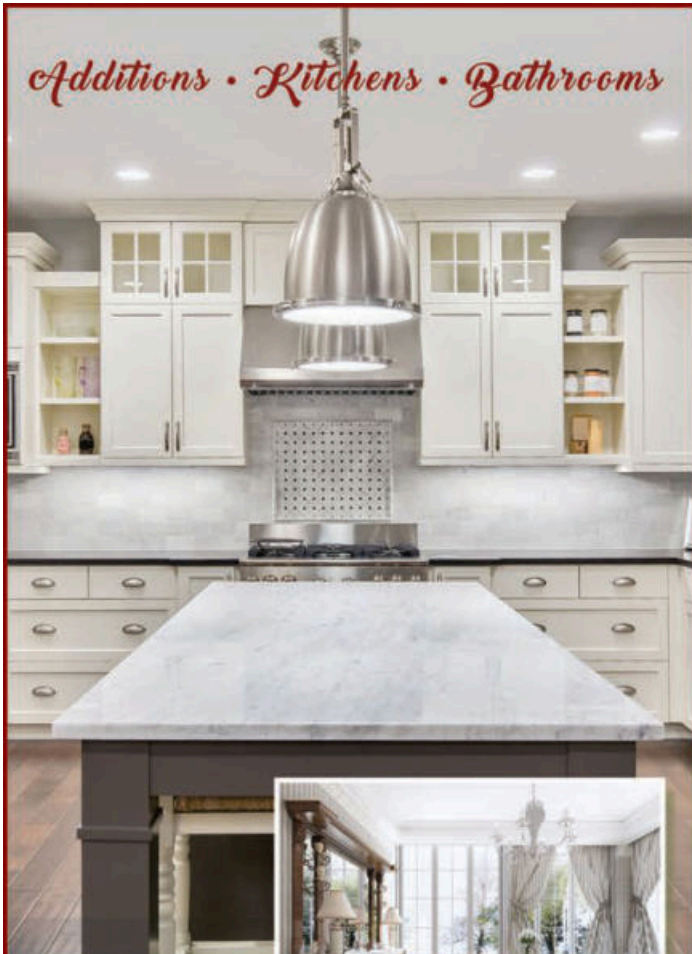
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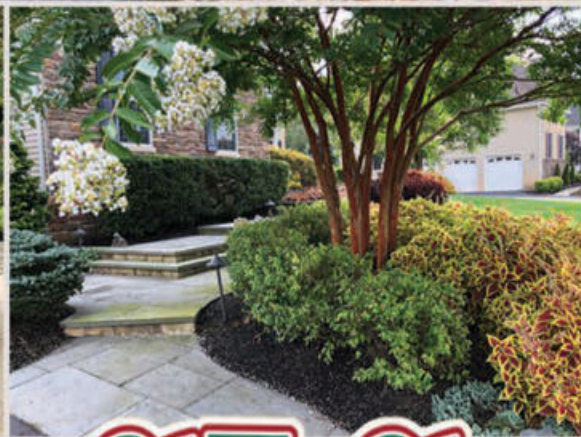
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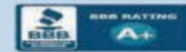
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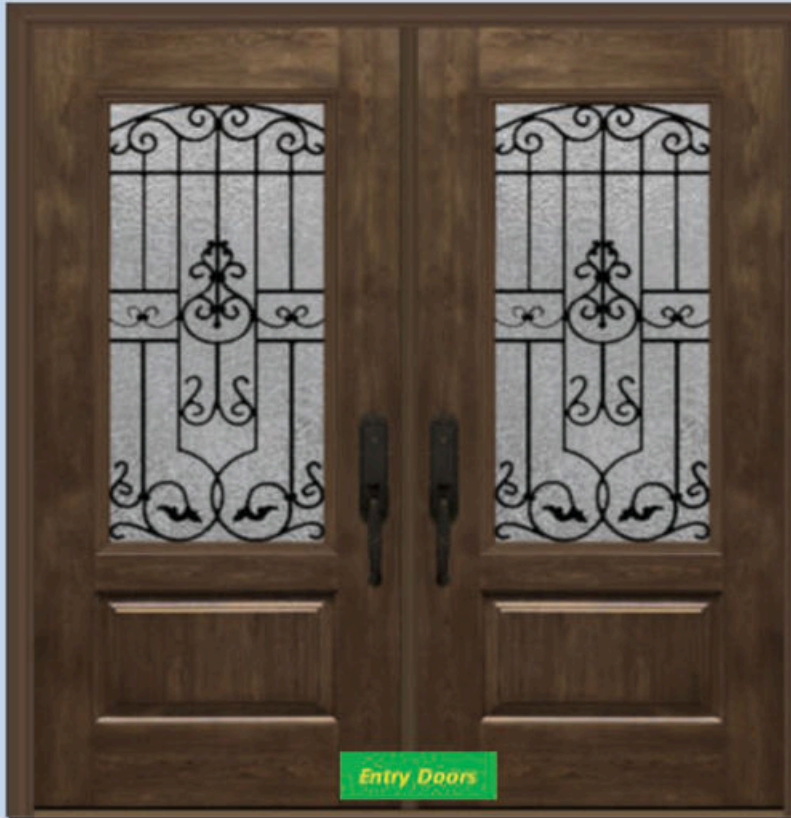


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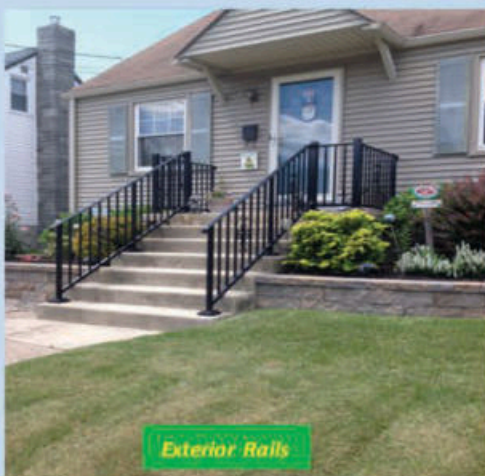
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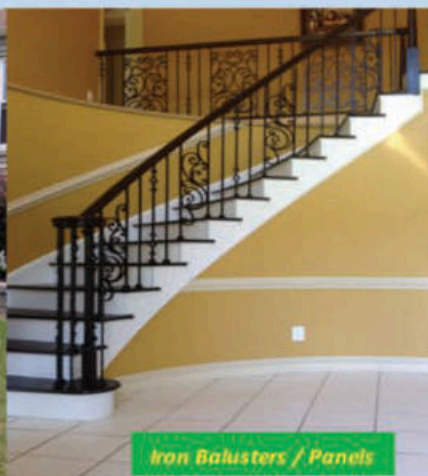
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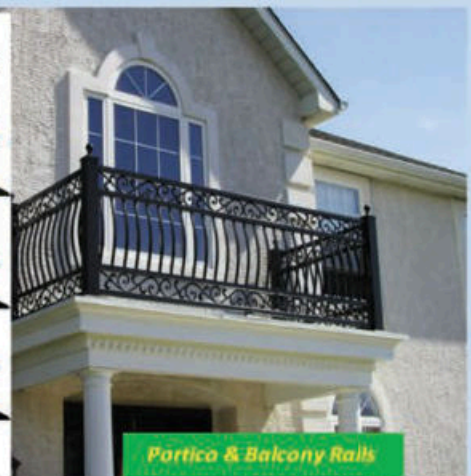
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Kitchens & Baths that INSPIRE

The Cabinet Cove store discusses what sets Bertch brand kitchen and bath cabinetry apart from other cabinet lines.

THE CABINET COVE, A PROFESSIONAL, FRIENDLY, FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS in Medford, N.J., specializes in providing quality, wood cabinetry at competitive prices as well as personalized designs for kitchens and baths. Larry Logan, a local Bertch rep, says, "Unlike the big-box stores, The Cabinet Cove puts quality over quantity. They take the time and effort to assist every customer through the remodeling process."

Bertch Cabinetry—What Sets them Apart?

The Bertch brand—a superior quality cabinet built with the finest craftsmanship and made by a family-owned company in Waterloo, Iowa—is sold at The Cabinet Cove. One feature Bertch offers is making your own rustic-style cabinet by adding cracks, gouges, screw marks, bird pecking holes, worm-hole marks, worn edges, nicks and

dents and/or wire brushing to cabinet doors and drawers. You can create a unique, rustic cabinet that looks like it came right out of an English country cottage.

In addition, when it comes to glazing your cabinets, Bertch has a unique glaze process whereby glaze colors and paint colors can be mixed together to create an entirely new color or you can have the glaze color applied to softly highlight the creases and crevices of a cabinet. Jacinta Schilare, a vanity designer at The Cabinet Cove, says, "The glaze from Bertch adds character and depth to a cabinet; it's definitely a high-end look." Schilare goes on to say, "The benefit of using Bertch cabinetry is that it allows you to think outside the box. You can customize your cabinetry and create something special that nobody else has." **H&H**



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BURNING

QUESTIONS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE
APPROACHING A FIREPLACE PROJECT.

By Liz Hunter

This month, many homeowners will be turning their attention to indoor projects to set the space up for the months when we tend to go into hibernation mode. With more time spent indoors, we want everything to be functioning properly and looking its best, and that may even mean a bit of remodeling. One area often considered at this time of year is the hearth. Whether yours needs some routine maintenance, a facelift or even if you want to install one completely new—there are plenty of questions to ask before beginning a fireplace project. *House & Home* spoke with some of the area's leading fireplace companies to pick their brains about some of the most frequently asked questions.

Does a fireplace add value to a home?

A fireplace will always add value to a home as most new homeowners regard that as a must-have on their wish list when looking. The design options available now allow numerous choices in the chosen decor of any home. The most important plus is that 95 percent of the fireplaces sold today offer a heat source for the homeowner.

Jody Miller, manager, Alber's Fireplaces



“A fireplace will always add value to a home as most new homeowners regard that as a must-have on their wish list when looking.”

— JODY MILLER, MANAGER, ALBER'S FIREPLACES



BURNING QUESTIONS

What maintenance is required on an existing fireplace and why are inspections beneficial?

When it comes to wood-burning fireplaces, the National Fire Protection Association recommends having it cleaned and inspected every year. Most manufacturers of gas fireplaces recommend annual maintenance and inspections. People are more likely to neglect gas fireplace inspections, but we tell people, just like your furnace or AC system, this needs routine maintenance too.

Inspections tell you a lot about what's going on and homeowners don't realize it takes a trained eye to spot corrosion. We might spot a bit of white corrosion built up by the pilot which could be a

bigger problem, or if we notice water leaking, we need to figure out where it's coming from. Everything is interconnected.

**Ed Gaynor, owner,
Newtown Fireplace Shop**

Why is chimney repair an important component of maintenance?

Chimneys should be swept yearly. Creosote can cause a chimney fire. Chimneys are also impacted by the freeze and thaw of winters, and may require brick pointing or crown repair, which if ignored could lead to costly damage and a potential rebuild.

Chris Tor, owner, 3C Home & Hearth

For homes with wood-burning fireplaces, do you see the homeowners opting to transition that to gas or a gas insert?

We absolutely see people wanting to convert from inefficient wood-burning to gas—it's a majority of what we do. There are some misconceptions about the terminology within the industry and it can sometimes be confusing to understand all of the options out there, so we recommend a trip to a showroom to discuss and make recommendations.

Ed Gaynor

What are the advantages to fireplace inserts and do they make switching easier?

Direct vent inserts provide high ef-



Image courtesy of Alber's Fireplaces

ficiency along with thermostatic temperature control and ease of use with most being remote controlled. A gas or wood insert takes the old, brick, very inefficient fireplace and turns it into a sealed combustion, high-efficiency fireplace.

When converting from wood to gas it is recommended that a Class II inspection be performed to check the integrity of the chimney and to see which type of appliance is appropriate. Once you've completed the Class II you should then contact a licensed plumber to see how difficult the gas run will be to get gas into the fireplace. Once those two things are complete it's pretty simple to select what's right for your home, be it a simple, vented gas log or a high-efficiency unit that will adequately heat the room.

**Dave Rettinger Sr., co-owner,
Rettinger Fireplace Systems**

What are the differences in vent styles?

A direct vent fireplace is an enclosed chamber that pulls the cold air in from the outside and expels all of the combustion gas back outside, without the need for a chimney. For vented gas units, the home must have a traditional chimney fireplace to expel the exhaust. If someone in the home has asthma, I would not recommend going this route.

Chris Tor

How has electric fireplace technology evolved?

The changes in electric fireplaces have been a game-changer—opening up the option for a fireplace where people can't put a chimney or vent, such as basements and bathrooms. Electric is not going to be a large source of heat, maxing out at 10,000 BTU, but they are a nice option for areas of a home you wouldn't have thought to have a fireplace.

**Jay Stong, owner, Salter's Fireplace
Patio Grill**

What are some new or trending styles of fireplaces you would recommend?

The linear gas fireplace has become very popular as many homeowners look to install a television above their fireplace. The manufacturers have made advances in the options which can be added to ensure the safety of heat damage to TVs. Another very popular product that is available to install into existing fireplaces are direct vent gas inserts. These are heat sources that can provide 900-1,200 square feet of additional heat to the home.

Jody Miller

What remodeling options are there to update the look of an existing fireplace?

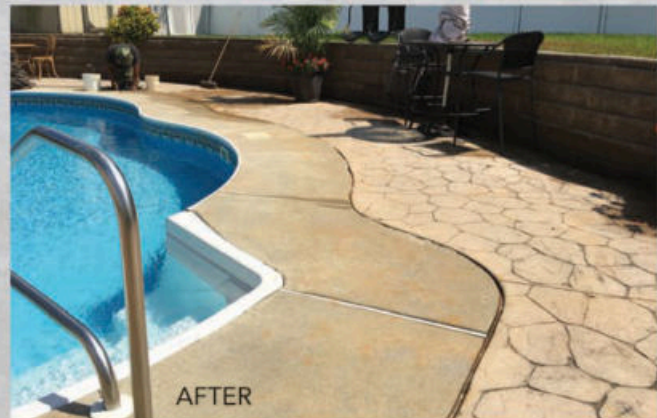
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Chris Tor

How are mantel designs changing?

Shiplap is very popular right now and we're actually seeing not just your traditional white shiplap look, but painted different colors like gray and even navy blue at the beach. Another popular trend popping up is metal walls and mantels which lend themselves to the industrial or farmhouse look.

**Alexis Rettinger, co-owner,
Rettinger Fireplace Systems**

What are some safety considerations for mantels?

It's very important to find a contractor who knows what they are doing and knows what is allowable for every fireplace and the mantel. I'm a firefighter, so we don't mess around. Some mantels pose a problem, like shiplap you sometimes can't have it for safety reasons. Manufacturers are getting sharp to the fact that homeowners want to place their TV over the fireplace, so they are making products that redirect the heat. We try to discuss what's allowable with every client because it's all specific to that fireplace.

Ed Gaynor

What other features are worth noting about modern fireplaces?

In the last few years, gas fireplace manufacturers have added accent lights to bring attention to the fireplace even if it's not on. The lights make it look like something is going on and it's

entertaining, making it a focal point any time of the year.

Jay Stong

What else should homeowners know before beginning a fireplace project?

This industry is largely unregulated, but it's increasing in education requirements. I strongly suggest readers do their homework, reading online reviews, checking someone's certifications and accreditations to make sure they are following the best practices of the industry. Hire someone who is licensed, insured, qualified and screened—this is not a project for an amateur.

Ed Gaynor H&H



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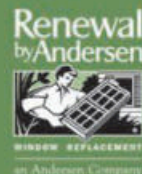
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An Elite Outdoor Space

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

For over 30 years, Elite

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

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

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

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

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

a shovel is even put into the ground," says Pasquarello. "Specific vantage points can be manipulated and viewed through these images."

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

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

So how have Elite's designs and landscapes grown to the top of everyone's radar? Pasquarello says he strives for "straight F, F, Fs." These are food, fire and fluidity.

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

And lastly, the sound of flowing water has a calming effect which can be a tranquil addition to any outdoor space, says Pasquarello.



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

—Michael Pasquarello,
a degreed landscape architect at Elite Landscaping



"Waterfalls, fountains and ponds each have their own unique attributes in providing this soothing atmosphere."

But if you think landscape design and construction is where the buck stops with Elite, think again. While their firm is definitely known for their vast designs of beautiful outdoor landscapes and constructing them effortlessly, Elite is a full-service landscape firm. Offering continued property maintenance such as cutting, pruning and cleanups, irrigation systems, fertilization, outdoor LED landscape lighting, holiday décor and more, Elite is well-equipped to handle all of your outdoor needs.

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

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

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

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This season is an ideal time for a number of landscaping tasks and tips.

BY LINDSEY GETZ

The air is getting crisper and the leaves are starting to change—and it's a beautiful time to be outdoors. It's also a great time to think about ways in which you can enhance your landscape. Although spring is traditionally thought of in terms of landscaping, the fall is actually an ideal time to perform a number of important tasks.

Plants and Flowers

One of those tasks is planting. The fall can be a wonderful time to install new flowers and plant material around your property.

“Studies have shown that fall is actually the best time for planting—better than the spring,” says Richard Cording Sr., president and licensed landscape architect with CLC Landscape Design. “That’s because the weather conditions are ideal. It’s still sunny but the air is cooler. Roots grow deeper and stronger. Plus, with plants going into dormancy, they have a better chance of survival during the cold winter months than newly installed plants needing to survive the stress of summer heat.” ➔



Fit for Fall

Image courtesy of CLC Landscape Design



The fall is also the time to plant spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils and hyacinths, says Sam Waddell, president of SLS Landscaping. To ensure you have beautiful early spring color, you don't want to miss that window.

"The avid gardener will also start planting chrysanthemum and aster that will offer that splash of color for the fall," adds Waddell. "A little bit later into the fall, winter pansies will make an appearance and provide color late in the season and another big push in the early spring."

Chris DeMato, owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing, says watering needs are also less intense in the fall (as opposed to spring and summer), so that's appealing to busy homeowners. He notes that there are a number of tasks that are best-performed at this time of year—including seasonal color.

"Removal of any annual flowers can also be done in the fall and then replaced with fall blooms like mums, pansies or kale, to name a few," DeMato says.

"Fall is most known for mums, but it doesn't have to stop there," agrees Michael Pasquarello, landscape architect with Elite Landscaping. "Many varieties of fall annuals are available such as celosia, aster, kale/cabbage and purple fountain grass. Even ornamental peppers offer an array of autumn hues to add a splash



Your lawn is also a vital aspect of your overall landscape and the autumn months are the ideal time to pay attention to your lawn's overall health.

of color to container gardens."

Selective pruning can also be completed in the fall, adds Pasquarello.

"Once certain varieties of shrubs and trees have lost their leaves it makes an easier determination of what should be pruned and shaped," he explains. "It is very important not to prune any set buds on flowering plants for the upcoming spring."

Michael Carmack, owner of A & M Landscape Management, agrees that fall can be a great time to shape and prepare many varieties of trees and shrubs for the winter and the next growing season, but adds that pruning can definitely be more complex than a lot of homeowners realize.

"Many common varieties of

deciduous shrubs such as spirea, burning bush and barberry can be cut back hard in the early winter for the reduction of the plant size and shape," he says. "But early blooming varieties of shrubs such as rhododendrons, lilac and forsythia have already started producing buds for the spring and should not be pruned in the fall. Pruning these varieties in the fall and or winter will remove flower buds and reduce the number of flowers the plant produces for the spring. Late-blooming flowering shrubs such as crape myrtle and butterfly bushes can be pruned in the late fall or early spring as they produce flowers on new growth."

When in doubt, leave the pruning to the pros who will know exactly what needs to be pruned and when. This will help ensure that you achieve optimal results and don't negatively impact bloom time.

A Beautiful Lawn, Too

Your lawn is also a vital aspect of your overall landscape and the autumn months are the ideal time to pay attention to your lawn's overall health. The weather conditions make it the perfect time for services such as aeration and over-seeding.

"Fall is a great time to address any lawn issues you may have with weeds or other problems," says DeMato. "The cooler mornings really help to speed up seed germination."

"Lawns can be much better established in the fall for a couple of key reasons," adds Cording. "For one, they don't have to compete with crabgrass and other spring weeds. But also, the cooler temperatures help stimulate root growth and prevent heat stress. Fall is the perfect time for aeration, seeding, lawn fertilization and even sodding."

Fall is definitely the time to strengthen turf roots to help the root system survive the winter, agrees Carmack. "This will help set the turfgrass up for success," he says. "Getting weed problems under control now [and eliminating growth] will help reduce the amount of weed germination in the early spring ... and allow room for top dressing and over-seeding to fill in voids created in the lawn as the fall provides the best opportunity for new turf seed growth."

A Focus on Maintenance

There are a number of important property maintenance tasks that can also be taken care of in the fall. Many professional landscape companies offer "fall cleanup," which usually includes services such as leaf and debris pickup and removal. Allowing leaves to sit on your property for too long can actually kill your grass.

"Be sure to not allow fallen leaves to sit on lawns for an extended amount of time," warns Pasquarello. "It is best, at minimal, to do two leaf cleanups in the fall."



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Fit for Fall

The first when about 50 percent of the leaves have fallen and a final when they are all down.”

Don't forget to also pay attention to cleaning and maintaining your hardscaped surfaces, as well.

“Fall is also a great time for cleaning up and taking care of your patio surface,” adds Jarrod Nyce, vice president of Nyce Crete and Landis Block & Concrete. “Cleaners and sealers can be applied this time of year because of good temperatures and low humidity. Many people cover up furniture or clean up ponds and water features. Winter preparations are needed for any water features because of freezing.”

Fall Hardscaping

Of course, if you want to get started with a hardscaping project in the fall, there's really no reason not to pursue it, adds Nyce. Most landscape companies work until the ground freezes so it's quite possible you could have a hardscaping project—such as adding a fire pit or a patio—completed at this time.

“A lot of homeowners think they have to wait until the spring but that's not the case at all,” says Cording. “Fall is a great time to have work completed on your property and most landscape contractors don't begin their off-season until December.”

It's also a great time to start planning ahead for large projects, such as a pool, that you may want completed in the spring, adds Cording.

“Many large-scale projects, like pools, require three to six months of planning prior to be shovel-ready and we have a lot of homeowners who start those projects in the fall and winter,” he says.

With the cooler weather and beautiful days, now's the time to get outside and enjoy it while you can.

As Nyce sums it up: “Winter is just around the corner, so take advantage of the fact that fall is a great time to get outside and enjoy your landscape.”

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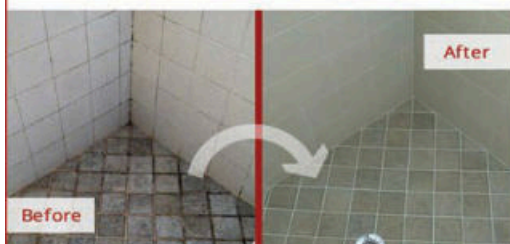
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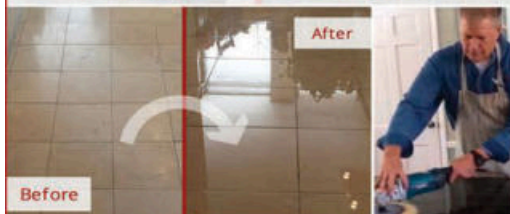
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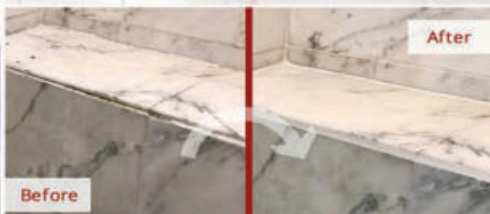
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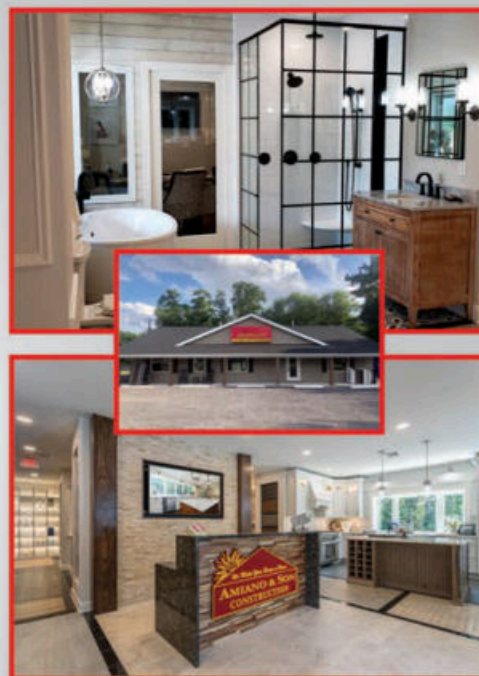
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Amiano & Son Design-Build

by Josephine Cusumano

Embarking on a kitchen or bathroom remodel or even an addition can seem daunting to homeowners—especially where budgets and contracts are concerned. However, the process can become a whole lot easier when working with the right design-build contractor, who is upfront about costs and explains the job before it even starts.

For Amiano & Son Design-Build, their entire business is built on communication. For over 20 years they've focused on working in tandem with clients, making sure selections stay within budgets and detailed contracts are in place ahead of construction. *House & Home* spoke with owner Lou Amiano Jr. about the importance of a comprehensive contract and how homeowners can avoid going over budget in their next home remodeling project.

How does your company operate with any modeling project?

We're truly a full-service design-build [firm] because we take the initial consultation and basically hold the client's hand through the whole process as far as design and planning it, helping them with the selections, controlling the budget, showing 3D renderings so they know exactly what they're buying when the process is done. We have our own in-house designer, [who] works with you, the client, on the design of your remodel. Our designer understands the remodel, your budget, your tastes and your situation at home. We do all the selections in our showroom, allowing us to control budget, functionality and the incorporation of the product. We put together a detailed contract that doesn't have allowances, therefore giving the homeowner their first sense of design phase finality.



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Lou Amiano Jr., owner

We have them pick everything out, down to the knobs on the cabinets.

How can a homeowner make sure they get a detailed contract?

If they see a contract loaded up with allowances, that is a big red flag. Product selections should all be done up front in the contract—so what they want is a contract that has the ability to tell them what type of cabinets they're getting, what type of countertops, the faucets should specify the model number, the finish and the size. That's going to eliminate a lot of the miscommunication that can go on when the production of it starts. You can never eliminate the possibility of arising issues, but our contract leaves less room for error.

What's the best way to control a job budget?

Do all the legwork up front. If we have a client [whose] preliminary number for the kitchen is at this amount and that client wants to stay at that amount, we show them selections that are going to make them stay within that amount, so the client has to control [their] selections to maintain the original budgeted number, otherwise the project is going to exceed in budget. Selections need to be made completely before a construction contract is signed by any homeowner. ... You're going to get a lot of guys who are going to load the contract with allowances and that allows their number

to look better, but they're already anticipating the homeowner will exceed the budgeted amount, therefore increasing the contract price through change orders. If you pick the right company, there really should be no reason to go uncomfortably over budget, unless [you] request certain changes.

How do 3D renderings benefit the client?

The 3D rendering looks like a real picture when it's done. When the client sees it, they cannot believe the space is being transformed. ... With us, they're seeing what they're buying. They're seeing the whole layout versus the norm in the industry where a client will sign a contract to do a kitchen and they've never seen a design of it. They're building as they go with the contract and that's a very stressful process for them.

What's the best advice for a homeowner starting the remodeling process?

It's best to use a professional design-build company because clients today are just more informed on the product and they want more expertise coming from the contractor. ... If they want that type of process, they've got to hire the right company and the biggest question they should have is "What type of design process are you going to take me through to do my kitchen remodel?" **H&H**

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Emmons Roofing & Siding

A company you can trust for your exterior projects *by Lindsey Getz*



When you need work done on your home—expected or not—you want to know that you can trust the contractor that 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. After all, 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 Roofing & Siding, a company that has been offering expert care for South Jersey and the Jersey Shore area since 1996. They are a well-known 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 one percent 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 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.”

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST STORM CHASERS

Unfortunately, when it comes to contractors for roofing, siding and windows, there are a lot of fly-by-night companies out there and it’s important for homeowners to protect themselves. In the business, many of these companies are called “storm chasers.” They follow severe weather from area to area, knowing that there will be a lot of work.

Unfortunately, they typically have no community roots and therefore no knowledge of local building codes. Their “rush job” often has shoddy work and since they typically leave the area in chase of the next storm, they can’t be reached when there are problems.

How can you spot a storm chaser?

Kelly says it’s critical to be wary of contractors who may not have a physical office—again, an indicator that they may be a fly-by-night company. They’ll do the work (poorly) and then disappear, leaving you with problems.

“We are a local small business in Williamstown with

real people answering the phones—not an answering service,” Matthew Kelly says. “We don’t work out of a house and we do not have a ‘virtual office.’ Be wary of contractors that will not provide you with a physical address but instead only have a P.O. box or suite number and only use an answering service.”

Some of the worst storm chasers don’t even carry the proper insurance and are therefore putting you at risk.

“We are fully insured and also carry liability insurance which is required for roofing operations,” Matthew Kelly says. “But many contractors carry cheaper insurance that does not include liability insurance, leaving you, the homeowner, liable if a worker is injured while working on your roof. Make sure the insurance certificate sent to you by your contractor’s insurance agency specifically includes liability insurance.”

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. Kelly 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,” says Stephanee Kelly. “At Emmons, you are not only investing in a new roof, new siding or new windows—you’re investing in peace of mind.”

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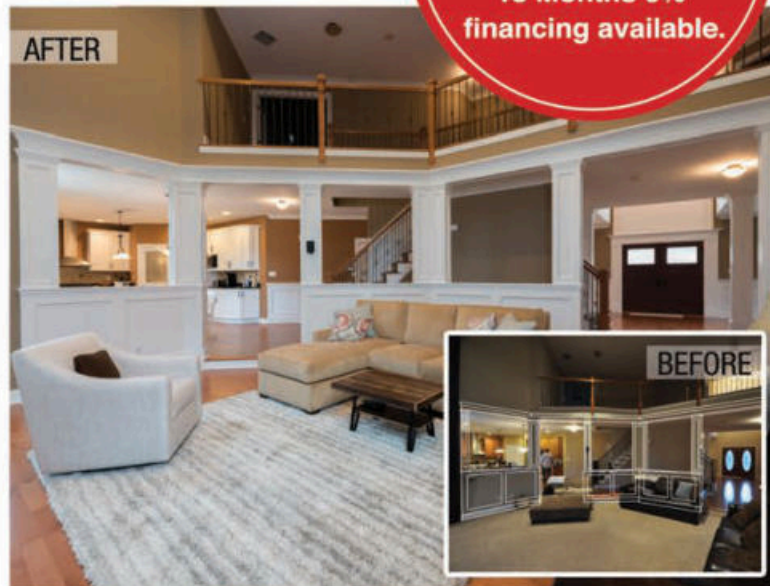
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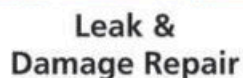
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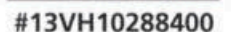
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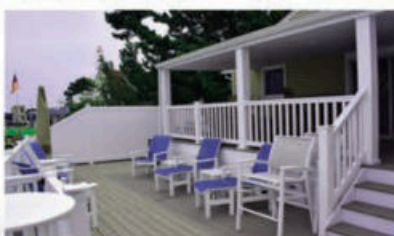
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