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Volume 21, Issue 2

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Front and Center

Fireplaces are catching on
as the focal point of homes

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*How to make your home more
functional* page 19

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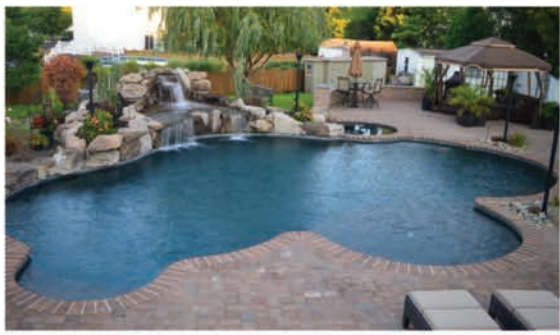
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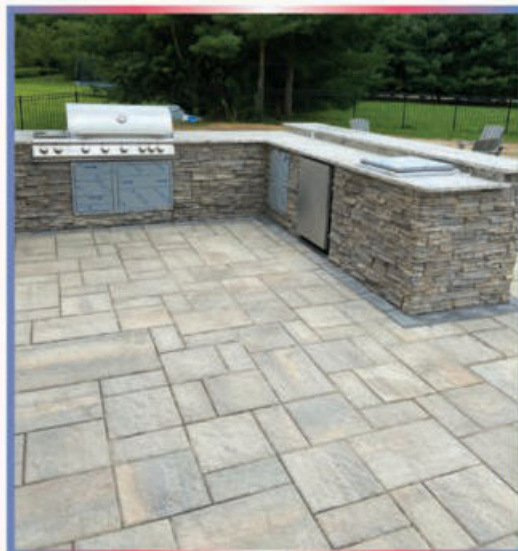
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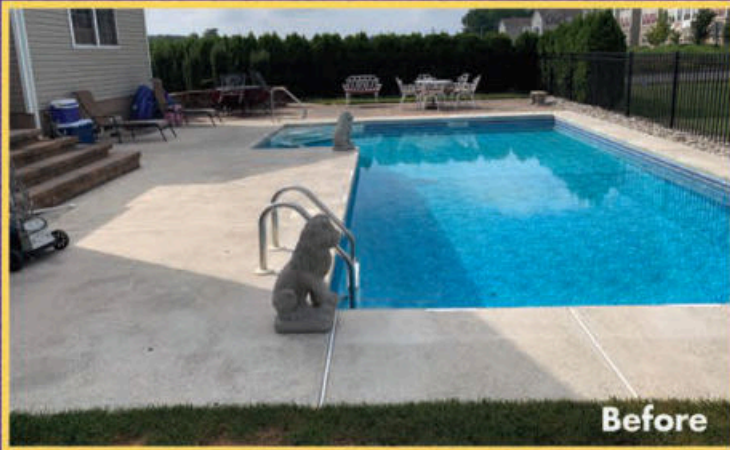
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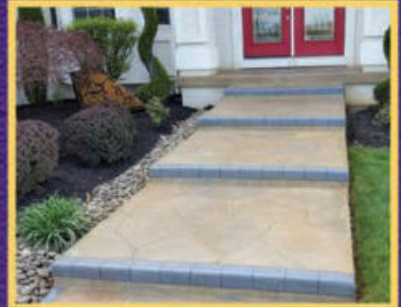
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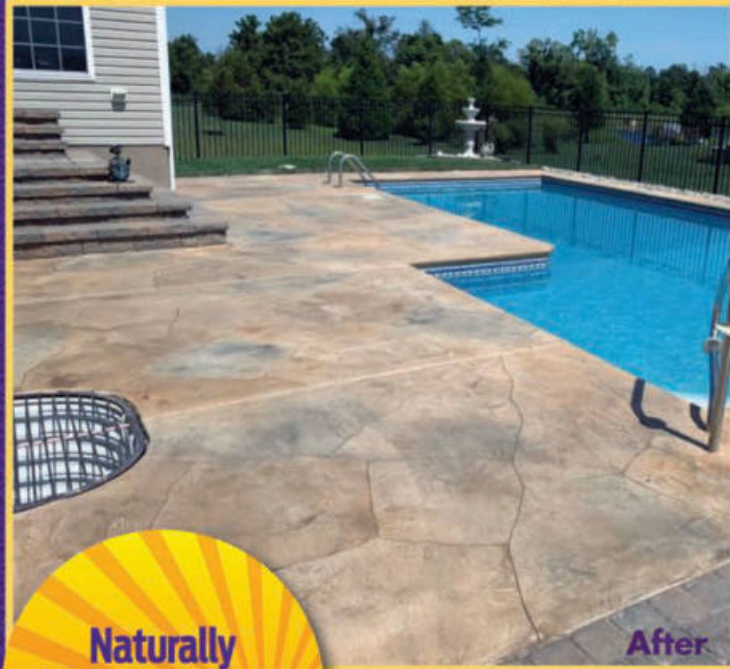


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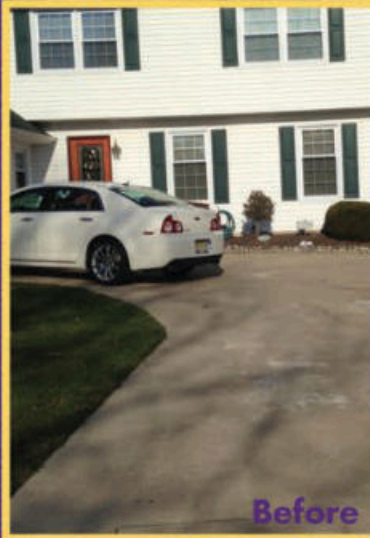
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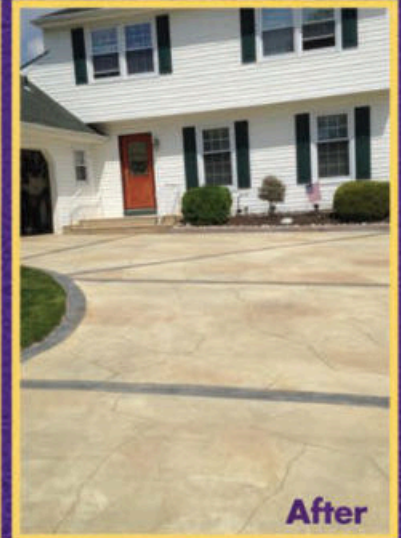
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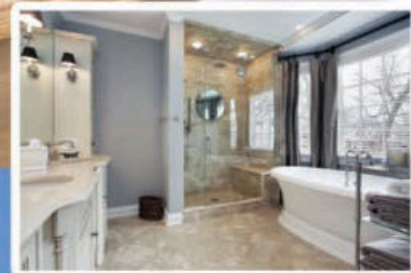
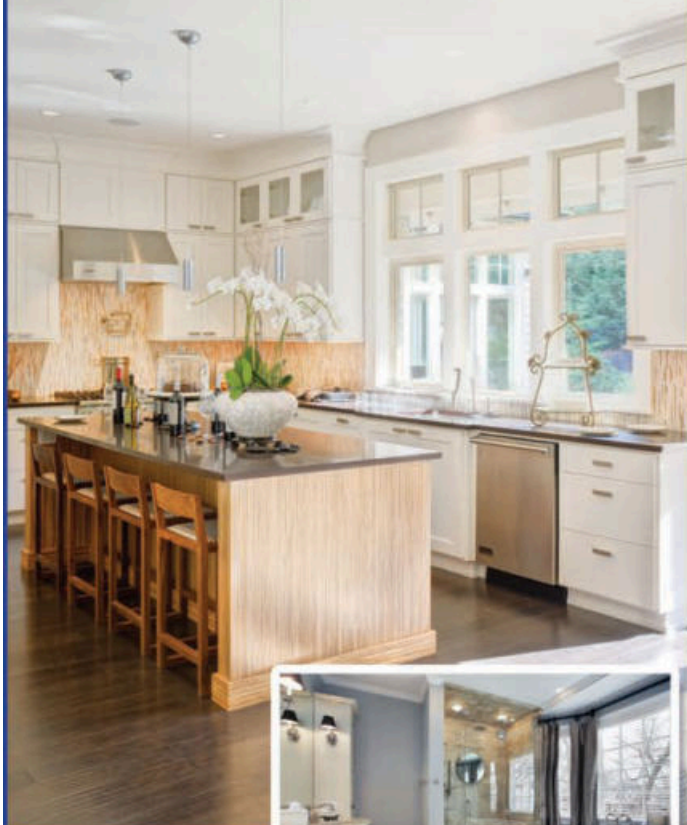
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On the cover:

While many of us have already been hypothetically hibernating in our homes, the approaching winter makes us all the more likely to be staying in. Fireplaces offer warmth, beauty and a cozy setting to sit back with our family. Turn to page 10 to find out which style is best for you.



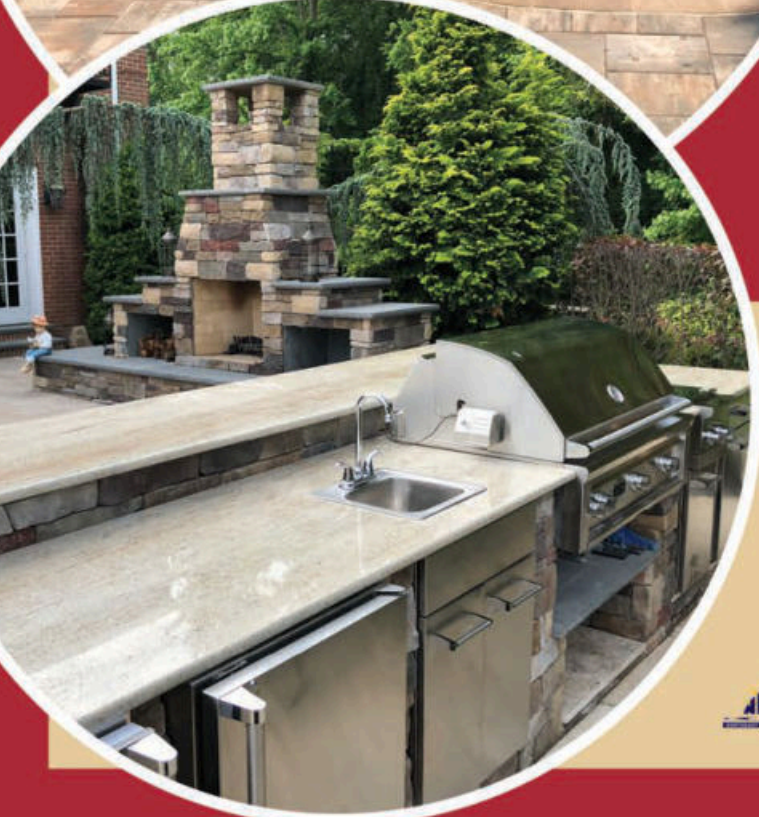
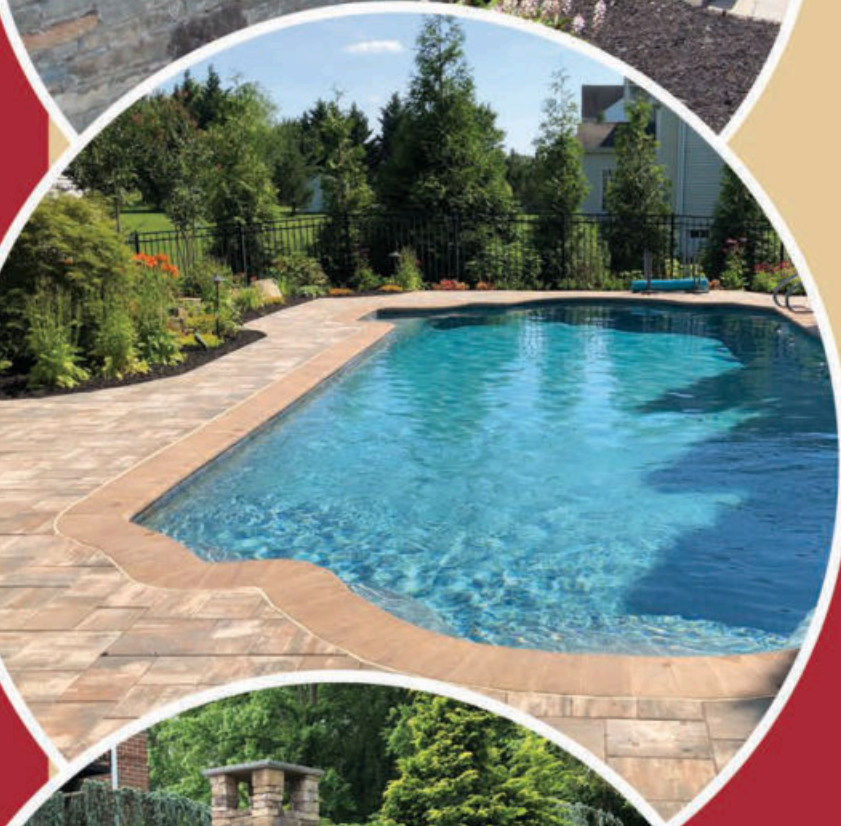
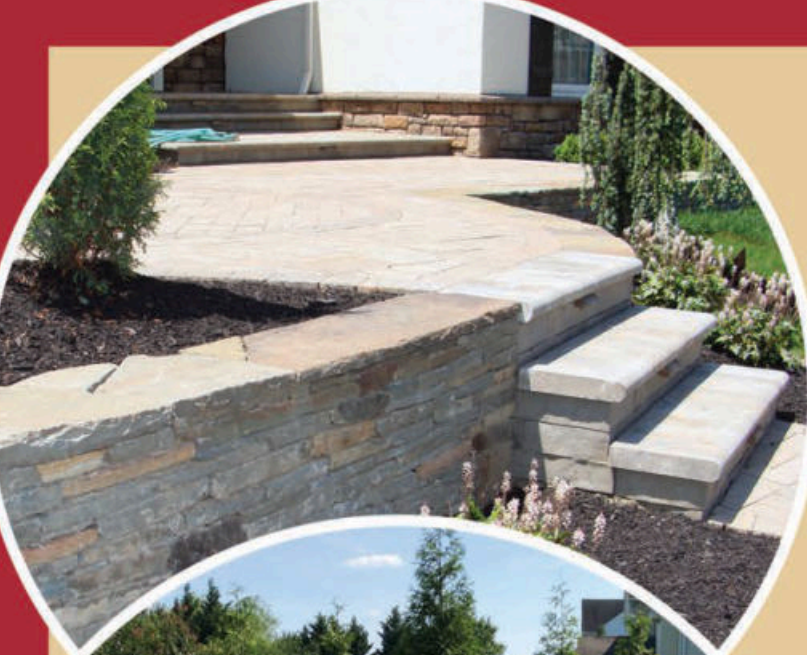
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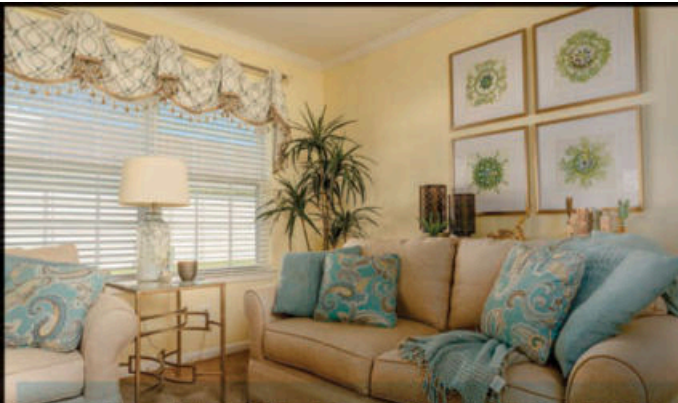
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That **Warm** *& Cozy* *Feeling*

Fireplaces not only keep you and your family warm during the winter months, they've turned into a year-round fixture that becomes the focal point of the home.

With no end in sight for this current pandemic, people are still spending more time at home and will continue to do so now that the colder temperatures are slowly starting to set in. Fireplaces are the ideal fixture to have during the winter months and hold a unique place in the home, and with the holidays around the corner, it's a special time for families to gather around the fireplace and create lasting memories.

Not surprisingly, there is a demand for fireplaces and the experts we spoke to say if you're considering getting one, do not wait any longer.

"If people are thinking about having a fire and creating memories by the fire during the holidays and

having that warm and cozy feeling sitting playing games in front of the fire, now is the time," says Jenna Guldin, vice president of sales, Salter's Fireplace Patio and Grill. "Most of the people who wait until October or November to get a fireplace before Christmas or the end of the year, it's going to be too late."

But where to start? There are plenty of options such as wood-burning, direct vent and electric in many different styles. Rettinger Fireplace Systems creates an experience for the customer that is always focused on beginning with the end in mind.

"We always ask questions," says operator Dave Rettinger. "What do you want the fireplace to look like and how do you want it to operate?"

BY JULIE SHANNON





That Warm & Cozy Feeling

Do you want something that's going to take the chill out of the air? Do you want something to run for an entire day or do you want something purely [for] ambiance?"

Salter's Fireplace Patio and Grill does the same thing, sitting down with customers and asking about the problem they are trying to solve and their goal.

"What's the feeling they want when they are in front of their fireplace? Do they want heat? Do they host parties? What is the lifestyle of the home? We ask a lot of questions up front and they show us pictures of the home so we can see the wall color, the floor, the design elements to see what colors coordinate, what light is in the room, etc.," Guldin says.

Rettinger says it's easier than ever to get the fireplace that suits your lifestyle thanks to the fireplace industry adapting to people's wants and needs.

"Every person has seen their dream home on Pinterest or Instagram or in a magazine and what the fireplace industry has done is made that dream-level design available at a variety of different price points," he says. "The world is your oyster. You can choose shiplap, marble tile, a TV above the fireplace or maybe something small and compact. There are also options of choosing something ultra-modern or a free-standing fireplace which is more of a piece of artwork. What the industry has done is created accessibility to have a real design focal point feature in your home."

Rettinger says the fireplace industry has evolved to go well beyond a utility aspect.

"They have improved the appearance and aesthetics, as well as the custom nature of finishes. The fireplace has shifted from a strictly utility appliance to more of a designer feature. In a lot of ways it's become like artwork," he says. "More and more people are putting the TV over the fireplace; that has also shifted us to more of the centerpiece of the

room, [with] the gathering's focal point being the fire and the TV. For bedroom use or living room use, it's become a very desirable feature that sets the mood. Between the improvements of products and versatility, that's where the industry has shifted. Originally there was resistance to that whereas now fireplace manufacturers have come up with unique ways to have the two work together."

Wood-burning fireplaces are a great option for a young family or those who want to use it as an entertainment or gathering space, as well as for those who are looking to save on energy bills, Rettinger says.

"It's perfect to gather children around the wood-burning fireplace to roast marshmallows and have family time," he says. "On the flip side, you have wood stoves and high-efficiency fireplaces for customers who don't have access to natural gas or who want to reduce dependency on oil. Wood-burning is the best solution for those customers looking to cut down on energy bills and don't mind work associated with owning and operating a wood stove."

Guldin says many customers are coming into Salter's showroom for wood-burning fireplaces and wood stoves because of their versatility.

"You can put gas logs into it for an aesthetic look and it's a huge efficiency gas heater," she says. "You can do a lot with wood fireplaces indoor or outdoor."

Guldin says electric fireplaces are becoming more popular with designers because they can go anywhere you want since no venting is needed, just electric.

"You can put electric fireplaces in bathrooms, kitchens and living rooms. They look pretty and realistic; some even come with crackling noises," she says. "They come in traditional, linear, all different styles and sizes."

"Electric fireplaces give you the absolute most design liberty because they have no real heat clearances associated with them," Rettinger adds. "You can design an electric fireplace in an enclosure

and have a TV above in whatever manner you like."

Both Guldin and Rettinger agree that direct vent fireplaces are the most popular for their convenience and aesthetic appeal.

"People prefer direct vent. It's sealed, you're not getting any byproducts into the room and you're getting the heat and ambiance," Guldin says. "There are many unique features, such as being able to touch the glass. There will be a beautiful flame and you can touch the glass and it's sealed."

"It's great for the busy homeowner, for the entertainer and it's also great for the person who wants to watch football and run the fireplace all day and not have to manage it," Rettinger says. "It comes in many different shapes and sizes. The designer feature gas fireplaces have also improved in terms of flame appearance and aesthetics."

Rettinger says another advantage to gas fireplaces is there is little to no maintenance. "You flip the switch, set it and forget it. There's no real manual work involved with having a gas fireplace," he says. "There's no need to store wood. You're not hauling wood in and out of your house and making a mess."

There are many styles to choose from as well, and Guldin says they can give each customer the desired look they want and suggests they come in with a vision or at least look on Houzz or Pinterest to get some ideas.

"We can make the fireplaces L-shaped, single-sided, a peninsula which is three-sided, anything custom—we can pretty much make anything happen," she says. "Whether it's modern, traditional or rustic, if a customer shows us a picture from Pinterest and says this is what they want, we can make this picture happen for them."

"What's popular with gas fireplaces right now is black glass panels behind the fire. When looking at it, it's reflecting the fire and makes it look much bigger and you don't have to worry about the background clashing with the facade. Also becoming more popular is greige—it's a take on beige

and gray mixed together. A standard brick in greige or any grayish color goes with a lot of homes."

Milton Campos of Campos Masonry says natural material, such as brick, withstands heat more than most and it's "always better to build a fireplace with natural material."

Campos and his team also restore fireplaces. "We can make the existing material look like new," he says. "It just needs to be power washed and the mortar joints between the bricks have to be replaced."

Another area where more fireplaces are popping up is in the outdoor space, which extends the living area into the outside and also extends the season. Guldin says Salter's Fireplace has seen a big uptick in outdoor fireplaces and Rettinger says some kind of fire feature is incorporated in many outdoor home renovations.

"You can have it built-in with a TV above your outdoor living room, or outdoor great room as we call it," Rettinger says. "It's also nice to include some sort of electric heater. Having the combination of both a fireplace and outdoor heater extends the usage of an outdoor living space by months." **H&H**



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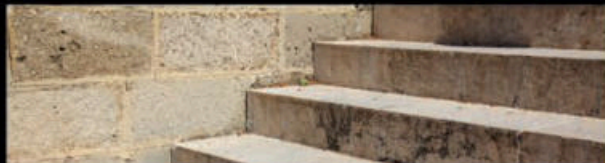
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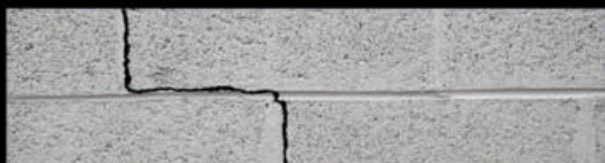
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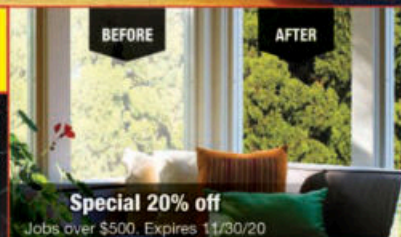


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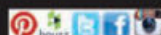
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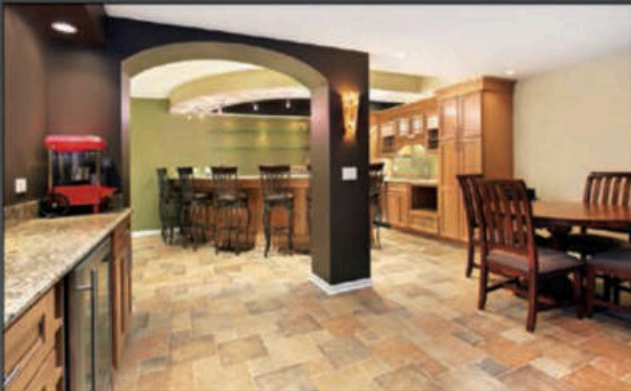
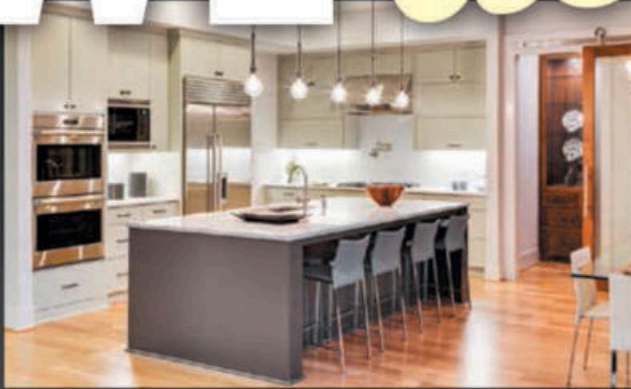
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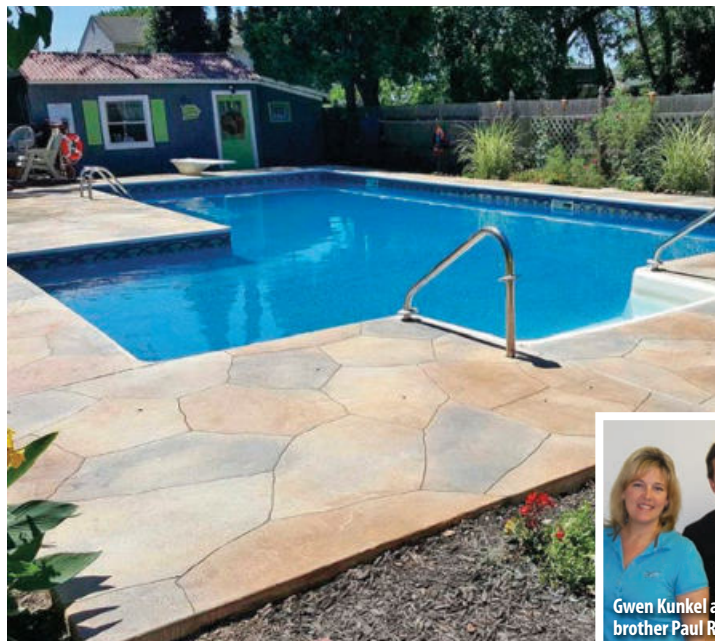
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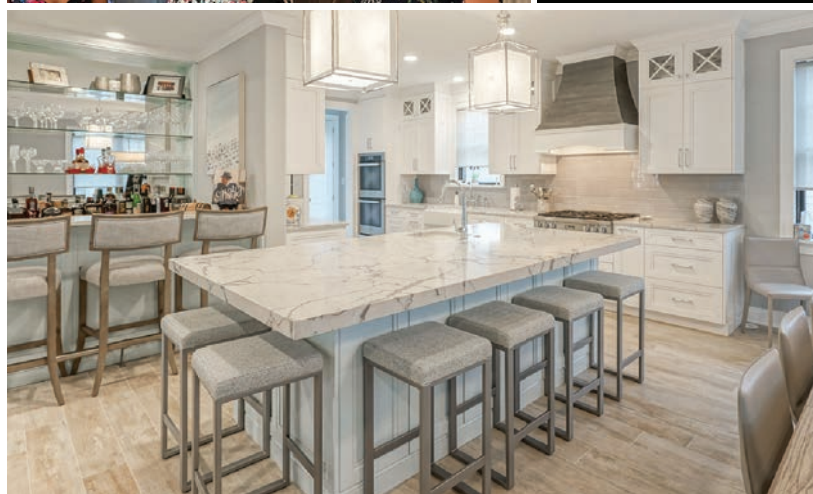
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Are there any new products/trends in your industry that you provide?

Yes, we are always on top of color trends and functionality options. New color options are stains on Rift Cut White Oak as accent pieces in the kitchen, such as the island. Walnut is also a recent trend for wood species options. Clients are also increasingly looking at strongly veined countertops, providing an unmistakable luxury and next-level style. If there's one thing that's storming the style charts and shaking up interiors, it's the return of this option, especially in quartzite materials.

What advice do you give to homeowners planning a project now?

The three primary reasons to consider updating your kitchen include efficiency, beauty and investment; all of which can and will streamline the way you and your family use the kitchen. Look at different options on websites like Houzz and Pinterest to get some preliminary ideas. Also, truly think about the budget you have for your project.

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If I am a DIY-er or contractor, why should I contact you?

For the DIY customer or independent contractor, we will be there to help guide you through the process and answer any questions about the design and installation. For the DIY-er who may need someone to perform some portion of the project for you, our experienced carpenters, electricians and plumbers can complete that portion of the project in a timely manner.

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What new trends are there in your industry?

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

Why should a homeowner invest in their home now?

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

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

Why should a homeowner choose you for their next project?

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



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Amiano & Son Design-Build

by Julie Shannon

Remodeling during a pandemic has had its challenges for companies and customers alike, but family-owned and -operated Amiano & Son Design-Build has adapted to the current environment and is busier than ever, giving owners the home of their dreams, while implementing extra safety precautions at the same time. A design-build company in business for over 50 years, Amiano & Son is your consultant, designer and contractor all in one. They have a 3,500-square-foot showroom in Tabernacle filled with endless materials and just opened a second location in Long Beach Island, serving residents along the Jersey Shore.

House & Home spoke with Joseph Clymer, director of sales and design, and Sophia Amiano, design-build specialist, on how Amiano & Son has adapted during the pandemic, how important functionality is to the home and the safety precautions they are taking.

How has Amiano & Son adapted during the pandemic?

JC: We have implemented multiple safety precautions in our showroom locations as well as our job sites. In our showrooms we have multiple hand sanitizer stations, constantly clean commonly used surfaces and run an air purifier. On our job sites we utilize floor covering protections—we have always directed our field crew to wear masks, gloves and booties when entering people's homes, especially during heavy construction or demolition. We are being extra cautious by providing hand sanitizer and taking temperatures on a regular basis. These measures are to ensure both Amiano personnel and clients are safe and stay well.



Joseph Clymer, director of sales and design
Sophia Amiano, design-build specialist

What are some of the advantages of your design-build company as a one-stop shop?

JC: Our showroom locations are an essential part of the true design-build process. Instead of bringing our clients shopping at multiple locations we bring all of the material options to them in one location.

How are you adding functionality to people's kitchens and bathrooms?

JC: We are always trying to create different and innovative ideas for kitchens and baths. For example, if the client has an existing dining room that is hardly used, we will recommend removing the existing wall and expanding the kitchen into the existing dining room space. This allows a more open concept and most likely a large island, depending on the final dimensions. Bathrooms are all about the shower. Designing a custom shower to enhance every individual's needs and storage options is the best way to make sure they get the space of

SA: We are still conducting some appointments over Zoom, but people have opened up to letting us back in for their first appointment or coming in for design meetings. I think

the comfort level that was somewhat lost in the beginning is definitely regained so to speak.

their dreams. We design using shower benches, niches and multiple shower heads.

SA: Many people want more counter space for cooking in the kitchen and they want more storage in the bathroom. We install full height linen closets which gives them plenty of storage. A lot of homeowners also want to expand their showers and take out the garden tub which makes the bathroom feel more functional.

Are people looking for more functionality in other parts of the home as well with parents working remotely and kids going to school virtually?

JC: Yes, given current events we are all spending more time at home. For some people it is the most time they have ever spent at home. We are finding that smart home technology and easier accessibility to receptacles are in high demand. Most common is the kitchen island, you can never have too many receptacles installed, especially USB receptacles.

Are you noticing any trends among your clients?

JC: We noticed a trend that many people who primarily live in New York or North Jersey are remodeling and revamping their existing houses to accommodate more of their everyday lifestyle. They are doing this with the expectation to be living in the house on a more everyday basis. We are currently working on a project near our Barnegat Light location on Long Beach Island. We are converting an existing 6,000-square-foot bed and breakfast into a single-family home. It is a very exciting project! **H&H**

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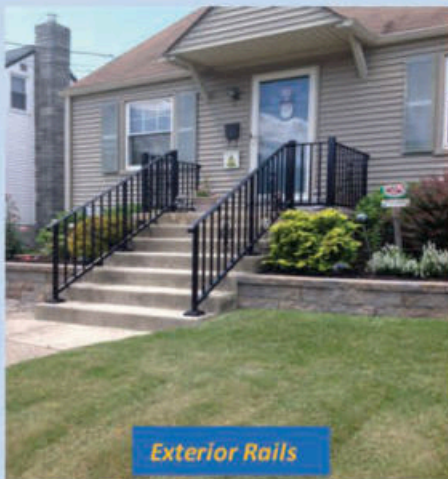


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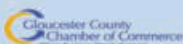
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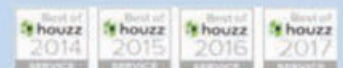
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Taking care of essential landscaping tasks this fall puts you ahead of schedule for spring.

LOOKING FORWARD

by Liz Hunter

With the hotter temperatures of summer behind us, it's a little more enjoyable to be out in the yard taking stock of what could be improved for next year. Whether it's making your grass greener or installing that patio and fire pit, there are still plenty of days to get it done and come spring, this sweat equity will be worthwhile.

LAWNS AND PLANTS

Summer weather can take a toll on lawns. High temperatures and humidity can dry it out and homeowners' first impulse is to turn on the sprinklers. Soil that never has a chance to dry out can foster fungus, which appears as brown patches, mushrooms and streaks.

"Fall is a great time to address any lawn issues you may have—bare spots, weed infestation—as it is the best time to renovate the lawn because of the cooler

weather and the moisture in the morning," says Chris Demato, owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing.

Rich Cording Sr., owner and founder of CLC Landscape Design, says homeowners should tackle regular lawn maintenance now. "Rake up dead grass, thatch and aerate, apply lime and fertilizer and you could even put in a completely new lawn," he says. "It's a great time from now until Nov. 1 to put down seed, or sod up until Thanksgiving."

Michael Pasquarello, degreed landscape architect at Elite Landscaping, agrees. “The fall is probably the most ideal of all seasons to install sod as temperatures are favorable for varieties such as fescue, which is a cool season turf. Just be sure to not install too late into the season as to allow the sod to root in and become established prior to winter. We try not to sod much after Thanksgiving.”

Fall is ideal for anything, grass or other plants, getting established. “The soil is perfect for germinating plants. In the fall it will take root and establish before the cold winter comes and it will lay dormant until the spring comes,” says Don Panetta, owner of D. Panetta Contracting.

“Cool soil encourages the roots to go deeper, and the sunny days still allow for plenty of photosynthesis,” Cording adds. “Plants put in now are going to go dormant in the winter, which means less stress for them. People think May is the best time to plant, but in the past few years as a result of climate change, we get 90-degree days in June before the plants are established, and that stress can be harder for plants than dormancy.”

To ensure grass or plant success, don’t ignore fallen leaves, says Demato. “During the fall season it is also very important that you clean the leaves off your property at least three to four times. This is a common

mistake that homeowners make in waiting until the end of the fall season to clean their leaves. This can be very damaging to your lawn as well as plant material.”

Mulch will also help to insulate roots for the winter. “After leaves fall and are raked, mulch should be put down,” says Cording. “Once spring comes, that mulch will help hold down weeds. As it breaks down, it becomes an organic topsoil and adds enrichment. Plus, it will look sharp over the winter.”

This is also the season when yards display beautiful autumnal colors. “Mums are the typical go-to flower of the fall, however there are many others,” Pasquarello says. “Celosia is a

“

The soil is perfect for germinating plants. In the fall it will take root and establish before the cold winter comes and it will lay dormant until the spring comes.”

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A minor repair, if let go until the spring, can turn into a major problem, particularly around pool areas. ... If you have a small sunken area near a pool, that can result in ice settling below the surface. As the water builds up in the winter it can create a lot of pressure on pool walls and other structural foundations.”

CHRIS DEMATO,
OWNER OF ROCK BOTTOM
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great selection as its plumes offer a great texture and colors capture the essence of fall. Ornamental peppers are another great addition for fall color interest. They come in an array of color palettes and most are even edible.”

Demato says another great mid-sized shrub to add to the yard would be a burning bush, which turns a brilliant red color throughout the fall season and adds a real pop of brightness to a garden.

AHEAD ON HARDSCAPING

If you have existing hardscaping areas, this is the time to address any repairs. “A minor repair, if let go until the spring, can turn into a major problem, particularly around pool areas,” Demato advises. “For example, if you have a small sunken area near a pool, that can result in ice settling below the surface. As the water builds up in the winter it can create a lot of pressure on pool walls and other structural foundations.”

As many landscaping businesses



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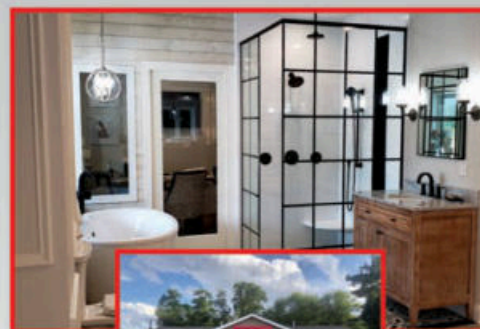
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have noticed, the interest in outdoor projects has skyrocketed during the pandemic. “With this COVID-19, most people are investing in their backyards. It’s your place to bring to life and make your backyard a staycation,” says Panetta.

While this is great news to keep these businesses going, it’s also harder to get on their schedule. “Typically, this is the time of year when we have some more openings in our schedule, but we’re almost all booked up,” says Cording.

This makes the sense of urgency all the more important for homeowners to call now. “They can’t wait until the spring. Calling now means we can spend the rest of the year planning, designing, getting the permits, etc.,” he continues. “Don’t dilly-dally.” **H&H**



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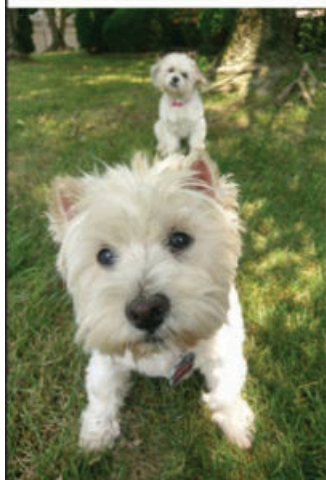
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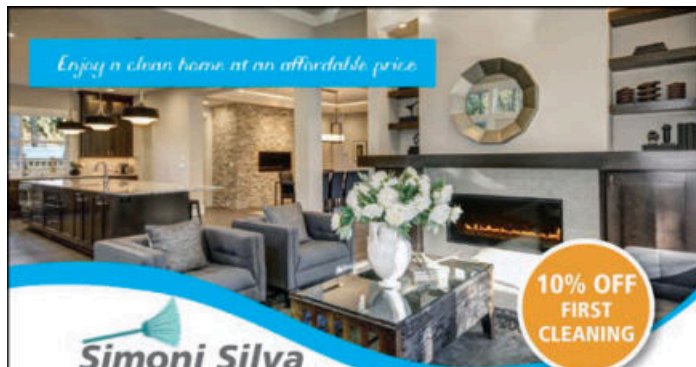
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