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Advice on how to keep your landscape looking its best this fall

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East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows

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Get into the holiday spirit with a festive display *page 31*

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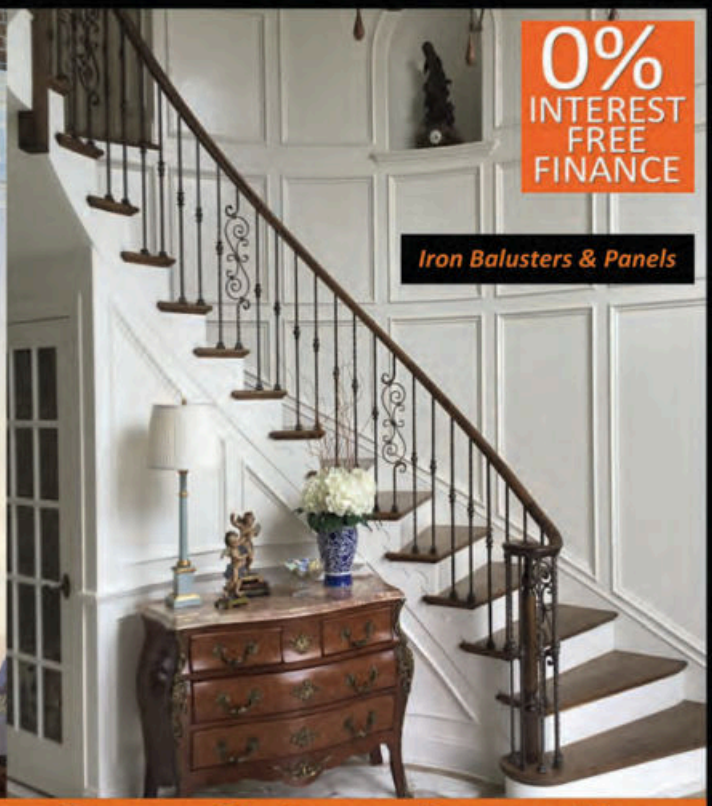
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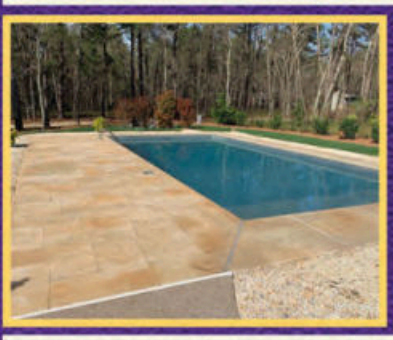
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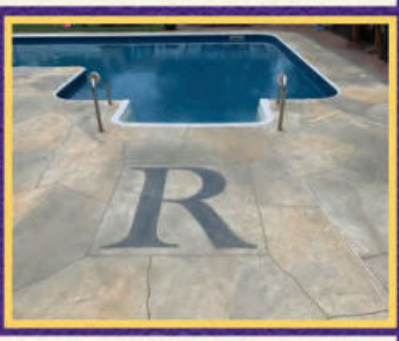
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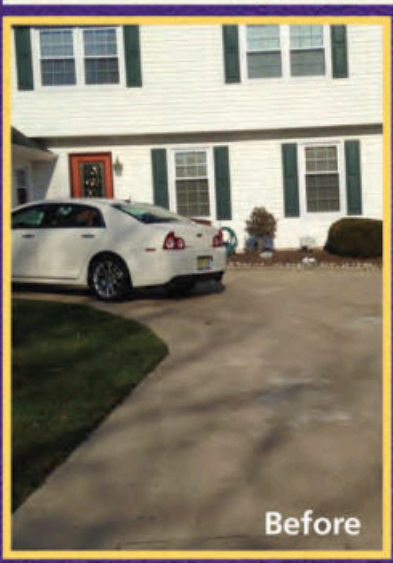
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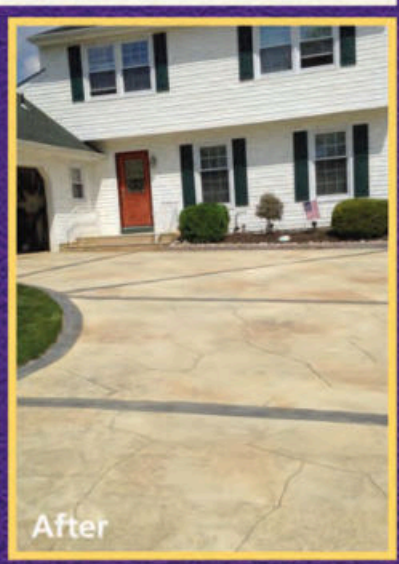






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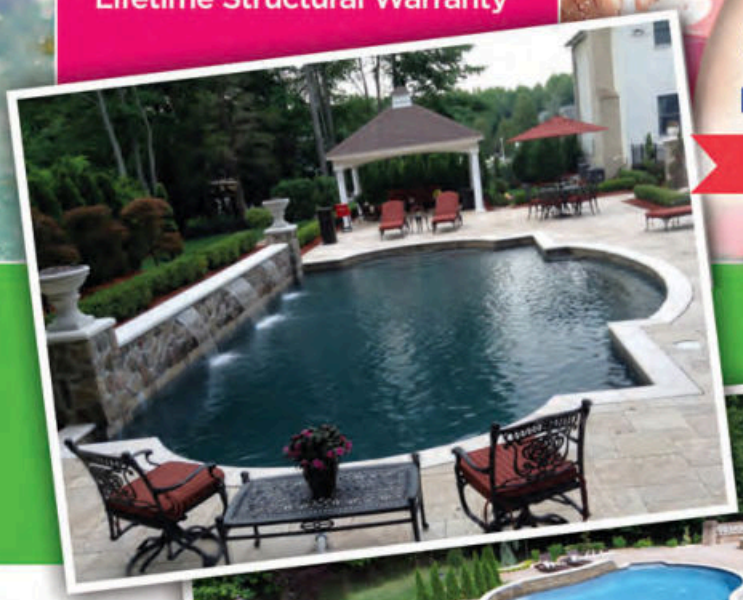
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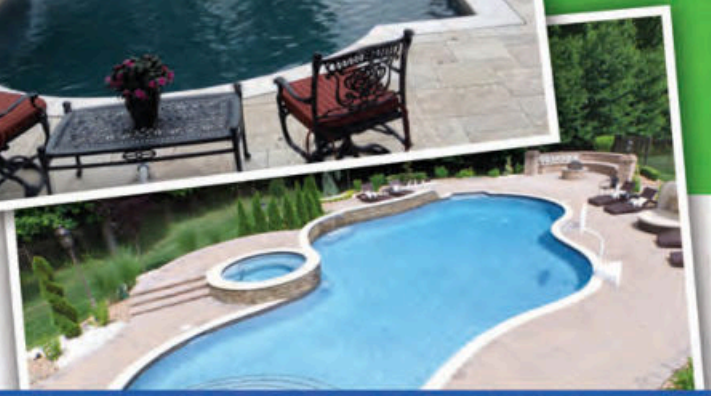
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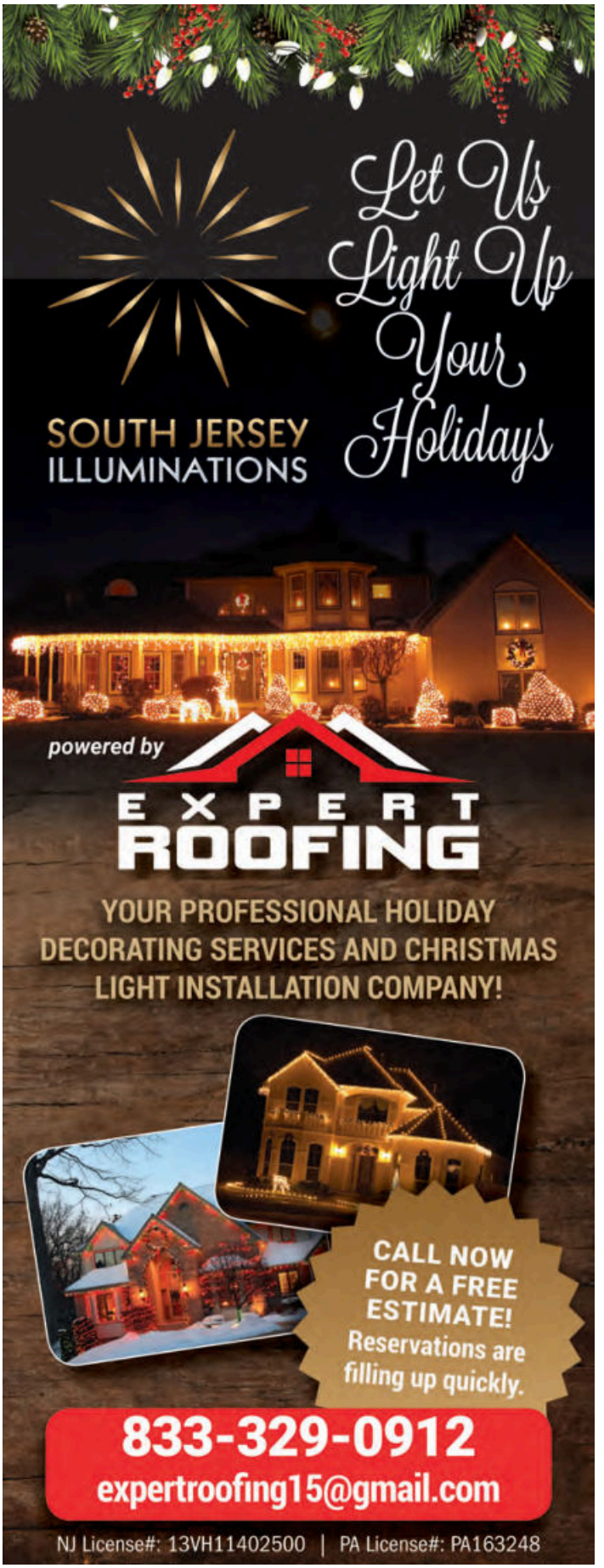
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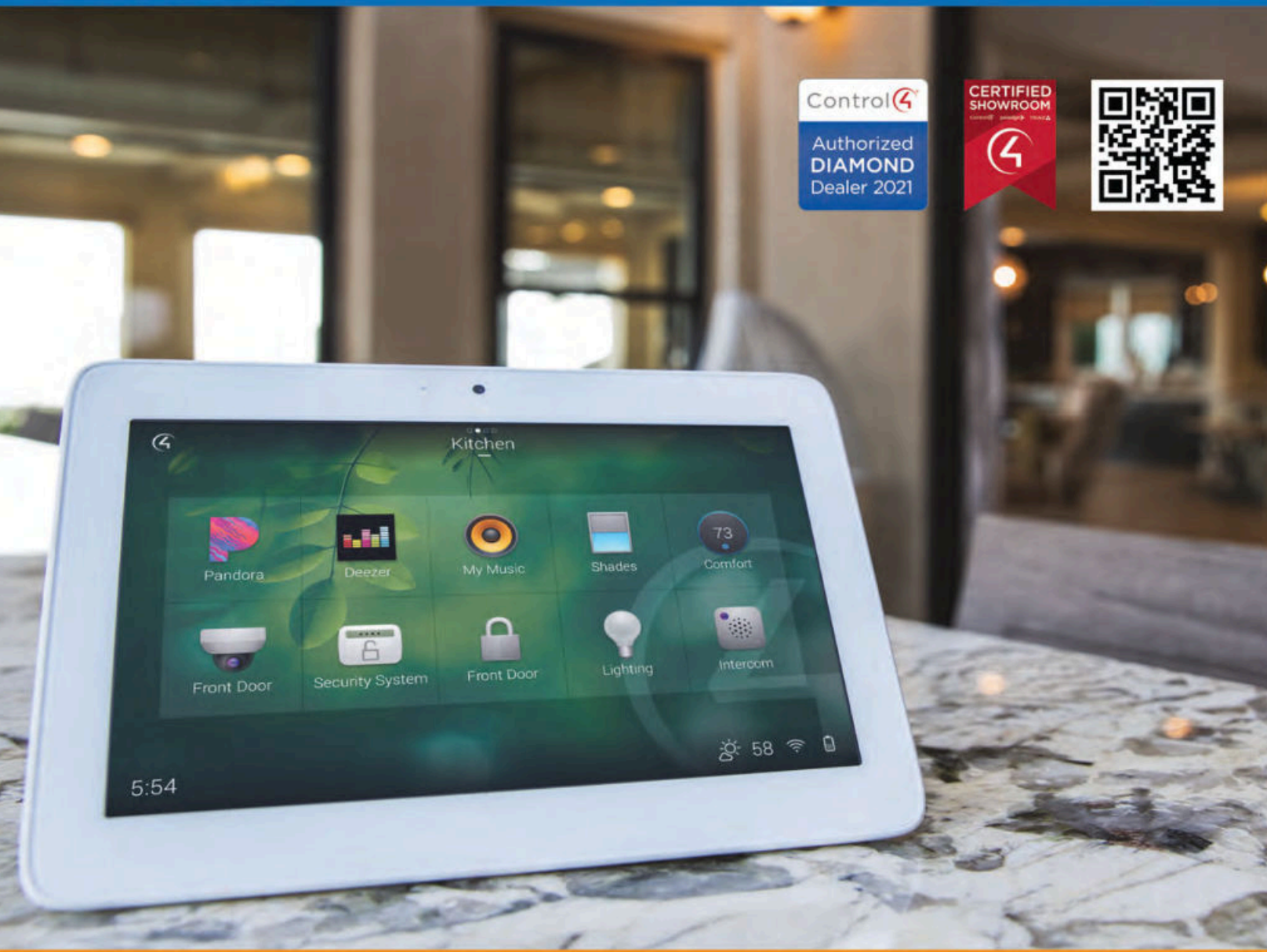
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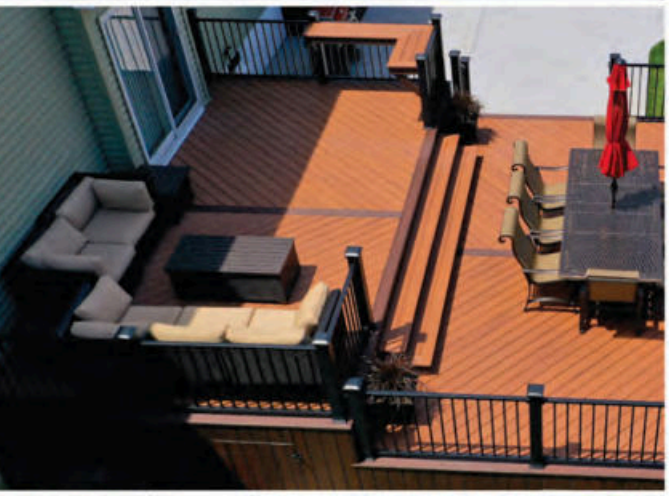
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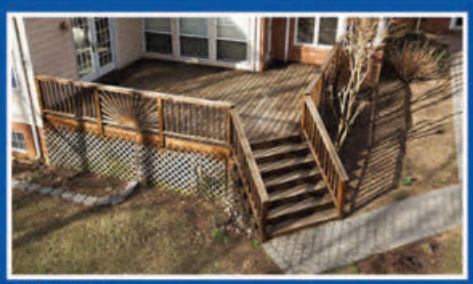




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BEFORE



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AFTER

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When you need work done on your home—expected or not—you want to know that you can trust the contractor you've hired to get the job done well. After all, you're not an expert on what's involved in services like roofing, siding or windows and you don't want to get taken advantage of as a result. Because of that, it's important to choose a company that you can feel confident is reputable.

But how exactly do you know a company can be trusted?

One important factor in choosing the best contractor is longevity. Only a company that performs great work is going to be able to stick around for the long haul. That's exactly the case with Emmons 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 1% of roofing contractors in the United States are Owens Corning Platinum Preferred.

"It's a title that backs up our already strong reputation," says Stephanee Kelly, co-owner of the company along with her husband Matthew. "Only the most reputable companies are able to earn that designation."

Besides being able to feel confident that you've hired a contractor you can trust, this designation benefits homeowners in a more tangible way as well. That's because Platinum Preferred Contractors are able to offer 50-year warranties on their work—much longer than other companies can offer. According to Owens Corning's website, "because we stand behind these warranties, we need to make sure that we are backing up the best roofers in the business."

AN INSIDE LOOK

And while Emmons are trusted experts you can count on for your exterior projects, their skilled interior remodeling team has also built up a solid reputation thanks to its more than 30 years of experience providing fine craftsmanship and exceptional customer service.



In fact, the family-owned company has grown, as several talented remodeling industry professionals have recently joined Emmons to help serve its more than 6,000 existing customers.

And Emmons' interior expertise is not limited to kitchens and bathrooms, as they also provide full-service remodeling and construction services for additions, interior renovations, porches, decks, windows, doors and basement finishing. The design team works with clients as a trusted advisor to help them make the right decisions on products, materials, colors and selections using a proprietary Curated Design Concept, which is an industry first. It's an easy way to quickly get a custom-designed project without the heavy cost of a design-build process.

It's all part of the company's desire to make remodeling one's home easy and affordable with exceptional financing programs and realistic pricing. The high level of expertise that Emmons brings to each and every project is backed by a 5-year warranty and a lifetime service guarantee, further illustrating why they continue to be leaders in the field.

CHOOSING WISELY

At the end of the day, your choice in finding the right contractor 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," she says. "At Emmons, you are not only investing in a new roof, new siding or new windows—you're investing in peace of mind." H&H

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FALL

For Outdoor Landscaping





Contrary to popular belief, fall is the most critical time to tend to your outdoor landscape.

SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION, THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING UP AND FOOTBALL IS JUST ABOUT THE ONLY THING ANYONE IS TALKING ABOUT. ALL OF THESE ARE TELLTALE SIGNS THAT SUMMER IS OVER, AND FALL HAS OFFICIALLY ARRIVED. HOWEVER, THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE DRASTIC TEMPERATURE DROP, WHICH CAN HAVE HUGE AND POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON OUTDOOR PLANTS, INCLUDING BUSHES, TREES, FLOWERS AND GRASSES. *HOUSE & HOME* ASKED THE EXPERTS IN LANDSCAPING HOW TO PREPARE YOUR OUTDOOR GREENERY FOR THE ROUTINE SEASONAL SHIFT.



LAWN AND PLANT MAINTENANCE

Typically, the largest and most important part of any property is the lawn. Having the greenest, most well-manicured yard on the block is a suburban family's dream, but most struggle to maintain their healthy, luscious grass when the weather gets cooler.

According to Rich Cording Sr., the owner of CLC Landscape Design, there are certain measures to take to ensure your lawn's health through the fall.

He says that thatching, core aerating, fertilizing, seeding and lining are the most important lawn care jobs to get done in the early months of fall. Of course, with the weather changing, the year-round needs of the grass itself begin to change, including watering and mowing your lawn.

"You should cut it right up to Thanksgiving," Cording says. "And you should still keep it watered so that it gets to at least an inch to an inch and a half per week. We are in a drought, so watering now is critical because the roots are going to try to grow

BY KATIE FRANCIS



> ***As things die back, prune them off because then all the energy goes into the roots of the plants, perennials, bushes and trees."***
>
> —George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds by George

FALL

For Outdoor Landscaping

deep during September and October."

As for other plants, there's a fine line between a healthy haircut and completely destroying the greenery.

Cording and George Mihalchick, owner of Ponds by George, agree that cutting off dead growth is beneficial to plants at any time of the year.

"As things die back, prune them off," says Mihalchick. "Because then all the energy goes into the roots of the plants, perennials, bushes and trees."

But be warned: Too much pruning can be detrimental to your greenery.

"You want to prune dead growth off because dead growth on a plant can be harmful to the rest of the plant," Chris DeMato, owner of Rock Bottom Landscaping & Fencing, says. "But you don't want to do any significant pruning as this can weaken a plant and, going into the winter season, that's not such a good idea." According to DeMato, pruning stimulates new growth, which would juxtapose and delay the natural dormancy process that plants go through as the temperature gets colder.

DeMato also stressed the importance of maintaining a clean lawn, free of any fallen leaves, as they could easily kill the grass beneath them.

"It's very important throughout the fall season to keep the leaves off the lawn. People tend to wait until a lot of the leaves fall to clean them and that's a big mistake that can really do damage to your lawn. The weight of the leaves and then matting down on the lawn can kill the lawn," DeMato explains.

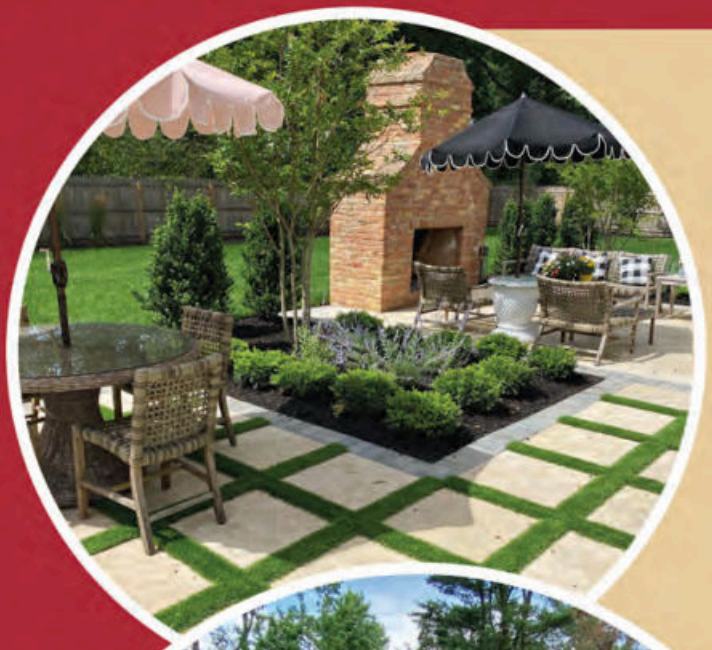
THE BENEFITS OF MULCHING

A common theme throughout all of the experts' advice is the importance of mulching, especially this time of year. Freshly mulched beds not only increase the aesthetic of an outdoor property but also provide insulation for the plants growing in them.

"Mulch your beds, clean out your beds," Cording says. "Mulch is important. Not only does it make the beds look nice and give you some curb appeal, but it also insulates the roots over the winter. It holds down winds, and it also holds in moisture."

Cording also says that, because of the late-summer drought, plant roots are going to grow deeper through September and October, making mulching that much more important.









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"To me, it's like a no-brainer. Everybody should be mulching their beds before the winter."

WHAT TO PLANT

There are countless beautiful plants that thrive in the crisp months of fall, including perennials that change colors as the temperature shifts and annuals that bloom just in time for the fall festivities.

Mihalchick recommends both the burning bush and the itea shrub to use as foundation pieces for a colorful autumn oasis.

"The burning bush and itea will start turning a brilliant shade of fire-engine red," Mihalchick says. "They're bushes that will give you a big 'wow' factor. As everything else is starting to drop its leaves, those bushes turn red just before they drop and they're stunning."

He also recommends cabbage and kale, two common annuals that are staples to fall landscaping and gardening, and a variety of different ornamental grasses that provide different colors throughout the year.

DeMato says that chrysanthemums, more commonly known as mums, are another fall favorite that are perfect for adding color to multiple different areas of your outdoor scape.

"Most [mums] in the garden centers will have an assortment of colors. Most people put them out on their porches but you can certainly plant them for full color as well," DeMato says. He also recommends honeysuckle, which is mildly fragrant, attracts hummingbirds, and has red berries in the fall to provide a bright contrast against its green leaves.

And fortunately, there is no better time than autumn for planting.

Cording says that greenery planted in the fall has a higher success rate than anything planted in the spring because of their root growth.

"If you plant one now versus in early spring, it's going to send its roots now. And then the dormancy of winter is less of a shock than the heat of the summer, and they actually survive very well over the winter. But then as soon as the ground warms up in late February or early March, these plants are ready to grow," Cording explains. "They're going to exceed anything planted in the spring in terms of root growth.

"You get a lot of dew forming on the ground [in the fall], which makes it good for lawns, but what that does to a plant is it stimulates root growth. So just that weather cycle of cold nights and warm days, it's telling the plant 'OK, winter's coming. Here, let me grow some roots down deeper.' So the lawn and the shrubs tend to grow their roots more in the fall in preparation for winter."

Regardless of how you decide to decorate your outdoor space for autumn, whether it be ornamental grasses, traditional mums or both, yard maintenance in the fall is just as important, if not more so, than any other time of year. H&H

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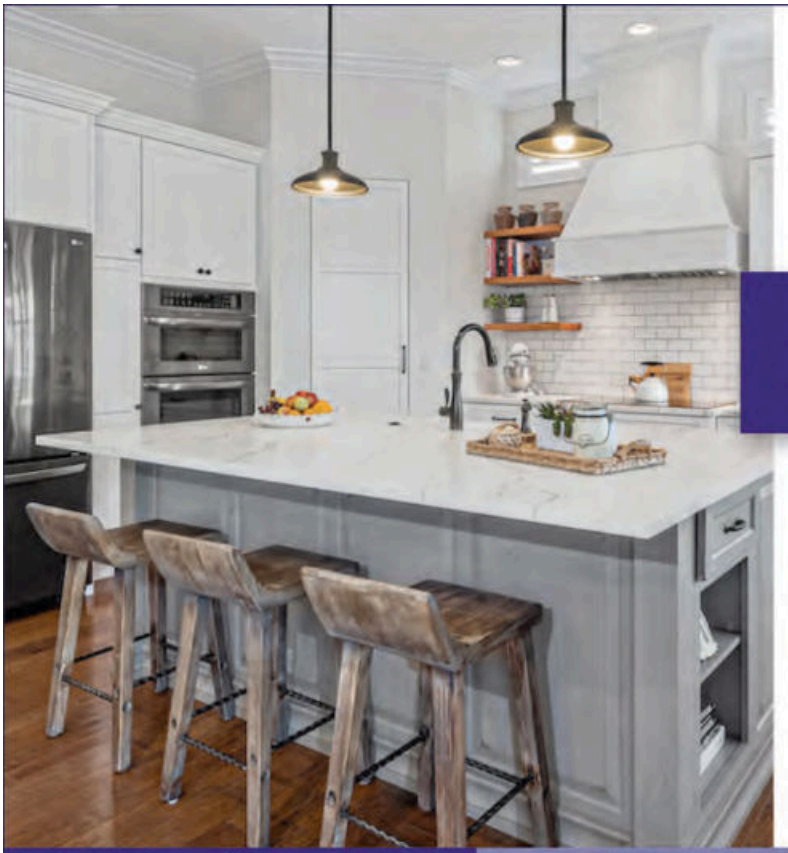
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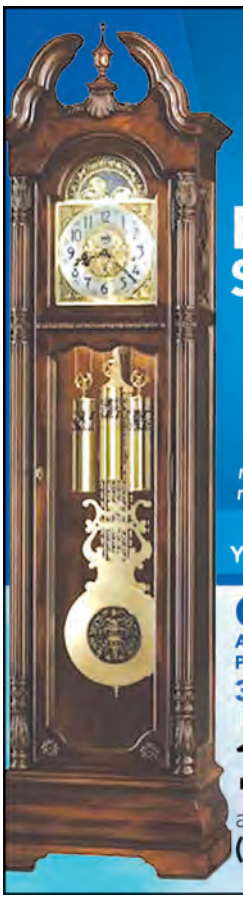
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Standing Above the Crowd

Homeowners have many contractors to choose from, but for a true family business with more than 45 years of experience and a commitment to excellence, trust **Brindisi Builders.** by **Matt Cosentino**

Mike Brindisi likes to joke that he would gladly hand over ownership of Brindisi Builders—the full-service remodeling company he founded almost 46 years ago—to son-in-law Quinn Harbright if he were to suddenly strike it rich. Harbright, however, knows full well that Brindisi's passion for turning clients' aging houses into updated, warm and cozy homes will never wane, even if he happens to buy the winning Powerball ticket.

"I don't know that Mike will ever retire willingly," Harbright says with a laugh. "I do more as time goes on but I think he'll always have a hand in the business, as long as he's able."

Brindisi has committed his life to making the remodeling process as smooth and stress-free as possible for a wide variety of customers, from residential to commercial. Brindisi Builders has completed more than 30,000 projects over the years, such as stunning kitchen and bathroom makeovers in South Jersey communities like Cherry Hill and Haddonfield and historical renovations in Philadelphia.

The company's commercial work includes projects at Moorestown Eye Center, St. Joan of Arc Parish in Marlton, St. Thomas Church in Brigantine and Whistlers Inn in Cinnaminson.

"Our scope is a good mix of everything," says Harbright, a project consultant who specializes in kitchen design. "It can be as small as changing a front door to as large as building a house."

Brindisi Builders stands apart from similar firms for a number of reasons, starting with its experienced in-house design staff that can transform clients' ideas for a brand-new kitchen or master spa from their wildest imagination to reality. They also offer a two-year warranty compared to the standard one-year warranty, and a five-year structural warranty.

The team is a true family affair. In addition to Harbright, Mike's brother Steve has worked for the company since 1982 and serves as the manager of field operations. Mike's wife works alongside his office manager Ardis and many of the staff feel like family, having worked for the company for 20 years, and some even longer.

That continuity results in a worry-free experience for clients and clear lines of communication, even when the inevitable speed bumps arise in a project.

"While we have foremen at every job site, Steve has oversight of all of the projects," Harbright says. "Everything goes through him, and obviously Mike and I work with him as well. We don't have five different people giving information: It all filters through Steve, so there's no chaos. He handles the ordering and all of the logistics for every job."

Continuing education is stressed throughout the company and it begins at the top with the owner. Rather than resting on his accomplishments, Brindisi is constantly attending trade seminars and work-study groups to further his skills. He was a prominent member of the New Jersey Remodelers Association, including many years as president and chairman of the board.

Whether it is Brindisi himself or someone else from the team, clients can expect a knowledgeable and friendly representative to guide them through the process. During a trip to the showroom, for instance, they can get a feel for products up close and have all of their questions answered.

"The showroom is by appointment only and we use the kitchen vignettes to show cabinet construction, door style and color options," Harbright says. "But you're not limited to only what's there, because we have custom manufacturers where you can pick any paint color or stain that you can find. It's beneficial to see things in person, especially on the cabinet construction side so they can see the difference in the styles and quality of cabinetry."

The strong relationships that are built early on remain through the duration of the project and beyond. It is common for past clients to call the company for advice or information about their project and, not surprisingly, a significant percentage of Brindisi's work comes from repeat customers or referrals.

For those homeowners who are entering into a major project for the first time, Harbright encourages them to do their homework.

"Do your research on the contractors you're initially looking to talk to," he says. "See if you can get references, find out how long they've been in business, find out how many jobs they've done. The biggest thing would be to research who you're bringing into your house and making sure they're someone you actually want to be working there for potentially three to four months."

Brindisi Builders checks off all of those boxes and more, which is why they have a proven track record of success for nearly half a century and show no signs of slowing down. H&H

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WARDING OFF WINTER

Take the necessary steps to make sure your home is properly protected against the season's harsh climate.

BY PETER PROKO



After another enjoyable summer, it's definitely hard to say goodbye to those sunshine-filled days and the favorable weather conditions that kept us enjoying the outdoors well past dusk. But as we trade in our swimsuits for sweaters and gear up for fall, it won't be long before we're bundling up even further and welcoming back Old Man Winter.

As the temperatures plummet and the days become drearier, homeowners will undoubtedly be spending more time indoors. But before you can enjoy all the comforts that your home brings, you would be wise to make sure your house is primed and ready for the long winter ahead. Winterizing your home—whether making energy-efficient changes to the exterior or necessary upgrades to the interior—can go a long way to saving you money, time and aggravation. And let's face it, dealing with a major home repair project in the dead of winter is not exactly ideal.

Adam Parnes of Global Home Improvement acknowledges the importance of staying on top of a winter checklist and says that homeowners who don't regularly do so are tempting fate. "I think anyone who is winterizing their home is already ahead of the ballgame," he says. "Upgrading insulation, re-caulking windows and cleaning gutters are some of the easier solutions to a safe home this winter."

The fall is the ideal time to winterize your home in an effort to address any issues before the harsh cold weather settles in, according to Andrew Ziegler of Matute Roofing Inc. "This allows for cleaning of gutters, making sure there are no loose shingles [on the roof] and checking that all the home's ridge shingles are securely in place," he says.



WINTERIZING CHECKLIST

A guide on how to plan for the season

- Make sure your attic/crawlspace is properly insulated
- Install pipe insulation around any exposed copper or PVC water pipe
- Have your furnace, fireplace and chimney inspected and serviced
- Check windows and doors for any leaks, rot or poor sealing
- Have a licensed roofing contractor inspect your roof for loose, damaged or missing shingles
- Clean gutters of leaves and other debris and make sure they are properly connected
- Inspect your grounds for troubled tree limbs that could snap and cause damage or harm
- Repair loose patio stones and pavers
- Drain and store garden hoses indoors and drain outdoor spigots







"It's also very important to inspect all metal flashings between the roof and home siding, and between the roof and chimney, to ensure that you have winter snow, ice and water protection at these critical joints on your roof," Ziegler adds.

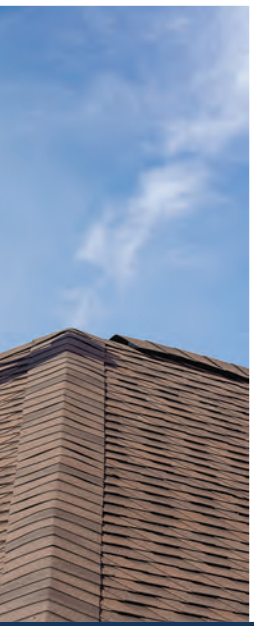
Elsewhere in the home, checking to see if the HVAC system is in need of a tune-up is recommended by industry professionals. Having it serviced annually to ensure things are running smoothly will help avoid rising energy bills due to suboptimal operation.

Another good place to start is in the attic. Poorly insulated attic space can be a major source of energy loss. In fact, estimates by the Department of Energy say that a properly insulated attic can cut your heating bill anywhere from 10 to 50%.

While a poorly insulated attic, or wall space for that matter, can be a large factor in energy loss, additional common contributors are windows and doors that are not properly sealed. Parnes says upgrades to old windows and doors are by far the most popular winter home improvement project and can make an almost immediate impact.

"Not only do older windows and doors not have updated thermal efficiency, but many of them have air leaks, which are just inviting the cold air directly into your home," he says.

What's more, homeowners will want to inspect their window frames to see that they are intact and not beginning to rot.



"Rotted wood window frames, or windows missing pieces of the frame will expose the homeowner to the risk of interior water damage, which can be costly to repair," says Ziegler. "It's best to replace windows to proactively protect inside the home's wall cavities and the surrounding sheetrock. Leaking window frames can lead to the growth of dangerous black mold that can make your family sick."

Another trouble spot for leaks is perhaps your greatest protection from the outdoor elements: the roof. Jane Alfaro of Alfaro Enterprises says an annual inspection of the roof by a professional will help identify any concerns and hopefully allow you to get well in front of any major problems.

"Your roof needs to be in good condition. No missing shingles, no leaks, etc. If you see dry rot or corrosion present or the underlayment plywood is corroded, it is time to replace your roof," she says.

Having to potentially replace your roof or windows can be a large expense and so some home-



WARDING OFF WINTER





owners may try and get through one more season before they decide to pull the trigger. But all it takes is one major winter storm and the problem could balloon into a much larger issue.

"The most important thing to consider is what could happen if you don't replace it," says Parnes. "A leaky roof will cost you way more money in damage then the money you save by trying to wait one more year."

Barbara Carranza of Carranza Roofing and Remodeling says age should be the key factor when weighing repairing or replacing one's roofing, siding or windows. "It is easy to nickel and dime repairs, but in the long run it is less costly to replace them. Putting off repairs leads to long-term and more costly problems," she says.

Ziegler echoes that sentiment, especially if the roof is approaching the end of its life.

"Roof and window repairs do not come with substantial warranties," he says. "Typically, when a roof is 20-25 years old, the shingles have begun to curl and the adhesion of the shingles to one another becomes compromised."

This could lead to the shingles allowing water to penetrate or perk down into the plywood decking, causing deck rot. "The risk to the homeowner of not proactively replacing the roof now is that there will be greater expense later for the replacement of rotted plywood decking," Ziegler says.

While having someone inspect your roof, it's also a good idea to check your gutters. "Gutters should be cleaned out and secured twice a year, prior to the change in weather. Ideally in the spring and the fall," says Alfaro.

Once gutters become clogged by leaves and debris, water does not flow through the downspouts. Thus, the water will back up under the shingles and behind the fascia boards.

"These leaks will cause interior damage as well as rot the fascia boards, causing extensive damage and costly repairs," Carranza says.

But, while this is a critical step in protecting your home, Carranza warns homeowners should not attempt to take matters into their own hands.

"It is very important for a homeowner not to climb a large ladder and attempt to clean their







gutters. Professionals have the experience and knowledge on climbing ladders and roofs. Inexperienced homeowners can easily fall from the ladder or the roof and be seriously injured or even cause death," she says.

No matter what type of services you may require, it's clear that now is the time to start thinking about the necessary upgrades that will help get your home ready for winter. By being proactive, you'll save money and avoid the hassles and headaches so you can enjoy your home the way it was meant to be. H&H

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ask the expert by Matt Cosentino

Amiano & Son Design-Build

ONE OF THE KEYS TO HAVING LONGEVITY IN BUSINESS IS TO ALWAYS EMBRACE ONE'S ROOTS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY REMAINING FORWARD-THINKING, and Amiano & Son Design-Build seems to strike a perfect balance in that regard. The company continues to adhere to the cornerstones on which it was founded in 1968, yet also welcomes in younger voices and a fresh perspective, and that approach has led to sustained success for more than 50 years.

With the millennial generation becoming more active in home-buying and remodeling, Amiano & Son is well positioned to suit their needs when it comes to kitchen and bathroom renovations, additions and more thanks to company leaders like Joseph Clymer. He joined the family business at age 15 as a laborer and ascended to the role of director of sales and design before his 30th birthday.

Clymer is a member of the prestigious National Kitchen & Bath Association Thirty Under 30 program and has been recognized locally by being inducted into the SNJ Millennials 30 Under 30. He and his team have quickly become known for their unique, original designs that are appreciated by homeowners of any age.


Joseph Clymer, director of sales and design

AMIANO & SON SEEMS TO HAVE A NICE BLEND OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS ON ITS STAFF, INCLUDING A STRONG REPRESENTATION OF MILLENNIALS. DO YOU THINK THAT'S IMPORTANT?

As a company, more than half of our staff in the office as well as in the field are millennials and we've been trying to emphasize the importance of having younger people within the industry. I am the director of sales and design and I'm 27. We have two other designers in their 20s as well. We bring a fresh, new look to all aspects of remodeling, including kitchens and baths. We all do extended learning to keep up with current trends and also what's traditional. It makes for a good balance, because our owner, Lou Amiano Jr., has been doing this for 25-plus years now, so we get a lot of guidance from him and he brings a whole different outlook on styles and the approach to a renovation.

ARE MILLENNIALS STARTING TO BECOME A LARGER PIECE OF YOUR CUSTOMER BASE?

Yes. We're working with a lot of younger families and younger couples who are looking for our expertise about what's current and for us to guide them to what will work for them and their family. For example, if it's a younger couple and they're planning on growing their family, then we're going to design the kitchen around growth for them. We keep different things like that in mind because we're at a similar point in life ourselves so we know what to look out for.

HAVE YOU FOUND MILLENNIALS TO BE MORE OPEN TO BUYING FIXER-UPPERS AND UNDERGOING REMODELING PROJECTS SO THEY CAN GET THE SPACE THEY DESIRE?

We've definitely seen that. This is the first generation to have technology at their disposal from a very early age. A lot of people we work with within that age group are utilizing things like Houzz and Pinterest, idea books or mood boards and sharing Instagram photos with us and using that as an inspiration for their project. They can say they really like this cabinet color or this cabinet style or the way the backsplash flows with the countertop. When the design team sits down and goes through these pictures with them, we can pick and choose which components from these inspiration pictures we want to pull into their remodel. The younger generation is definitely more proactive when diving into a project and doing a lot more legwork, sometimes before they even make the call to a contractor.

THIS GENERATION SEEMS TO BE INTERESTED IN ROOMS THAT ARE RICH IN CHARACTER AND HAVE UNIQUE FEATURES TO THEM. DOES THAT MAKE IT FUN FOR YOU AS A DESIGNER?

Yes. Trending materials are definitely a hot commodity right now. What I mean by that is, instead of doing something more traditional like a raised panel door or a natural stone backsplash, we're doing something like an exotic wood floor or white shaker cabinets with quartz countertops and a blingy backsplash. That's a whole different clientele and a whole different style than what we were doing even five or 10 years ago.

ALONG WITH YOUR COUSIN SOPHIA AMIANO, WHO IS A DESIGNER AT AMIANO & SON, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE USHERING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS?

It's very important to us. We've seen the blood, sweat and tears that went into it from our grandfather to my uncle and her father. We don't take that lightly. We want to make sure that the hard work and dedication to our clients over the years gets handed down. We want to bring a new approach, bringing different design ideas in and bringing in new materials to our showrooms in Southampton and Barnegat Light. We're trying to keep everything going but also keep adapting to the times as well. H&H





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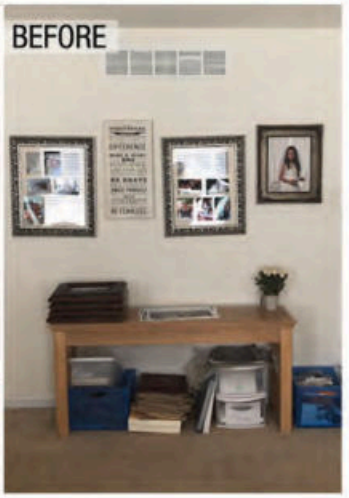


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Quality Carpets has partnered with Flooring America, giving customers the personal touch and community ties of a local company along with the vast flooring options, low pricing and unparalleled warranties of a successful national brand. *by* **Matt Cosentino**



A Winning Combination

Thirty years ago this past March, Mike Graff, with the support of his father Lew Graff, took the bold step of starting his own business as a young man just getting his feet wet in the flooring industry, and he has seen Quality Carpets evolve into a fixture in Glassboro and the surrounding communities in the ensuing decades. Not only has it become a trusted source for carpet and all types of hard-surface flooring for both residential and commercial customers, but it has made a commitment to giving back through proud sponsorship of youth athletic teams and as a supporter of area charities and police departments.

Rather than rest on those accomplishments, however, Mike and his team—which includes Lew, his father and business partner, and longtime manager Breah Dill—recently entered into a relationship that will take the business to another level. They have joined forces with Flooring America, a national brand with a stellar reputation and a network of locally owned stores across the country.

Quality Carpets' Flooring America is a flooring specialty store offering everything from carpet, area rugs and custom runners to classic hardwood, laminate, tile and the wildly popular luxury vinyl tile. It combines the personal touch and friendly service of a local, family-owned company with the buying power, product availability and extended warranties of a large organization.

"It's a great partnership and we're blessed to be part of it," Mike says. "It's something that we feel is really going to be beneficial to our customers."

Mike has put his customers' needs first ever since starting Quality Carpets in 1992, in the same location it sits today on Delsea Drive. He had gotten introduced to the industry as a high school student, working on weekends and during summers for a local carpet store, and became an installer after graduation.

He founded the business with his father, and Dill joined shortly after, bringing her extensive design experience and product knowledge. Many of the same employees from the beginning are still at Quality Carpets, and the entire team has bought into the values of integrity and treating the customer with respect.

"When you deal with Quality Carpets, you deal with us from start to finish," Mike says. "We're not subcontracting out to a separate installation crew, which is what happens at some stores and relieves the store of any responsibility for the install. We stand behind our installation.

"The flooring trade is very personal: we're moving your furniture, we're moving your bedding, your kids are home while we're working. All of our employees are local residents who grew up in the area, have ties to the community and treat your home like their own."

House & Home sat down with Mike to learn more about the partnership with Flooring America and how Quality Carpets can guide customers to the best flooring solution for their home or business.

Why did you become a Flooring America dealer?

The main reason is that we get better buying power and better pricing from the manufacturer, which we can pass on to the customer along with special financing. The second reason is that the warranties are much stronger, even better than that what the manufacturers offer. If the manufacturer offers a 20-year wear warranty, then Flooring America will give us a 30-year warranty. Flooring America also has a no-questions-asked warranty that is good for 120 days. If you don't like your carpet or other flooring for any reason at all, they will replace it free of charge, material and labor. Another reason is product availability. So many people are having issues with back-ordering and materials not being available, but Flooring America has the largest inventory in the country for flooring products.

What can customers expect when visiting your showroom?

Our friendly, knowledgeable staff is here seven days a week to show customers around our 12,000-square-foot showroom. Here they will find floor-to-ceiling displays showing full-sized samples of all the latest flooring trends. Knowing it can be an overwhelming process for some, we will find the flooring that best fits their needs by asking about their home lifestyle, household size, if they have kids or pets, and their budget for the project. We can even show them pictures of different jobs we've done over the years for some ideas. Once they have it narrowed down to a few awesome choices, they are welcome to take the samples home and even use our room visualizer to get an actual picture of the flooring in their room.

Are there certain trends in the industry you can tell us about?

Luxury vinyl tile, or LVT, is probably half of our sales today. It's very practical, 100% waterproof and good for homeowners with kids or pets. It's easy to install and is designed to go over existing hardwood or tile, which is why it's so popular. If people have an old, ugly ceramic tile in their kitchen and they don't feel like dealing with the rip-out, we can come in and cover it up in one day. **H&H**

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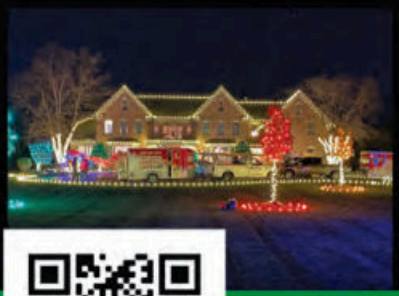
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Christmas in September

Think September is too early to be thinking about holiday lights? Think again. For one local business, the holiday season began back in August, and it's in full force until the end of January. *by* **Katie Francis**

Jeff Adamiak, the owner of GEM Home Maintenance, began We Hang Holiday Lights with his crew in the fall of 2017 to fill the primary business's offseason.

"It [holiday lights] sort of fit with our traditional business, window cleaning, power washing, that sort of slows down. … And then I just realized how much happier you make people hanging Christmas lights as opposed to cleaning their windows or cleaning the roof or something like that," Adamiak says. "And I just fell in love with doing it. It became fun. It's Christmas lights, who doesn't like Christmas lights?"

Thus, We Hang Holiday Lights was born, and business is booming with the team providing holiday cheer for more customers than ever before.

In its first year, We Hang Holiday Lights served roughly 30 clients. Last year, the team decorated for 420 clients; this year, Adamiak expects to hang lights at more than 600 houses, with hundreds of new and returning customers whose demand for the specialized service is already filling up his team's schedule.

How It Works

Once customers sign a five-year contract, We Hang Holiday Lights customizes the lights specifically for each home. The company guarantees that its high-end lights remain in peak condition during those five years with very few maintenance issues.

Adamiak explains that his crew tries to get installations done as early in the season as possible, given the safety and productivity concerns that arise as the nights get colder and longer.

"We try to get as many of our customers installed in October. If you're a returning customer, we want to get your lights installed in October because it's safer. There's no frost on the roof in the morning and the days are longer, so it allows us to get more work done."

A team of three installs the lights and a photocell timer, set to run the lights for eight hours each night. All the homeowner has to do is plug the lights in when they are ready to show off their traffic-stopping displays.



Along with the team's immaculate decorating and top-notch products, they provide maintenance service all throughout the holiday season.

"Part of the contract is, we maintain everything. Bulb goes out? Give me a call and within 24 to 48 hours, I have somebody out there doing the repairs," Adamiak says, adding that this year, he expects his crew to fix any problems within 24 hours of customers' calls.

Maintenance is guaranteed until Jan. 6, which is when We Hang Holiday Lights begins the process of taking displays down.

"We come to disassemble the lights, we label them all and then store them for the customer at our facility. We have three different warehouses that we're using," Adamiak says. Even in the holiday offseason, the crew is working on maintaining each customer's lights, ensuring that they are ready for next year.



Not Just a Light Company

When Adamiak began We Hang Holiday Lights in 2017, he quickly realized the positive impact he was making on his customers. Since then, his team has added a philanthropic facet to the seasonal business, providing lights for families going through tough times and bringing some light to their holiday season.

"We always try to look for as many of those as we can every year," Adamiak says. "I'd like to do more of those. Those are the most enjoyable jobs ever." We Hang Holiday Lights repurposes lights from customers who canceled their contracts early for these single-use projects, giving the lights another chance to fulfill their five-year lifespan.

Only the Best

We Hang Holiday Lights only uses the best lights in the business, or, as Adamiak admirably calls them, "the Bentleys of the holiday light industry." The company uses C9 lights and customizes the length of the strips to perfectly shape the architecture of each house.

"I can cut these lights to fit any length, any design. … And then, of course we can do bushes and trees and shrubs," Adamiak says.

All of the lights used by We Hang Holiday Lights are warm LEDs, not to be mistaken for the bright blue that people usually associate with LED lighting. These lights are incredibly illuminating and replicate the look of incandescent lights while using only 10% of the energy.

With so much labor and quality products, Adamiak admits that the work his team does is on the pricier side. However, he believes that a job worth doing is worth doing right, and his customers certainly get what they pay for. He even compares his team's quality of work to that of Philadelphia's Boathouse Row and the iconic displays at Downtown Disney, but better!

"It's pricey, but it's worth every penny." H&H

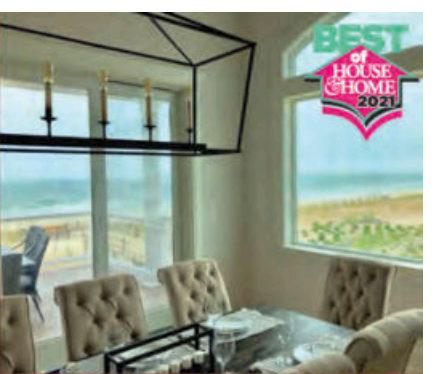
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Led by a desire to take care of their community by providing high-quality work, the team at East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows treats every client—and the homes they love—with a respect befitting family. *by* **Madeleine Maccar**

Where the Heart Is

Your home isn't just four walls and a roof: It's a treasure trove of memories, a meeting place for your nearest and dearest, a collection of lovingly selected and generationally passed-down items.

When structural repairs are necessary, you want to trust your beloved home with contractors who will also regard it with the respect and love it deserves, which is the philosophy at the heart of every job East Coast Roofing, Siding & Windows proudly puts its name on. In fact, every member of East Coast's more-than-200-person team treats each client like they're guests in their home, according to East Coast President Jeff Kay. "We typically leave a property better and cleaner than we found it," he says while describing the award-winning customer service that East Coast has unfailingly offered for more than 40 years.

A "detail technician" will start the project with a free on-site assessment that includes taking measurements, preparing material orders and staging the worksite. When it's time for the work to begin, a dedicated installation team takes over, headed by a projected manager who will also serve as a client's constant point of contact.

"That's how they get that personal attention, and that level of organization is what makes the process a painless one," Kay says. "Sixty percent of our business comes from referrals, and I think that speaks volumes to the customer experience."

East Coast hasn't just earned recognition and rave reviews for how it treats clients, though. For more than 10 consecutive years, it's won The Press of Atlantic City's Best of the Press awards in roofing, siding, windows and contracting. "That is voted on by the residents of Atlantic County," Kay points out. He adds that East Coast has also won the nationally ranked Best of the Best Television with Rich Noonan for three years in a row.

To maintain those demanding standards, potential employees are painstakingly vetted to ensure their personality and professionalism meet the company's expectations for customer care. Once they're on the team, installers go through additional training to be certified as GAF Master Elite Contractors in roofing, CertainTeed Master Craftsman and 5-Star Contractors in siding, and ProVia Certified in windows and doors.

That additional education ensures they deliver manufacturer-specified results to ensure proper installation, as well as offer guarantees like the "Golden Pledge" warranty on every roof they do. That 25-year workmanship and leak-free guarantee and 50-year warranty is not only 100% prorated but also an offer only Master Elite Contractors can extend.

"We take our installation teams to GAF headquarters in Parsippany once a year to be retrained and certified: half the day's in the classroom, the other half is hands-on," Kay explains. "Only 2% of contractors achieve GAF Master Elite Contractor status, and we're also in the President's Club. Of the 2% of contractors who do reach the Master Elite status, only about 10% reach the President's Club."

That diligent professional training is paired with local, home-grown talent, all of whom keenly understand how the region's seasonal extremes can impact the lifetime and effectiveness of their products.

"We're able to easily identify the most vulnerable areas of your roof, your siding, your windows, your doors based on the seasonality," says Kay. "There are installation techniques we follow that are specific to the Northeast."

East Coast takes its community responsibility just as seriously as the quality of its work. Their doors have stayed open all throughout the pandemic because homes didn't stop needing repairs, even when it felt like the rest of the world stood still. Rising inflation inspired its latest promotion where homeowners who install a new roof, siding or windows before Nov. 30 will not pay anything or accrue interest for 24 months. That's right, no payments or interest until 2024. No other South Jersey contractor offers this kind of wallet-friendly financing.

It's the newest way the team is able to step up and give back: Longstanding outreach efforts include giving away roof replacements to locally active homeowners in need every holiday season and this year marks the 14th year East Coast will assist two deserving families in New Jersey. To nominate a family, visit EastCoastRoofing.com/RoofGiveaway.

"At the end of the day, we do what we say we'll do, and we go above and beyond to help people," says Kay. "We live and come from a place of service." H&H

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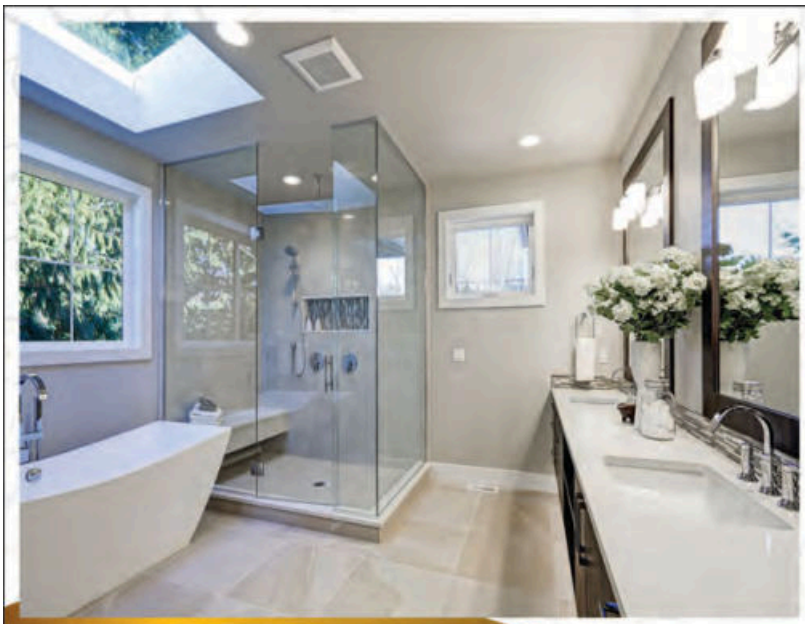
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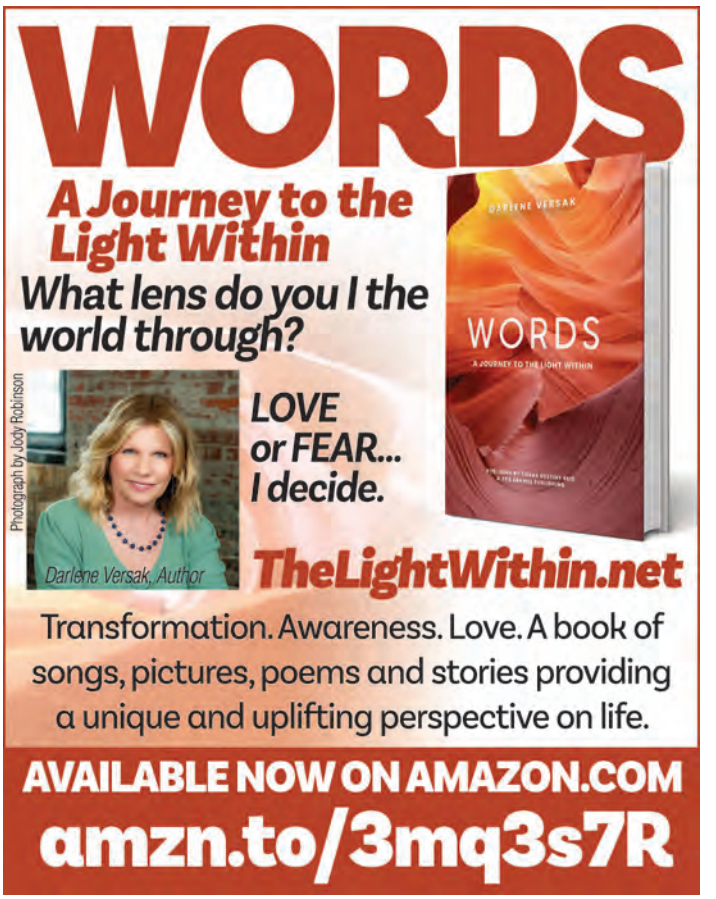
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