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Remodeling GUIDE

Thursday, August 29, 2019

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FOR A REMODEL

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Planning a Renovation? How to Get Your Home Ready

By taking some precautions, you can keep your home and its furnishings safe and sound

By Nancy Mattia
CTW Features

Prepping your home for a major renovation means more than just draping old sheets over the furniture. Your goal should be to keep the contents of each room intact when the construction is done. Here's how to do that:

1. Set rules and parameters for your contractor. "Discuss things like how you expect that the house will be fully protected by drop cloths on the floors and taped down with heavy plastic in doorways and over vents to minimize dust travel," says

Abbie Jacobson, a Chicago interior designer. "Do you want workers to wear protective booties indoors?"

2. Get big furniture out of the way. Empty the work area as best as you can of sofas, armchairs, tables, and rugs before the reno begins. The emptier the room is, the less chance something will get damaged or dusty.

3. Don't forget about accessories. Find a place to store lamps, drapes, dining room chairs and other items that could be in the

way and end up a casualty. "Plants, aquariums, and pet enclosures should also be moved out to avoid damage and flying dust particles," says Jacobson.

4. Take advantage of little-used rooms for storage. Got a kid who's away at college or an exercise room that you keep meaning to use but don't? They're ideal spots to temporarily store the furniture you moved from

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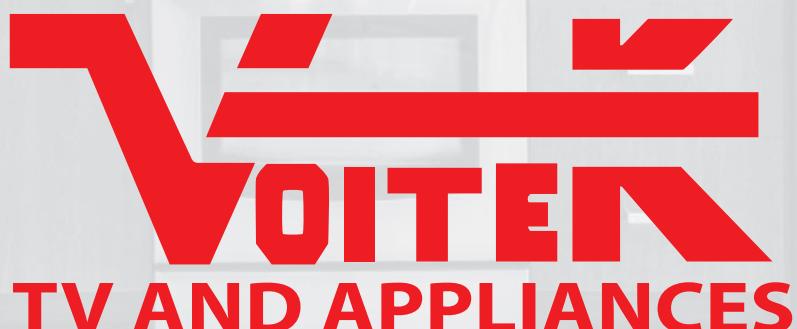
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YOUR DREAM KITCHEN STARTS HERE!

CONTROL YOURSELF

By Dawn Klingensmith
CTW Features

Remodeling can get expensive. Follow these tips to keep the surprise costs at a minimum

It was a kitchen remodel where one thing kept leading to another, jacking up the price and jettisoning the timetable for completion. Then, while jackhammering the thick tile flooring, a tradesman made a scary discovery: There, in the setting material, lay an electrical wire.

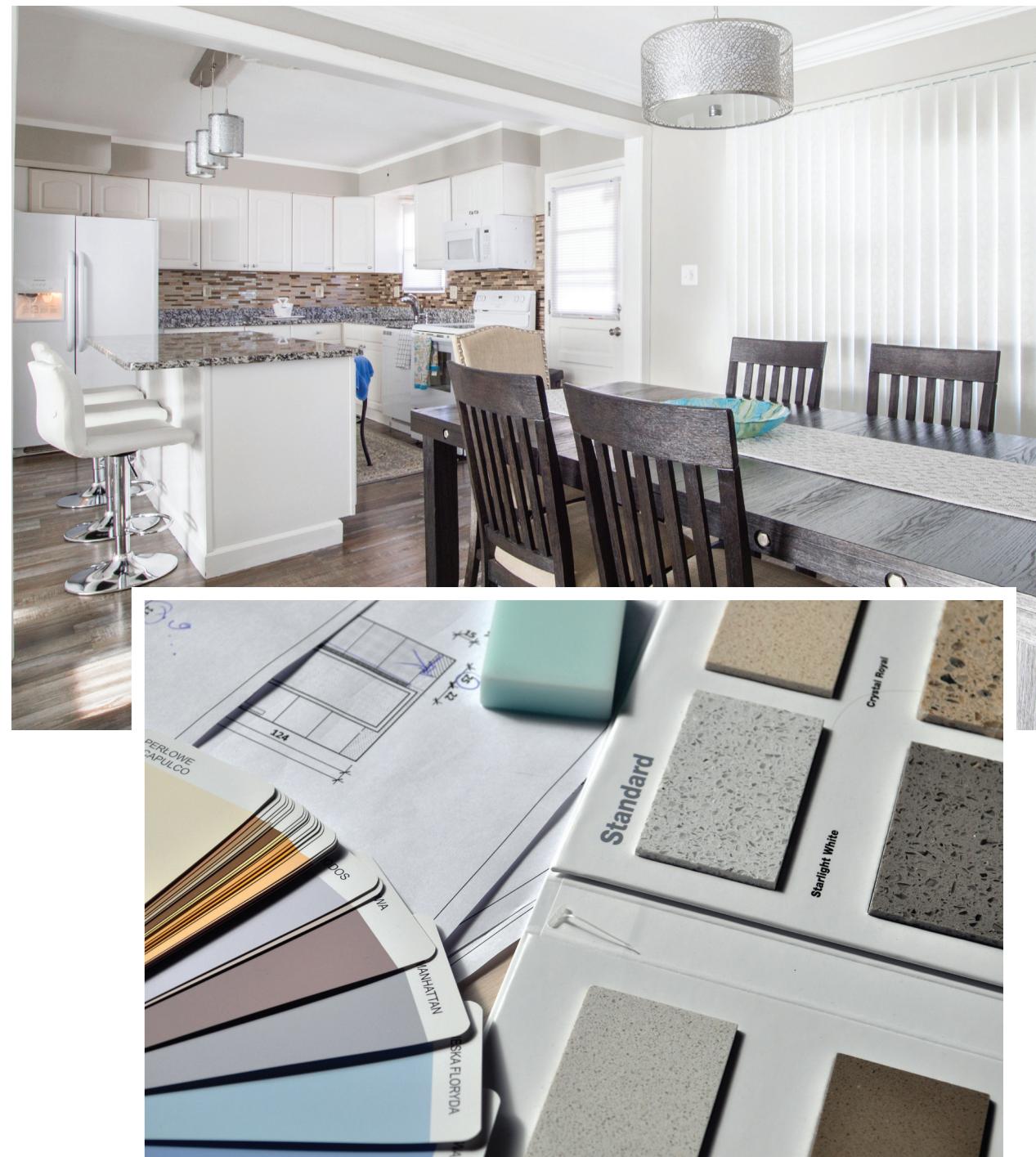
"Nobody had thought to turn off the electricity in the house because this just isn't something you encounter," recalls Lucy Katz, vice president of operations and customer service at Katz Builders in Austin, Texas. "Had the jackhammer hit the wire, someone would have been electrocuted."

The snake didn't bite that day. But kitchen projects almost always result in a shock of a different sort — sticker shock. People watch home design shows that redo kitchens "on a dime," cutting corners and wrapping up swiftly and neatly in the span of an hour-long episode.

1. KITCHEN COSTS

In fact, renovating a kitchen is time-consuming, messy and expensive. Costs vary by region, but nationwide, a mid-range, major kitchen remodel costs an average of \$ \$66,196 in 2019, while an upscale kitchen remodel came in at \$131,51, according to the Remodeling.com.

"What I really want to make clear so people are prepared is that remodeling a kitchen is not an exact science. It's not one-size-fits-all," says certified kitchen designer



Robin Siegerman. "You can discover something that leads you down the path of having to deal with 10 other things. So, set aside a contingency fee of at least 15 per-

cent of the overall budget to deal with these things and still finish the job the way

See 'CONTROL' 6

'READY'

from 2

the work zone.

5. Cover too-big-to-move items. If your sofa is staying put during the reno, protect it from getting damaged or dusty by covering it with plastic sheeting or drop cloths.

6. Wrap fragile items. Even if they're stored on a shelf, breakable items like fine china and vases should be wrapped in protective plastic like bubble wrap and moved away from the demolition area.

7. Remove wall hangings. Paintings, shelves, clocks, and anything hanging on walls at the renovation site and in adjacent rooms could end up falling to the floor because of drilling vibrations and hammering. Be proactive and before your favorite shadow box ends up in pieces, take everything off the walls and out of the room.

8. Safeguard non-reno rooms. Even if your living room won't be touched by the contractors, if it's adjacent to the construction site, the furniture will be exposed to dust, plaster, and debris. Covering everything with plastic sheets will minimize the mess. Some homeowners even seal off every doorway in the house with plastic sheeting and painter's tape to avoid a problem.

9. Relocate jewelry, cash, and other valuables. Even if you trust your contractor and his crew implicitly, it's better to keep anything of monetary value out of sight. Even if the valuables are far from the work zone, don't keep them out in the open. Consider putting them in a safe-deposit box.

10. Take care of the workers. If the work crew will be using a bathroom inside the house, replace bath towels with a roll of paper towels. Also, keep the room stocked with toilet paper in plain view.

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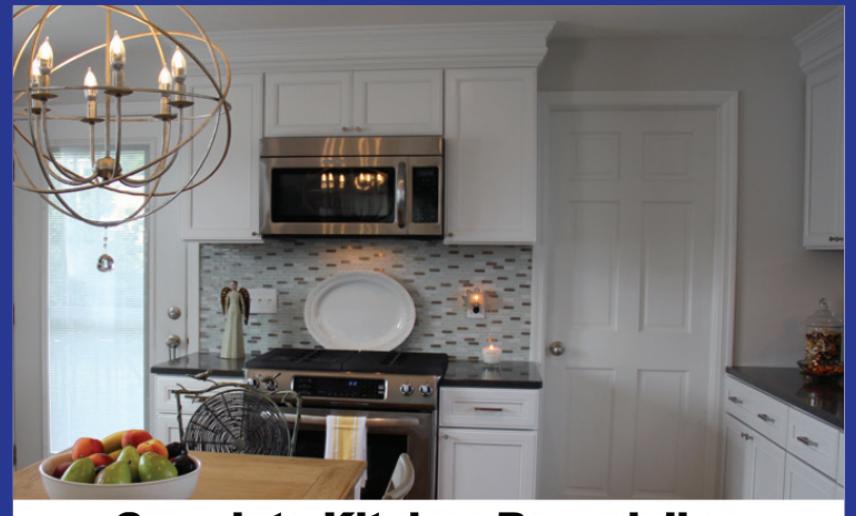
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'CONTROL' from 4

you want."

Aging infrastructure and the misdeeds of previous remodelers are two sources of unpleasant surprises, but sometimes, spiraling costs are due to decisions made by the homeowner. It pays to know which decisions drive up costs and which projects tend to beget other projects.

While it's worth it to many homeowners, changing a kitchen's footprint is an expensive endeavor that calls for new electrical circuitry, plumbing and flooring. Building an addition involves demolition and major reconstruction, and any existing structural problems will need to be fixed.

2. MECHANICAL CHANGES

Relocating the sink or range may necessitate new plumbing or gas lines, which are especially burdensome where there's

no basement and water pipes and gas lines are embedded in the foundation, Katz says.

In comparison, rerouting electrical "is not really a big deal. I wouldn't suppress my design ideas because I need to move an electrical appliance," says Randy Tapper, owner of RHT Designs and Construction in Deerfield, Illinois.

By contrast, "Plumbers cost the most of all the trades, so moving the sink is very significant," he adds.

Adding an island is easy enough until it's made into a wash or cook station. Moving a vent hood over an island requires new ductwork in addition to electrical wiring, Tapper says.

3. PLANS AND SHORTCUTS

Bottom line: "If you just change out the appliances, cabinetry and countertops and leave the walls intact and the electrical and plumbing in place, you'll see tremen-

dous cost savings," Katz says.

Be advised, though, Siegerman says: "Sometimes a quick fix or a shortsighted decision can cost you down the road." One example is when homeowners choose to place new stone countertop onto existing cabinetry, which can strain the cabinets and render the drawer glides nonfunctional.

Two of the costliest mistakes are changing plans once a project is underway and not hiring a competent, connected designer or contractor to begin.

"The time to make changes and change your mind is in the drawing phase," Siegerman says. "Once the contractor has quoted the job and gets started, to say, 'Gee, I'd really like to have a window here' where no window was planned – that's expensive."

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Style, Substance Pay Off in Home Remodeling

New deck additions, both wood (75.6%) and composite (69.1%) are great investments for homeowners looking to enjoy their outdoor spaces and, eventually, recoup their investment if and when they sell.

How to get the best bang for your remodeling buck

By Erik J. Martin
CTW Features

When you put money into the stock market, it's inevitable that some of your chosen stocks and funds are going to outperform others you picked. And it's practically impossible to predict ahead of time which ones will be smart bets.

When you invest in home improvement, on the other hand, you can have a better idea of which projects will pay off in

terms of adding higher resale value to your property. One trusted resource that many homeowners turn to for guidance here is Remodeling's annual Cost vs. Value Report, which suggests particular renovation projects that offer a better return on investment (ROI).

In its recently published 2019 report, Remodeling indicates that upgrades yield-

ing the highest costs recouped are a garage door replacement (97.5% ROI); manufactured stone veneer (94.9%); minor kitchen remodel (80.5%); wood deck addition (75.6%); and siding replacement (75.6%). Rounding out the top 10 are steel entry door replacement (74.9%);

See 'PAY OFF' | 8

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'PAY OFF' from 7

vinyl window replacement (73.4%); fiberglass grand entrance door (71.9%); wood window replacement (70.8%); and composite deck addition (69.1%).

Chris Collier, Realtor with Kay Houghton and Associates in Arlington, Virginia, says it's important to keep in mind that it's rare to recoup 100 percent of your money on any remodeling project – especially the big ones.

"For a lot of these projects, you're only getting about 60 to 80% of your money back at resale," he notes.

That doesn't mean many of these renovations aren't worth investing in, however.

"There are two types of home improvement projects worth considering: purely esthetic improvements made to enhance your

See 'PAY OFF' | 9



'PAY OFF'

from 8

home's appeal to potential buyers, assuming you want to sell soon; and projects that actually save you money and/or make your life more comfortable," says Ken Summers, co-founder of Dayton, Ohio-based Comfort Institute. "It's the money-saving, comfort-improving projects that really make sense if your goal is to enjoy your home while you're living there."

Put another way, don't necessarily nix a desired home upgrade just because it may produce a lower ROI than you'd prefer.

"If you're going to get years of enjoyment out of the improvements that you're considering and are okay with not recouping a high return on investment, by all means proceed," says Collier. "But if you are moving sooner rather than later, your money is often better spent on your next home than on expensive remodeling upgrades."

That's because the next owner may not value your lavish room addition or costly master bath remodel as much as you do.

"Not paying attention to what and how much you should spend on a renovation can be an expensive learning experience. You'll learn that many buyers just don't care that you spent \$200,000 to remodel the kitchen and add a bathroom. People often over-improve their homes and just don't get that back when they go to sell," says Julie Upton, Realtor with Alain Pinel Realtors in Marin County, California.

Nevertheless, Steve Booz, vice president of marketing for Columbus, Ohio-headquartered Royal Building Products, believes the top ROI projects ranked by in the 2019 Cost vs. Value Report are safe bets.

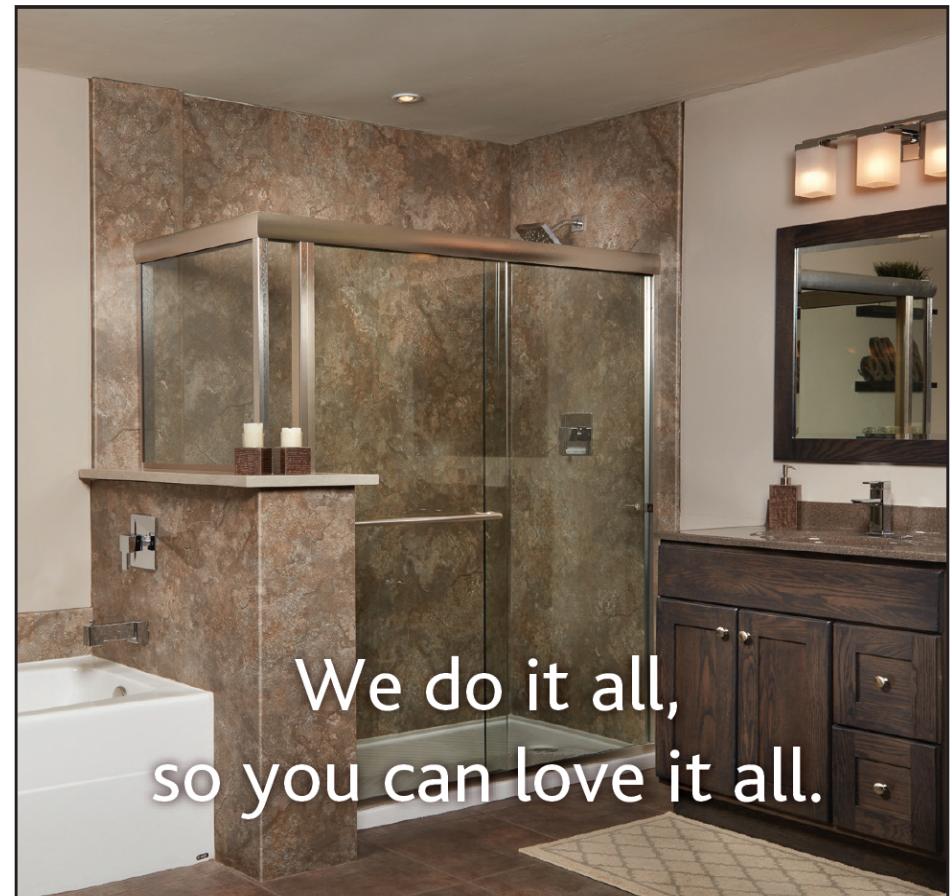
"This report lines up with not only what homeowners want in their homes today but supports major trends, too. The most common remodeling themes we hear repeated are upgrading our indoor and outdoor living spaces and having low-maintenance exteriors," says Booz. "If you look at Remodeling's list of projects that drive the most value, eight of their top 10 projects accomplish one or both of those goals."

Before embarking on any project, pre-planning is crucial, the experts agree.

"Talk to a Realtor in your neighborhood to see what he or she thinks about your plans and if it will increase the marketability of your home," recommends Upton. Additionally, shop around carefully for a qualified remodeling contractor, "and get at least three quotes for any potential work."

Lastly, "expect to spend time researching colors, finishes, and trends so that the final product is something you're going to be happy with for years to come," recommends Collier.

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Home Appliance Trends

from the experts at Voitek

The owners at Voitek TV & Appliance recently shared some insights on their business, appliance trends and purchasing tips.

The company, which has locations in Kingston and Exeter, has been in business more than 50 years.

It draws customers not only because of the quality of products it offers, but because the family business embodies a sense of service and commitment to the community.

They carry nearly all of today's leading kitchen appliance manufacturers, including but not limited to, Sub-Zero, Wolf, Viking, Miele, GE Cafe, KitchenAid, Electrolux, Frigidaire, & Maytag. There are various styles they offer from commercial to traditional and black stainless to paneled appliances, among others to distinctively complete a kitchen.

Looking at kitchen and appliance trends in 2019, the Voiteks point to French door model refrigerators that have been very popular, as well as slide-in gas & electric

ranges. They are also seeing homes revert back to white and black appliances depending on kitchen cabinetry, spacing, and flooring. They are also starting to see smart appliances beginning to gain some traction as nearly every brand today carries a smart model and with tech pushing forward they say they will likely see this trend continue to grow. For many remodels and new construction – and for those looking to maximize space in the kitchen – there is the under-the-counter microwave drawer/oven. In the laundry spectrum, Speed Queen just released their "classic" washer/



'APPLIANCE'

from 10

dryer series, which is a vintage model designed almost identical to their earlier models with features such as a simple transmission wash action and no lid lock.

In terms of products to consider, for the French door refrigerators and slide-in ranges, the Voiteks say GE Café carries a brand-new finish for their products in matte white and matte black, which is perfect for an exclusive look in the kitchen while keeping maintenance low with its fingerprint and smudge resistant finish.

Speed Queen Laundry has been their most popular brand of washer/dryer, and they say it will continue to be.

The Voiteks encourage customers to research online, know your dimensions, and consult with their team. There are dozens of brands and several finishes and designs within those brands so it can be overwhelming if you do not take the time to narrow your options down. Don't strike out on your dream kitchen.

Go into one of the Voitek locations to take a peak at the floor models and consult with their team; they'll be able to assist in



White Top Load Washer: TC5 and White Dryer: DC5 available at Voitek TV and Appliances

making the best decision for your unique space. After all, it all depends on the finish of the cabinetry, countertops, flooring and floorplan within the kitchen, so it's best to consult in person.

As for rebates, special offers and promotions, there are a few available.

The biggest promotion right now is Speed Queens' 10-Year Warranty promotion on every single one of their washer and dryer products which is going now until Sept. 30. There are plenty of products that are on special running through now until the end of the week after Labor Day. The majority of brands today have packaged rebates as long as you purchase the common 4 kitchen products (refrigerator, range, dishwasher, over-the-range microwave/hood). With that being said, the higher priced line you purchase, the greater the rebate will be. For example, a GE Cafe kitchen will net you approximately a \$1,000 rebate vs. a basic GE kitchen which would be around \$300.

With so many options to consider, your best bet is stopping at one of the Voitek TV & Appliances stores and asking the experts all the questions.

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Let There be (Extra) Light

Recessed lights add more illumination without taking up space

By Erik J. Martin
CTW Features

It's a common quandary, especially in older homes: One or more rooms lacks ample artificial illumination due to an absence of overhead light fixtures.

Making matters worse, that same room may be short on outlets, requiring you to use extension cords or power strips to accommodate your only mode of lighting, table and floor lamps.

Sure, you could use brighter bulbs in

those lamps or install an expensive window or skylight to bring in the natural rays of the sun. But how do you see better at night, and why should every light fixture require a lumen-robbing shade?

Time to adopt a can-do spirit by thinking can lights, otherwise known as recessed lights. These fixtures, which can include a hollow metal can

inside which a separate bulb is housed or else a can-less, surface-mounted fixture that includes the LED light, are installed within a hole made in the ceiling and send ample concentrated light downward a broad area (via a flood-light) or a more narrow space (via a spotlight).

See 'LIGHT' | 14

POPULARITY CONTEST



Some renovations are just more popular — and beneficial to homeowners — than others.

The National Association of Realtors' 2019 Remodeling Impact Report reveals the top remodeling projects as reported by 2,287 homeowners.

The study found that more than half of all projects were completed by contracted professionals versus do-it-yourself (DIY).

For those looking to have a final product that improved a home's functionality and livability, 41 percent of preferred hiring a professional.

INTERIOR RENOVATIONS

	Hire Professional	DIY
Bathroom renovation	25%	26%
Kitchen upgrade	17%	19%
Complete kitchen renovation	16%	9%
New wood flooring	10%	7%
New master suite	4%	3%
HVAC replacement	4%	1%
Basement conversion to living area	3%	4%
Insulation upgrade	2%	2%
Hardwood flooring refinish	2%	3%
Add new bathroom	2%	1%
Closet renovation	1%	3%
Attic conversion to living area	1%	1%
Other projects	14%	24%

EXTERIOR RENOVATIONS

	Hire Professional	DIY
Roofing	39%	35%
Vinyl and wood windows	17%	24%
Vinyl siding	15%	16%
Garage door	12%	3%
Steel and fiberglass door	10%	11%
Fiber cement siding	7%	11%

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® 2019 REMODELING IMPACT REPORT

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'LIGHT'

from 12

Unlike chandeliers, track lights, lighted ceiling fans or other overhead fixtures, can lights don't protrude downward or rob ceiling space; the lights you see are flush with the ceiling's surface for greater spatial efficiency and provide more illumination (depending on the aperture size) because they don't use a shade. And they're controlled with a traditional wall switch or dimmer switch with no cord or plug to fuss with – all the electrical connections are hidden behind the ceiling and wall.

"Recessed lighting enables you to define spaces in a room, accentuate

See 'LIGHT' | 15



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'LIGHT'

from 14

ceiling height, and highlight objects like artwork. As a replacement for or addition to the use of lamps in a room, this down-lighting effect adds to the overall feel of the space and its connection to the outdoors," says Tim Davis, real estate broker with The Corcoran Group in Southampton, New York.

Dan Meyer, co-founder and CEO of Pocketdoor, based in San Mateo, California, says recessed lighting offers a range of advantages.

"Rooms with low ceilings benefit from having no exposed elements. It can provide distributed — if not necessarily uniform — illumination across a space, especially with recent advances in LED lights. Additionally, in space with easy access above the ceiling, installation can be relatively easy and inexpensive," says Meyer, noting that the fixtures themselves start at only around \$20 each.

"I recommend recessed lights whenever possible to homeowners, as they can change the way that your space is seen, improve the appearance of furnishings and make visitors feel more welcome without know-

ing why because the light is out of their normal field of vision," Robin Wilson, CEO of and designer with Robin

Wilson Home in New York City, says. "More options are available in the market today at varied prices, and they don't require extensive renovation or insulation due to the availability of safer LED lights, which don't heat up ceiling spaces like halogen or incandescent

bulbs do."

When deciding where to place the lights and how many to install, "think about exactly what you want to illuminate," suggests Meyer. "Are there particular fea-

tures like artwork that you'd like to highlight? Are you concerned about illuminating evenly on the floor?"

"More options are available in the market today at varied prices, and they don't require extensive renovation or insulation due to the availability of safer LED lights, which don't heat up ceiling spaces like halogen or incandescent bulbs do."

Robin Wilson
CEO of and designer with Robin Wilson Home in New York City

"In a kitchen or hallway, I suggest placing these lights four to six feet apart with a wide aperture to allow a wash of light. In a living room or bedroom, you might select a mixture of wide and narrow aperture lights chosen based on the task," Wilson says.



Leslie Saul, a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based architect, cautions not to use "too many recessed lights in a room, as it makes the space look commercial and can make your elegant room's ceiling look like Swiss cheese."

Also, avoid installing recessed lights in rooms with exposed beams or an impermeable surface, "as the installation can be costly if not downright impossible," notes Davis.

And for best results, hire an expert to do the job. A professional electrician can properly cut and conceal holes made in the ceiling, reduce heat loss caused by the hole, install sufficient insulation, make the proper safe electrical connections, and reduce fire risk, according to Meyer.



In-Demand Industrial

Why the industrial look is hot and how you can implement it

By Erik J. Martin
CTW Features

The word “industrial” may conjure up cold and hard imagery, such as cement, metal and machinery. But when talked about as a design aesthetic, many experts get warm and fuzzy about the industrial look.

That’s because, when applied to a home, the industrial style doesn’t have to be bland, impersonal or off-putting like a factory floor might be. Instead, it can cre-

ate an inviting and open space with an attractive modernity and simplicity.

“At its core, industrial design involves creating a space that feels like it was once used for industrial purposes. Industrially designed spaces often share common elements like concrete floors, high ceilings, steel and timber architectural elements, and expansive windows, among others,” says Mackenzie Collier, owner and prin-

pal designer with Phoenix-based Mackenzie Collier Interiors.

Laura Mineff, designer/contractor with Array Design Studio in Cleveland, defines the industrial look as “brining in the old with the new by simplifying and appreciating natural elements such as concrete, brick and steel with an open floorplan

'INDUSTRIAL' from 16

concept. It often incorporates exposed ceilings and conveys a feeling of unlimited defined spaces as opposed to compartmentalized or defined cubed spaces. The atmosphere produced feels more open, vast and free-flowing."

In its 2019 Design Forecast, Zillow predicted that the industrial style will prove increasingly popular this year in residences. The pros can tell you why.

"Increasingly, home and business owners are adopting an eco-friendly mindset, choosing to move to more urban environments and downtown dwellings where they can forgo commuting in favor of walking or biking. The industrial style works really well in lofts, condos, townhouses and commercial spaces," Collier says.

Additionally, the industrial look "has evolved to become homier and more comfortable, which is why it's spreading to smaller cities and multi-family housing," notes Rachel Hyslop, director of channel

See 'INDUSTRIAL' | 18



Image courtesy Graber



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Before

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'LIGHT'

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marketing for Graber, a window treatment manufacturer in Middleton, Wisconsin.

But make no mistake: industrial esthetics aren't ideal for every home.

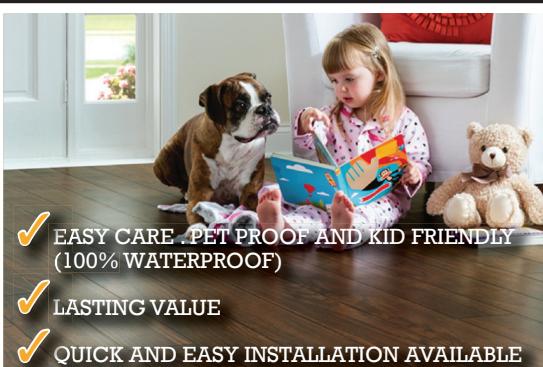
"It's very specific and doesn't appeal to everyone. It works best in urban settings as opposed to more traditional looking homes in suburban neighborhoods," Hyslop cautions.

Amanda Leigh Carlson, lead interior designer at Nashville-headquartered Southern Athena, LLC, echoes that thought.

"A mid-century modern ranch will look ridiculous if the interior design is industrial," says Carlson.

Also, if you're not careful, the completed effect can be cold, sterile and costly, according to Mineff.

To pull off the industrial look in a given



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room or area effectively with panache, it's best if those interiors have high ceilings and open space, although you can create the illusion of more space with special techniques.

"You can release the limitations of a space, even without high ceilings, by painting the walls, ceiling and trim the same color, removing all woodwork and trim to create clean lines, and using dry wall wrap versus casing and molding in doorways and openings," suggests Mineff.

Most agree that the colors you choose should be neutral – like white, black or grey.

"Distressed finishes, aged metal, and repurposed hardware can also go a long way toward achieving this look," says Hyslop.

In addition, "vintage reproduction filament lighting, leather furniture, and primitive commercial objects repurposed as decor are also common elements uti-

lized in industrial spaces," adds Collier. Aim, too, for streamlined furniture that you shouldn't try to match.

"Bring different fabric textures into play. A metal frame with a leather-wrapped seat and back cushion is a great piece, for example," says Carlson.

An area rug can top off your industrial-themed space nicely, as well.

"Look to natural fibers, like sisal," Hyslop says.

While it won't resonate forever, many concur that the industrial design approach has legs.

"It should last a long time, considering that historic buildings and vintage architecture continue to hold a spell on anyone interested in esthetics. It's an absolute classic when executed well," says Carlson. "I don't think it will die out as a trend until seven to 10 years from now."

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7 Bathroom Trends for a Luxurious Upgrade

By Nancy Mattia
CTW Features

Transform your bathroom — and treat yourself — to these trending indulgences

Though it's the smallest room in the house, the bathroom is a spectacular place for an upgrade. Because of the room's cozy size, a luxe item will pop as soon as someone walks through the door. Everything from lighted mirrors to matte black faucets is making it big this year. And recently seamless design has become popular in the bathroom too, in the form of floating vanities and wall-mounted toilets. Here are seven to consider:

1 MATTE BLACK FINISHES

Forget shiny metallics—today's trendiest finish is dark and daring. Black is the real deal, showing its bold personality on faucets, mirror frames, vanity legs—anywhere you want to make a strong yet sultry statement.

2 FLOATING VANITIES

If you want an elevated bathroom experience, install a floating vanity, says Nicole S. O'Dwyer of NS Designs, an interior design firm in northeast Pennsylvania (nsinteriordesigns.com). With no legs to anchor it to the floor and no visible attachments to the wall, "it's a noticeable difference from your average out-of-the-box vanity." Adding under-cabinet lighting gives it a special glow.

3 LIGHTED MIRRORS

This mirror coordinates nicely with a floating vanity. "It eliminates the need for a light fixture," says O'Dwyer, "and creates a streamlined look that works in a large space but is ideal for a small space."

4 WALL-MOUNTED TOILETS

There's something very sleek and modern about a toilet that "floats" on the wall, its plumbing and working parts hidden from view. A wall-mounted toilet is an extravagance—it's pricier than the standard model and you'll likely need to make plumbing alterations—but if



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'BATHROOM'

from 19

your bathroom lacks in square footage, the indulgence may be worth the price since some models can save you up to 12 inches of space.

5 ROUND-CORNERED RECTANGULAR MIRRORS

When is a rectangle not a rectangle? When it's got soft corners that look fresh and modern, less severe than the traditional figure's edges. Framed or not, this new shape is a reflection of good taste and style. Combine two trends and hang a rounded rectangular mirror in a matte black frame.

6 EXPOSED SHOWER PIPES

While floating vanities and toilet bowls hide their inner working parts, this trend proudly goes in the opposite direction and makes them stand out. Exposing the plumbing creates an industrial look that feels both rustic and luxurious.

7 FINE ART ON WALLS

When you've acquired a work of art and are considering where to put it, the bathroom probably doesn't make the cut. But why not? There's no rule that says you can't decorate the bathroom with art—if you do put up a painting or photograph, the room might start feeling more like a spa! To keep your masterpiece safe, avoid anything under glass or with glazing, where moisture could get trapped and cause damage.

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RISE OF THE BATHROOM REMODEL

Akitchen might be the heart of the home, but renovating bathrooms is an emerging trend

Consider that 25 percent of homeowners aim to renovate their baths over the next 12 months versus 15 percent who are preparing for a kitchen redo, according to homeowners surveyed for HomeAdvisor's True Cost Report. Baby boomers plan to spend up to \$1,000 more, but millennials are twice as likely as boomers to finish a bathroom remodel – spending an average of \$1,896 on the project. Popular inclusions in those bath reboots include upgraded cabinets, flooring, shower doors, tile and creative lighting, per the report.

Why are so many folks clamoring for a new or enhanced bathroom? The reasons are rampant.

"Many people chose to renovate their kitchens over the past 20 years – so it makes sense that the bathroom renovation craze is next," says Carolyn DiCarlo, archi-

tectural designer with New York City-based CD Build, Inc.

Bathroom upgrades also tend to be more manageable and less disruptive than kitchen remodels.

"They're usually smaller projects in size and scope, and they typically cost less and require less time," Botond Laszlo, president of Marvelous Home Makeovers, LLC in Plano, Texas, says.

"Additionally, it's easier and more affordable to incorporate your own style into a bathroom remodel than into a kitchen," says Laszlo.

Furthermore, bathrooms are deemed wortier of investment today because they're increasingly viewed as private sanctuaries where you can pamper yourself—unlike the utilitarian kitchen.

"Established homeowners who have enjoyed several years of strong home value appreciation are now indulging themselves with spa-like upgrades—luxurious features like body sprays, rain shower heads, and specialized lighting. And younger homeowners are more focused today on basic fixes, like replacing worn or broken tile, chipped sinks and upgrading toilets," notes Brad Hunter, chief economist for HomeAdvisor, headquartered in Golden, Colorado.

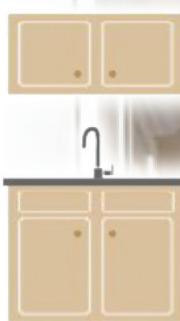
Other popular bathroom enhancements



currently include bold tile patterns, bright-colored vanities, gold champagne accents, and mold- and moisture-resistant drywall for peace of mind to protect all the pretty stuff, per Anita Mecadon, TV host and Atlanta-based design build expert.

"Homeowners are also now more interested in floating tubs than sunken tubs, and they're getting more daring with their bathroom remodel materials and designs," Mecadon notes.

Among other bathroom trends in vogue are whites, grays and neutral tones with occasional pops of color, differently shaped tile for variety, mixing and matching various hardware tones in the plumbing and lighting fixtures, and cleaner lines, Laszlo adds.



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BACKSPLASH TO THE MAX

Why tile backsplash feature walls are hot

By Erik J. Martin
CTW Features

For years, the traditional backsplash has taken a backseat to other major design elements in a new or remodeled kitchen, serving as a functional yet decorative shield to protect the wall behind it from moisture and food splatter.

But lately, experts are noticing a growing movement: the growing backsplash, as evidenced by countertop-to-ceiling-high backsplashes that create an eye-catching feature wall. In fact, Houzz noted this drift in its recently released 2019 home design trend predictions.

"Backsplashes have generally been installed behind the range area, where pots and pans make the most mess," says Mitchell Parker, Houzz editor and writer. "But these days, we're seeing that backsplashes are more about seizing a design opportunity and introducing a graphic pattern that helps to visually break up all the cabinet surfaces and add texture and interest to the room."

John Linden, a Los Angeles-based interior designer, says the idea of covering an entire wall with tile may have seemed ridiculous years ago, but today feature wall backsplashes provide "a great way to unify your entire kitchen. When it's done well, it creates a perfect sense of harmony between the walls, countertops, cabinets and floors."

Melinda Earl, founder and lead designer at Stone Impressions in San Diego, seconds that sentiment.

"Big backsplashes are trending right now because they allow you to create an open, contemporary space with high visual impact. Removing all the clutter and pairing open shelving with a statement backsplash can make the space seem larger and more open while still maintaining a high level of functionality," says Earl. "Plus, it allows you to save money on upper cabinet materials and installation."

Parker adds that a full-tile feature wall



makes an immediate statement.

The Houzz Kitchen Trends Study found that half of homeowners are opening up their kitchens to interior spaces, and the most popular kitchen layout is the L-shape," notes Parker. "This openness means the kitchen is always on display and, therefore, in need of a good focal point. It draws the eye in, whether it be through shimmer and texture with something like simple subway tile or through bold colors and patterns like a Moroccan tile design. It's a relatively cost-effective way to get a stunning effect that looks high end."

Ideal candidates for a feature wall are homeowners who aren't afraid of showcasing some personal style in their space.

"You should like open, breathable spaces and want something different," adds Earl.

Be forewarned that a feature wall can come with a higher price tag spent on backsplash tile and installation; it can also require more cleaning and sealing maintenance; and it robs wall space that can otherwise be used to store contents and conceal clutter within cabinets.

When planning a feature wall, "I suggest choosing a pattern tile with a matching esthetic and colors that complement the open spaces surrounding it," says Earl. "For example, if you have a modern home with cool col-

ors, consider a geometric design with a complimentary bold shade of blue or grey on a contemporary marble stone tile."

Linden says feature walls often work best when they contrast at least slightly with your cabinet hues.

"You don't want to clash with your cabinets, but you don't want them to blend into each other too much, either," adds Linden. "You may even want to consider mirrored tile, which is super easy to clean and makes your kitchen look bigger."

If in doubt, try a neutral approach.

"All-white tiles, such as simple subway tile in a brick or herringbone pattern, can give you that visual texture and interest you crave," says Parker, who recommends working with a designer and skilled tiler or contractor for best results.

As for the longevity of the feature wall backsplash, the pros expect it to stick around for the foreseeable future.

"It's not too common to see a trend like this come and go completely. While this tile trend is certainly having its moment now, I think it will continue to be popular well into the future," Parker says.



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