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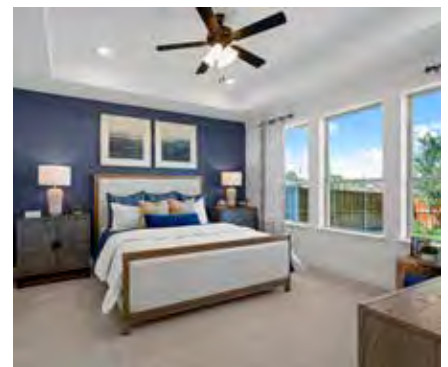
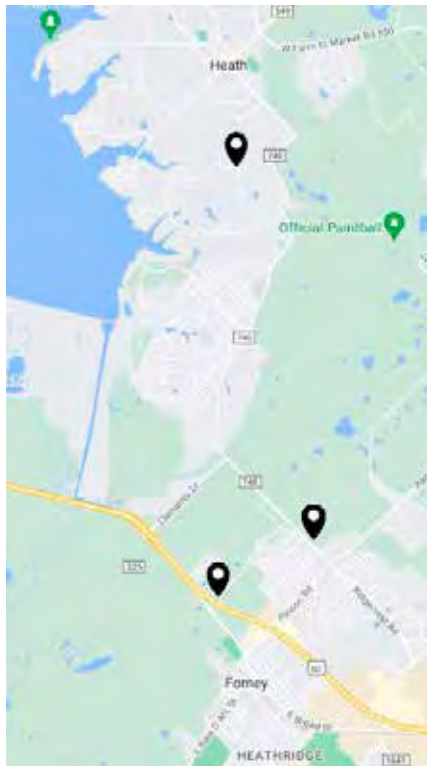
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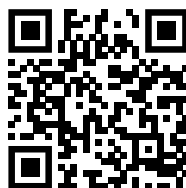
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WHO IS KELLEE KATH?

Originally from Texas, brings a wealth of experience and a dynamic background to her real estate career. After spending an impressive 15 years residing in Colorado, Kellee currently calls East Texas her home, where she resides with her husband, three children, and two canine companions.

Known for her deep-rooted passion for her family, Kellee finds joy in supporting and cheering for her children in their various sports and cheer activities. Additionally, she embraces the serenity and thrill of spending time on the lake, indulging in water sports that invigorate her adventurous spirit.

Raised in an outdoor-centric family, Kellee's upbringing has fostered a strong foundation in adventures, hunting, fishing and a deep understanding of land and home sales. It is this unique blend of experiences that has allowed her to excel in the real estate industry since 2005. Kellee's initial venture into the real estate arena commenced in the captivating landscapes of Colorado, where she honed her skills and developed a keen insight into the intricacies of the market.

Driven by a genuine desire to assist individuals in finding their dream homes or land, Kellee's expertise and dedication have now expanded to the vibrant real estate market of Texas. With a profound sense of responsibility, she prioritizes the well-being and satisfaction of every client, ensuring that each person receives the utmost care and attention throughout their real estate journey.

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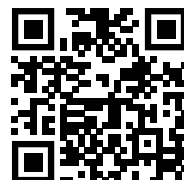
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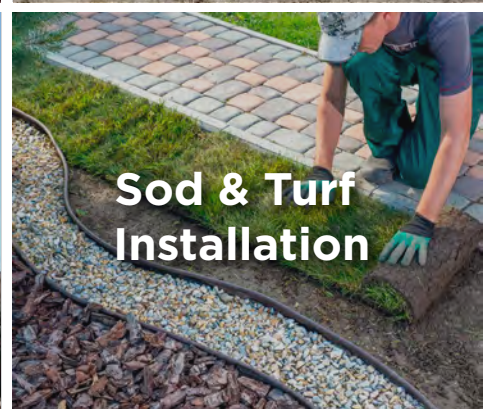
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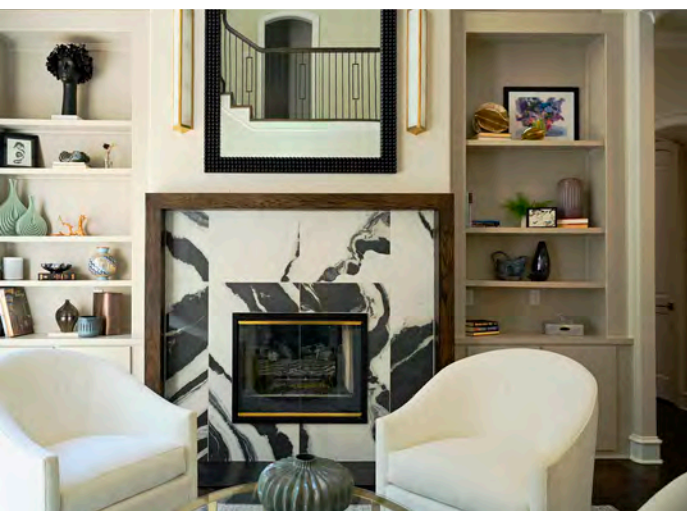
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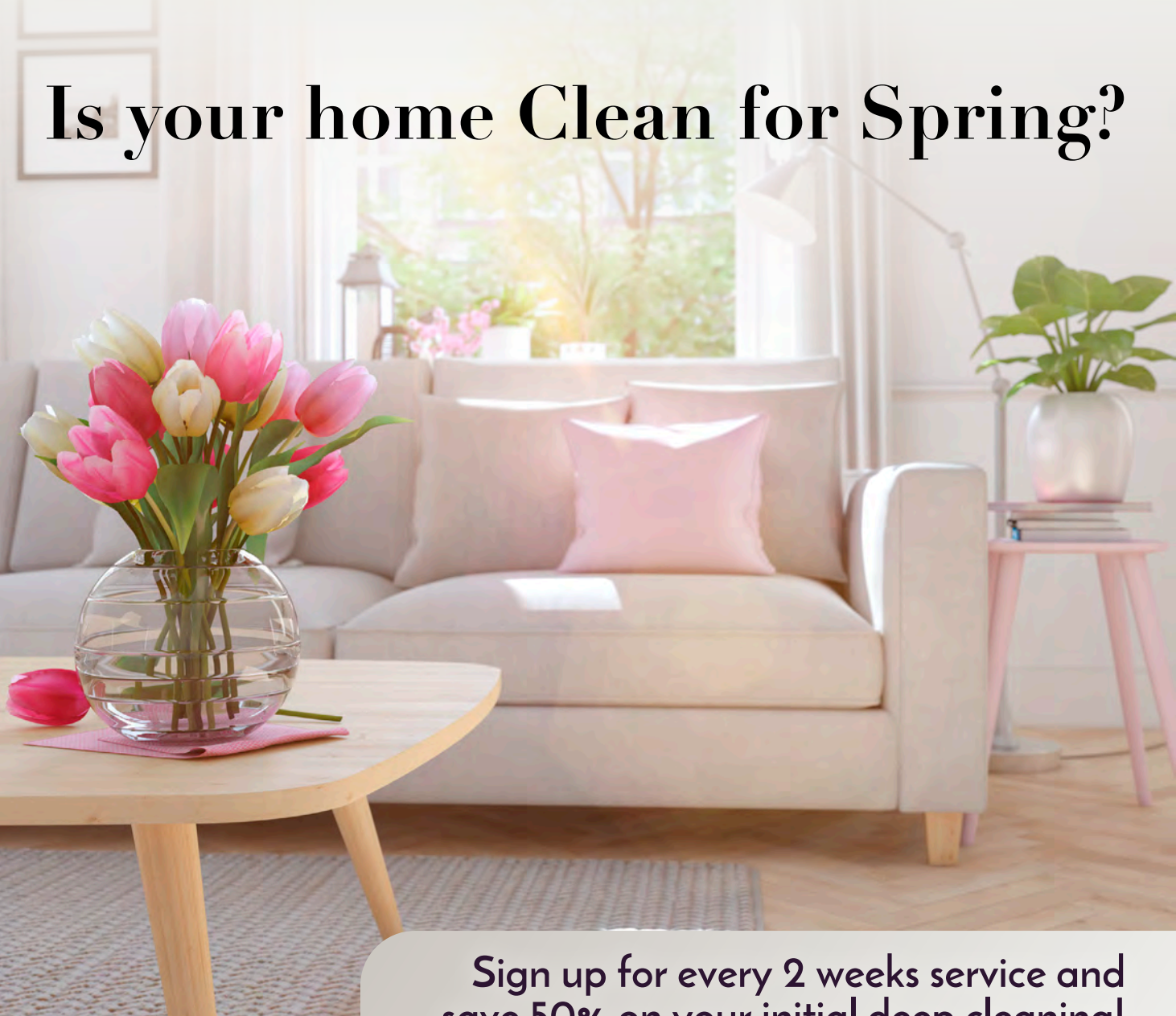
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LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED



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WHO YOU BUILD WITH MATTERS

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED
CANYON OAK POOLS

BY MEREDITH KNIGHT | PHOTOS BY DALLAS MCNEAL PHOTOGRAPHY



When Dr. Janine Kreft purchased her new Frisco home, something was missing – a pool. Her Realtor recommended a few local contractors and one of them really stood out – locally owned and operated Canyon Oak Pools. “From my first phone call, I felt this was someone who’d treat me right,” Dr. Kreft said. “Susan scheduled Mike to come out and take a look at the yard and discuss design options with me.”

HAPPY CUSTOMER

Dr. Kreft called other pool companies, but the warmth and responsiveness of Canyon Oak Pools – even on a weekend – impressed her. “Their customer service was head and shoulders above the rest.”

The design process was collaborative. “I really wanted to be a part of

the process, but I needed guidance,” she said “I knew I wanted a higher-end resort feel. Mike gave me things to consider and helped me hone my vision.” When she decided on certain tiles that weren’t available in the area, Mike jumped in his truck and drove to get them.”

Construction took 60 days from design to completion and Dr. Kreft couldn’t be happier with the outcome. “They absolutely nailed it,” she said. “They were accommodating from day one and really honored what I wanted. I’d recommend Canyon Oak Pools to anyone.”

WHO YOU BUILD WITH MATTERS

Dr. Kreft discovered what hundreds before her have. Who you build with matters. After all, for most families, their home is the largest purchase they’ll ever make. If you’re dreaming of a backyard pool, that could be

the second largest. When you decide to take that plunge, you want your money's worth – in the quality of the build and in the level of service you receive from your pool company. For many of your North Texas neighbors, that company is Canyon Oak Pools.

Owner Larry Parnell spent 27 years in the big-box pool industry designing, selling, and building pools for some of the top-producing pool companies in San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. But he became disillusioned with the emphasis placed on numbers of pools built, rather than on quality of customer experience. Larry and his wife, Susan, live in this community. They dreamed of offering a better product and experience to their DFW neighbors.

RETHINKING THE POOL-BUILDING EXPERIENCE

It was a giant leap of faith for the two of them to start their own pool company. Their vision was that – no matter how big they grew – Larry would be onsite for every job, actually giving his personal cell number to each customer, forgetting about quotas, and concentrating on the quality of the pool and on the relationships they'd build with local families. It was a winning formula!

Today, Canyon Oak Pools is recognized as an elite pool builder offering a wide range of custom pool and outdoor living options. They enjoy an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau, a five-star rating with Google reviews, most of their business comes through referrals, and they were recently named a finalist in the Better Business Bureau's 2023 Torch Award for Ethics. Far beyond awards and accolades though, the most important thing to Larry and Susan is running into a neighbor for whom they've built a pool – they've built 11 and counting in their own neighborhood – and knowing they've done their best for them. In fact, for any one of their dozens of five-star reviews, Susan can put you on the phone with the customer who wrote it.

A TEAM YOU CAN TRUST

Larry and Susan carefully hand-selected the others who'd join their



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team. They include Susan's brother and head of operations, David Maia, longtime friend and director of sales, Mike Woodfin, and another longtime friend, Scott Yoakum, senior design consultant. The number one quality the Parnells considered while building this team was character. But even with this dynamic team in place, Larry still insists on being onsite for every job (Susan is often with him) and personally fielding phone calls from customers.

"One thing you can be sure of with any construction project is there will be hiccups," Susan said. "The important thing is how those hiccups are handled. Because Larry is onsite and is the ultimate decision maker, any issues can be address immediately which improves our build times." Those build times average 62 calendar days – from excavation to plaster – with several jobs last year being completed in 35 calendar days.

PAYING IT FORWARD

The Parnells are active members of Snow Hill Baptist Church in Farmersville and annual sponsors of the Blue Ridge Rodeo. Both Susan and Mike's wife, Audrey, sponsor women in recovery and the entire Canyon Oak Pools team loves participating in local events and supporting Melissa and Blue Ridge ISDs. The Parnells

have a soft spot for dogs and support numerous rescue groups throughout the Metroplex.

Whether they're working on a large commercial project at a hotel, apartment complex, or health club or helping fulfill a family's dream of the perfect backyard get-away, the team at Canyon Oak Pools puts their name on the line with every build. Find out more at CanyonOakPools.com.

WHERE WAS YOUR POOL CONTRACTOR DURING THE FREEZE OF JANUARY 2024?

For customers of Canyon Oak Pools, he was just a FaceTime call away. That's easy when you have your contractor's personal cell number. During those uncertain days, Larry Parnell talked many a pool owner through the freeze protection process for their pool. All survived unscathed, and Canyon Oak Pools had even more customers for life.

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ECO style

Designing with Natural Materials and Elements

BY ANNETTE BROOKS

Natural is in, including using natural materials and elements in interior design. Versatile and appealing, they fit with almost any style, from cozy boho and comfortable transitional to minimalist or relaxed opulence. Below are a few ideas to kick-start your creativity and find new ways to enhance your home with wood, stone, and organic fibers.

WOOD: Using rough-cut and reclaimed wood remains popular, but don't shy away from finished wooden pieces. Place a low, polished live edge bench at the end of a bed instead of an upholstered piece by the fireplace, or use it as a coffee table instead of a large, tufted ottoman.

Another way to use finished wood is with a gorgeous hardwood dining table. If you're into sustainability, find one you like at a consignment shop or an estate sale. The wood you select depends on the look you're going for. Mahogany, for example, is luxurious and elegant. Walnut, known for its vibrant, rich color, has tight grains, often with swirls and wave patterns. Maple is light-colored with a smooth, even grain unless you splurge for birds-eye maple, which has swirling eyes within smooth grain lines. Soften it and add color, if you wish, with upholstered chairs.

And remember hardwood flooring. Sure, luxury vinyl that simulates wood is a popular choice for its ease of maintenance and durability, but there's nothing like the eye-catching appeal of real hardwood floors.

STONE: Timeless and often breathtaking, stone is one of the easiest ways to add natural materials to your home décor. The options are almost limitless. Flooring, countertops, backsplashes, vases, wall cladding, fireplace mantels, shower surrounds, lamps, candle holders, coffee tables, sculptures — and the list goes on.

As with wood, the type of stone you select depends on the aesthetic you're going for. It also depends on where you're going to use it. Sedimentary stones such as limestone, sandstone, and travertine tend to be more porous and softer. Metamorphic stones like marble, quartzite, and slate are harder than sedimentary stone. Granite, which is volcanic in origin, is one of the hardest natural materials on earth.

If you have the option, choosing your own stone slabs puts the control in your hands, and you'll know what the finished product should look like.

ORGANIC FIBERS: Natural fiber fabrics and décor accessories complement styles like modern farmhouse and add elegant comfort to virtually any living space, regardless of the style. Fabrics made from cotton, wool, jute, and sisal add warmth, softness, and texture to your home. Linen especially pairs well with minimalist design.

Choose natural fibers for throws and pillows coverings, rugs, upholstered ottomans and benches, and wall art, such as a grouping of sisal trays or shallow baskets. Or make a bold, beautiful statement with a striking mohair velvet sectional sofa. (Mohair velvet is a plush, durable upholstery fabric made from wool shorn from Angora goats.)

DECORATE WITH INDOOR PLANTS AND TREES:

Beautifying your home with plants builds a closer connection with the outdoors, but did you know that research indicates indoor plants may reduce psychological and physiological stress, too?

If you're new to growing plants indoors or have recently moved, consider your home's environment room by room. Is it drafty or dry in the winter months? What kind of natural light is available for how many hours of the day? Lastly, determine how much available space you have for plants. A fiddle leaf fig, for example, usually grows to about 10 feet or more indoors.

When selecting plants, match them with your home's environment to ensure they will grow and thrive with proper care. You can create groupings of smaller plants, go all-out and install a living plant wall, or invest in a couple of large statement plants. I especially love my Ponderosa lemon and kaffir lime trees. They're fairly low maintenance and easy to keep in great condition with plenty of sunshine and brief, daily misting. I move them outside in the summer and watch them grow like crazy. 🌿



TIMBER RIDGE ESTATES

THREE HOURS FROM DFW
BUT A WORLD APART

BY MEREDITH KNIGHT



For years, Dawn had dreamed of a cabin getaway for her family. As soon as she pulled onto her new lot at Timber Ridge Estates, she knew she'd found it. "I instantly fell in love," she said. "It's breathtaking and peaceful, and I can't wait to create memories with my family here."

What Dawn and others like her have found at Timber Ridge Estates is an exclusive 800-acre gated community that seamlessly blends five-star luxury amenities with nature's tranquility. Whether you're looking for a second home or an idyllic location in which to retire, life in Timber Ridge Estates offers gorgeous views and untouched mountain landscapes far away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Rather than traffic jams and crowded retail spaces, you'll find mountain trails and sleepy lakeside fishing. This is a blank canvas on which to build your dream getaway in a place where nature and comfortable luxury go hand in hand. Your family and guests can enjoy private hiking trails and stocked fishing ponds or venture over to nearby 14,000-acre Sardis Lake with its 117 miles of picturesque shoreline and the

state park beyond. And while Timber Ridge Estates is off the beaten path, it's still easy to get to and just three hours from DFW. And did I mention summers are several degrees cooler here than in Texas?

Phase Four is currently available and Owner/Developer Brenda Richey says it's particularly picturesque. "These lots sit at 1,650 feet elevation with majestic mountain, valley, and lake views," Brenda said. "This spot is gorgeous and untouched and just waiting for families to build their dream on them." Lots range from two to five acres with homes ranging from \$400,000 to \$2 million. You can bring in your own preferred homebuilder and build on your own timeline.

Timber Ridge homeowners enjoy The Hideout luxury pavilion for summer concerts and owner events. Plans are in the works for a second owner pavilion, The Lookout, which will sit atop a mountain with lake views, fire pits, grilling areas, patio seating, and TVs all overlooking a spectacular view. Plans are also underway for two pickleball courts and additional hiking trails for a total of seven miles.



"TIMBER RIDGE ESTATES HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL ESCAPE FROM OUR BUSY LIVES. OUR LITTLE DAUGHTER, EMILY, ALSO LOVES THE CABIN AND REALLY ENJOYS THE OUTDOORS. THE TRE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN VERY WELCOMING, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO MANY OF OUR NEW FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS JOINING US HERE."

— MARK HILL

THE GENESIS

From the day Brenda went to work for a land development company, she began taking home top salesperson awards. When her husband, an avid hunter, decided they needed a weekend getaway in one of his favorite hunting spots in Southeast Oklahoma, her love for land sales resurfaced. When the couple bought a second home in the piney woods of Oklahoma, Brenda took every opportunity to be amid the trees and enjoy the peace and quiet of the pristine Oklahoma wilderness. It was on one of these visits to the family cabin that she discovered 450 acres of undeveloped land for sale right next to their cabin.

Brenda and her husband enlisted some partners and purchased the land. Within two months, they'd sold the first gorgeous, wooded property and the first 60 lots within the first year as other families embraced the opportunity to build their own second-home getaway. Brenda has now sold 95 lots. But the

beauty is, with each lot being two to five acres, families can feel like their home-away-from-home is completely private — because it is.

Even with Timber Ridge now being a total of 800 acres, Brenda is still very hands-on as she oversees the develop of amenities while preserving the natural beauty of the land she first fell in love with. "My vision is for this property to bring families closer together," she said. "I want to see kids spending time away from cell phones and electronics enjoying nature and time with their family — making memories while preserving the natural beauty of the land."

Timber Ridge Estates offers luxury living surrounded by breathtaking mountainscapes seamlessly intertwining nature and modern comfort to create a serene escape for you and your loved ones. Find out more and purchase your own slice of paradise at TimberRidgeOklahoma.com.



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PLEDGE TO WATER NO MORE THAN TWO DAYS A WEEK

COVER PHOTO BY KAREN GNEPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

Upper Trinity Regional Water District is encouraging local residents to pledge to water their yards no more than two days a week and not during the heat of the day. By pledging to water less frequently, residents living in Upper Trinity's service area can receive water savings rewards and landscape-related giveaways. Upper Trinity provides drinking water to parts of Denton and Collin Counties.

To take the pledge, visit WaterLessYall.com and fill out the pledge form. Qualified residents will receive free swag and be entered into weekly drawings for a free irrigation evaluation (valued at \$125). Additionally, in October, three grand prize winners will be randomly selected to receive both a free professional landscape consultation and a \$500 gift

card for plants to Rooted In, a local nursery and garden center. The website also offers landscape classes, weekly watering tips, and hands-on information about how to reduce outdoor watering.

The new, mandatory two-day-per-week watering schedule is in place to reduce water usage and help protect the water treatment infrastructure for this fast-growing region, while saving residents money on water bills. Upper Trinity recommends discontinuing outdoor irrigation during the winter.

"It's our job to make sure every time you turn on your tap, water comes out," said Larry Patterson, Upper Trinity's executive director. "The steady growth in North Texas and our hotter, drier summers make it important to use only the water our yards actually need."

More than half the water used in North Texas during the summer is for outdoor watering, which amounts to billions of gallons applied to yards annually. Fortunately, it doesn't take much water for your yard to thrive. Grass and native plants are Texas tough. In fact, if watered efficiently, plants thrive with less frequent watering.

Plants watered up to twice a week develop deeper and healthier root systems. This results in better overall plant health, which increases plant resilience during extreme temperatures (hot or cold). Frequent watering can weaken a plant by encouraging shallow root growth, making it harder to survive heat.

"CYCLE AND SOAK" FOR A HEALTHIER LAWN

When you're watering two days a week, make them count by watering the right

- Pledge to only water up to two days a week this growing season
- Visit WaterLessYall.com
- Fill out the form (you must live within Upper Trinity's service area)
- Qualified entrants will receive swag and be entered into a weekly drawing for a free irrigation evaluation
- Three grand prize winners will receive both a free professional landscape consultation and \$500 gift card for plants to Rooted In



way. Water between 6 PM and 10 AM to avoid the heat of the day and water loss. The “cycle and soak” method also helps water go deeper into the roots: Water a couple of short cycles of 5-6 minutes each, and repeat in an hour. Residents can still water plants and flower/garden beds by hand more frequently when needed.

GO NATIVE

Incorporating Texas native and drought-tolerant plants in your landscape saves water. These plants thrive in local growing conditions, often requiring less water than exotic or water-demanding species. Adopting a two-day-per-week watering regimen complements the needs of native and drought-tolerant plants, allowing them to flourish without excessive irrigation. You can find a native plants list on the Native Plant Society of Texas website at NPSOT.org. Most garden

centers have designated sections for native and low-water plants. Texas SmartScape provides water efficient landscape designs residents can use (TXSmartScape.com).

Applying mulch to newly planted and existing garden beds and trees retains soil moisture, regulates soil temperature, and suppresses weeds. This approach, combined with a two-day-per-week watering schedule, saves water and promotes healthier plants.

MORE EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

The type and condition of your sprinkler system plays a significant role in how much water your landscape absorbs. It's important to check sprinkler heads each spring to ensure they are in good working condition for summer. Irrigation evaluations, performed by a licensed irrigator, provide expert advice on proper watering schedules. An irrigator can also identify worn out or broken heads and replacement heads to deliver water more effectively.

You can also distribute water more evenly by upgrading your irrigation system to multi-stream heads in place of traditional, fixed-spray nozzles. The rotational movement applies water at a slower rate, which reduces evaporation, resulting in less misting and runoff, giving the soil more time to absorb it. Drip irrigation systems are ideal for flower beds, younger trees, and foundation watering. This form of irrigation uses tubing with emitters in garden beds or next to trees. The emitters drip water slowly at the root

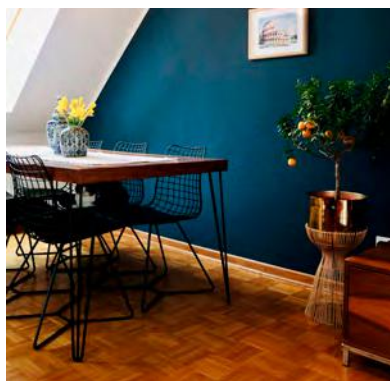
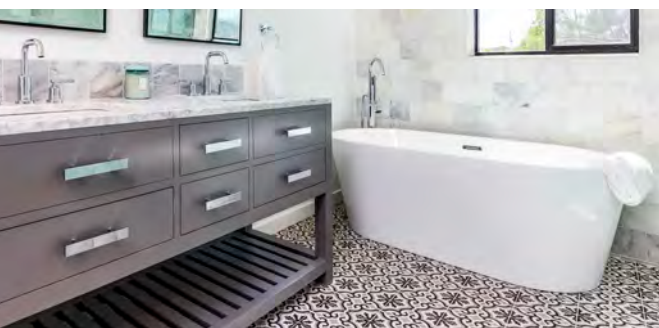
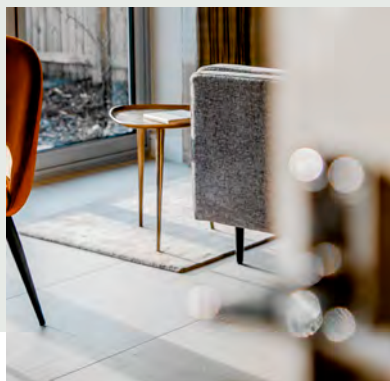
zone, reducing weed growth and preventing plant diseases by minimizing contact with leaves, stems and fruit.

Smart controllers do the thinking for you by automatically operating your irrigation system and adjusting it based on weather and the time of year. The watering schedule changes to align with actual site conditions. You can also sign up for weekly emails from Texas A&M AgriLife's WaterMyYard program (WaterMyYard.org) to take the guesswork out of knowing when and how much to water. When rain is forecasted, it's best to shut off sprinklers. Inserting a screwdriver in the soil will also tell you if it's time to water. If it inserts easily, keep the sprinklers off.

Adopting a two-day-per-week watering schedule for our yards ensures plant health and vitality. It also conserves limited water supplies and reduces water bills. We can strike a balance between plant care and responsible water use to ensure we have water today and for generations to come. So, pledge to water less, y'all!

ABOUT UPPER TRINITY

Upper Trinity Regional Water District, headquartered in Lewisville, Texas, provides drinking water to 29 cities and communities in Denton and Collin Counties. Established in 1989, Upper Trinity treats water from various sources, including Jim Chapman, Lewisville, and Ray Roberts Lakes, to meet the needs of its growing service area.



STEPPING *in style*

FLOORING IS MORE THAN THE GROUND BENEATH OUR FEET

In the ever-evolving world of interior design, flooring has emerged as a powerful medium for homeowners to express personal style while creating a functional space.

This year, an array of trends is captivating the hearts of homeowners and designers alike. From encaustic floor tiles to neutral wood flooring, let's dive into some of the top trends that are redefining spaces with their unique charm.

WOOL CARPET: ENDURING ELEGANCE

Renowned for its luxurious feel and natural insulation properties, wool carpet creates an inviting ambiance that's hard to resist. As this year embraces modernity, wool carpets now feature bolder patterns and colors, allowing homeowners to personalize their spaces with a touch of opulence. From classic herringbone to contemporary geometric designs, they provide warmth and unmatched style.

LARGE FORMAT TILES: LASTING GRANDEUR

Materials like flagstone, limestone, and sandstone are being embraced for their understated elegance and grandeur.

These tiles come in generous dimensions, reducing the number of grout lines and creating a seamless expanse that's visually striking. Large format tiles are versatile, effortlessly enhancing indoor and outdoor spaces with their earthy textures and natural hues.

CHECKERBOARD: RETRO CHIC RETURNS

Prepare for a nostalgic journey as the checkerboard pattern finds its way back into homes. Best suited for hallways, bathrooms, and kitchens, the juxtaposition of contrasting colors creates a bold visual impact that's both playful and elegant. From classic black and white to subtle pastel hues, checkerboard flooring elevates interiors, adding personality and a touch of whimsy.

NEUTRAL WOOD FLOORING: TIMELESS AND VERSATILE

The subdued tones of neutral wood create a foundation that complements various decor styles, from rustic to contemporary. Its traditional style presents an opportunity to use another 2023 trend by incorporating classic patterns like herringbone and parquet, adding an air

of vintage sophistication and an inviting atmosphere that resonates with the past and the present.

ENCAUSTIC FLOOR TILES: A TOUCH OF ARTISTRY

Encaustic floor tiles have made a triumphant return to the forefront of flooring design. These intricate, handcrafted tiles boast timeless patterns that range from delicate florals to bold geometrics. What sets encaustic tiles apart is their fusion of colors, which is not just surface level but runs throughout the tile. This makes them highly durable and perfect for high-traffic areas. Whether adorning an entryway or bringing life to a kitchen, encaustic tiles infuse spaces with artistry and character.

As we step into the holidays and welcome guests into our home, we are reminded that the materials beneath our feet can be more than just a surface. They are a backdrop that reflects personal style and creates an inviting space. Whether you're a fan of warm wool carpets or bold tile designs, there is a wide range of options to suit every taste and transform your rooms into a work of art. 🏡

GENERATIONS OF QUALITY

From carpet to hardwood, Smitty's Floor Covering sets the standard for excellence

Since 1958, Smitty's Floor Covering has been trusted by generations of Texans for its prompt, professional, and friendly service. As Denton County's oldest family-owned and operated floor covering business, the community has come to trust Smitty's Floor Covering for all their flooring needs. The company offers a full selection of flooring from featured suppliers like Mohawk, Karndean, Daltile and many more. Smitty's Floor Covering can also take care of your flooring with professional carpet and tile cleaning services.

Mansell "Smitty" Smith founded the company nearly 70 years ago. His children, Ricky Smith and Darlene Rogers, run the business along with Ricky's children, Brian Smith and Natalie Smith.

With such an enduring history, it's no wonder that Living readers voted Smitty's as the Best Flooring Store in 2023. Smitty's Floor Covering truly cares about each customer and treats them like family. "Our customer service and our extensive knowledge set us apart," Natalie says. "My grandfather started the business in 1958, and our family is extremely proud of that. We're proud to continue his legacy for three generations."

When you stop by the Denton showroom, you can simply browse at your leisure, or you can sit down with a skilled in-house design consultant and get help designing and choosing colors. Smitty's Floor Covering will also come to your home or business. "We're happy to provide in-home estimates," Natalie says. "We educate our customers on what products would work best. We want to help them create their dream home."

When it comes to popular flooring options, Natalie says homeowners



continue to ask for luxury vinyl plank. "It's affordable and easy to maintain," she says, "and it has the right finish and texture to complement any aesthetic."

Homeowners are also going for carpet like Mohawk SmartStrand, which is one of the softest and most stain-resistant carpets on the market. "People love timeless colors like beige, taupe, and gray," Natalie says.

Whether you're looking for a custom area rug or you want to remodel your kitchen and bathroom, no project is too large or too small for Smitty's Floor Covering. "I just enjoy helping customers refresh their house and making it feel brand new again," Natalie says. "That's a great feeling."

Over the years, customers have raved about their experience with Smitty's Floor Covering. One said, "Very personable, and their work is impeccable. I would definitely recommend them for your flooring and tiling projects." Another customer commented, "We had a complete makeover, and the carpet experience was the icing on the cake. Great people all around."

Let Smitty's Floor Covering provide the exceptional and friendly service you deserve. Request your accurate and professional in-home flooring estimate today. Just scan the QR code or visit SmittysFloorCovering.com.

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STYLESENSE design quiz

WHAT SENSE WILL
COMPLEMENT YOUR STORY?

BY COURTNEY WARREN

People assume that designing a space is just visual, and for a good reason. After all, what our eyes take in often plays a crucial role in the room. But you may not realize that our other senses are just as essential in creating an aesthetic.

But how do you incorporate the five senses into your space? Enter the StyleSense Design Quiz, a tool to assist you as you determine which one is most important and how to include all of them as you tell your story.

When you walk into a room, what's the first thing you notice?

- A. The onions simmering on the stove
- B. The temperature of the room
- C. Lamps or big windows that allow natural light in

D. The dining settings on the table

E. A space for quiet conversations

Think of a time when you felt uncomfortable in a space. Which of the following bothered you the most?

- A. A mysterious odor
- B. The air was too warm or too cold
- C. The use of harsh lighting
- D. Absence of options for food and drink
- E. The use of bold and busy colors

Which of the following chores do you tend to prioritize?

- A. Cleaning everything
- B. Vacuuming carpet
- C. Painting and decorating

D. Arranging the kitchen

E. Setting up the TV and sound system

Your bedroom has to have:

- A. Linen spray
- B. A plush blanket
- C. A wall painted in a color that makes a statement
- D. A glass of water on the nightstand
- E. A noise machine

When you do spring cleaning, what do you start with?

- A. Disinfecting everything
- B. Dusting
- C. Decluttering paperwork – old bills, papers, etc.
- D. Organizing the refrigerator and pantry
- E. Fixing squeaky doors

Now tally your answers.



DID YOU CHOOSE MOSTLY A'S?

Consider incorporating more scents into your space.

Our sense of smell is a major player in the feeling of a space and is often overlooked. Think about when you walk into someone else's home. Can you tell that they just burned salmon or cooked broccoli? Or does the house smell musty and, as a result, feel dingy? Or is the mix of aromas warm and inviting? There is a reason why realtors bake cookies before a showing. Scents make a difference. To incorporate our olfactory sense into your home, utilize candles, diffusers, and sprays. My favorites are peppermint, lemon, citrus, lavender, and eucalyptus. To recreate a Zen hotel experience at home, dab essential oil inside a toilet paper roll before putting it on the holder or soak a cotton ball in a fragrant oil and place it underneath the trash bag. You will be surprised how pleasant the result is.

DID YOU CHOOSE MOSTLY B'S?

Consider incorporating more tactile sensations into your space.

Textures, surfaces, and materials are combined to create a feeling – good or bad – in a home. How would you describe a kitchen with long, slick countertops and bright white lights? Most people would say it feels sterile. Now, contrast that feeling with a cottage, soft sofas, fuzzy blankets, and a plush rug underneath your feet. You might say that space feels cozy. Notice I described the room's textures, and the result was a feeling.

Consider the textures of your sofa, bed, or comforter. How do your sheets feel? Are they pillowed with little balls from wear and washing? What does not feel soft anymore? It might be time to invest in some new items that are soothing to the touch.



DID YOU CHOOSE MOSTLY C'S?

Consider how you've incorporated visual elements into your design style and bring them into focus.

Color is proven to impact mood and feeling. Businesses spend many marketing dollars and hours researching to determine brand colors that invoke a particular sense when people use their service. Similarly, color in your home can invoke the emotion you are striving to create. Blue suggests peace. Red, on the other hand, is used for strong emotions. A color wheel will give the specifics for every shade and can be a helpful tool to consult as you brainstorm what hues to use.

DID YOU CHOOSE MOSTLY D'S?

Consider incorporating more "taste" into your space.

Clearly, utilizing taste in design is not literal. Instead, it can be interpreted through how the space is set up to incorporate savoring food and drink. One of the most common offenders I see is a sitting area without tables to set a drink.

Ideas for adding taste include a coffee bar or mini refrigerator in the home office. Perhaps there is a small bowl of mints by the entry, or a bottle of water and a snack basket left in a guest room.

DID YOU CHOOSE MOSTLY E'S?

Consider what your space sounds like.

In college, I lived in a loft with upstairs neighbors who used rolling chairs to play hockey. Living beneath them was an explosion of sound that was fun for only the game's players. Do you live near a noisy road or train? Do you have neighbors who can hear you through paper-thin walls and vice versa? Do your floorboards creak, or does your HVAC shutter when it turns on? All of these



contribute to the sound of your home. To create the background noise, you want and combat those you do not, grab a sound machine or a fan as a good starting place. Consider speakers or surround sound playing your favorite music.

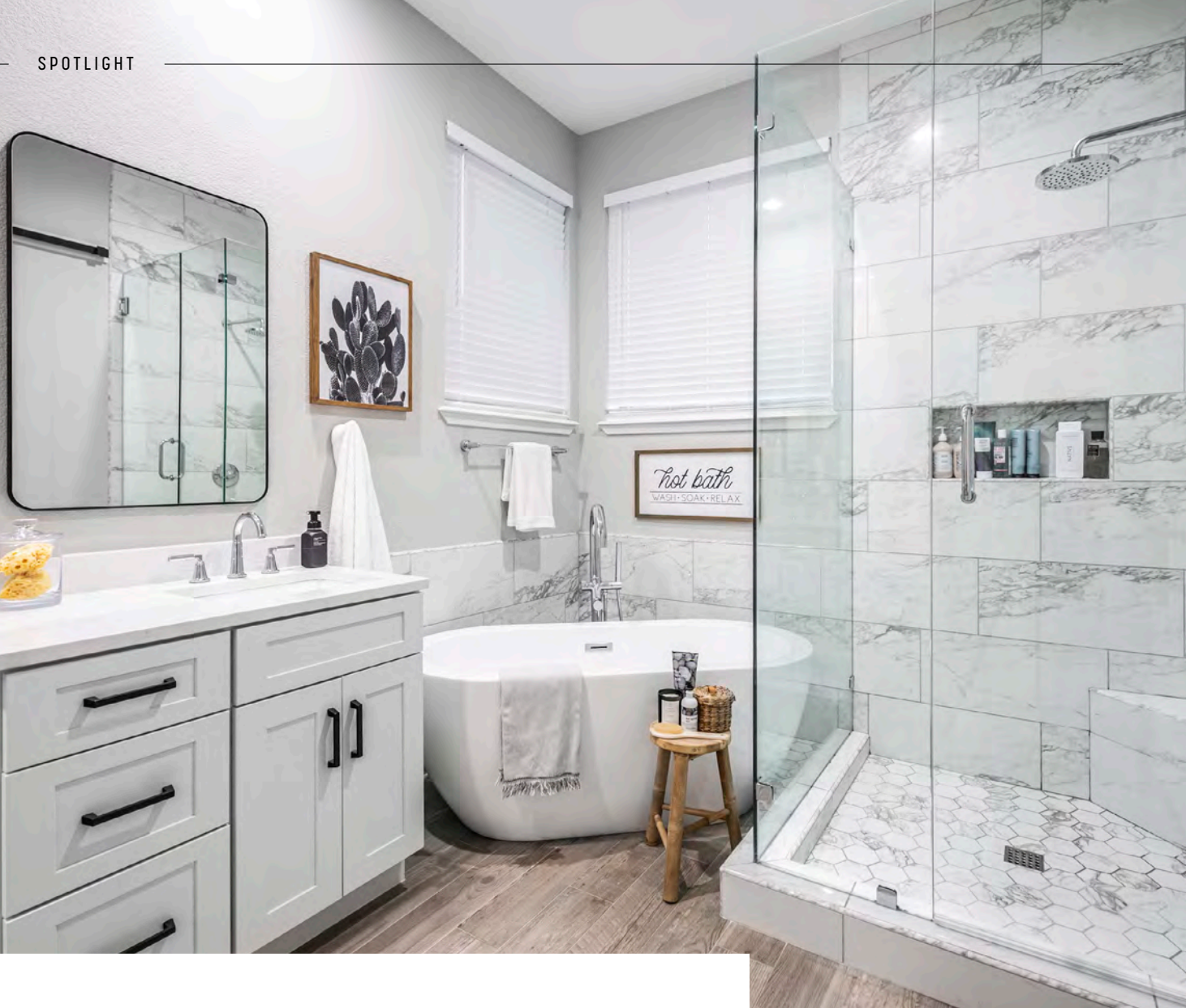
While this quiz focuses on the sense that speaks most powerfully to you, take note of the other answers as well. Choose your favorite ideas from each category and incorporate them in a way that resonates with you.

Do you want to find out more about how to use your senses in your home and how to use decor to tell your family's story? Check out *The Story of Your Home* by Rockwall's own, Courtney Warren, shipping August 22 from your favorite website or bookstore. 📖



ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Courtney Warren is a Rockwall native interior designer whose award-winning design work has been featured in numerous national magazines and media and whose clients span the North Texas area. You can find her recent projects on Instagram and Facebook at @courtneywarrenhome or courtneywarren.com.



RIGHT CHOICE PAINTING & CONSTRUCTION

*When It Comes to Your Home,
There's Only One 'Right Choice'*

BY MEREDITH KNIGHT | PHOTOS BY KENNY RICHARD PHOTOGRAPHY AND YOUR CANDID MEMORIES

When Sue Matthews was ready to make some renovations to her home, she knew exactly who to call. "We'd worked with Right Choice Painting & Construction on a bathroom remodel in 2020 when we wanted to get our house ready to sell," she said. "We were empty nesters and figured it was time to downsize." To Sue's surprise though, when the Right Choice team was finished with the renovation, she and her husband liked it to so much they decided not to put it on the market but to stay right where they were.

Now, they were ready for Right Choice to do a complete kitchen remodel and to update the downstairs flooring. "I knew I could trust Kyle and the whole Right Choice team," Sue said. "I knew from experience that they'd

do what they promised, do it on budget, and finish on time.” Sue had a general idea what she wanted, and Kyle knew the right questions to ask to help her hone her vision.

“He walked me through picking out all my materials,” Sue said. “When I wasn’t sure what choice to make, I’d ask his opinion, and he had a lot of great ideas. It means so much to collaborate with a contractor you know you can trust. Kyle isn’t going to nickel and dime us and, if there’s a problem, I knew he’d make it right.”

Sue was a little worried because she and her husband both work at home and would be working there throughout the construction. “They gave us plenty of warning when they had to do something that was going to make a lot of noise and they were great about cleaning up as they went, so we didn’t feel like we were living in a construction zone. They were professional, kind, and considerate throughout the whole job, a real joy to have in our home. Kyle often stayed and worked after hours taking care of small details for us.”

In the end, Sue and her husband couldn’t be happier with their new kitchen and new luxury plank flooring (LVP). And their project came in on budget and on time. It’s no wonder Right Choice Painting & Construction has received over 100 customer-service awards, including Angie’s List Super Service Award, Living Magazine’s Best Of and Readers’ Choice awards, Texas Small Business Champion, awards from the Coppell Chamber of Commerce, a sterling A+ Better Business Bureau rating, and many more accolades.

But to this family-owned and operated business, the most important “award” is a satisfied customer who happily recommends them to their family and friends. In fact, most of Right Choice’s work comes through repeat and referral business. Established nearly 20 years ago by Jeff and Jan Adkinson, Right Choice has grown from a small painting company to a thriving home remodeling business with over 20,000 projects completed. On any given day, there are 50 to 60 people working on various Right Choice projects, ranging from simple painting to remodeling a kitchen or bathroom, or even a whole-house makeover.



Jeff and Jan’s daughter, Jordan, and her husband, Kyle Mederos, purchased the business in 2019 and continue the family legacy of honesty and integrity, delivering what they promise and exceeding customer expectations on every job. “This business was established on service, professionalism, quality work, and building relationships with our customers,” Jordan said.

And those customer referrals just keep rolling in. “Customers we’ve worked with in the past move and contact us to work on their new home,” Jan said. “As their children grow up and buy their own home, they call us too. We’re grateful and humbled by every customer referral.”

“Whether you want to remodel your kitchen and bathroom, freshen things up with a coat of paint, install new flooring, replace your windows, or undertake a complete home makeover, we’d love to offer you a free estimate on doing the work for you,” Kyle said. Join thousands of your Denton County neighbors who have trusted Right Choice Painting & Construction with their home project and are happy they did.

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HERE’S WHAT ONE SATISFIED RIGHT CHOICE CLIENTS HAD TO SAY:

“I couldn’t have asked for a better experience. My project was small and yet their responsiveness and attention to detail never seemed like this job wasn’t their highest priority.”





PLAYING IN THE DIRT

GARDENING WITH KIDS ISN'T JUST FUN - IT'S HEALTHY, TOO

BY KIMBERLY BLAKER

There's no question, playing in the dirt tops the list of fun for kids, particularly young children, despite the protests of many well-intended parents. If you are one of those worried parents, you can put your fears aside.

As it turns out, dirt is beneficial to kids' long-term health, according to a Northwestern University article by Clare Milliken, "Germs at four, less inflammation at forty." Studies have found that early exposure to certain germs, like those found in dirt, actually helps kids' immune systems learn to regulate inflammation better. In turn, this exposure reduces kids' risk for many diseases throughout their lives.

For that reason, a family garden is a perfect opportunity to build your kids' immune systems. Better still, gardening offers lots of other benefits to kids and families.

GETTING STARTED

First, decide where to plant your garden. Then allow a small space for your child to have their own garden, too. This will help build your child's enthusiasm for the garden and encourage them to take ownership and responsibility for it. Having their own garden can be exciting and rewarding for kids because they know that they, alone (or with minimal help), grew those little seeds into marvelous plants.

Next, decide what to plant. For young children, consider fast-growing plants they are familiar with. Little kids also love plants that are colorful or have strong scents.

If your kids are older, let them choose what they want to grow.

But keep in mind your child's personality. If he tends to be impatient, suggest plants that are easy to care for and grow quickly.

As you plan and prepare, include your child as much as possible. Remember, this stage is as much fun for kids as it is for parents and helps build their enthusiasm. Also, let them help you draw up the garden plan. If they're old enough, they can also create their shopping list.

When you shop for supplies, take your kids along and let them pick out their own seeds and gardening tools. For the safety of young children, look for kids' gardening tools made of durable plastic.

PLANTING YOUR GARDEN

When you begin planting, show your child how to plant the seeds and how to space them apart correctly. Then have your child water as directed.

Put a daily gardening task list on the refrigerator to help your child take responsibility for their garden.

Also, suggest keeping a garden log to help your child maintain enthusiasm. Kids can have fun recording the date of plantings, each day's gardening activities, when each plant sprouts, the amount of growth of the plants, and the harvesting.

Finally, after harvesting, have your child help you prepare the vegetables. Try different ways of preparing or cooking them to help your kid develop a life-long love for fresh, healthy veggies. 🍷

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LIVING color

ON-TREND HUES REFLECT
COMFORTING LIFESTYLE DESIGN

Upgrading your home design is an opportunity to tap into new color schemes. Knowing what shades are trendy and how different hues can work together for a cohesive design is an essential step in creating an attractive design aesthetic.

While you might turn to family or friends for inspiration for your next project, another resource for collecting concepts and options to upgrade your space is the internet. Consider the Valspar Color-verse, which allows visitors to explore colors and offers paint color inspiration and decor trends they can envision within their homes.

COLOR TRENDS TO CONSIDER

Many of this year's popular nature-inspired designs are all about finding comfort, embracing a flexible lifestyle, and rediscovering joy. The most trend-worthy, forward-thinking, and livable colors reflect specific facets or emotions of life, so you can update your well-used spaces with thoughtful colors that evoke positive energy and lasting change.

Comfort and Contentment: If your goal is to create a space that envelopes you in comfort, consider a white with a yellow undertone that makes the room cozy, like a soft blanket, like Cozy White. Complement the softness with Southern Road, a muted clay that brings in brown undertones that suggest gentle contentment.

Calming Restoration: Tap into the calming tones of nature with Green Trellis, a hazy green with duality, bringing in both the great outdoors calm and liveliness. Another option is Everglade Deck, a deep midnight blue used as an elegant calming shade to restore the mind, body, and home.

Healthful, Mindful Living: Evoke a greater sense of health consciousness with a light blue that has a dose of softness used as a fresh neutral with uplifting qualities of a modern pastel, like Rising Tide. Reinforce the benefits of mindful living with Villa Grey, a cool color balanced by the warmth of the yellow undertone.

Connections and Joy: Establish spaces where you can celebrate relationships with others and happiness in your being. Consider hues like Gentle Violet, a harmonious shade promoted by digital connectivity. Evoke joy with a dependable classic tan like Holmes Cream, which features a yellow undertone that suggests new life with uplifting qualities.

Natural Balance: Bringing hints of the outdoors into a well-loved living space creates a soothing ambiance. Consider Ivory Brown, a warm neutral tone inspired by the shades found in nature, or Blue Arrow, a cooled-down blue that strikes a beautiful balance between cool and warm shades in your design.

Inspirational Thought: A work-from-home or crafting space needs color to inspire great thinking. Try a faded natural terracotta like Desert Carnation that sparks individuality and warmth or a deep blackened olive like Flora, an on-trend neutral that embodies charm and sophistication.

Explore the tool and find more colorful ideas at Valspar.com.

Courtesy: Family Features, Valspar

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AVOIDING REAL ESTATE PITFALLS

BY PETE ALFANO

If we were compiling a Top Ten list of the most stressful things we do in our life, selling a house would be at or near the top. Even if the move is voluntary, as Juliet said to Romeo, parting is such sweet sorrow. The house may represent the first one you ever owned. It could be where your children were born and hold a cupboard full of memories. Or it fits as comfortably as a well-worn pair of shoes.



This means that many homeowners take it too personally when selling their house. It's difficult to hear criticism about the home from realtors and negative feedback from prospective buyers, such as the rooms being too small, the yard not big enough, or comments on an unappealing color scheme. So, the first rule of putting your house on the market is to check your pride at the door. This will be a business transaction, and your goal is to maximize the sale of your home and get as many offers as possible.

As tempting as it may be to place a "For Sale by Owner" sign on your front lawn to save the real estate commission, spare yourself the grief of doing it yourself. Hire a licensed realtor and try to negotiate the commission and determine the length of the contract. The Realtor will be more familiar with houses comparable to yours in your neighborhood and help you determine a realistic listing price.

Remember the good old days of 2022 when demand exceeded supply and houses got multiple offers well above the list price? Well, the housing market has regained its sanity, and it is important to set a price that will bring more traffic to your home. Yes, there will be some back and forth between the list price and the offer, so remember to let your realtor know your bottom line in advance.

Making major repairs, such as getting a new roof, before listing the house can help it sell more quickly. You may be willing to lower your asking price because of the roof's condition, but prospective buyers want to avoid buying a home and immediately spend money on major repairs. Consider having your own inspection before listing the house to determine whether problems are brewing with your heating and cooling system or any structural concerns.

Remember to de-clutter to make your house appear larger and more inviting. Rent a storage unit and move some of your furniture and clothing there. And remove all those family photos. Psychologically, it makes it more difficult for prospective buyers to envision the house as their own.

Anyone who has sold their house knows what a major inconvenience it can be. Your family might be eating dinner when a realtor requests to show your house in less than an hour. Be flexible. Limiting the days or hours your home can be shown makes selling in your time frame more difficult.

And don't get greedy. Have your realtor negotiate with prospective buyers who are pre-qualified and will get mortgage approval in a timely way. That can mean accepting an offer that may be less but is more likely to close on time. 🏠

BUY *first* or SELL *first*?

Selling your house and buying another involves multiple homeowners, and one hiccup along the way can start the dominoes falling. Conventional wisdom says you should sell your house before you begin looking in earnest for your new home. The rationale is that you will need to know how much cash you will have available for a down payment, and it will be easier to get mortgage approval. Moreover, no one wants to make mortgage payments on two houses.

However, some real estate experts suggest people buy and close on a house before listing their own. This ensures you have a place to live while selling your home. You can qualify for a bridge loan that provides the funds for purchasing a new home, and that loan is paid off when your current home is sold.

What if your old home isn't selling? Consider options such as renting until you can sell it or even a rent-to-own arrangement, a lease with an option to buy. But remember, this makes you a landlord, which may create problems of its own, and there are tax implications as well.

CHANGING THE WAY FAMILIES LIVE IN A MODERN WORLD

RENOVATING THE HEART OF THE HOME'S SPACES PAIRING WORLD-CLASS CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH THE FINEST OF FIXTURES AND APPLIANCES

BY MELISSA GAUTIER | PHOTOS BY SCOTT PEEK PHOTOGRAPHY

Each new year offers the ability to start fresh with a clean slate. Remodeling your home with a fabulous kitchen or luxurious bathroom focused on your needs might be at the top of your 2024 to-do list. But if thoughts of anxiety, stress, construction mess, and unmet deadlines are holding you back, the professional team of design and remodeling experts at Euro Design Build offers an alternative approach.

Euro Design Build – Dallas' premier, award-winning interior remodeling, and design firm – is comprised of expert craftsmen who appreciate fine quality workmanship and strive to exceed clients' expectations. Melinda Dzinic, MCR, MCKBR, UDCP, is the co-founder, mentor, and leader of Euro Design Build. She and her husband, Seval, and their son, Samuel, work tirelessly to stay on top of the changing industry, focusing on the latest manufacturers and materials that stand the test of time.

Melinda and Seval have brought together a talented, highly experienced group of designers, craftsmen, and field crew employed as full-time team members. Throughout the remodeling process, the Euro Design team remains passionately focused on exceeding clients' needs and creating healthy, practical living environments.

"We're raising the standards of quality within our industry," Melinda said. Their stellar reputation is a testament to their dedication to providing enjoyment, comfort, quality, and peace of mind to clients for years to come. Pairing world-class craftsmanship with the finest fixtures and appliances, Euro Design Build is changing how families live in a modern world.

EACH PROJECT BEGINS WITH AN INTERVIEW AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

For a remodeling project to be successful, key elements must be in place. Thorough planning, detailed execution, and attentive project management are Euro Design's secrets to ongoing success. "We're transparent with our pricing and work with clients to keep costs to a minimum, providing a fully detailed breakdown of each anticipated cost so clients have a solid understanding of their investment," Melinda said.

FINDING SOLUTIONS TO A FUNCTIONAL SPACE

Euro Design digs deep to discover why a client wants to remodel and determine what led them to this conclusion. Convenience and ease of use are thoughtfully considered when developing an area geared toward the homeowner's specifications and

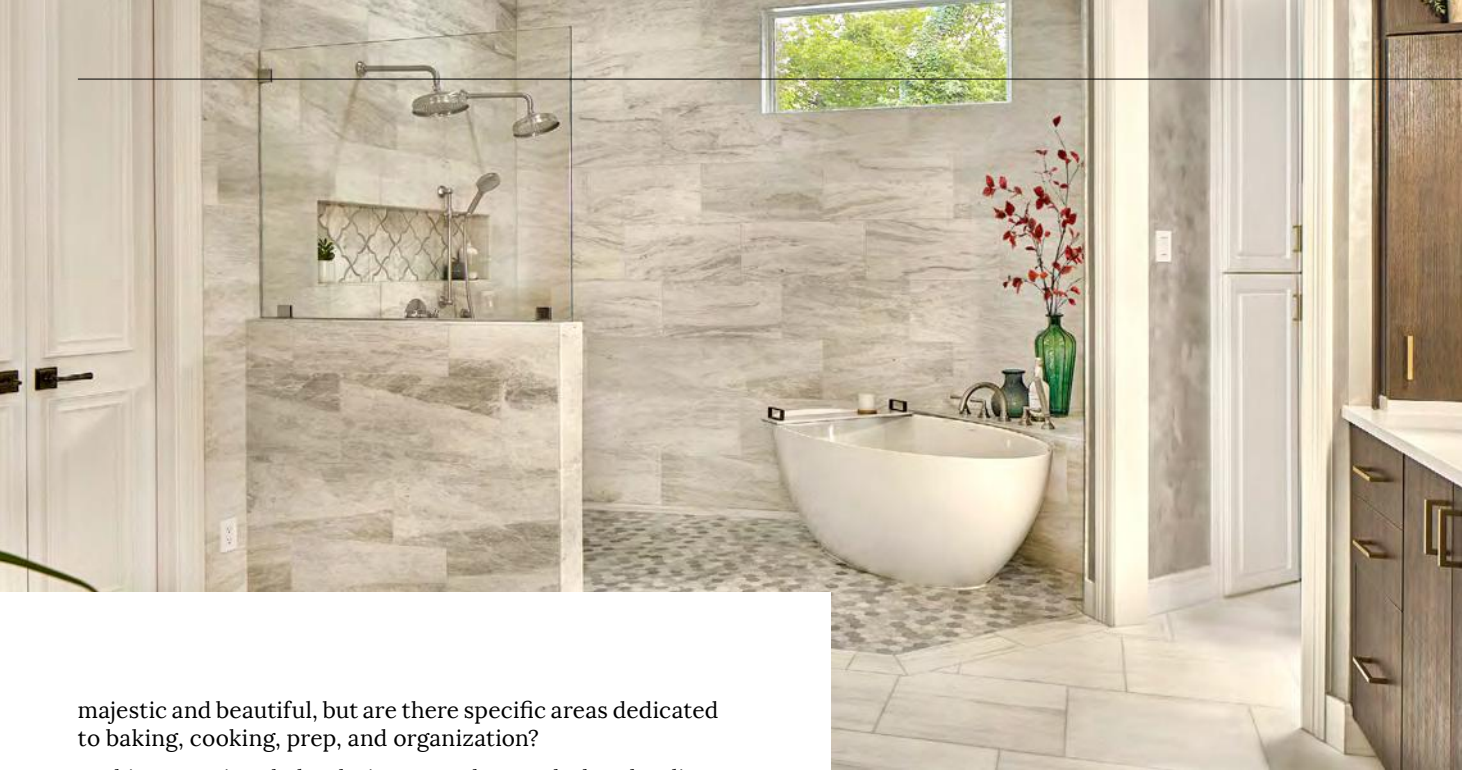


preferences. Recognizing their current issues and developing solutions for functional, healthy living is paramount. Just like a physician, diagnosing the problem with a client's present living space facilitates the development of a strategic plan and management of scrupulous details.

FORMING A TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP

Communication and confirmation are key to making sure everyone involved is on the same page. "We're a client's trusted partners, shielding them from the stresses of project renovation and construction," Melinda explained. "We take on these burdens to ease their worries, setting them up for a successful process and freeing them to concentrate on their family and what they love to do."

Designers get to know clients by asking questions relating to how they currently use their space and how it affects daily function. High-end kitchen cabinetry and materials might look



majestic and beautiful, but are there specific areas dedicated to baking, cooking, prep, and organization?

Probing questions helps designers understand what the client is really looking for and what is needed to fulfill their dreams of a perfect space. “What is it that you don’t like about your current bathroom or kitchen?” and “Why is it difficult to move around in your space?” or “What makes cooking such a challenging experience in the kitchen you presently have?” And finally, “If you had a magic wand, what would your new bathroom, kitchen, or living space look like?” Answers to these questions help designers create convenient, functional spaces, expressly focused on ease of use and comfort.

“Achieving organization of your space on a daily basis adds more value to your family,” Melinda says. Kids learn how to cook by participating in the process with their parents. They’re enticed to help mom or dad in the kitchen, strengthening family bonds and creating memorable experiences.

NEW AND IMPRESSIVE EXPERIENCE CENTER

You and your family deserve a harmonious kitchen or bathroom design that not only meets your needs but offers a lifelong commitment to health and wellness. The state-of-the-art experience center is tailored to that purpose, providing modern upscale appliances and safer alternatives necessary for developing a healthy environment. It provides homeowners with an unmatched experience utilizing top-notch brands that combine beauty with all the bells and whistles. The ability to actually see what it’s like to use a zero-gravity bathtub or cook with a steam oven is realized. Cooking venues will be set up for baking bread, steaming veggies, and creating other side dishes using various appliances.

TOTO’s zero-gravity flotation tub will be live in the center as well. Clients can schedule a private appointment to soak and experience the relaxing feeling of floating weightlessly in a luxurious tub with massaging bubbles.

If you’re ready to experience a refreshingly different remodeling process, the skilled craftsmen and designers at Euro Design Build look forward to speaking with you. You’re invited to visit their website for more information.

Winner of numerous awards, including the national Chrysalis Award for Remodeling Excellence. This prestigious award is based on how well clients’ needs are met and how their lives have been transformed by the resulting design/remodel.

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A BLUEPRINT *for success*

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN
BUILDING A HOME

BY AUDREY SELLERS

Building a custom home can be a rewarding and exciting experience. You get to dream up the design and personalize it with brand-spanking-new everything. Move-in ready, you can open the front door and enjoy it from the very beginning – no repairs or remodeling needed.

If you're dreaming of a new abode, read on for a few tips on what to keep in mind when building a home.

It's all about location. Location is crucial to valuable real estate. Where you build your home can have significant implications on your life now and when you sell your property. A “good” location can vary from person to person, but generally, you should pay attention to your home's accessibility to places like grocery stores, schools, and hospitals. Remember that houses close to power lines, busy streets, or that back up to commercial property may be more challenging to sell in the future. On the other hand, homes with a view of the water, a golf course, or trees may make it more appealing.

Understand local laws. When building a house, knowing even small rules and regulations is important. Before any building gets underway, you'll need things like electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits. In Texas, homebuilding decisions are made



Often-Overlooked Items

It's easy to forget the finer details when building a new house. Here's a list of some items that may get lost in the homebuilding shuffle.

- **Showerhead height.** If you or your family members are over six feet, consider installing a showerhead fitting a little above the standard height. (Most showerheads are placed around 80 inches high.)
- **Recessed bathroom storage.** Would you like a recessed shower compartment for your toiletries? Or how about a recessed medicine cabinet behind the bathroom mirror? These small additions can significantly boost your bathroom storage.
- **Laundry room finishes.** Consider adding a hanging rack to air dry clothing or an additional sink for laundering swimwear or delicates. You could also add extra counter space for folding clothes or deep shelving for additional storage.
- **Extra materials.** Having a stash of leftover paint, wallpaper, tile, and carpet is always helpful. Even if you don't have enough material to patch things up, you can at least bring a sample to your local hardware or home renovation store to match. Be sure to ask your builder for any leftovers, along with a list of paint colors, selections, and finishes you choose for your home.


by cities and local municipalities, so check in with your city's local building department or planning office for information on permits. If you have an HOA, check the HOA regulations.

Think about your long-term plans. It's essential that your new home fit your lifestyle. Will your aging parents move in with you? Do you need plenty of outdoor space for gardening, playing with children or pets, or a pool? What about a hobby you see yourself enjoying in your new home? Envision your life five to 10 years from now and build your home to accommodate that vision.

Be choosy when selecting a home builder. Building a home is a significant investment. Make sure you select an experienced builder who can bring your dream home to life. Conduct a public records search and check out Better Business Bureau rankings. You may also want to look at local "Best Of" lists to find highly respected builders.

Focus on the flow. Building a house from scratch allows you to design a home that fits your lifestyle now and in the future. When finalizing floor plans, make sure rooms with heavy foot traffic – like the kitchen and living room – are easily accessible. For example, place the kitchen close to a convenient entrance to make it easier to haul groceries inside.

Prioritize sustainability. You can make a new construction home as energy-efficient, eco-friendly, and sustainable as possible. Consider things like high-performance windows, drip irrigation systems, or a cool roof designed to reflect more sunlight than a traditional roof. You could also look at alternative building materials like wool insulation, bamboo, and cork flooring.

Building a house may seem like a herculean task, but it's also an exciting opportunity to create the home of your dreams. With some thoughtful planning, you can enjoy your new home now and for years to come. 



STATELY DESIGN & RENOVATION

BECAUSE CHARACTER, HONESTY, AND INTEGRITY STILL MATTER

PHOTOS BY KENNY RICHARD PHOTOGRAPHY

When David was looking for a complete remodel of his Copper Canyon home, he asked local builders and designers he knew who they'd recommend. One name kept coming up, family-owned and operated Stately Design & Renovation. When he contacted Owner/Operator

Rick Baker, he felt immediately comfortable with him. He asked for a list of clients to call for referrals and recognized some names on the list. They all gave glowing recommendations and David was soon partnering with Stately Design & Renovation on his monumental remodel project.

"We tore the existing house down to the studs and foundation, doubled the square footage, and essentially built a whole new house," David said. "From day one, Rick and his staff did what it took to realize our vision. They communicated with me daily, so I always knew where we were on the build. Rick was great about understanding what my wife, our architect, and our designer wanted and, if we had any questions, he was only a phone call away."

START TO FINISH

David worked closely with Production Manager Justin Lindemulder as Rick oversaw the project. "With any large construction project, there will be things that go wrong," he said. "When they did, we never worried. Justin was right there making it right. Often we didn't even know there had been a problem until he'd already addressed it. He communicated with us every step of the way, so we always knew what to expect next. And we never felt like we weren't his number one priority." In the end, David's remodel came in on time and on budget.

David and his wife have been in their new home since June 2023 and he and Rick have become hunting buddies. "It's not like they finished our job and disappeared," he said. "I still text with Justin often. They're all around good people who really care about what they do. They're like part of our family now and I feel completely confident recommending them to my family and friends."

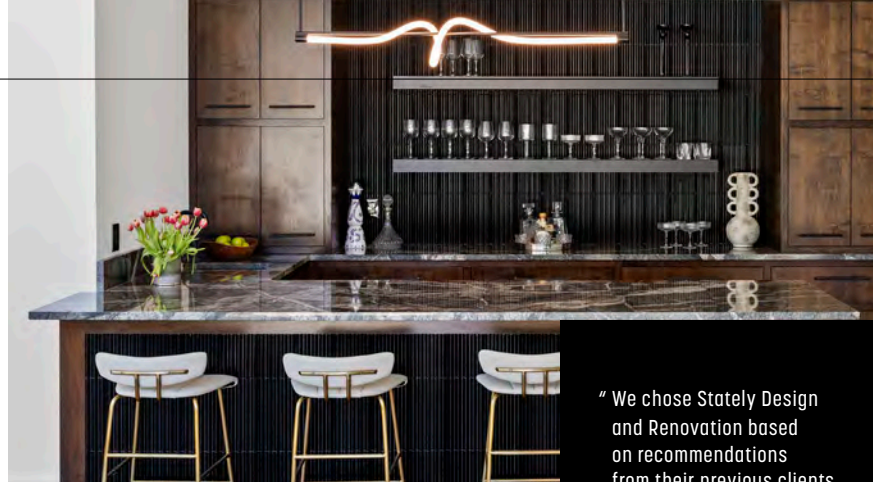
BUILDING THE DREAM

Rick Baker founded Stately Design & Renovation in 2007 as a boutique renovation company. Over 17 years, 600 renovations—and as many happy clients—they've settled into their niche of ground-up additions, large-scale renovations, and second-story add-ons. "We really enjoy projects with high design and love taking a home from traditional to contemporary," Rick said. "The biggest transformations are the most fun for us."

Dependable, honest, trustworthy, punctual, professional, creative, collaborative, and communicative aren't just words to Rick Baker and his Stately Design team. They are benchmarks that guide their work and inform their interactions with a client. Those clients thank them by recommending them to their family and friends and calling them back when they're ready for the next renovation project.

REFERRALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For Rick and his team, the best part of the job is the relationships they build with their clients. "Nearly all our work is referral based and that means a



lot to us," Rick said. "When our customers decide they're ready for the next renovation project, they call us back. We enjoy being a partner our customers continue to reach out to and trust to help provide solutions as their needs change over time and who they feel confident recommending to their friends and family. My greatest success in life—other than my two wonderful kids—has been helping our clients achieve their vision and seeing the SDR team improve their own lives because they work at Stately Design." They also have longtime relationships with local subcontractors and trade partners they've grown to trust and call friends.

Visit StatelyDesign.com and enjoy a walk through a virtual portfolio of luxury Southlake, Westlake, and Flower Mound renovations. From extravagant kitchen and bath remodels and luxurious master suites to additions and complete remodels, each design represents a happy Stately Design client.

MEET RICK BAKER

Rick Baker's passion for design and construction runs deep. He gained valuable construction knowledge during his years in the real estate industry, remodeling homes, and owning rental houses. His background includes a real estate degree, holding a real estate broker's license for 14 years, and five years in home décor. His time as an air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration and in detailed project management equipped him to handle the complexity of major home renovation projects.

He and his high-sweetheart wife, Janet, have been married over 40 years. They have two grown kids and longtime employees who've become like family to them. Outside of work, Rick enjoys metalworking, woodworking, hunting, and serving in the family's home church.

If you're looking to partner with a home design and renovation team with a solid reputation for delivering what they promise, consider Stately Design & Renovation. Because honesty and integrity still matter.

"We chose Stately Design and Renovation based on recommendations from their previous clients in the neighborhood and based on our discussions with Rick Baker. Our project was an extensive renovation and expansion of a 6000-square-foot home in Timarron and included a brand new, expanded kitchen, family room, laundry room, and playroom. In addition, we added a new bedroom and bathroom and remodeled several other rooms in the house. The front elevation of the home was also extensively updated."

Rick and the Stately Design team were honest, direct, and flexible throughout the whole project. They collaborated with us on details and designs and then executed the work in a very professional manner. We would definitely choose Stately Design and Renovation again for any remodeling project."

— KEITH OF TIMARRON





FIRST *impression*

GIVE A LIFT TO YOUR HOME'S
MOST PROMINENT FEATURE

BY CHERYL ALEXANDER

A recent study found that replacing a front door increases the home's perceived value by as much as five times the cost of the new door, which means you get a return on your investment.

If you determine that now is the time for an update, do not think only about swapping one door out for another. Also, consider enlarging the entryway by installing a door with windows to either side or above it. The added natural light adds a sense of grandeur and creates a more open atmosphere. Here are a few options to consider.

Wood Doors: Wood doors are available in an infinite variety of colors and styles with lots, a little, or no glass at all. Select a wood door for its natural beauty and traditional style, but make sure it is in a covered entryway, protected from too much exposure to the elements.

Metal (Steel) Doors: Metal (steel) doors are very affordable and extremely durable, but they cannot be stained, only painted.

Fiberglass Doors: Fiberglass – probably the most popular current choice – offers wood's beauty and versatility and metal's durability. It is least affected by weather and ensures a long-term life span and easy operation. Fiberglass doors come in many styles and can be stained or painted.

If the existing entry door on your house doesn't have any of the problems listed above, you may want to have someone refinish or update it instead.

Embellish it: If every door on your block is brown or gray, a simple coat of bright paint will make your home stand out. You could also hang a wreath, add a dramatic house number, install some long shutters on either side, or add a specialty door knocker. Even a new doormat and some planters placed on either side with beautiful foliage will elevate your entry.

Add lights: Lights at your front door will boost your curb appeal. If you already have lights, consider replacing them as an update. On a front porch, a hanging fixture will cast a welcoming pool of light. And to add a bit of drama, spotlights at ground level aimed at the door will put your entry at center stage.

Dress up your entry with new trim: Replacing your front door trim with decorative moldings is an easy way to upgrade. In addition to wood, these are also available in PVC trims that look identical to their wooden counterparts.

Keep it tidy: Clean is impressive, which translates to curb appeal. Sweep your entry weekly, then scrub with soap and water intermittently. You will instantly bring your home's appearance back to life.

Your front door is the first thing that welcomes a passerby or visitor and sets the mood of your home. While style and budget are obvious considerations, any improvement you can make to your home's most prominent feature is worth the investment. Your front door sets the first and last impression. Make it a great one. 🍷

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By DESIGN

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AN ADDITION

BY CHERYL ALEXANDER

Are you and your spouse tired of sharing the bathroom in shifts? Has your family gained a new member? Do the kids need their own rooms? Does your kitchen feel tiny and cramped? Is it finally time for the home office you have talked about since you moved in? The list could go on, but one thing is sure – you are ready for more space, and the time is now. Here is a list that will help get the ball rolling in the right direction.

First, decide on your budget. Unless money is not an issue, you will likely end up making some cuts to your ideal vision, so enter into this process with that in mind. The average cost for an addition is between \$40,000 and \$50,000. This aggregate national number does not take into account size, scope, the slope of land, or geography. An extensive project could cost more than double this figure. If your addition is small and relatively simple, it may be less.

Once you have decided how much money you will need or can spend, you'll need to determine your exact property lines to develop a plot plan, including your home, landscaping, and the location of the utilities. Then check local codes regarding restrictions about how close you can build to your neighbor.

Next, take a close look at your existing structure and floor plan. At this point, you'll likely need help from a residential designer or architect to come up with an addition that will be not only economical but also attractive, useful, and fit with your current home

style. As well as interior design, think about how the expansion will architecturally affect the exterior of your home.

Before work begins, make a list detailing the materials and the scope of the work to be done. Regarding materials (such as flooring, hardware, lighting, etc.), include first, second, and third options. Your first choice may turn out to put you over budget. A backup plan from the onset will ensure you do not lose time once your build-out begins. Determine at this stage what you can and cannot live without, where you can compromise, and where you can save money.

Finally, hire professionals. The number and type of people you will need will depend on the scale and scope of your project. Even if you plan a relatively small addition, you will need a designer or draftsman to prepare one or more working drawings to apply for a building permit, freehand sketches or rough diagrams will not suffice. For large projects, you will likely need an architect to design an efficient layout and merge the addition's design with your existing home. And do not forget to budget for the cost of the architect.

After your blueprints are complete, you will get bids from contractors. If you have plans for your home addition available for contractors to bid from, you will get a better sense of the cost because they will all be bidding from the same information.

Another option is to hire a design-build firm. They provide a complete package of services, including design consultation, construction drawings, and project management.

Though the idea of expanding your home can be daunting, when broken down into a few steps like these, an addition can be a relatively simple and extremely rewarding way to improve your home and lifestyle. 🏡

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POOL *party*

MAKE A SPLASH WITH DIFFERENT
POOL DESIGNS AND FEATURES

BY ANNETTE BROOKS

Have you dreamed of transforming your backyard with a pool, creating a safe place to have fun, relax, cool off, entertain, and create lifelong memories? If you're like most homeowners in Texas, the question isn't if you should build a pool but what kind to build. Your available backyard space and budget play a role, but you also want a pool that fits your lifestyle and how you envision using it. Here are a few different options to consider. But if there's one thing that isn't an option, it's choosing an experienced, highly reputable custom pool builder.



BACKYARD OASIS/RESORT-STYLE POOL

Make your backyard a resort-worthy destination featuring a pool with options like waterfalls and water curtains, caves to swim through, lazy rivers, tanning ledges, dramatic fire features, a swim-up bar, and custom lighting effects. You may want to include a cabana and even a pool house with a bathroom. Or how about incorporating an outdoor kitchen and entertainment area into the design? With the right custom pool and outdoor living builder, the sky's the limit if you have the space and budget.

INFINITY POOL

Custom-made to highlight a view or a landscape focal point, infinity pools are designed with one or more walls just below the pool's water level. The water flows over the wall, creating the illusion of a vanishing edge. A sloping lot or one with a few feet of drop-off is usually needed for an infinity edge to work well.

COCKTAIL POOL

Do you envision relaxing in a pool bigger than a hot tub but smaller and not as deep as a regular pool? A cocktail pool may be just the ticket, especially if you have a smaller backyard. The design and size can be customized to fit your space and style and integrated into a patio or backyard living area.

PLUNGE POOL

Smaller than a traditional pool, a plunge pool is just deep enough for lounging, cooling off, and low-impact water exercise. The size can vary from around 6.5 to 10 feet wide and 10 to 22 feet long, and 5.5 to 7 feet deep, and the bottom is usually flat.

LAP POOL

These long, narrow, rectangular pools are designed primarily for swimming laps in the privacy of your backyard. A good length for a lap pool is at least 40 feet, and it can serve as a focal point for a narrow lot. Consider including features like a swim current generator.

"SPOOL"

A best-of-both-worlds option for homeowners, a spool is just what you think it might be – a pool and a spa. Often referred to by pool builders as a portmanteau (a blend of two words), spools are typically half the size of a typical in-ground outdoor pool and twice the length of a spa. 🏊‍♂️



More Hot Features for a Cool Pool

Baja Shelf – If you enjoy soaking up the sun but not the summer heat, a Baja shelf is a great solution. Think of it as a wide top step into your pool where you can lounge and play in shallow water.

Lighting Effects – Make your pool come alive at night with programmable colored LED lighting. Whether you're in the mood for a dramatic, illuminated nightscape or dynamic light show, let your pool builder show you all the lighting options to choose from.

Laminars – Like a deck jet but better, laminars emanate from the pool deck or coping and reach greater heights. They produce a larger, sleeker, arced water stream that holds its shape until it hits the pool's surface, creating a serene scene that embodies beauty and relaxing elegance.

Reverse Infinity Pool – With most vanishing-edge pools, the water overflows a pool edge to seemingly blend into the horizon. As implied, the opposite occurs with this pool design. Instead, the water spills into an eye-catching, stylized catchment pool viewed from a spa, outdoor living area, or your patio.



NOT AN *open-and-shut* CASE

GARAGE DOORS ARE BECOMING MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED

BY PETE ALFANO

We live in the age of “smart” technology. We have smartphones, smart TVs, smart cars, and smart houses. By utilizing the Internet, a person can raise or lower the thermostat, turn lights on and off, talk to someone at the front door, and arm or disarm the home alarm system, all from the workplace, grocery store, or in the car heading home.

Few people know, however, that garage doors have been technologically advanced, if not “smart,” for more than 100 years. According to garage door websites, inventor C.G. Johnson created the first overhead garage door in 1921 that could be manually lifted and which ran on rails. Five years later, Johnson invented the first electric garage door opener, which opened and closed garage doors by pressing a button. In 1931, the remote opener made its debut.

This history lesson won’t make you feel better if you once owned a house where you had to get out of the car in the pouring rain to lift the garage door. It is also worth noting that many garages were separate buildings, modeled after carriage houses in the horse and buggy days. And back in C.G. Johnson’s day, only the wealthy could afford an electrically powered overhead garage door.

Fast-forward to today when garage doors are not just an overlooked appendage to the house but very much a part of the design element and smart house technology. Websites such as OverheadDoor.com and LiftMaster.com display the updated design of garage doors, which can be opened and

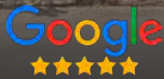
closed using an app on your smartphone or a key chain fob to avoid having a remote on your car’s visor or programmed into your car. You can search for a dealer near you on each website.

Garage doors come in wood, fiberglass, vinyl, aluminum, insulated steel, and what LiftMaster calls Thermacore, or insulated steel. There are a variety of colors to match the rest of the house’s exterior, or you can opt for a glass-paneled frameless door that is sleek and modern. Other styles include barn door and carriage house for more rustic or traditional home designs. In addition to remote entry from a phone app or key fob, a keypad can be installed outside the door so a homeowner can program it for additional security. And in the not-too-distant future, garage doors may include solar panels to help generate electricity.

Depending on what kind of door a homeowner chooses and whether it is for a single, double, or three-car garage, the cost for all the bells and whistles can exceed \$5,000. For that reason alone, garage door experts caution against making this a Do-It-Yourself project. Garage doors are heavy, and a person has to be comfortable with the electrical and mechanical components of installation. Garage doors will come with a warranty covering any damage that occurs when it is professionally installed. However, the warranty will be voided if damage is caused by a homeowner trying to install the door. Thus, the safest and “smartest” thing to do is leave it up to the professionals. 🏠



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Beckoning Butterflies

HOW TO PLAN A GARDEN
THEY WILL LOVE

BY MIMI GREENWOOD KNIGHT



P

icture this. It's early morning, and the sky's still pink with the sunrise. There you sit, coffee cup in hand, companionable dog at your feet, watching the butterflies dance in and out of your flower garden. What could be more relaxing? If you've dreamed of just such a scene, it may be easier than you think.

Thanks to our diverse ecoregion and long growing season, Texas plays host to more butterfly species than any other state in the union. And whether you live on a sprawling ranch, a suburban homestead, or an urban condominium, it's easy to attract these winged beauties into your life.

Design an Enticing Space

Butterflies don't ask for much, but they do need six or more hours of sunlight — preferably midmorning to mid-afternoon — and shelter from the elements that can come from trees or plants and chemical-free soil.

DID YOU KNOW?

A GROUP OF BUTTERFLIES
IS CALLED A "KALEIDOSCOPE."

Selecting Your Plants

Butterflies require both host plants and nectar plants. A host plant is one onto which butterflies, and moths lay their eggs and whose leaves provide a buffet for emerging caterpillars. Also known as larval host plants or caterpillar host plants, they're usually native plants that have evolved alongside butterflies and moths. Since some butterflies will only lay their eggs on a specific plant, find out what plants it prefers if you hope to attract a specific species of butterflies. A well-known example of this host/butterfly symbiosis is monarch butterflies and milkweed.

A nectar plant provides food for adult butterflies and moths who drink the nectar from their flowers. Because host plants provide food for butterflies in the caterpillar stage while nectar plants feed the creatures once they've metamorphosed into butterflies, your butterfly garden should include both.

Other Attractions

Since a butterfly can't land on open water sources to drink, provide a birdbath or other structure with tiny stones and fresh water. Butterflies can safely land on the stones and drink water to hydrate. You can also provide a receptacle with wet sand from which they'll draw minerals, a habit known as puddling. And lastly, because butterflies need sun for orientation and to warm their wings for flight, you can place some flat stones around your landscape for butterflies to rest and bask in the sun.

Go for Color

Adult butterflies are attracted to red, yellow, orange, pink, and purple blossoms with flat-topped or clustered blooms. Be sure to include flowers in those colors and plan your garden so that when one plant stops blooming, another begins. Or opt for plants such as lantana, vinca, or zinnia that bloom all summer long.

What you do to attract butterflies to your landscape will also attract other beneficial insects, such as native bees, dragonflies, and ladybugs. Together, they pollinate our world and provide food for birds, lizards, frogs, toads, wasps, and bats, contributing to the circle of life. And as English naturalist and author Sir David Attenborough put it, "That simple pleasure of looking at butterflies in the garden is calming to the soul and spirit and good for us all." 🦋

Native Texas Plants Butterflies Can't Resist

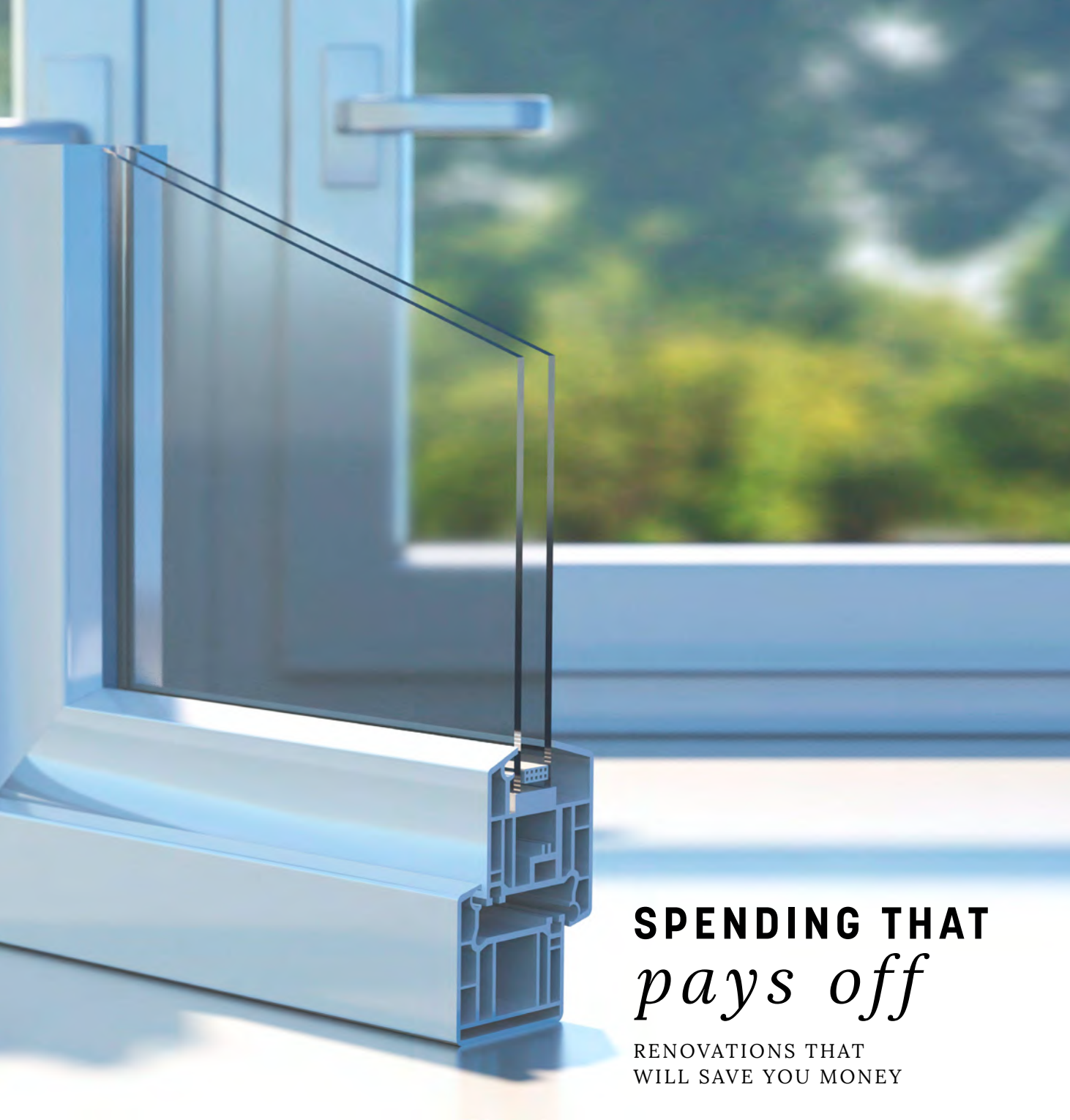
When planting to attract pollinators, it's important to choose varieties that thrive in our ecoregion, including:

- **Oak (Quercus)**, which plays host plant to hundreds of different butterflies and moths and has 44 varieties native to Texas
- **Plum or cherry (Prunus)** will add dramatic blooms to your spring landscape
- **Willow (Salix)**, which is also the fastest-growing tree
- **The Texas state tree, pecan (Carya)**, also feeds small mammals, birds, and humans
- **Goldenrod (Solidago)** plays host to 80 different butterflies and moths
- **Sunflowers (Helianthus)**, a powerhouse host plant
- **Prickly pear (Opuntia)**, the state plant of Texas
- **Evening primrose (Oenothera)**, which acts as both a nectar and a host plant



DID YOU KNOW?

THERE ARE THIRTY TYPES OF BUTTERFLY-LOVING MILKWEED NATIVE TO THE STATE OF TEXAS.



SPENDING THAT *pays off*

RENOVATIONS THAT
WILL SAVE YOU MONEY

Renovating your home is an exciting endeavor, but it can also be a substantial investment. If you're looking to enhance your living space while making smart financial decisions, we've got you covered. Here are a few renovations that will not only add value to your home but also save you money in the long run.

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ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOWS

Windows are a crucial element of any home, providing natural light and ventilation. By opting for energy-efficient windows, you can significantly reduce your utility bills. These windows are designed to minimize heat transfer, keeping your home cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The advanced insulation properties of energy-efficient windows will lower your reliance on heating and cooling systems, resulting in energy savings of up to 20%. Over time, these savings can add up to thousands of dollars, making it a sound investment for homeowners.

LED LIGHTING

A well-lit home not only enhances its aesthetic appeal but also impacts your energy expenses. Swapping out traditional incandescent bulbs for energy-efficient LED lights is a brilliant choice. LED lighting consumes significantly less energy, and its long lifespan means you won't need to replace them as frequently. By making this simple switch, you can save up to 75% on lighting costs. On average, homeowners can save around \$100 per year by incorporating LED lighting throughout their homes. So why not brighten up your abode while keeping your bank account happy?

UPGRADED APPLIANCES

When it comes to maximizing savings on appliances, Energy Star-certified models are the way to go. These appliances have undergone rigorous testing to meet strict energy efficiency standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Whether it's a refrigerator, dishwasher, or washing machine, Energy Star-certified models use less energy than their conventional counterparts, resulting in savings of up to \$200 per year. With their advanced technologies and smart design, Energy Star appliances not only save you money but also contribute to a greener and more sustainable home.

WATER-SAVING FIXTURES


Conserving water is not only beneficial for the environment but also for your finances. Upgrading your bathroom and kitchen fixtures to water-saving alternatives can yield substantial savings over time. Low-flow showerheads and faucets reduce water usage without compromising performance, resulting in a significant decrease in your water bill. On average, homeowners can save approximately \$200 per year by embracing water-saving fixtures. So, not only will you be reducing your environmental footprint, but you'll also enjoy the sweet sound of savings.

INSULATION

When it comes to keeping your home cozy, insulation is key. A well-insulated home retains heat in the winter and keeps it out in the summer, reducing your usage of heating and cooling systems. By upgrading your insulation, you can save up to 30% on your energy bills annually. This translates to hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in savings over the long run. Plus, better insulation enhances your home's energy efficiency, making it more attractive to potential buyers if you ever decide to sell.

SMART THERMOSTAT

Incorporating a smart thermostat is a renovation that marries comfort and cost-effectiveness. These devices enable you to control your home's temperature remotely, optimizing energy usage. Smart thermostats learn your habits and adjust temperature settings, accordingly, maximizing energy efficiency without sacrificing comfort. By reducing energy waste, you can save around \$180 per year on heating and cooling expenses.

From reducing utility bills to enhancing energy efficiency, these renovations are investments that will pay dividends for years to come. So, go ahead and embark on your renovation journey with confidence, knowing that you're making wise choices that will leave your home beautiful and your wallet fuller. 

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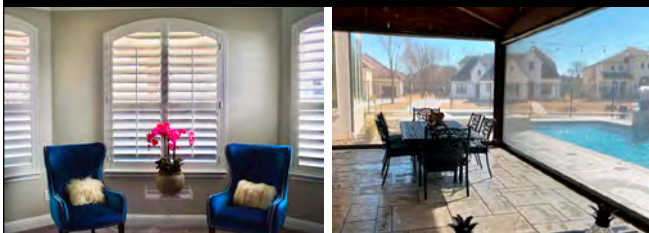
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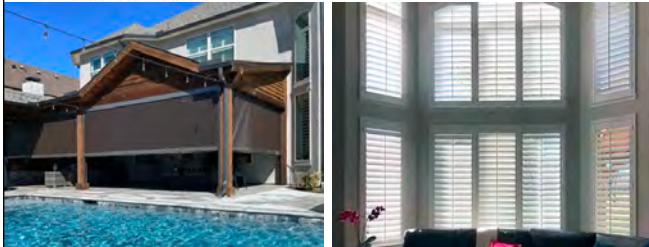
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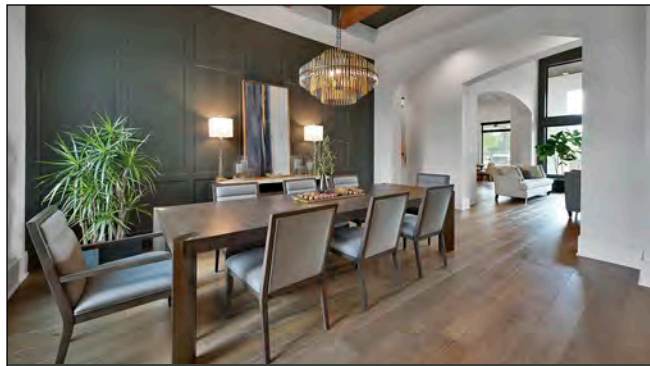
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SCAN ME

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a woman swimming in a pool. She is wearing a blue swimsuit and is captured in a freestyle stroke, with one arm extended forward and the other back. The water is a vibrant blue with white ripples and splashes around her. The overall mood is bright and summery.

Ready, Set, Swim

PREP YOUR POOL FOR SOME FUN IN THE SUN

BY MIMI GREENWOOD KNIGHT

As the days grow longer and the weather gets warmer, your backyard pool beckons you toward lazy hours of floating, splashing, diving, dining, and making memories with the ones you love. If your pool's been closed all winter, it's recommended that you begin getting it ready about a week before you hope to use it. Here are a few things for you or a pool professional to consider when preparing for summer fun.

Clean Debris and Give Everything a Once-Over

Take a little time to survey the area around your pool. Trim overhanging trees that might drop leaves in the water. Blow or sweep off your pool decking and look for any damage or wear and tear. Clean, repair, or replace deck furniture and conduct a safety check of pool rails, slides, rescue equipment, ladders, and diving boards. Then inventory your chemicals to ensure you have what you need on hand.

Remove the Cover

Your swimming pool cover accumulated water and debris all winter. Use a pool cover pump to eliminate old, dirty water so it doesn't end up in your pool as you take the cover off. Hose down the cover and give it a good scrub with a pool-cover solution.

Do a Thorough Pool Inspection

Remove drain plugs from surface skimmers and wall-return equipment and restore directional fittings. Inspect your pool's pump and filter and replace anything that's damaged or worn.

If you disconnected your underwater pool lights for the winter, reconnect them. Check all tiles and use a pool scale removal product to remove calcium buildup and stains. Thoroughly inspect the interior of your pool for damage and make any necessary repairs. If you have a fiberglass pool with a gel coating, hairline cracks typically won't affect the integrity of your pool, however, large cracks or holes should be addressed by a pool professional.

Do a Final Debris Removal

An easy way to get rid of that last bit of debris is to fill the pool to the midpoint of the skimmer opening. Then you can easily clean leaves, twigs, and debris from the pool's bottom with a pool brush. Empty the basket as well.

Turn on Filter and Test Water

Before you test the water or add any chemicals, turn on the filter and let it run for 24 hours. Then collect a water sample and take it to a pool professional to analyze and offer instructions for balancing your pool's water. They'll test the water's pH level, alkalinity, calcium hardness, and chlorine levels, advise you on shocking the pool, and recommend stabilizers, phosphate removers, metal treatment products, or algaecides to add a week before that first swim.

Continue to run the filter for the next few days and vacuum debris as it settles. Once you're done, all that work will pay off as you spend summer 2023 enjoying the perfect staycation spot right outside your back door.

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UNDO RULES

GROUND

GET YOUR YARD READY FOR SPRING

BY MIMI GREENWOOD KNIGHT



During spring, your yard is a different place every day as leaves return to trees, the grass renews itself, and local nurseries beckon with a rainbow of flowers to brighten your landscape. If you're as excited as I am about the approach of spring, it's an excellent time for a bit of prep work to get your yard springtime ready.

Start with cleaning up any leaves, twigs, or other debris that accumulated over the winter. Employ your rake and/or leaf blower to eliminate anything that can get stuck in your lawnmower or block fertilizers and other beneficial materials from absorbing into your lawn.

Hit your lawn with a combination of fertilizer to feed your grass and a pre-emergent such as Scotts Turf Builder, to prevent weeds. Follow the directions, but in general, you'll apply it again in six to eight weeks, adding a broadleaf weed killer. It's better to take preemptive action than try to play catch-up with weeds later. Get your mower out and start it up. If it seems sluggish, perform a tune-up, including changing the oil and air filter, replacing the spark plug, draining out and replacing leftover gasoline, and sharpening the mower blade.

It always amazes me what a fresh layer of mulch can do for a flowerbed. Along with replenishing the mulch, trim back dead branches on shrubs and replace anything that didn't survive the winter. If there are shrubs you've been meaning to move, spring is the time to do it. Consider hiring a tree trimmer (about every three years) to prune away dead or dying branches on trees which can cause property damage or personal harm.

Give your garden tools a good cleaning and sterilization since remaining plant sap, dirt, or debris can harbor bacteria or fungal spores which may infect your new plantings. You can do this with a soak for about a half hour in a solution of 10% household cleaner to 90% water. Then give your tools a good coating of oil to prevent rusting.

Have the soil in your flower or veggie beds tested by your local agricultural extension service. They can diagnose your soil's current pH and what amendments you can add to optimize your planting this season. Pull any weeds, trim any winter-killed, brown leaves from last year's perennial flowers and divide the ones that need dividing. Unless you're using a no-till gardening method, turn over the top six to eight inches of soil, looking for caterpillars, cutworms, or other garden pests that may have overwintered there. Raised beds may need to be topped off with more soil.

Visit a local nursery and get an idea of what annuals you might want to add, then draw up a plan of how they'll work into your perennial landscape. Consider incorporating something new and untested with some old, faithful plants that consistently produce for you. With a little prep work this spring, your garden will be ready to provide you with beauty, fragrance, and enjoyment all summer long. 🌱



CONSIDER AN ECO-LAWN

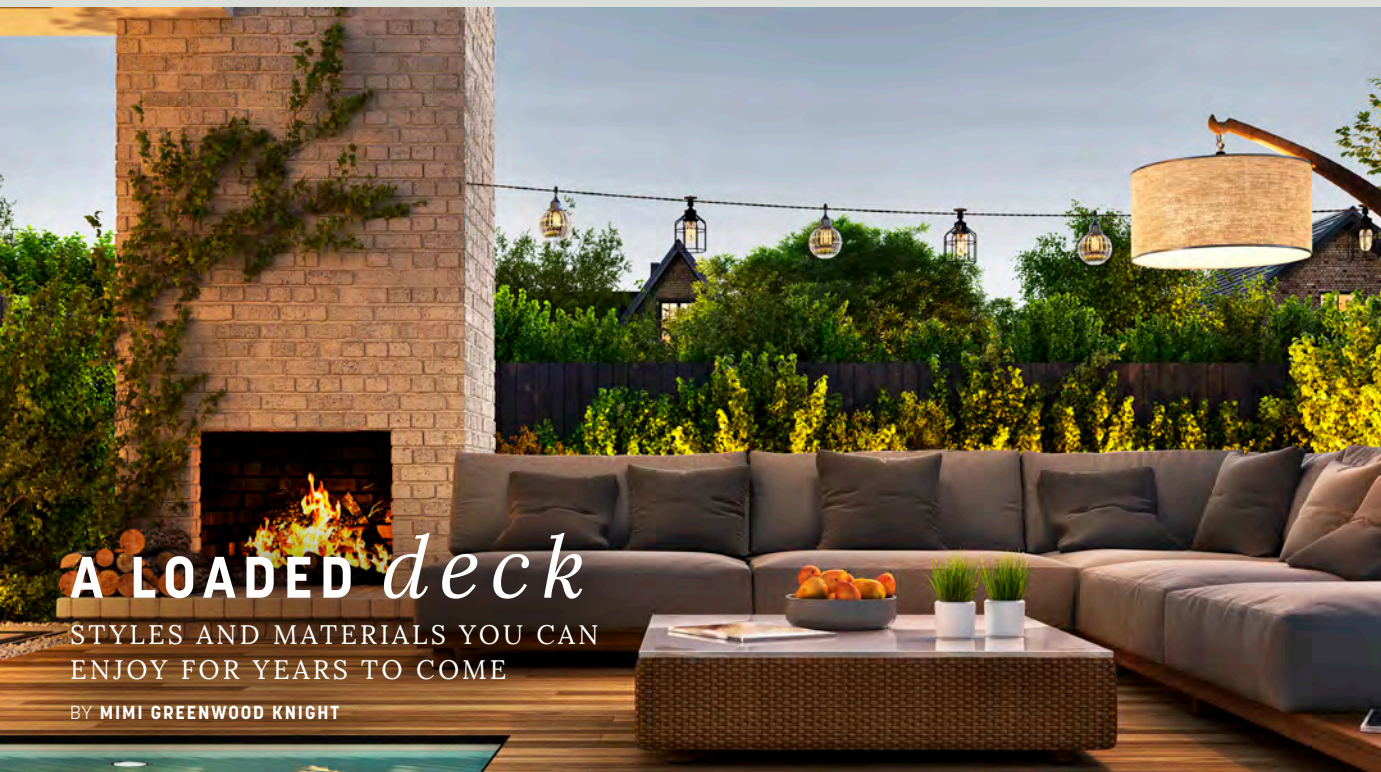
If you've been looking for ways to reduce your carbon footprint, remember your lawn. Whether you use a push or riding mower, your weekly summer mowing requires roughly a gallon of gas. Over the usual 32 weeks of summer mowing, that adds about 563 pounds of CO₂ into our environment. Then there are the chemicals required to keep your lawn green and weed-free and the gallons of water for irrigation.

By converting to an eco-lawn, you can significantly reduce the water required, eliminate chemicals, and reduce your mowing to three or four times per summer. One way to do this is to replace your traditional grass lawn with nitrogen-producing clover, which doesn't require fertilizer. It's drought tolerant and can thrive and grow in full sun or partial shade. It's also pet tolerant, a nectar source for bees, and clover flowers can be dried for tea.

Talk to your local landscape expert about the suitable clover to use for your area. Then, you can seed right over your existing grass on all or part of your lawn. The best time to seed for clover is after the last frost in spring, then water daily for two weeks and wait for your beautiful, earth-loving lawn to emerge.

If you're serious about converting your lawn and have an HOA, check with them first.





A LOADED *deck*

STYLES AND MATERIALS YOU CAN ENJOY FOR YEARS TO COME

BY MIMI GREENWOOD KNIGHT

Who wants to be stuck in the house all night after a long day at work or school? A spacious deck is a perfect place to get outside, enjoy some family time under the stars, eat, listen to the crickets, and enjoy your backyard. Here are some deck ideas we're excited about this year.

LARGER DECKS

Gone are the days of the 20-by-10-foot deck with a grill and a scattering of patio chairs. Families are now enjoying multilevel decks with different functions on different levels, such as outdoor kitchens, sun decks, or spas. Pergolas and walls add privacy, and built-ins provide the perfect solution for seating, storage, and planters.

VARIED-PLANK DECKING

Instead of an expanse of identical decking, try mixing materials. Consider alternating thinner and thicker boards or different colored materials for a contemporary flair. It's an easy way to achieve any number of looks and can be accomplished with traditional wood or composite decking material.

BOLD COLOR

While neutrals are always popular for decks, some homeowners are stepping out with bolder hues. Use complementary colors to highlight structural design elements or to accent decking and railing to create a picture frame effect to show off structural design elements.

OUTDOOR LIVING

There's no end to the choices in outdoor living decor. Lighting, appliances, TVs, fireplaces, fire pits, misters, and outdoor kitchens make the deck a great place to hang any time of year. Low-voltage, solar-lighting adds safety as well as ambiance. Lighting elements should provide style, directional lighting, and function.

GREEN DECKING MATERIALS

Composite decking is one of the most popular and affordable sustainable materials. The blend of wood fiber and recycled plastic creates a highly durable and beautiful product. Homeowners love it for its low maintenance and the way it convincingly mimics premium natural materials. And while a composite deck costs more upfront to build, it's cheaper over the deck's life because it won't need to be painted or stained every few years.

HEATERS AND CEILING FANS

Adding heaters and fans to covered areas means you can enjoy your deck all year long. Incorporating them into the original deck design makes for a seamless aesthetic, but it's usually not a problem to retrofit them later.

MODERN/INDUSTRIAL STYLE

While rustic-style deck designs are still popular, contemporary-looking homes are being designed with modern/industrial-looking decks featuring cleaner lines, angular shapes, and cooler colors. Think mixed materials like metal and composite decking, stamped concrete, and glass rails or 'fences' for a sleek, industrial vibe. Cable railing also offers a clear, unobstructed view and requires minimal maintenance.

BLENDING OUTDOORS AND IN

Decks today are viewed as an extension of the home, offering many of the same amenities. Some homeowners are echoing the aesthetic appeal of their indoor living out onto the deck. Achieve this by continuing the color theme and other décor elements for a cohesive look, with the indoor space flowing seamlessly into the deck and outdoor area. 🏡

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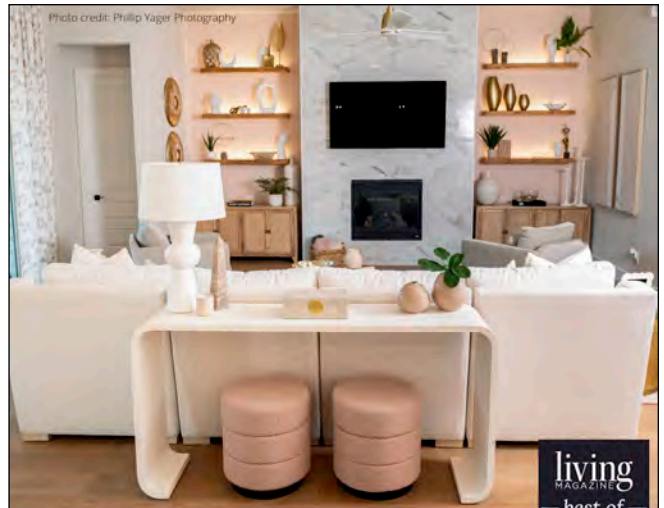


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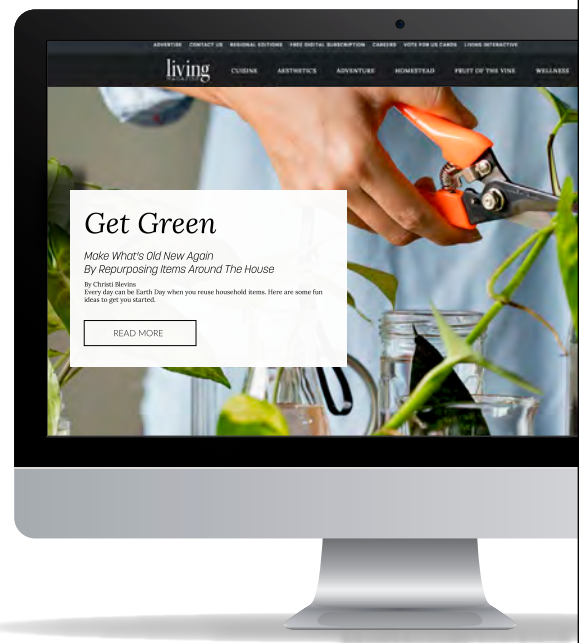
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DON'T BE *alarmed*

STAY SAFE WITH HOME SECURITY

BY AUDREY SELLERS

Your home should feel like the safest place in the world.

It's where you spend time with loved ones, share laughter, and create memories. If you want peace of mind that your family and property are safe, a home security system can help.

About one in four Americans use a home security system, according to U.S. News & World Report. These systems may be unmonitored or monitored, and they may run the gamut from wireless cameras and video doorbells to 4K image sensors and video analytics.

You could set up your home security system or get it professionally installed, which can be ideal if you're not particularly handy or tech-savvy. With professional installation, you can kick up your feet while



a home-security expert sets up your system. Many security companies offer same-day installations and the peace of mind that it is done right.

Wondering what kind of home security options are out there? Here's a breakdown of some of the available products. Pick and choose what suits your home security needs best.

Video doorbells. Whether you want to protect against porch pirates or keep an eye on package deliveries, doorbell cameras can help. Features vary by model, but many video doorbells provide night vision, facial recognition, voice control, and high-definition video. Some home security companies also offer optional storage plans that allow you to store motion-triggered video clips in the cloud.

Entryway sensors. When placed on doors and windows, sensors will alert

you immediately if one opens when it shouldn't. You can choose from wireless and wired sensors, with variations between contact sensors, glass-break sensors, and motion sensors.

Security cameras. These cameras may be mounted inside or outside your home, and you can choose to record continuously or only when motion is detected. Some cameras may feature two-way voice, mobile access with live streaming, pan and tilt, and a smartphone app that activates features, including a siren on the device.

Floodlights. Potential burglars can't sneak around in the shadows if you install security floodlights. Typically motion-activated, these lights feature super-bright LEDs and can be mounted quickly. Some floodlights include a built-in siren and may double as security cameras.

Panic buttons. This security option can be helpful during home invasions or medical emergencies. Just push a button to alert the company's monitoring center. Some panic buttons offer two-way voice capabilities so that you can communicate with a dispatcher.

Automated options. If you want high-tech home security, look for a company that lets you control everything from an app on your phone, Alexa, Google Home, or a smart panel. You can watch live or archived videos, arm or disarm your home, and check your system's status from anywhere.

If you've been thinking about stepping up your home security, you have plenty of options. Whether you want to turn your home into an expertly protected fortress or want to deter potential break-ins or thefts, use the options above as a starting point. 🏠

Three Considerations When Choosing a Home Security Company

Once you have an idea of the type of security system you want, it's essential to evaluate different home security companies. Some things to consider include the following:

■ **Contract length.** Does the company require long-term contracts, or can you go month to month? A contract

may not be an issue if you plan to stay in your home for the foreseeable future. But if you rent or move often, you should look for no-contract home security companies.

■ **Quick response time.** Ask how long the company's monitoring center takes to reach out when a security breach is

detected. Look for companies that reach out in 30 seconds or less.

■ **Helpful customer service.** How fast can you get an employee on the phone? Does the company offer live chat options? Make sure you choose a home security company with a strong track record of satisfied customers.

THE Art -OF DOING- Laundry

TIPS TO MAKE THIS
CHORE MORE FUN

BY SYDNI ELLIS



*W*ash, dry, fold, and leave in the basket until you want to wear it again, then repeat. It's the endless laundry cycle. Whether you immediately fold and put away your clothes (do these people actually exist?) or wait until your laundry pile could rival Mt. Everest, we can all agree on one thing — this chore may be exhausting, but it's so necessary. Lighten your load and make it more fun with these tips and tricks highlighting the art of doing laundry. You still may not love doing laundry, but it could help the process go smoother or maybe even help convince the kids to take over!





USE CLEAR DISH SOAP FOR STAINS

It fights grease on dishes, so why not stains on clothes? Dish soap makes an excellent spot treatment. I prefer a clear product, like **Palmolive Ultra Pure + Clear Liquid Dish Soap**. Just pour directly on the stain, scrub it with a laundry brush, and throw it in the wash. It's effective and works double duty in the kitchen.

SWITCH TO WOOL DRYER BALLS

Save money — and avoid that dryer sheet residue by switching to wool dryer balls like the **Eco Dryer balls from Friendsheep**. Made with 100% New Zealand wool, they help dry clothes more evenly, keep laundry soft and fluffy, and naturally reduce drying time by up to 40%.

\$22, Friendsheep.com



UPGRADE YOUR LAUNDRY HAMPER

A new laundry basket might be precisely what you need to find joy in folding clothes. The **Brightroom Laundry Station** features a medium-sized metal basket on the bottom, a small metal basket in the middle, and a bar at the top for hanging clothes to dry. The whole thing is on wheels, making it easy to roll it from your room to the washer and dryer and vice versa.

\$40, Target.com

BRIGHTEN WHITES OUTSIDE THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Instead of using bleach, keep your sheets, shirts, and socks extra white with a special tip by Martha Stewart. Boil water with a few lemon slices in a pot on the stove, then turn off the heat and soak your clothes for an hour. Afterward, wash them and hang them to dry in the sun.

LEARN WHAT THOSE TINY SYMBOLS ON THE TAGS MEAN

Delicates, outerwear, and linens all have different washing recommendations, as revealed in the tiny symbol on the tag. Keep a handy guide to these symbols and their meanings with the **Hearth & Hand with Magnolia Laundry Sign**. Hang it up in the laundry room for quick reference.

\$25, Target.com



FOLD LAUNDRY — OR NOT

It's perfectly fine if you'd rather skip this last step. Hang up your shirts and pants instead of folding them and put underwear in a drawer as is, although undershirts may be an exception. And kid clothes? Don't even worry about it. They'll ruffle through the drawers anyway, so save yourself some time. Remember, done is better than perfect, so find the system that works for you and embrace it. 🐾

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LAUNDRY

We washed clothes for thousands of years before Tide PODS and scented laundry beads arrived on the scene. Here's a quick refresher on the history of laundry from Encyclopedia.com.

2800 B.C. - Ancient civilizations made soap from boiling fats and ashes.

206 B.C. - A natural soap derived from the Soapberry tree was used during the Chinese Han Dynasty to wash silk.

7th century - Urine, dung, and lye were used to make soaps in Europe, and laundry was done in streams, tubs, or troughs.

1712 to 1853 - A luxury tax on soap in Europe meant that it was less popular than lye.

18th century - People pounded materials against rocks or wooden blocks to clean them. Washboards were also used in tubs.

Mid-19th century - Public laundries came into being in Great Britain.

Early 1900s - Chicago-based Hurley Electric Laundry Equipment Company introduced The Mighty Thor, the first electric washing machine.

1947 - The first fully automatic washing machine for home use was pioneered by Procter & Gamble.

2023 - We're still trying to find a way to stop losing socks in the dryer.



WATER *wise*

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
AND SAVE MONEY TOO

BY PETE ALFANO

First, here are the facts of life as they pertain to water and Texas. The state averages just over 27 inches of precipitation a year, with half that amount in West Texas and almost double the average in East Texas. North Texas gets about 34 inches of precipitation annually, and Houston gets around 45 inches of rain yearly. So, why is this important? Well, the population of Texas was about 4.8 million in 1921, and today it is 29.5 million and counting. And guess what? Mother Nature hasn't allocated additional rainfall to account for the population explosion.

This makes water conservation imperative, especially when Texas is prone to periodic droughts. There are numerous steps we can take that might not seem like much but, cumulatively, can result in saving and better utilizing hundreds of thousands of gallons of water.

For starters, consider investing in a rain barrel. They can hold from 50 to 100 gallons of water collected from the gutter and downspout, which is cut to a height above the rain barrel. The rain barrel itself has a spigot that enables you to



attach a hose so you can use the rainwater to irrigate the garden and even wash your car.

Speaking of which, how often have you seen a neighbor's sprinklers running the morning after a major rainstorm? Raise your hand if you have also been guilty of this wasteful act. If you want to avoid manually monitoring your irrigation system, purchase rain sensors. These devices are attached to the sprinkler system and detect when there has been enough rain to prevent your sprinkler system controller from starting. There are different types of sensors, and all are excellent ways of saving water and lowering your water bill as well.

Before you get that bucket, soap, and garden hose ready to wash your car, consider going to the car wash. Yes, it is a more expensive way of keeping your car clean, but many car washes use recycled water, which is better than using fresh water. If cost is an issue, you can keep it down by getting only the exterior washed and cleaning the car's interior yourself.

There are dozens of water conservation measures you can do inside the home. For example,

purchase low-flow showerheads and low-flow toilets for the bathrooms. Check your toilet and faucets for leaks. And while you are at it, do not pour money down the drain by using water more than you have to. Reduce time spent in the shower, and don't run the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving.

In the kitchen, install an aerator on your faucet to reduce the flow of water. In fact, put aerators on all your faucets. If you have a dishwasher, fill it before you run it. It is estimated that you can save up to 5,000 gallons of water a year compared to washing dishes by hand. Fill a pan with water and wash fruit and vegetables instead of putting them under running water.

Follow the same principle when using the washing machine. Wait until you have a full load and use the "quick wash" cycle whenever possible. Your clothes will still come out clean. And use cold water to wash because it saves water as well.

Acting on even some of these suggestions to conserve water will benefit the environment and slow that water meter spinning in the front of your house. 🍷

Five More Water Conservation Tips

With the demand for water in Texas increasing, and the cost rising, here are some additional tips to consider:

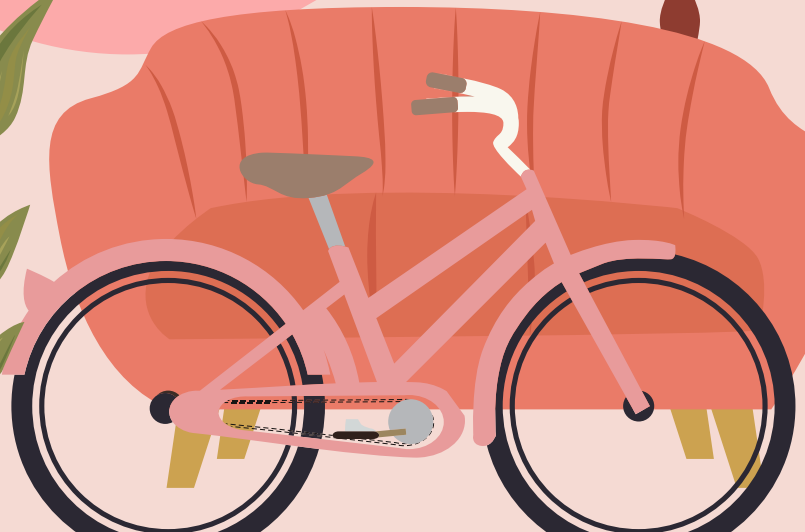
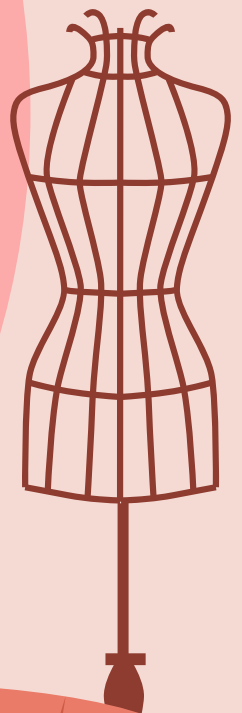
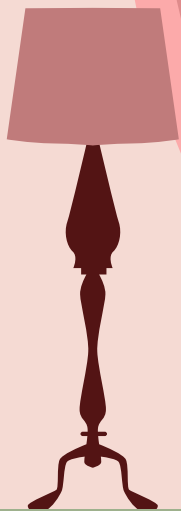
1. Check your irrigation system to make sure your sprinklers are all working properly and that none of them is watering the sidewalk or driveway instead of the lawn.
2. Pools can lose as much as 80 gallons a day in the summer heat because of evaporation. Invest in a pool cover to reduce evaporation.
3. Insulate water pipes, which means you won't have to waste gallons of water waiting for the water to get hot.
4. Plant drought-resistant plants and trees and surround them with mulch to reduce evaporation and the demand for water. And water your lawn less but more deeply so that moisture reaches the roots — also, water in the early morning or evening.
5. Reduce the number of times you run the kitchen garbage disposal unit, as it requires as much as five gallons of water each time. And use cold water.

Let it Go

Everything You Need to Know
to Get Rid of Unwanted Stuff

BY KIMBERLY BLAKER

Are your garage, attic, and closets overflowing from the heaps of stuff you've been saving 'just in case?' If so, it may be time to put those languishing piles to good use — in someone else's home. Follow these suggestions for a successful sale and a clutter-free home.



The Storefront

A garage is usually the best place to hold a sale, offering shelter and requiring little daily set up and tear down. Use a covered porch, patio, or yard if your garage is hard to access or contains valuables. Make sure you have tarps available to protect items from rain and for covering at the end of the day.

All in the Timing

Plan your sale when temperatures are between 60 to 90 degrees outdoors. Typically, the best days to hold sales are Thursdays thru Sundays, with Fridays and Saturdays bringing the most traffic. Mornings get the most significant flow of shoppers, so the earlier you're ready, the better.

Displaying Your Wares

- Don't heap your merchandise on tables or leave it in boxes to be ransacked. While some are okay with digging through messy stacks, most people won't bother.
- Use a clothesline or portable clothes racks to hang as much clothing as possible.
- Plenty of table space is also a must. Folding tables are optimal, but you can make a table by resting a sheet of plywood over sawhorses or prop spare wood planks between chairs.
- Neatly fold and stack clothing that can't be hung on tables, and label stacks according to size. Organize good toys and complete sets where parents and grandparents will easily spot them. Categorize tables and place small articles such as jewelry in divider containers or egg cartons, so they're easy to view.
- One exception to the disorderly rule is for small toys. Stick all these little goodies in boxes on the ground where young children can dig for treasures to take home. Label boxes according to the price per item or allow kids to choose one as a prize.
- Finally, make sure batteries and electricity are available to show shoppers that items are in working condition.

Looks are Everything

Appearance plays a big role in selling used goods and how much they can bring. Wash and dry all clothing and linens, then

fold or hang immediately to prevent wrinkles. Wash dust, dirt, and grime from toys, tools, and household items. Also, repair broken merchandise when feasible.

Priced to Sell

Don't overprice items, or you'll end up packing up nearly as much as you started with. Research online ads or resale websites for average resale prices for oversized items. But remember that this pricing often differs from what people pay at a garage sale.

Advertising

Newspaper classified ads or Craigslist, as well as the more popular online garage sale locator websites, usually bring the best results. In your ad, be sure to include your address and main cross streets, dates, and time of your sale, and what you'll be selling. List big items individually and the categories of things you'll sell, like "tools" or "toddler clothing."

Also, post fliers on the grocery store or laundromat bulletin boards. If there are no regulations against doing so, posting signs on nearby corners is a must. Remember to put a bright sign in front of your house, too. Balloons tied to your mailbox, or a tree can make your sale more visible. 🎈

Tips for Success

- The bigger the sale, the more traffic you'll get. Go in with family, friends, and neighbors and hold one big sale rather than several small ones.
- Hold a street or subdivision-wide sale. This will draw people from surrounding areas.
- Move large items such as furniture or appliances into the driveway to attract passersby.
- Finally, have your items priced. Many people will only walk away from a sale with something when things are priced. They don't want to make an offer that's too low and might offend you. They also don't want the hassle of asking the price for every little thing they might consider buying.





TURN UP *the heat*

MAINTENANCE IS KEY TO
STAYING IN HOT WATER

BY PETE ALFANO

As you lie in bed at night counting sheep, have you ever thought about the 100 gallons of water that may be sitting above your head? Because various reasons make it nearly impossible for Texas houses to have a basement, many two-story homes have water heaters in an accessible walk-in attic on the second floor.

That's great news for helping keep that water hot during a typical Texas summer, but a leak from a faulty valve or pipe or other major malfunction that goes unnoticed can result in water spilling over a drain pan and flooding the floor. That will result in water dripping from the ceiling on the floor below, and, well, you can imagine the cost of the cleanup and repairs and what happens to your homeowner's insurance premium.



Sure, it makes more sense to have the water heaters in the garage if you have one, although they should be placed on a platform at least 18 inches above the garage floor if the water heater is gas-powered. This protects the heater from potentially combustible gasoline fumes emitted by your car. In any case, a homeowner should not ignore their water heaters. The easiest solution is to get an annual inspection from a plumbing company to ensure the water heaters are functioning properly and efficiently.

However, there are 364 days between inspections, so homeowners should diligently check their water heaters once a week. It is easy to forget about them when they are out of sight and out of mind. Inspect the heaters to determine whether there are any leaking pipes or valves and that no moisture has accumulated in the drain pan, not even a few drops. That could spell trouble is on the way.

If there is water around the pipes, valve, or in the drain pan, turn off the water to the heater at the source and call a professional. If you are not getting any hot water, check the pilot light on the water heater. A flame ignites a gas heater, while an electric heater uses a heating element to start the heater. Double-check that the circuit breaker dedicated to the water heaters hasn't tripped.

Make your water heaters more efficient by insulating the hot water heater pipes. You can also insulate the water heater tank with a relatively inexpensive insulation blanket or even use bubble wrap. Check the thermostat to see the temperature of the water. Most experts recommend keeping water heaters at 140° to prevent bacteria from forming, but others suggest 120° is hot enough and will cut down on scalding. It also will lower your heating costs.

If you are adventurous and want to maintain the water heaters yourself, flush the heater at least once a year. Unplug an electric heater or turn down the thermostat on a gas heater so it isn't going to start making more hot water. Then turn off the cold-water supply valve and attach a garden hose to the drain valve. Using the pressure relief valve or turning on a hot water faucet in the house allows air into the tank. At this point, you turn on the drain valve, and the tank should begin emptying. Water heaters collect sediment, which affects their performance and life expectancy. You can drain the tank into a floor drain, outside your house, or into buckets. Remember, the water will be extremely hot.

With regular maintenance, a water heater will last for 10 years and probably longer. But neglect will shorten its lifespan and may leave you in financial hot water. 🔥

TANKS(LESS) For The Memories

There are options for traditional water heaters, and the best may be a tankless heater that provides hot water on demand. It is a small unit that occupies far less space than traditional water heaters, and instead of storing water in a tank, a heat exchanger heats the water spontaneously. So, if someone in your family is prone to long showers, for example, you won't run out of hot water.

There are gas and electric tankless water heaters, with electric heaters considered about 10% more efficient. The most significant negative is the cost, averaging close to \$3,000 and often more if installers must modify or change the direction of gas lines. But there is also a potential IRS tax credit of up to \$1,200. Tankless heaters also require less maintenance and can be installed

just about anywhere, even outdoors.

Heat pump water heaters, solar water heaters, and other variations of the standard water heater are all designed for efficiency and to save money. But if you are concerned about that tank filled with water above your head, a tankless water heater may be the best option.



DWELLING *detox*

BOOST YOUR HOME'S
HEALTH FACTOR

BY ANNETTE BROOKS

With spring in full swing in the Lone Star State, it's time to throw open the windows, let the fresh air and sunshine pour in, and participate in the time-honored tradition of spring cleaning. This year, go beyond the usual scrubbing, dusting, and organizing. Include a home detox to improve indoor air quality and the water you drink and address items that could pose a health and safety hazard. Here are a few suggestions to help you get started.

HVAC Filters – Most air filter manufacturers and HVAC companies recommend changing your air filter every three months. These out-of-sight, out-of-mind passive workhorses keep the air in your home cleaner by capturing pollutants and contaminants from the air that passes through them.




Be aware that not all filters are created equal. Generally, the more expensive they are, the more efficient and effective they are at trapping dust, pollen, and pet dander so it doesn't keep circulating through your house. Check the filtering grade assigned by the manufacturer before you buy replacement filters, and don't be tempted to pinch pennies here. Usually, the higher the rating, the better the filter is at trapping specific particle types.

Chimney Inspection and Cleaning – If you have a wood-burning fireplace, creosote – a dangerous byproduct from burning wood – can build up to the point that smoke and toxic gasses like carbon monoxide get trapped inside your home. Furthermore, creosote accumulation can lead to chimney fires. Chimney cleaning removes creosote, soot, and debris.

You won't have creosote build-up with a gas or propane fireplace, but you still need to have your chimney inspected and maintained. Ceramic logs can deteriorate and clog vents, bird nests, and debris may obstruct airflow in your chimney, and your fireplace should be checked to ensure there are no leaks and that it's in good working order.

Air Duct Cleaning – You'd be surprised at what can lurk in your home's air ducts. Pollen, pet dander, mold and mildew, dust mites, fungal spores, and even bacteria and viruses in your air vents can wreak havoc on your family's health and well-being. Look into air duct cleaning services that offer full source removal cleaning, which includes breaking contaminants loose from surfaces and continuously collecting them to prevent any spread during the process. Many companies also offer antimicrobial, EPA-approved products they apply to nonporous surfaces in your HVAC system to address microbial contamination and help control odors.

IMPROVE YOUR HOME'S WATER QUALITY

Get a whole house water filter and enjoy cleaner, safer water from every tap. Ask your water quality consultant about different systems and look for those that follow NSF/ANSI standards. A global, independent organization, the NSF standards team "facilitates the development of public health standards," and its service teams "test, audit, and certify products and services." 



The Candle Debate

Do you love the scent and flickering flame of a candle burning in your home? I used to have a candle going somewhere in my house several hours a day and especially enjoyed using fresh scents. Then one day, when our HVAC tech was performing a spring check-up on our system, he walked into the room holding the HVAC filter he'd just replaced with a new one, and it was completely black.

The candle debate is controversial. Candle manufacturers claim they aren't hazardous to our health, and some believe soy candles are healthier than paraffin candles. My personal choice was to install a whole-home air purification system that actively removes many odor-causing contaminants from the indoor air. And when I occasionally want a pleasant scent in my home, like when I'm entertaining, I use essential oil blends in a cold air diffusion machine.

PROTECT *Your Pup*

HELP YOUR DOG STAY COOL IN THE SUMMER HEAT

BY PETE ALFANO

We all know the saying a dog is “man’s best friend.” The question is, are we returning the favor? Anyone who has watched an infomercial on cable TV showing how some dogs are mistreated or neglected by their owner knows how upsetting this can be. Sometimes, however, people don’t even realize they are neglecting their pet’s health.

Summer, for example, is a dangerous time for dogs, especially those that spend most of the day outdoors. They are more prone to heat stroke than humans because people sweat more readily than our furry friends, whose meager sweating is mostly through their paws. Instead, dogs try to regulate their body temperature by panting. Not leaving a dog in a yard with enough shaded areas, drinking water, or sunscreen on their nose, ears, and belly can lead to heat stroke and death. A word of warning — do not use your human sunscreen on a dog. It has ingredients such as zinc oxide that are harmful to animals. Purchase sunscreen formulated for dogs instead.

You should not leave a child or a pet in a car as they can overheat in minutes. Statistics show that the interior of a vehicle can reach 120 degrees in 10 minutes, even if you leave the window open a little.

Hydration is essential. Dogs, like people, need to drink plenty of water during the summer. Water should be cool, but not necessarily ice cold, which can cause gastric problems.

Puppies and older dogs are more at risk for heat stroke, as are dogs that are overweight, have exceedingly thick fur coats, or are bred for colder climates, such as Siberian Huskies and Malamutes. A dog with a respiratory condition or is on medication should be closely monitored and

have their time outdoors monitored during the summer. Veterinary experts say dogs with short noses (Pugs, Boxers, Bulldogs) are also at a higher risk. And resist the urge to have your dog shaved. Their fur coat is a form of insulation and protects them from sunburn.

Many dog breeds need regular exercise for their well-being; thus, summer poses a challenge when the asphalt and concrete heat up. So, avoid taking your dog for a walk in the late morning or afternoon.

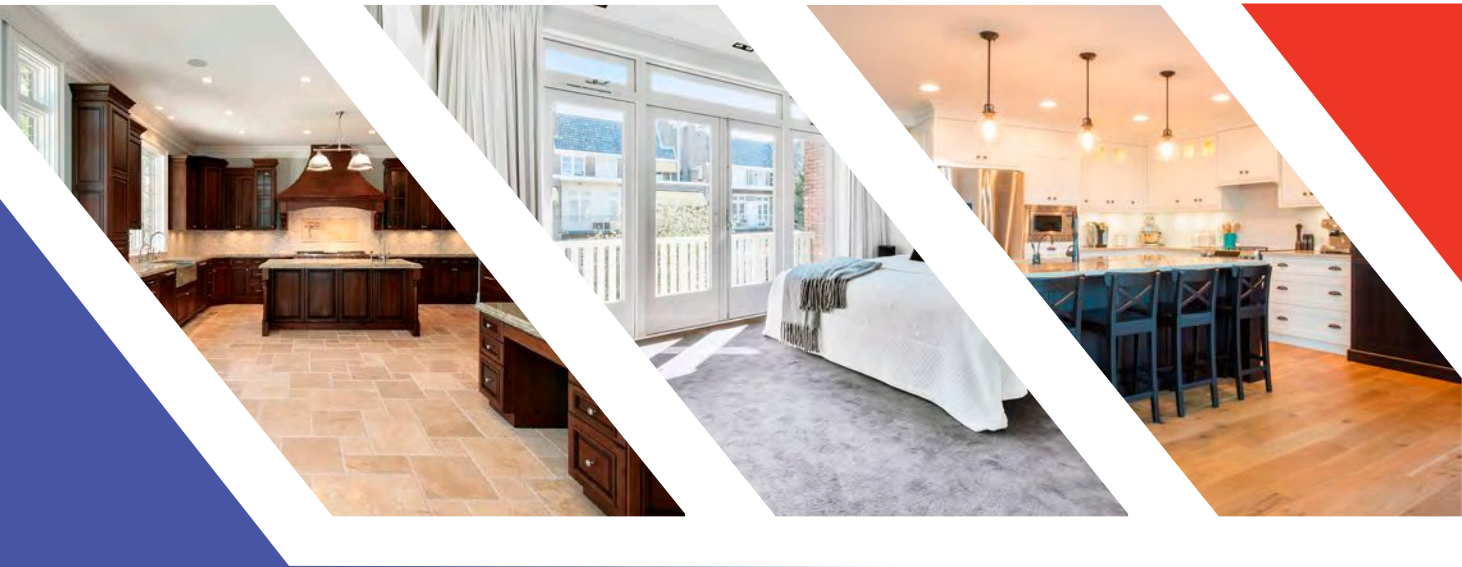
Walk dogs in the morning and shorten their walks because heat and humidity can result in dehydration at any time of the day. Walk your dog on the grass, if possible. And invest in a set of booties even if you believe it will be a waste of time. It’s worth seeing if your dog will tolerate them because asphalt will burn the pads on your dog’s paws.

A pool can be a great place to cool off, but swimming is strenuous exercise, and your dog will still be exposed to the sun and heat. Limit their time in the pool, and rinse them with a hose afterward to eliminate chlorine. Also, dry your dog’s ears thoroughly to avoid infections.

Despite taking all precautions, your dog may suffer from heatstroke. Symptoms include vomiting, increased panting, difficulty standing, and difficulty breathing. Try to cool down your dog with a hose and go to your veterinarian or an emergency animal clinic as soon as possible. 🐾



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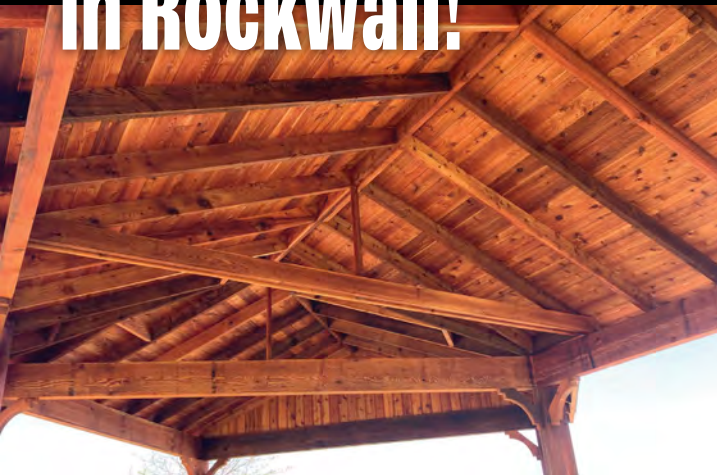
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