

Your

A REMODEL & DESIGN MAGAZINE

HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE

LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

Volume 4 Issue 1

*A Stone Countertop
and Tile Backsplash
Make a
Perfect Pair.*

*Spring Updates
for Your Outdoor
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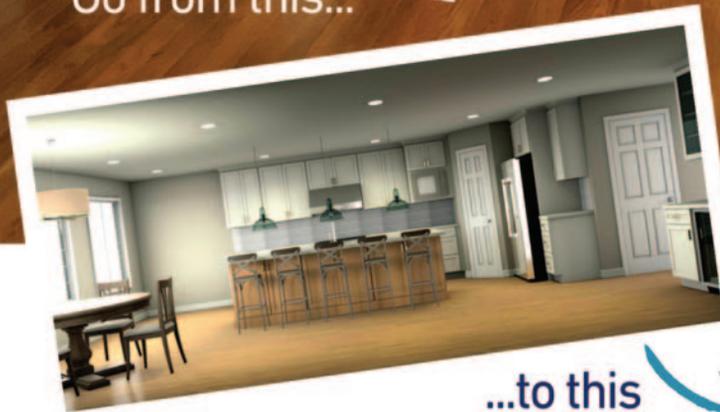
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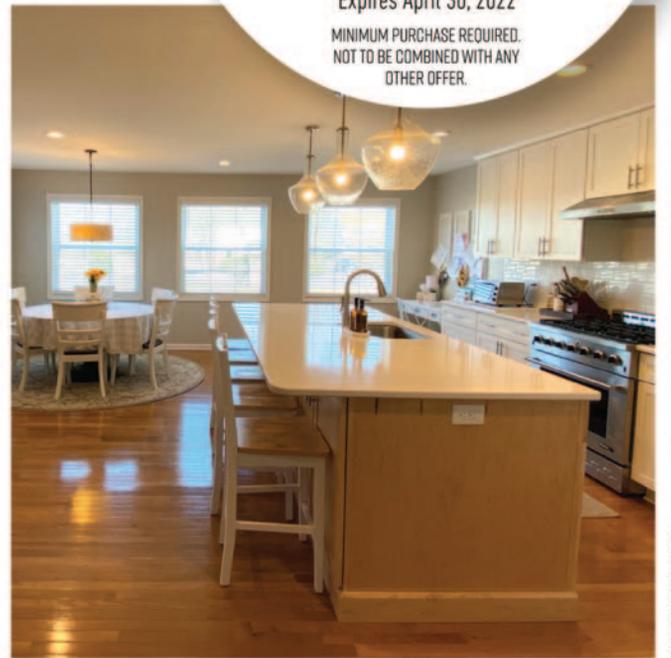
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Hello and Happy New Year!

YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE is back and excited to announce that it has officially entered into its third year delivering to your beautiful homes. It has been a wonderful but challenging (who can forget COVID) journey and I'm excited to see where 2022 will take me. Our goal this year and every year at **YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE** will always be to provide you with the best home remodeling ideas and inspiration along with highlighting local contractors and businesses who can help make your dreams a reality inside and outside of your home.

Take a look inside this issue of **YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE** and enjoy the following articles on *Updating Your Outdoor Living Space*, and, *A Stone Countertop and Backsplash Make a Great Pair*, plus so much more. And if you are looking to get any remodeling, renovations or outdoor living space designed, check out the businesses showcased in this issue of **YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE**.

Finally, stop in at the Spring Home Show the first weekend in March, the 4th through the 6th, at the Allentown Fairgrounds and say Hello! I'll be there with some goodies to hand out.

Wishing you a great year of good health, peace and prosperity.

Tina DeSantis Perrotta
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
Tina@YHRMAG.com

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Spring Updates to Your Outdoor Living Space

Outdoor Living Spaces have become more important than ever as we are spending more time at home. And these easy updates will help you get ready to entertain this Spring.



A Stone Countertop and Backsplash Make a Perfect Pair

A beautiful stone countertop and colorful backsplash are important and creative elements that will add versatility and style to your kitchen design



The Pennsylvania Spring Home Show

Check out all the vendors on display at the Spring Home Show at the Allentown Fairgrounds, March 4 - 6.

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**BELLA CASA**
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A *Stunning* REMODEL FOR EVERY ROOM

Homeowners throughout the Lehigh Valley are finding new reasons to love Bella Casa Kitchen and Bath. The family-owned business has been remodeling in the Valley for several decades and continues to offer the highest level of craftsmanship and on-trend designs that have made them a fixture in the community.

While their name may just include kitchen and bath, Bella Casa does so much more. "We do basements, mud-rooms, home offices, walk-in closets and built-ins," explains Faye Motsenigos, owner of Bella Casa. "We are here to meet all your interior remodeling needs!"

When you think about it, it makes sense that Bella Casa offers such versatile remodeling options. While they specialize in kitchens and baths, many rooms require the same skills as these rooms. A basement, for instance, may

include a bar area or kitchenette similar to a kitchen remodel and typically also includes the addition of a bathroom. "We do everything that you need to turn your basement into an extended living space." Similarly, home offices, butler's pantries, bars and closets demand the same craftsmanship of a kitchen, with custom cabinetry bringing these rooms to life.

"We've been creating many larger luxury closet spaces. We see homeowners wanting to make their master bathroom more expansive, so that typically involves taking out bathroom and bedroom closets to use that space, then going into another room that they don't use and creating a separate master closet space." Motsenigos says Bella Casa is doing frequent walk-in closet remodels, where homeowners turn an unused bedroom into a walk-in closet complete with cabinetry, a dressing island, chandelier and recessed lighting. It's a striking upgrade that can add significantly to a home's property value while making organization a breeze.

Basements Offer a New At-Home Getaway

In the last few years, Bella Casa has become more in demand for creating large-scale finished basements. "We've done several in the last year that have included a full kitchen, bar area, TV room and full bathroom." With home prices continuing to rise and people traveling less, many homeowners are looking for ways to easily increase the fun factor at home while gaining additional square footage.

Basements are the perfect place for adding in more recreation space and allowing homeowners to create designated party and play spaces away from the rest of the living areas. "Particularly now, people really want to improve their way of living at home. They're just really investing in making it as comfortable as possible these days," adds Motsenigos.

Now is the Time for the Kitchen of Your Dreams

The kitchen continues to be a perennial remodel favorite but Motsenigos says the last few years have really made people want to achieve the kitchen they always wished they could have. "People are splurging a little bit more on the extras, accessorizing their kitchen more with all the bells and whistles." That means organizational and convenience elements like spice pull-outs, utensil bins, slide-out recycling drawers and unique innovations for storing unwieldy cooking and baking equipment like pans and cookie sheets. Additionally, Bella Casa has been adding more warm tones as homeowners demand cozier kitchens filled with painted cabinetry and stained wood elements.

With so many options, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. That's why it's so beneficial having the experience of a Bella Casa design expert there to advise you of options every inch of the way. "I personally like to walk customers through the showroom and open up the cabinets and drawers so they can see them in person, because it's different seeing them in a catalog or in a picture than when you get to open up a cabinet and see the functionality. You want your kitchen to not only look great but to be extremely functional," says Motsenigos. To do this, Motsenigos and her design team ask lots of questions to determine each homeowner's unique kitchen needs and lifestyle. "We ask very detailed questions, like 'where are you going to put your Saran wrap and your foil, your Tupperware, your small appliances?' Even after we finalize the design before anything is ordered, we recommend, 'take the design home and really think about where everything is going to go.'"

Just as important as the aesthetic of the kitchen is how it's going to be used. And the Bella Casa team prides



themselves on knowing all the organizational strategies and options homeowners may want and suggesting the ones that are right for each household. "Everybody uses their kitchen differently so everybody's needs are different, so you can't design every kitchen with the same accessories because what one person might need, another won't have a use for."

Quality Craftsmanship Always Comes First

Each one of Bella Casa's installation experts is a master carpenter and very detail oriented. Motsenigos says one of the most rewarding parts of her job is when a client calls and says, "Your guys are doing an amazing job. They're so detail oriented. They're a master at their craft." "They just really pay attention to the details and that's what we strive for is to make sure that it's just not installed and looks okay, but that everything looks exquisite and like how you imagined it would be." She

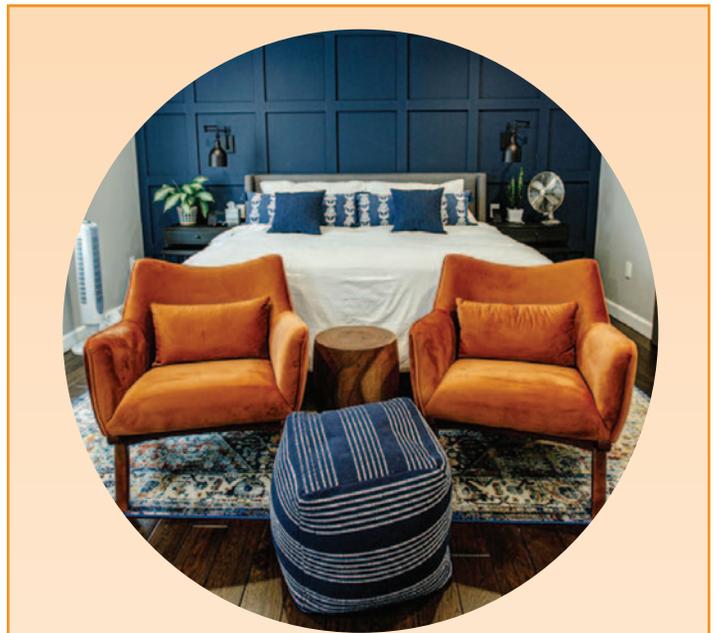
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adds that every project is owner supervised. "Whether you meet with me or one of our talented designers, you are getting the same level of service. A lot of collaboration goes on before a design is presented." And the same goes once the job starts. Motsenigos' husband and co-owner, Spiros, supervises every project in the field and is always available when a question arises. This level of involvement makes a difference in the finished result.

Bella Casa works hard to stay on top of the latest trends in home decor and make sure their showroom is continuously updated with the most popular looks and accessories. "There's endless possibilities we can show you in catalogs, but we also try to make sure we have a wide variety of looks in cabinetry and many opportunities to interact with the pieces like you would at home." Faye suggests customers make appointments to visit the showroom, but welcomes walk-ins who just want to browse and look around.



Rooms You'll Love in Three Easy Steps

From large whole-floor remodels to a single room, Bella Casa makes the remodel process easy, giving homeowners a simple way to get the look they're craving without much effort.

It just takes three steps:

- 1** A Bella Casa representative will gather information from the client on the room they'd like remodeled. (Keep in mind, Bella Casa only does full remodels, not a singular item like a backsplash or countertop install)
- 2** Next, measurements are taken, and the design process begins. Faye says that she encourages clients to share their inspirational photos, whether they're from Houzz, Instagram or Pinterest, her team is happy to find out every customer's preference and vision. Faye says that some homeowners need more guidance through the process, while others know exactly what they want. She and her team of designers are happy to adjust their guidance to match each customer's needs.
- 3** From there an estimate and a 3D design is created so clients can visualize the design in their space. Once approved and a contract is signed, you are on your way to a finished room wowing you and your friends and family for years to come.



Ready to transform a room in your home? Bella Casa is open Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and closed on Sunday. Appointments are suggested. The Bella Casa showroom is located at 1812 Tilghman St, Allentown, PA 18104. Call (610) 433-9800 or visit: bellacasakitchenandbath.com ■

Window Treatments
Which Works Best
for Your Home?

Blinds vs. Curtains



Understanding the differences between curtains and blinds to determine what's right for your light control, insulation, and privacy needs—as well as your décor and budget.

Window treatments let you control light, privacy, and indoor temperature while complementing your décor.

While you've got a variety of options to choose from, blinds, which feature movable slats, and curtains or drapes, made of fabric panels, are among the most popular. Blinds and curtains each come with particular

benefits and drawbacks. So we've put the two head-to-head—blinds vs. curtains—and outlined key differences to help you decide which window treatment will be a winner in your home.

Blinds are generally less expensive.

Blinds require less material and time to manufacture and

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take less time to install. In 10 to 20 minutes, a pro can put brackets in a window frame, mount the blind, and attach the mechanisms that move the slats. Plastic blinds will lower your material costs, whereas wood and high-quality vinyl blinds will increase them.

Curtains are usually pricier because they take more material and time to make, and more time to install. A pro will take an hour or more to install level brackets above the window, slide the panels onto the rod, hang and secure the rod onto the bracket, and then style the curtains in an attractive arrangement. Choosing cotton curtains over linen or silk may reduce your costs overall.

Blinds offer more light control options.

The slats on blinds, situated either vertically or horizontally (known as Venetian blinds), can be operated in two ways for light control. Pulling the lift cord that hangs from the top lets you lift and lower Venetian blinds, and move

vertical blinds from one side to the other. While blinds offer more ways to control light, their slatted design means that some light will enter even when the blinds are fully closed. When curtains are closed they block virtually all light.

Blinds are easier to clean.

Blinds have a hard, slick surface, so dusting them with a microfiber cloth is quick and easy. To remove dust from both sides of blinds, close the slats and wipe with a duster from the top down. To get rid of stubborn dirt and stains, moisten a soft cloth with water or a mixture of 25 percent white vinegar and 75 percent water, wipe down the front and back of the slats, and then use a fresh cloth to dry. Cleaning curtains is a bit more involved. To remove dust, vacuum top to bottom with a dust brush attachment. Removing dirt and stains requires spritzing the stained areas with a mixture of 25 percent white vinegar and 75 percent water, or dry clean if necessary.



Blinds last longer.

It's not unusual for well-maintained blinds to keep their looks for 15 years or more. Blinds' synthetic material, be it plastic, vinyl, aluminum, or polymer-coated wood, makes them resistant to discoloration and staining. They're also more rigid and rugged than curtains, so less prone to everyday wear and tear. Fabric curtains, be they cotton, linen, or silk, are more prone to tearing, staining, and molding, so they often need replacement within a decade.

Curtains offer better insulation and soundproofing.

Both curtains and blinds can increase the overall insulation of your windows to help maintain heat, resulting in lower utility bills in cold weather. But curtains, because they lack the slats through which heat escapes, have been shown to reduce heat loss by up to 37 percent during chilly months, compared to the approximately 14 percent heat loss reduction you might get from blinds. The thicker the curtains or blinds, the more insulating they are. In warm weather, however, blinds beat curtains in energy efficiency. Because blinds leak more heat from a room, they also decrease indoor heat gain more efficiently in the summer, by around 45 percent, which can lower your AC bills. Curtains, which leak less heat,

reduce indoor heat gain by only 33 percent in the summer. Both curtains and blinds also aid in sound absorption to keep out neighborhood noises. But curtains, especially those made of heavyweight, tightly woven fabrics, perform better than blinds because they're thicker and lack slats through which sound enters.

Curtains offer more design possibilities.

You'll find curtains in a wider variety of materials, textures, styles, colors, patterns, and levels of transparency, from geometric-inspired cotton curtains to sheer silk curtains. They work well in rooms with classic interior design styles, be it French country, mid-century modern, or farmhouse chic.

Pairing the two window treatments to maximize the benefits.

To gain the benefits of both curtains and blinds, why not install both. Consider, for instance, curtains in low-moisture areas where mold isn't an issue, such as living rooms and bedrooms, to maximize your design options, insulation, and soundproofing. In high-moisture rooms like the kitchen or master bath, where mold growth is a concern, install blinds for a durable, easy-to-clean window treatment with a high degree of lighting control. You can even layer the two treatments in a single room to boost privacy and to create a more intimate setting. ■



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Spring Updates to Your Outdoor Living Space!

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Outdoor Living Spaces have become more important than ever as we are spending more time at home. So investing a little time and money on amenities like a refinished deck or outdoor lighting could improve your quality of life and may even increase the value of your home.

Spice Up Your Front Door and Entryway

It's the first thing your company will take notice of when they come to visit you. Freshening up the color of your front door with a semi-gloss paint yields a smooth, slightly shiny sheen that is also easy to clean. And,

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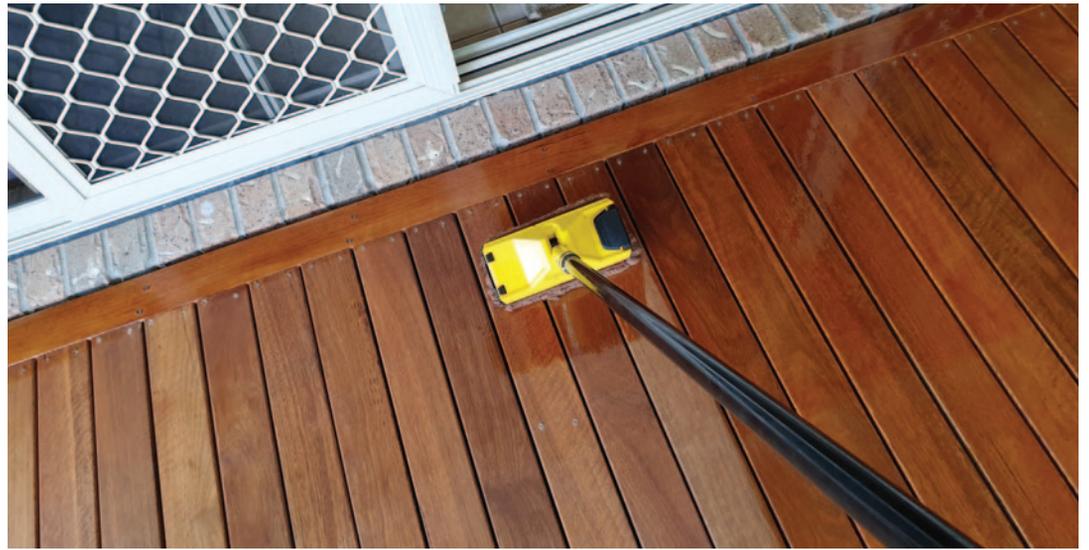
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notably, painting your front door black could translate into thousands of dollars in your pocket according to Zillow. Other ways to make the front of your home more appealing is to pressure wash your walkways and driveway and wash your windows. Placing tall plants in colorful pots on the front porch or landing will make for a beautiful entrance to your home.



Spruce Up Your Landscaping

To get the most visual “pop” when mulching your landscape, use dark brown or black mulch which contrasts well with the color of your flowers or shrubs. Don’t mow too close to the ground, especially in the

summer, to protect the grass from drying out. And use a string trimmer to keep edges clean. We all love light streaming in so trim your hedges so they don’t obstruct your windows. Clean and declutter your lawn, a neat and tidy yard is a tranquil one.

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Make the Most of Your Outside Living Area

The pandemic has driven the importance of having an outdoor living space. There are many ways you can improve your outdoor space this Spring that will give you a fresh, clean look. Having your existing deck refinished or painted or power wash your patio and deck to remove the mold and mildew that has grown over the winter months. Replace old cushions and flower pots with new colorful pillows, cushions and flower pots that will brighten up your outdoor areas. And setting a table with colorful plates and place mats would be a wonderful finishing touch to your outdoor living space.

Highlight With Lighting

Adding lighting could be as easy as installing solar-powered path lighting yourself. Or you could have lighting professionally installed. A licensed professional outdoor lighting expert will provide you with an outdoor design that will illuminate the areas around your front facade and walkways. For your deck you can gain a soft, gorgeous glow without the hassle of wires. There are many Solar Deck Lighting systems available to you. You can bring your solar decking lighting to life with solar deck post cap lights and deck rail lighting fixtures and kits. And enjoy your outdoor living space day and night! ■



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GET THE POPCORN READY!

TURN YOUR BACKYARD INTO AN OUTDOOR MOVIE THEATER WITH THESE MUST-HAVE ITEMS



Nothing can replicate the experience of heading out to the movie theater. But, like with so many communal experiences, we've had to adapt since the start of the pandemic, and there are plenty of ways to replicate a version of the theatrical experience in a safe, socially distant manner. The best option? Investing in a few key purchases to turn your backyard (or front yard, or patio, or any outdoor space) into a home theater. You'll need a projector and a screen to start. Mini projectors, or small portable projectors, allow you to beam movies at night using a sheet, screen, or other smooth, light surface. Plus a few more accessories (lights, blankets, a Bluetooth-speaker option) that will make your outdoor movie viewing as comfortable and cozy as possible. Keep in mind that all projectors benefit from a dark environment. The darker the evening, the better the picture you will see, especially with a larger screen. And don't forget the S'mores, too. If you have a fire pit, light it up and roast away your favorite melted delicacy and enjoy the smell of your campfire while you watch your favorite movie...outdoors! ■

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A Stone Countertop & Tile Backsplash

...Make a Perfect Pair

The countertop is an essential component of the kitchen. It is where all the action takes place. But more than that, the countertop is the foundation of kitchen décor when doing a kitchen renovation. It can set the tone and feel of your new space. Seeing its importance to your kitchen design, it matters a lot what material, finish and design you choose for your countertop. Following are some of the top countertop trends that should give you ideas for your own kitchen.

Updating your countertops can completely change the overall appearance of your kitchen and bath. There are many variables you should consider when deciding to install new countertops. You'll need to find a material that suits your needs, as well as a color that will fit well into your kitchen's color scheme. You may be looking to achieve a sleek, modern look or maybe a rustic update with your new countertops. Whatever you're seeking to gain from replacing your kitchen surfaces, there is no shortage of material types from which you can choose. Some more popular options include granite, quartz, marble, onyx, and quartzite. Some fantastic benefits come from each of these materials. It will definitely benefit you to see each in person, so a few trips to local countertop suppliers will be time well spent. There you will see how they look in real life, feel the differences in texture which will ultimately help you to narrow down your favorite countertop for your new kitchen or bath.

Granite Countertops

Granite is an incredibly attractive countertop material and will add a gorgeous flair to your kitchen. Here's a fun fact about granite: it resists heat. Therefore, if you're using your range or stovetop very frequently during your time in the kitchen, granite might be the ideal countertop material. Also, granite is an incredibly durable surface material. It can stand up to lots of usages, so it should maintain quality and appearance despite many years of wear and tear. Also, granite countertops do not stain when they are adequately sealed. If you hire an installation expert, they can ensure that your granite countertops are effectively sealed so that you can live without fear of countertop stains. There are many cool aspects of granite, and the only major downside of granite countertops is that they tend to be on the more expensive side. However, investing in granite countertops and the services of an expert to see them appropriately installed will lead to satisfying, long-lasting results.



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Quartz Countertops

A common, defining characteristic of quartz countertops are little flecks of glass or metal which gives it a distinctive rich glow. Quartz itself is one of the strongest materials derived from the Earth. Unlike granite, quartz countertops never need to be sealed because they are naturally stain-resistant and prevents bacteria growth. Another benefit of using quartz as your kitchen surface material is that there is a broad range of color options from which you can choose. If you want your countertops to be a focal point in your kitchen, then quartz may be the best material to update your countertops with. Some popular colors quartz countertops can be found in include gold, blue, brown, black, white, and there are so many more. A countertop installation expert will know where to find quality quartz countertops in the color you desire, as well as how to install it.

Marble Countertops

Marble countertops are a porous surface, meaning that these countertops are likely to have different substances seep into them over time. If you cook frequently, you'll need to repeat the sealing process for your marble countertops every six months. An installation expert can help you initially seal your marble countertops, but due to the structure of marble, you'll need to keep it up to

prevent staining. Marble is also much more prone to scratching than other kitchen surface materials. Marble is softer and less durable of a stone than granite. Marble is heat resistant, which is a nice plus. If you don't mind taking extra care of your countertops, or if you're not cooking in your kitchen very frequently, then marble countertops might be a good choice for you. Marble countertops can be a beautiful addition to any kitchen, and they're definitely worth considering for your next kitchen remodel.

Onyx Countertops

Onyx is a rare, vibrant stone that will set the countertops in your kitchen apart. Onyx does tend to scratch easily, and many people feel that it does not age well because of this fact. Like marble countertops, you will need to reseal these countertops frequently to maintain and preserve its beauty. Light can shine through onyx, so you can opt to backlight your countertops to create a more dramatic effect in your kitchen. Onyx can be a striking addition to your updated kitchen; however, it is incredibly fragile and prone to scratches and marks. If you're hard on your countertops, onyx may not be the best choice for you. Onyx countertops also tend to be on the more expensive side. If you're curious to learn more about onyx countertops, it would be worthwhile to



contact a home installation service and consult with them about whether onyx countertops are the best choice for you.

Quartzite Countertops

Quartzite countertops are actually more durable than

granite. It is similar in appearance to marble, but offers the strength and lasting ability of granite. Quartzite also requires little to no sealing work, as it is one of the least porous countertop materials. Quartzite countertops are probably the most low-maintenance material option you could choose for your kitchen. Quartzite offers the

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stunning appearance of marble and the durability of granite. A professional can help you measure, select, and install your perfect new quartzite countertops.

Dress Your Backsplash Up to Compliment Your Countertop

For decades, the backsplash has been an important part of any kitchen remodel. In addition to protecting the walls above your counter, it would complement the countertop as well. In the early years, backsplashes were often colorful with fruit and vegetable graphics. Now, we have the luxury of installing a variety of materials like natural stone, glass, mirror, metal, brick and wood. Backsplash design has become more creative and artful with design to incorporate textures and different shaped tiles. In today's marketplace you will find a mixture of traditional and contemporary backsplash designs that can add great beauty to your new kitchen design.

Take Your Tile to the Ceiling

What area comes to mind when you think of backsplash

tile? The space between the countertop and the underside of the wall cabinetry. If there wasn't wall cabinetry above the countertop, then it was common to still place the tile straight across in the same location as if there had been wall cabinetry there. Perhaps by instinct or tradition. But it's time to break the mold and bring that tile to the ceiling.

We expect to see the continued trend more as homeowners do away with wall cabinetry for open shelves or windows. Ceiling-height backsplashes can give classic tile a fresh and modern look by highlighting a single area of the kitchen, creating a focal point, or help a large patterned tile sing loud and proud. Higher backsplashes will unite all aspects of the space, and brighten up the space with the reflective qualities of the tile itself. Especially if you are using white subway tiles. Not to mention that tile can create a visual break from all the cabinetry making the kitchen feel more open and giving you a stunning background for your work area.



Larger Subway Tiles In Vibrant Colors

The most common size for Subway tiles is 3" x 6", which have remained popular for years. A true testament of design & function. But as a result, homeowners are left craving something a little different. With subway tiles still being a hot trend for kitchen backsplashes, it's not surprising that we are seeing the emergence of larger sizes. Homeowners love them for their clean classic look and super easy maintenance. But a few changes are in

the air as we travel into a new year. Specifically, we are seeing manufacturers produce subway tiles in larger sizes. The standard large format size is 4" x 8" or even 4" x 12." A large format subway tile backsplash can be especially helpful for a small kitchen where the large tiles create the perception of space. Large format subway tiles can also help in creating a feeling of continuity especially if you are extending the backsplash to the ceiling.

The backsplash is also a good opportunity to introduce personal style; a surprising pop of color in the kitchen will do just that. If you want to convey luxury, go for black or charcoal gray tiles. The contrast from surrounding elements such as the cabinetry and countertops will create the luxurious drama desired. Make sure you have a good lighting plan, in place, so you can see the beauty. If you want an airy feel to your kitchen, good ole white will work just perfectly though you might want to consider a contrasting grout color for an unexpected twist.

A blue-tiled backsplash introduces a homey feeling. It makes the kitchen feel like a happy yet cool and relaxing place. If you want a burst of energy whenever your eyes drift to the backsplash area, go for red or yellow tiles. If you are feeling creative, combine two or three colors for a nice feature to your backsplash design. *Cont'd on pg. 32* ▶▶



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Patterns and More Patterns

With the neutrality of quartz countertops, it is no longer enough to have a plain tile backsplash; more homeowners want something that turns heads and creates an interesting focal point for all to admire. Many are beginning to experiment with various tile patterns. One of the top trends involves the use of graphic print or large pattern tiles in big, bold colors. These oversized patterned tiles have the punch to liven up any space. Keep in mind that the tile will have repeats much like wallpaper. So it's important to lay out your design ahead of time so that it ends up looking balanced.

When working with "busy" patterns that have many elements to them, you have to be careful not to create an overly exciting kitchen. With a busy patterned tile, we would recommend a plain countertop or even white cabinetry to highlight the beauty of the patterned backsplash. Feel free to take the backsplash as high as the ceiling to make it even bolder, if you can. It will not just be a protective surface; it could look like a piece of art.

More Interesting Finishes

With technology so advanced, there is virtually an



endless option of finishes to choose from. If you want a backsplash with a slightly aged appearance, look for tiles with a weathered finish. For a washed-out look, go for tiles with an acid wash finish. A lot of finishes are aimed at mimicking natural appearances for a more authentic look. For instance, you can get tumbled tiles that have been designed to resemble natural stone. They have an appealing antique look to them. The natural stone effect can also be seen in matte or honed finish tiles. There are dozens of finishes you can choose from depending on what kind of style you want for your backsplash and your entire kitchen area. Whether you want glossy and reflective, rustic and country or aged and weathered, they are all available ■

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