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HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE

Lehigh & Northampton Counties

Volume 6 Issue 1

MINIMALIST KITCHENS

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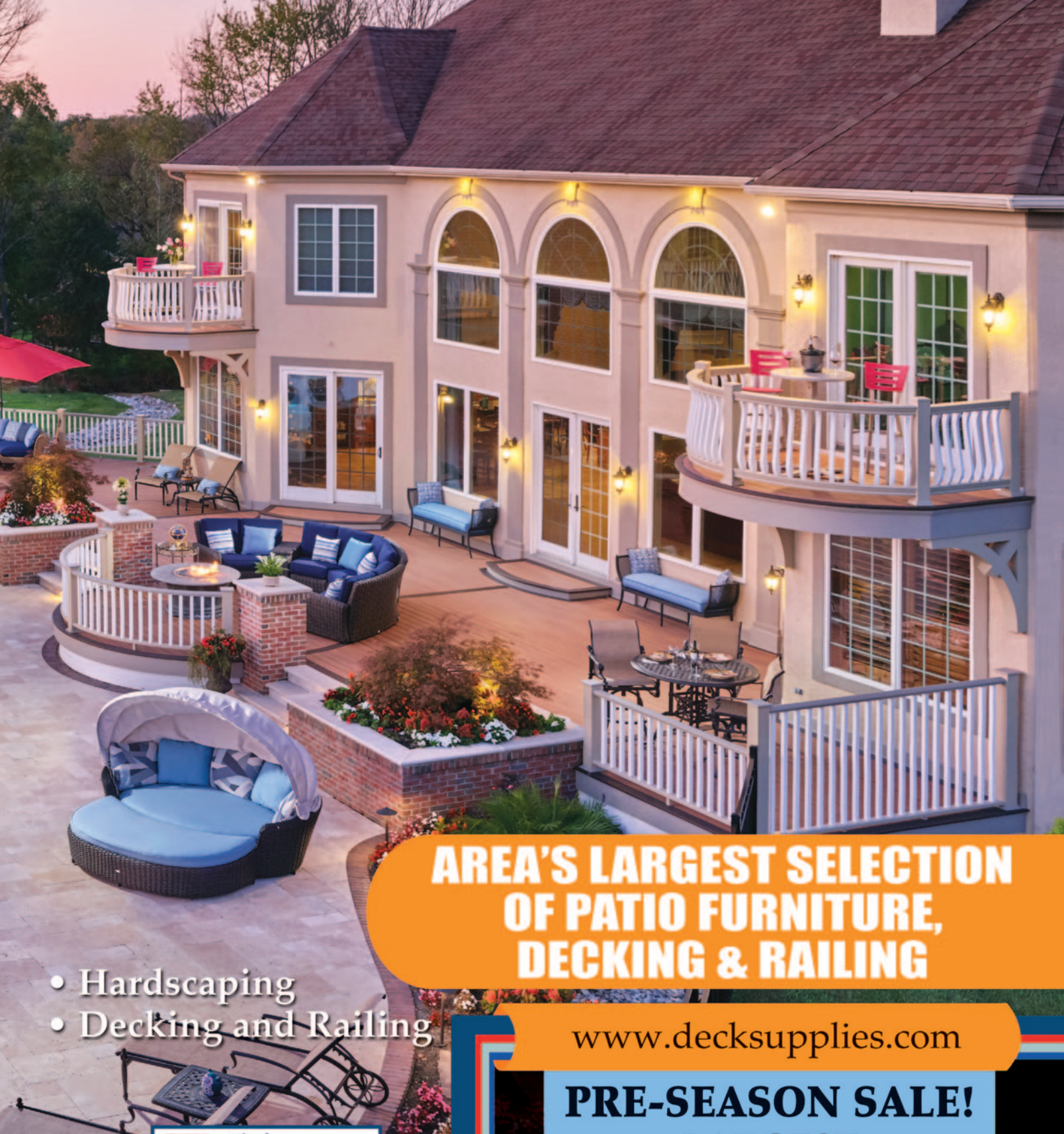
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Happy New Year,

The start of every year brings us a chance for a new beginning. This year is no exception. As I write this letter to you, I watch as the first snowflakes of 2024 blanket my small office window. Winter has arrived... and so has the first issue in the new year of YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE...celebrating its 5th year in print.

Our goal at YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE has always been to provide home remodeling ideas and inspiration along with highlighting the local contractors and businesses that can help make your visions a reality inside and outside of your home. In that vein, I'd love to hear from you. Do you have an exceptional experience with a local contractor, business or service provider? Send me your story. We are always looking for inspiring ideas and local stories to share with our readers in the Lehigh Valley and neighboring Northampton County.

For now, enjoy the articles in this issue on sleek modern Kitchens, Dramatic Bathrooms, Beautiful Tiles and Ductless Heat Pumps. And if you are looking for an expert on these topics look no further than in the pages of YOUR HOME REMODEL MAGAZINE.

I wish you all a year of good health, peace and prosperity.

Thanks for Reading!

Tina DeSantis Perrotta

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

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Effortless Elegance Creating a Kitchen with a *Sleek* Modern Design

Your kitchen is the bustling hub where your family comes together and memories are made. A streamlined, modern design offers many benefits, whether you're part of a busy young family always on the go or are an empty nester looking to simplify your kitchen's look. Today's minimalist kitchen can be both welcoming and sophisticated, offering the functionality modern designs are known for with the elevated look of an uncluttered aesthetic.

If you're ready to transform your kitchen in the new year, a home remodeling firm can guide you through the process, allowing you to achieve a high-end look in an efficient and effortless way. But before you begin this

process, it's best to understand the most important elements and materials that make up a modern, minimalist kitchen, so you can go in with a better sense of what you're looking to achieve.

Begin with a Beautiful, Sleek Kitchen Foundation

A kitchen remodel is filled with many decisions and steps, which is why it's best to approach the design in an organized manner. To begin, focus on the most foundational layers of the space: the flooring, countertop, paint, and cabinetry. These elements take up the most space so they'll make the most impact in terms of the look of the space.

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Elegance Underfoot with a Practical Touch

Flooring in a minimalist kitchen should balance elegance with practicality. Porcelain or ceramic tiles, polished concrete, or luxury vinyl flooring with a matte finish are excellent choices. Stick to neutral tones for the flooring to maintain a cohesive and calming atmosphere. Remember, light-colored floors will contribute to the illusion of a larger and more open space. To maintain consistency, extend the same flooring material throughout the kitchen and beyond. In an open concept floor, the same flooring can be used for the entire space, creating a seamless flow which reduces visual clutter.

Countertops Create Stunning Surfaces

Countertops will be one of the most visible elements that deliver maximum modern impact. Thankfully there are plenty of countertop materials to choose from to add a minimalist aesthetic to your space. Quartz countertops for example offer a sleek and uniform surface. Their clean lines and durability make them an ideal choice for a minimalist kitchen. When choosing a countertop, you'll not only want to pick the right color and material, but a clean modern edge, such as an eased edge, over more ornate edges like bullnose or ogee.

Opt for monochromatic or neutral-toned countertops to complement the overall color scheme of the room. Light-colored countertops, such as whites or light grays, enhance the minimalist aesthetic, but black and darker shades can also be worth considering, depending on the look you're trying to achieve. Create a harmonious



look by ensuring a seamless transition between the countertops and backsplash. Choose materials and colors that complement each other for a cohesive design.

The Centerpiece of Any Modern Kitchen: Streamlined Countertops

Flat panel or slab cabinets are an instant way to bring a sleek, modern look to a kitchen. These are free of any visual ornamentation like traditional cabinets, making them an easy way to instantly smooth out the look of the space and create a completely built-in look. While white is often a first choice for modern kitchens, you don't have to feel limited to this shade, flat panel cabinets are also available in wood tones, for a mid-century modern look and multiple colors from rich emerald and navy to pastel peaches and pinks. High gloss options give another way to bring sleek shine to the room.

In terms of hardware, there are plenty of ways to accent cabinets with metal bar handles or low-profile finger pulls, but you can also opt to keep the cabinets completely free of any accessorizing. Push and pop open designs allow for easy opening without the need for any hardware getting in the way of your minimalist design.

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Gorgeous Modern Details Complete the Minimalist Look

A Place for Everything

One of the hallmarks of a minimalist kitchen is its uncluttered look. We all know a kitchen comes with lots of gadgets like coffee makers, toasters, blenders and other small appliances. Left out, these can ruin the streamlined look. The solution? Built-in appliance garages can house and conceal such pieces, while keeping them easily on-hand for better kitchen functionality.

Neutral Color Palette

Embrace a neutral color palette to create a serene and

cohesive atmosphere. Think whites, grays, and muted tones for walls, cabinets, and countertops. But don't feel limited to just monochromatic colors, which can be mundane rather than modern. Instead, spruce things up with sophisticated touches of natural materials, like the warmth of wood grain, the elegance of Carrara marble, or the rich texture of stone. By balancing smooth, sleek materials with some pops of visual appeal you'll create a professionally designed look.

Open Shelving Options

Introduce open shelving strategically to display curated items such as stylish cookware or decorative pieces. This adds a personalized touch to the kitchen, creating warmth amid the minimalist design. Keep the display limited to avoid overwhelming the space.

Integrated Appliances

Opt for integrated appliances that seamlessly blend into the kitchen's design. Counter-depth appliances are much more prevalent today, making it easy to create that sleek look. Another option is to conceal appliances behind cabinet panels to maintain a cohesive look

Ample Natural Light

Maximize natural light to enhance the airy and open feel of a minimalist kitchen. Consider large windows, glass doors, or skylights to bring in more sunlight, creating a bright and welcoming space for family gatherings.

Statement Lighting

Beyond natural light, statement lighting fixtures serve as focal points in any modernist kitchen. Pendant lights above the island or a sleek chandelier can add a touch of sophistication, elevating the overall design.

As you can see, a modern, minimalist kitchen combines many intentional elements to create an uncluttered, classic look. Although less is more within any minimalist space, choosing the right elements will not only allow your modern kitchen to be effortlessly functional and a pleasure to be in, but also provides a welcoming and calming space ■



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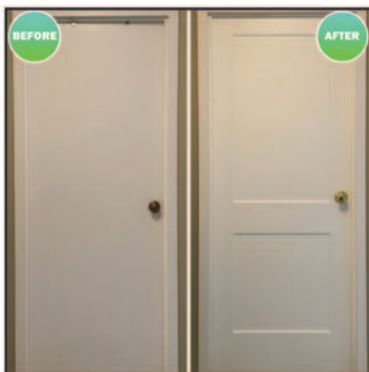
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Bring *Drama & Serenity* to Your Bathroom With a *Chic* Minimalist Style

Have you ever stayed in a breathtaking resort or spent an afternoon in pure bliss at a luxury spa? Those moments can be found right in your own home when you transform your basic bathroom into a minimalist sanctuary for self-care. With the right plan and professional remodeling firm to help you achieve your vision, a modern spa bathroom retreat is just a few steps away!

A Show-Stopping Shower

A stand alone shower can be a stunning focal point of any minimalist bathroom, but also, one of the most useful spaces as well. So feel free to deck out this space with whatever luxury additions you'd like, you won't regret it. For instance, built-in shower benches provide a comfortable seating area while ledges can be useful spots for resting a scrub brush and shampoo bottle. Add in sleek, substantial fixtures and if you have the space, consider placing your stand alone tub within the shower space as well.

Swap the shower curtain for a true minimalist look and

install glass shower doors. To truly streamline the look, you'll want to opt for frameless glass, which appears to be floating in space, without the clutter of thick, clunky frames or other ornamentation.

For the ultimate minimalist look, opt for a curbless shower, which eliminates the need for a step into the space, making the entire bathroom into a wet room, for the ultimate in stripped down design and minimalist cleaning. This can also set a bathroom up to be more accessible without the risk of a shower step. This creates a seamless and visually appealing design, especially in open-concept or spa-inspired bathrooms.



Stand Alone Tubs Truly Stand Out

In the past, the only stand alone tub option was the iconic clawfoot tub, but that's far from modern or minimalist. Today however, with the popularity of stand alone, there are many other more modern options. Freestanding soaking tubs give a sleek, clean look with their soft curves and inviting sheen. But there are other choices such as slipper tubs that have a raised end to support the head and neck, perfect for reclining and relaxing. The shape resembles a slipper, with a higher back for added comfort. If you're limited on space, there may still be room for a Japanese soaking tub or Ofuro, which features a deep and compact design that conserves space while making a modern statement.

Floating Vanities Elevate Style

Minimalist bathrooms are defined by clean lines and no design is sleeker than the rectangular appeal of a floating vanity. Without legs or other ornate additions to distract the eye, a floating vanity simplifies the space and instantly adds to the modern feel. Not only that, but you'll appreciate the effortless cleaning that comes with a vanity that's simply attached to the wall. Just make sure your pipes are formatted to be run through the wall, otherwise you'll need a plumber or your remodeling contractor to reformat their arrangement. Complete the look for underlighting to enhance the spa-like feel. *Cont'd on pg. 20* ▶▶

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We couldn't overlook one of the most important elements to any bathroom. While a toilet is typically more function than form, there are new options that lend themselves to a more modern vibe than your typical big box model. A wall-mounted toilet offers a streamlined look, and like a floating vanity, makes cleaning a breeze. But you can take the minimalism one step further with an in-wall toilet tank to simplify the look of this space even further.

Beyond these main elements, there are several steps you can take to cover all of the bases of a minimalist bathroom.

Step 1: Define Your Style

Begin by envisioning the specific elements of a modern minimalist bathroom that appeal to you. Consider clean lines, neutral color palettes, and the strategic use of dramatic focal points. Identify your preferred balance between simplicity and boldness. White marble for instance is a classic look that can be used on the floors and walls and paired with light woods, concrete or crisp white subway tile.

Step 2: Choose a Striking Color Palette

Opt for a minimalist color scheme dominated by neutral tones such as whites, grays, or muted earthy colors. Introduce drama through accent colors like deep blues, blacks, or metallics for fixtures and accessories. This creates a sense of contrast and visual interest. But you don't need to feel tied to simply white or gray, a minimalist bathroom can feature any color, as long as you keep the color palette to no more than a trio of shades.

Step 3: Streamlined Fixtures and Furniture

Select fixtures and furniture with clean lines and a simple, functional design. Wall-mounted vanities, floating shelves, and frameless mirrors contribute to the uncluttered aesthetic of modern minimalism while maintaining a touch of drama through their simplicity.

Step 4: Embrace Statement Lighting

Introduce drama with carefully chosen lighting fixtures. Recessed lighting will provide functional lighting while remaining low profile. Pendant lights or wall sconces with bold designs can serve as eye-catching focal points. Opt for fixtures that emit a warm, inviting glow, adding a touch of luxury to the minimalist space.

Step 5: Textures and Materials

Incorporate texture to elevate the bathroom's visual appeal.



Consider materials like matte tiles, natural stone, or textured wallpapers for an added layer of depth. The key is to maintain a cohesive, understated texture palette that enhances the minimalist vibe.

Step 6: Select Sleek Hardware

Opt for minimalist hardware such as sleek faucets, handles, and towel bars. Choose finishes like matte black or brushed nickel to add a contemporary touch. These subtle details contribute to the overall sophistication of the space.

Step 7: Strategic Art and Décor

Incorporate dramatic artwork or a statement piece to break the monotony of a minimalist backdrop. Consider large-scale photography, abstract art, or a strategically placed decorative element that aligns with the modern minimalist theme.

Step 8: Keep Clutter at Bay

Maintain the essence of minimalism by decluttering your space. Implement efficient storage solutions to hide toiletries and personal items, ensuring a clean and serene environment.

Step 9: Thoughtful Greenery

Introduce a touch of nature with carefully selected greenery.



Minimalist planters with a single, striking plant can add a refreshing element without overwhelming the space.

Step 10: Personalize with Purpose

Lastly, infuse elements of your personality into the space with carefully chosen accessories. Select items that serve a purpose while contributing to the overall aesthetic, avoiding unnecessary clutter.

Because of its simplicity, you don't need a slew of elements to achieve a minimalist bathroom retreat. Focus on quality materials, functional spaces and limit the number of colors, textures and materials to create a simplified and serene bathroom space ■

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Tantalizing Tiles...

Trends for a Terrific Home Transformation

If you're looking for a way to give your home an upgrade, bringing in the luxurious appeal of tile can instantly boost its aesthetic. That's because tile is made of natural materials like marble and stone, bringing a substantial elegance to any room. Whether you're looking to enhance the look of your floors by adding in tile or provide a burst of style with a gorgeous tile backsplash, there are a few things to consider before taking the plunge:

Choosing the Perfect Tile for Your Space

For high-traffic areas like kitchens and bathrooms, porcelain and ceramic tiles are popular due to their durability and water resistance. If you're aiming for an elegant touch in living rooms or entryways, natural stone tiles like marble or travertine can be a great choice. For outdoor spaces, you'll want to focus on more robust options such as slate or quarry tiles that can withstand the elements. In smaller areas like backsplashes or shower niches, mosaic tiles, with their petite pieces, can add a stylish accent touch.

Understanding the unique features of each tile type allows you to choose based on the specific requirements of the space, providing both functionality and style to your home. And while you may be tempted to turn this tile transformation into your next DIY project, this home improvement is one that you should let the professionals handle for the best outcome. Since precision is paramount to quality tile work, a professional contractor will work to achieve a level and even surface, especially in tricky areas like bathrooms and kitchens. This requires



expertise and pros have the specialized tools and know-how to ensure your tiles align seamlessly.

Different tiles call for different techniques. From cutting intricate patterns to handling specific materials like natural stone, a professional installer understands the nuances of each type and will prevent costly mistakes. Because proper substrate preparation is vital, professionals assess the subfloor condition, addressing potential issues like uneven surfaces or moisture problems, ensuring the longevity of your tile installation. And the remodel firm you choose will streamline the process, minimizing disruptions to your daily life and ensuring a polished result that stands the test of time.

Flooring Finesse: Terrazzo Triumphs and Large Format Luxe

Many areas of your home can benefit from a tile floor. For instance, entryways and foyers deliver a great first impression with durable and stylish options like porcelain or ceramic tiles. Other tile designs mimic the look of natural stone or wood while providing an easy-to-clean and stain-resistant floor. For high traffic areas like living rooms, kitchens, and dining rooms porcelain and ceramic tiles are popular choices due to their resistance to water, stains, and high traffic.

You might also explore options like porcelain wood-look tiles for a warm aesthetic. Large format tiles continue to remain popular and offer an easy way to add a flooring upgrade to an open concept space.

When it comes to bathroom tiles for the floor, choose moisture-resistant tiles such as ceramic, porcelain, or natural stone. For a cohesive look, consider extending the same tiles used on the floor to shower walls or bathroom backsplashes. Don't overlook spaces like hallways, laundry rooms and mudrooms for tile flooring. This durable flooring option makes it easy to wipe up paw prints and laundry detergent spills. You can even choose tiles that have a slip resistant surface for especially high traffic areas. Finally, if you're concerned that tile flooring might be too chilly on bare feet, consider radiant floor heating systems underneath the tile to consistently add a toasty touch to your tiles.

Backsplash Brilliance: Mosaic Marvels and Beyond

In recent years, backsplashes have experienced a renaissance, where homeowners have embraced the opportunity to add a splash of artistry and imagination to even the most minimalist kitchen. From geometric patterns to floral mosaics, the backsplash gives you a

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place to make a big statement, even if it's in just a tiny space. But don't feel limited to just under the cabinet, backsplash tiling has been taken to greater heights extending up to the ceiling in many kitchens. Since it may be less square footage than your flooring, a backsplash can be a place to splurge on artisanal tiles like glass, textured porcelains, and cement pieces.

For those favoring a more understated elegance, subway tiles in unconventional arrangements steal the spotlight. Experiment with herringbone or vertical stacking for a fresh take on a classic favorite. Earthy tones and matte finishes add a touch of subdued sophistication, providing a neutral backdrop that complements various kitchen styles.

Make Your Shower Stunning with a Tile Upgrade

When you think of decorative tile, the shower is probably one of the first spaces that comes to mind. Given the moisture-prone environment of a shower, this space demands water-resistant materials. Porcelain, ceramic,

and glass tiles are ideal choices, providing durability that can stand up to the constant steam and sprays of the shower. To complement the overall design of your bathroom, coordinate the shower tile colors and patterns with the flooring, vanity, and other elements for a cohesive and harmonious aesthetic.

Experiment with tile sizes to create visual interest on your shower walls. Large format tiles offer a sleek and modern look, while smaller mosaic tiles provide intricate detailing. Choose the size that aligns with your design vision and the size of your shower space. Consider incorporating accent tiles for a touch of drama on specific sections of the walls, such as in a shower niche. This accent can be a contrasting color or pattern that adds a focal point and a personalized touch to the space.

Hearth Harmony: Tiles Enhance Your Fireplace

Fireplaces are often a centerpiece of a room and new tiles can complement the overall design of a living room whether you choose natural stone, sleek porcelain, or

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rustic wood-toned tiles. You'll want to choose heat-resistant materials like porcelain, ceramic, or natural stone, since these materials can withstand the high temperatures around a fireplace without losing their charm.

The size and shape of the tiles can significantly impact the fireplace's appearance. Larger tiles create a more modern and streamlined look, while smaller, intricate tiles may evoke a traditional or vintage feel. Experiment





with different textures and finishes. Matte finishes offer a more subdued look, while glossy finishes can add a touch of sophistication. Textured tiles, like those with a 3D effect, can create visual interest. From glistening marble to understated stone, tile can

add an unmistakable splash of elegance to any room. If your home needs a refresh, consider tile. Not only will it bring an instant facelift to your home, but it will also create a durable and worry-free installation which you can enjoy for years to come ■

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Embracing Comfort and Efficiency

The Allure of Ductless Heat Pumps for Homeowners

Although interior design trends seem to constantly evolve, it doesn't seem like much has changed in the way of home climate control in decades. However, that is changing as ductless heat pumps are transforming the world of HVAC. Why? Because these modern marvels are energy efficient and provide a more versatile way to a comfortable living environment. So what does a heat pump offer you as a homeowner compared to a typical central air and furnace combination?

What is a Heat Pump?

Before jumping into the benefits of a heat pump, it's important to first understand what it is and how it's different from a traditional set up of a furnace and central air conditioning unit. While central air conditioning and furnace heat use ducts throughout the home to either create cold or hot air that is pushed through the ducts, a ductless heat pump works a bit differently. While it's called a heat pump, it can provide both relief from hot temps in the summer and warm up rooms in the cold weather months. A heat pump can come in both duct and ductless varieties. Heat pumps that use ducts can heat and cool an entire home and use electricity rather than gas or oil like older models of furnaces.

Experience Unprecedented Energy Efficiency

One of the key advantages of ductless heat pumps is their unparalleled efficiency. Unlike traditional systems that can experience energy loss through ducts, ductless heat pumps deliver conditioned air directly to the living spaces. This targeted approach ensures minimal energy waste, allowing homeowners to enjoy efficient heating and cooling without the typical energy losses associated with ducted systems.

Cost-Effective Comfort

Installing ductwork in a home can be a costly and time-consuming process. Ductless heat pumps eliminate this hurdle, offering a cost-effective solution for homeowners looking to upgrade their heating and cooling systems. The absence of ducts not only reduces installation costs but also prevents potential maintenance issues that can arise in traditional ducted systems over time.

Zoned Comfort Control

Ductless heat pumps provide homeowners with the luxury of zoned heating and cooling. This means that each indoor unit operates independently, allowing for precise temperature control in individual rooms or zones. If you have ever been tired of heating or cooling an entire home when you've only used a single room all day, this is a feature you'll appreciate. This not only enhances comfort but also contributes to significant energy savings by only conditioning spaces that are in use.

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Installation Simplicity

The installation process for ductless heat pumps is remarkably straightforward compared to traditional HVAC systems. No ductwork means less invasive construction work, making it an attractive option for homeowners looking to upgrade their heating and cooling without major disruptions. Additionally, the versatility of ductless systems allows for easy retrofitting in homes with existing ductwork or for supplemental heating and cooling in specific areas.

Year-Round Versatility

Remember, ductless heat pumps are not limited to providing warmth during the colder months. They operate as both heaters and air conditioners, ensuring year-round comfort. This dual functionality makes them an ideal choice for regions like the Lehigh Valley which have both intensely cold winters and searing summers.

Quiet Operation

Have you ever had to turn up the volume on the TV because the furnace kicked on? Noise can be a significant concern with traditional HVAC systems. Ductless heat pumps are renowned for their quiet operation, ensuring that the only thing you'll notice is the comfort they provide. The absence of noisy ducts and the use of advanced compressor technology contribute to a peaceful and serene indoor environment.

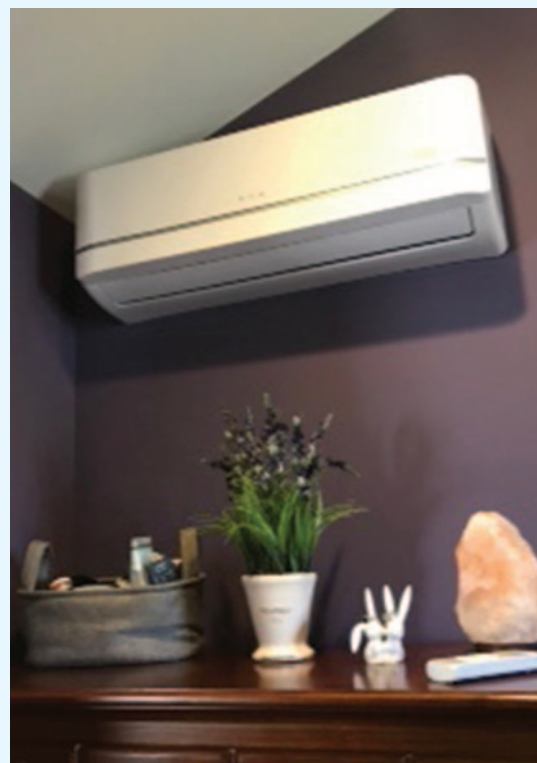
Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

In an era where energy efficiency and environmental sustainability are at the forefront of our minds, ductless heat pumps offer an easy way to lessen your carbon footprint. These systems use electricity to move heat rather than generate it, making them a highly efficient option.

Enhancing Home Aesthetics

We've discussed in detail the functional benefits of heat pumps, but it's also important to highlight their value

in terms of appearance. The indoor units come in sleek and modern designs, typically installed near ceiling height. They provide a contemporary touch to your living spaces and some models even offer customization options, allowing you to choose units that seamlessly blend with your decor.



Elevating Home Comfort with Ductless Heat Pumps

Ductless heat pumps are an innovative home heating and cooling option that provides many benefits of the standard furnace and air conditioner unit. From their efficient operation and cost-effectiveness to the flexibility they offer in zoning and installation, ductless heat pumps cater to the evolving needs of modern homeowners. If you've been searching for a solution to your home's climate control needs, a heat pump offers the comfort, versatility, and energy efficiency to transform your home into a haven of year-round comfort ■



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