



TRENDS IN RENOVATION

ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, BUILD + OUTDOOR LIVING

The origins of home improvement can be traced to the early part of the century, when home ownership became within reach for growing numbers of families, and mass-circulation magazines began providing readers with information about home renovation. World War II provided many Americans with the skills to undertake home-improvement projects on their own. As home remodeling became a central feature of domestic life and consumer culture, the “do-it-yourself” movement was born, coming of age in the post-war 1950s. Today, home renovation is a multi-billion-dollar industry, offering endless opportunities to automate, beautify and organize our interior and exterior spaces—with an emphasis on energy conservation and environmentally conscious building materials and methodology.

WRITTEN BY DEVON CAHAN

PRUDENT DESIGN + BUILD

Andrea D'Alessio, Jr.'s career in the family home building business commenced at the age of 14, where he was an assistant stonemason. Fast-forward a decade or two, when home building dominated the marketplace and palatial custom homes could not get constructed fast enough, D'Alessio created one bespoke masterpiece after the next in rural and suburban neighborhoods throughout New York and Pennsylvania. The downturn in the economy, however, produced a significant shift in consumer behavior marked by downsizing and prioritizing. "Since the building industry's dramatic turn after 2008, there were fewer new builds," D'Alessio notes. "As the market began to rebound, we

things on the subject matter, starting with some remodeling advice in the space customarily most in need of TLC: the kitchen. "If your kitchen has four walls, that is the first indication that it needs a reno," D'Alessio says. "Kitchens are no longer single-use rooms; they need to be opened up into great rooms, family rooms and dining rooms. It's not just for cooking anymore—it's the central command center of the home. And if there isn't access to outside space from the kitchen, you better get moving on that remodel fast!" Ok, so now what? The prognosis is clear, but how do we, the homeowners, get the most value out of a remodel? And what is considered contemporary but not trendy?



D'ALESSIO INSPIRED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS

This home's interior rooms are extended with balconies and French doors that open onto backyard living spaces—outdoor loggia with fireplace and custom-designed terraces surrounding a built-in pool.

"In the Northeast, we've seen an overwhelming demand to create backyards as additional living and recreational spaces that include highly designed luxury pools and spas."

-ANDREA D'ALESSIO, JR.

saw a significant increase in renovations. The renovation market continues to grow and as the industry begins to see an upturn, we see the demand for new home building increasing as well. However, we have seen a definite change with clients' desire to stay in their current homes and retrofit them to accommodate their changing needs versus moving."

Today, the new-build vs. remodel paradigm has seemingly reached equilibrium among high-end homeowners and buyers. In turn, D'Alessio's work is dynamic—rich with opportunities to create classical European-style homes from the ground up or to transform existing residences from the top down. In the context of this theme, renovations, we asked D'Alessio and his team a few

"High-end finishes are a must in the luxury market, from faucets to marble to travertine backsplashes and floors for both kitchen and bathroom renovations. Custom cabinetry is also a must, as are functional islands that look like furniture and can accommodate a dishwasher or microwave," D'Alessio shares. Where does technology come into play in this endeavor? "Technology has conquered the kitchen with smart, connected refrigerators that take inventory, robot vacuums, Wi-Fi light bulbs and the like," he says. "Connected professional appliances, such as built-in double convection wall ovens, gas ranges found in four-star restaurants and induction ranges, can talk to you from your kitchen's communication center or from remote locations, all designed to meet various interior design tastes."