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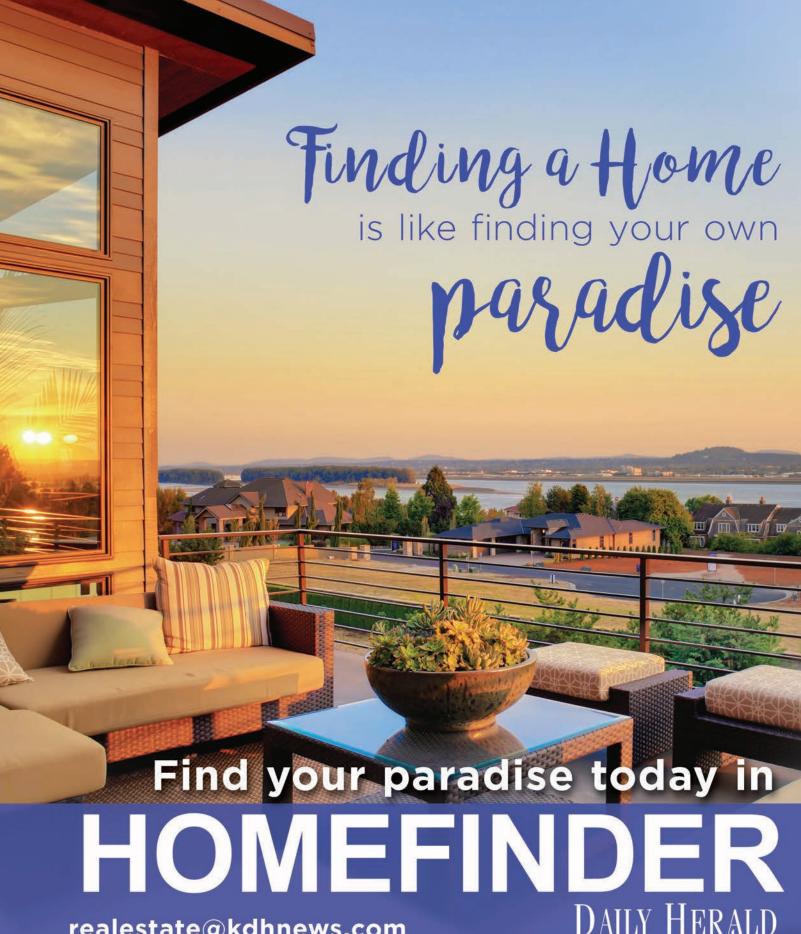
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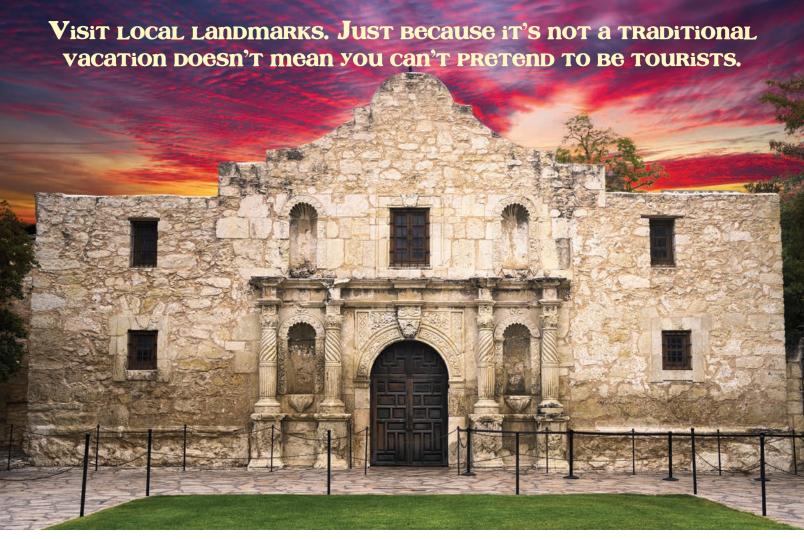
Doing some Home Remodeling? Hire Smart Pg. 20



WITHOUT



5 Family Staycation ideas That won't break your budget



(eLivingtoday.com) Family vacations are a great way to bond and take a step back from the hectic schedules that accompany everyday life, but sometimes time or money (or both) make planning an elaborate trip a non-starter.

camping Doesn'T Have to be done Far From Home. in Fact, it can be done Right in your own Backyard.

However, a staycation – a vacation you take right in your hometown (or nearby) – can be much less expensive and fit into nearly any amount of available time with the added bonus of skipping out on potentially stressful travel.

Consider these staycation ideas to take advantage of your local area's attractions and prove you don't have to go far to spend quality time together. **Visit local landmarks.** Just because it's not a traditional vacation doesn't mean you can't pretend to be tourists. Start by visiting the places you recommend to friends and family from out of town or pick up a city guidebook to uncover

hidden spots you may not even know exist. Make a plan to seek out historic sites, visit local landmarks like museums or try an out-of-the-way restaurant (or two) you've never eaten at before.





Camp out in the backyard. Camping doesn't have to be done far from home. In fact, it can be done right in your own backyard. Pitch a tent to sleep under the stars and plan a night full of traditional

camping activities like roasting s'mores, telling spooky stories by flashlight and trying to identify stars and constellations.

Set up a picnic in the park. Pack a basket with sandwiches, fruit and other treats and head to the park. You can enjoy a casual meal then take advantage of the open space for a family walk or game of tag before retreating to the playground to let the little ones expel any leftover energy.

Have a home spa day. If you're looking for some relaxation but don't want to splurge on the full spa treatment, plan an at-home oasis instead. Light some candles, run a bubble bath and break out the facial masks and fingernail polish.

Visit an amusement park. No matter where you live, there's probably an amusement or water park within driving distance. A quick online search before you arrive can help prepare a strategy for hitting the most popular thrill rides and waterslides while skipping those that may not provide quite the same entertainment value.

Find more tips and tricks for enjoying family time together at eLivingtoday.com.



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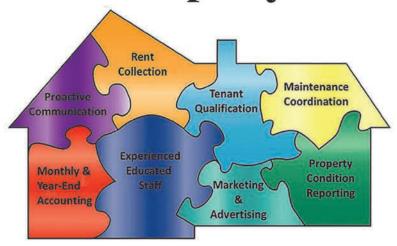
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BATHROOM

(Family Features) Due to their small size and heavy usage, bathrooms can become messy, cluttered areas for many families. For those with smaller bathrooms, storage solutions can be even harder to find. Consider these organization tips to make your bathroom a clean and functional space for every member of the family:

1. Assess the mess:

Go through all the cabinets and drawers to clear out unused makeup, health care products and medications. Make sure the items you keep are used on a regular basis. Items used sparingly should be placed in an alternate location.





2. Go vertical:

Medicine cabinets can quickly get stuffed when combs, toothpaste and other toiletries are stored horizontally. Use organizer cups with suction adhesives to contain items vertically and save space.



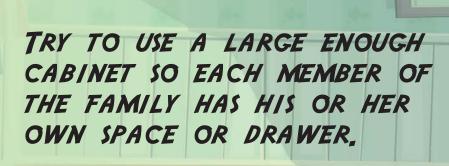
3. Hang up in style: Old coat racks and ladders make perfect solutions for larger families to hang multiple towels. Snag an old one from a thrift store and paint it a bright hue, like red or turquoise, for a stylish bathroom accent piece.

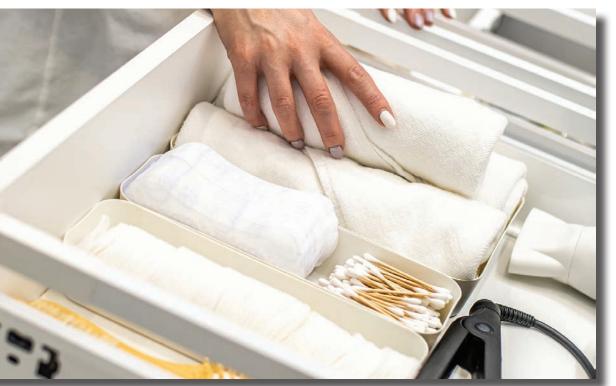




4. Avoid spills and squirts:

Hair products, such as gels, mousses or hairsprays, can create sticky, tough-to-clean messes if liquid escapes the container in a drawer or cabinet. Avoid such mishaps by placing these types of items in plastic tubs instead of directly in the drawer or on a shelf.





5. Divide and conquer:

Bathroom drawers can become unruly if not organized. To keep items separate and tidy, insert dividers, such as those used for kitchen utensils. These often come in fun materials, such as bamboo or stainless steel, to add a fresh look.

6. Assign cabinets or drawers:

Try to use a large enough cabinet so each member of the family has his or her own space or drawer. This can help limit the amount of items high-maintenance family members can bring into the small area. Plus, it makes it easier for everyone to find their things.







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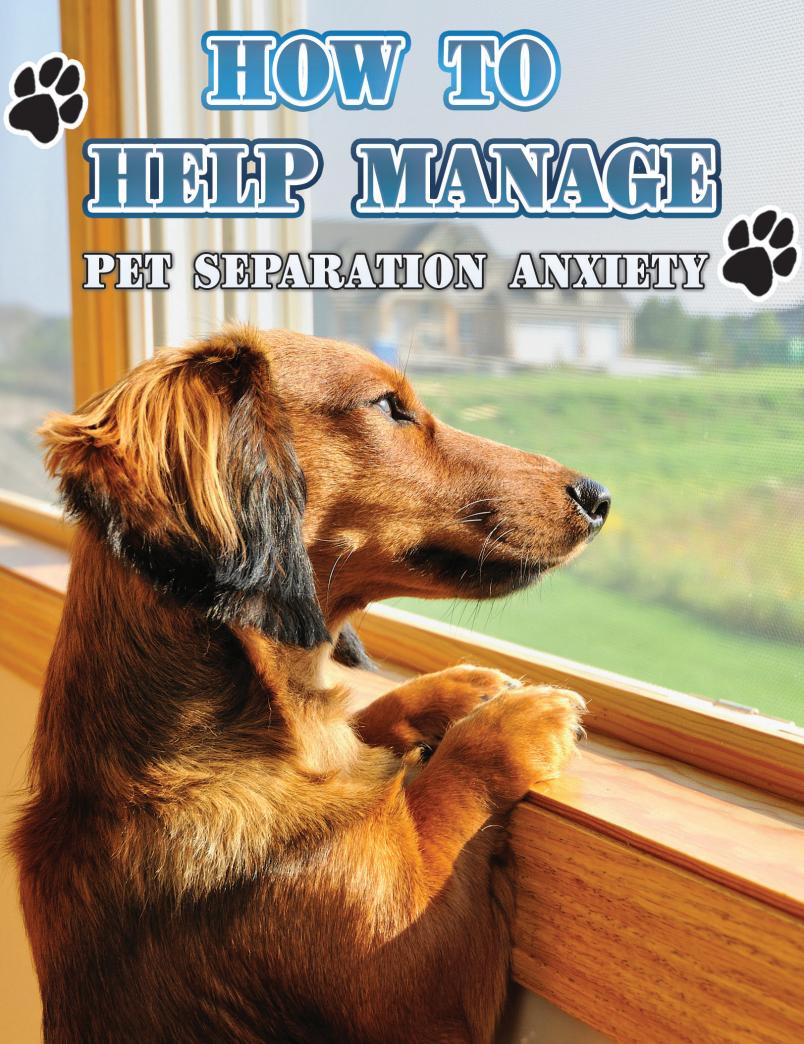


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(Family Features) For more than a year, working from home and keeping social circles small due to COVID-19 has meant people have been able to spend more time with their pets. However, as more Americans are vaccinated and restrictions loosen across the country, it's likely many are spending less time at home with their pets. As a result, pet parents should be prepared to spot the signs of separation anxiety and help their pets manage.

When left at home alone, pets can exhibit behaviors that could indicate they're experiencing separation anxiety. It's not a new problem, but it can become more pronounced as pet parents begin to spend less time at home, whether they're returning to work full-time or just leaving the house more often. It may be especially challenging for pets that found their forever homes during the

pandemic, as being alone

may be a stark

contrast to what they've become accustomed to. In these cases, pets may struggle to learn how to cope with being by themselves.

pet

separation

pets and

alone

To help

embrace

time,

parents identify

anxiety in their

consider these tips from Dr. Crista Coppola, PetSmart's consulting animal behaviorist and separation anxiety expert.

How to Identify Separation Anxiety

Changes in behavior are some of the most common indicators of separation anxiety. These behaviors are coping mechanisms and can include excessive barking or whining, destruction near exit points or windows, having accidents around the house,

hyper salivating, pacing, decreased appetite and depression. To better understand what your pet is experiencing, consider setting up a video camera when you leave to see how he or she behaves hen you're not there.

Ways to Prepare Your Pet for Separation

Unpredictability has been shown to add stress for

many animals, including dogs, Coppola said. Routines, however, can help many pets cope with stressful situations. Because a vacation or long weekend getaway involves a change in your pet's routine, these seemingly small changes can make him or her susceptible to separation anxiety. If you know change is coming, slowly introduce your pet to the idea of being alone beforehand to help your four-legged friend prepare. Start by taking short trips outside your home without your pet - even if just for a few minutes - and consider leaving treats or toys to help make the alone time more enjoyable.

When you are ready to leave the house, set up a cozy, inviting space for your pet, where he or she can't destroy items or get hurt trying to escape. Consider a non-carpeted area in case of accidents or install a doggie door to allow for going outside when necessary. Prior to any period of alone time, mentally and physically engaging your pet by going for a walk or run, or working on quick

trick training, can make it more likely he or she spends at least some of the time you're gone resting.

While you're gone, Coppola recommends providing your pets with enrichment activities such as puzzles, chews and calming aids like the Adaptil Calm On-the-Go Dog Collar. Calming vests like the veterinarian-

recommended Thundershirt can also help pets transition.

Solutions for Coping with Anxiety

If your pet is excessively barking or exhibiting destructive behaviors, never punish him or her and avoid expressing disappointment or frustration, Coppola said. It is understandable to feel this way, but it can upset your pet further and add to the stress he or she may already be feeling. Instead, spend time having fun together when you are home and consider an option like PetSmart's Doggie Day Camp, which can help ease the transition by gradually introducing your pet to the amount of time left alone.

Available at more than 200 locations in full- or half-day sessions – including themed playdates – your furry friend will receive expert care, exercise, mentally stimulating playtime and socialization with other pups.

Learn more and find additional solutions to help deal with separation anxiety at petsmart.com/newnormal.





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(Family Features) When you decide to make the investment in a home improvement project, you're likely entrusting a professional contractor to bring your vision to life on time and on budget.

Remodeling contractors are diverse, so it's important to take your time, ask lots of questions and do your research before selecting the right one for the job. Keep in mind these considerations from the experts at the National Association of the Remodeling Industry:

Choose local. A

local home
improvement
contractor with an
established
business in your
area is likely
connected to
your
community

community
and has a
vested
interest in
doing a job
well.
Referrals
are an
important
source of
business for
local
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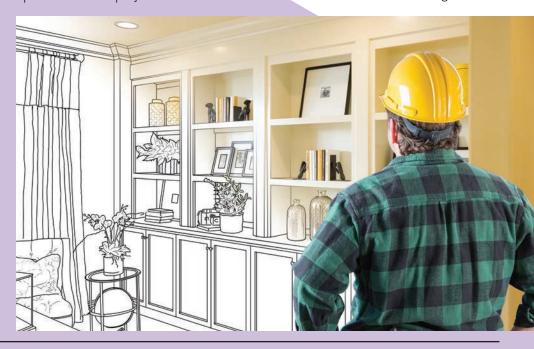
local remodelers are typically compelled to perform quality work that satisfies their customers in order for their businesses to survive.



Discuss experience. While a skilled remodeler may be willing to take on something new, chances are you'll be best served by working with someone who has experience with your specific project. A learning curve can be expensive, and the results aren't always exactly as you hope. Talk about similar projects the contractor has completed in the past and how that work compares to what you're planning. Also be sure to ask what, if any, outside certifications a contractor may have earned that are pertinent to the project.

Understand staffing. Be sure you're clear about who will be in your home completing the work, whether it's the person you meet to discuss a bid or an assigned team. Ask who the project supervisor will be, and if any work is to be subcontracted, who is ultimately responsible for those tasks.

Check references. A reputable contractor should be able to produce a list of past customers who can attest to the remodeler's workmanship and service. You can contact the government





Consumer Affairs Office and the Better Business Bureau to check for complaints on record for the contractor. Also ask if the remodeler is a member of any trade groups or associations.

Verify licensing. Many states, but not all, require contractors to be licensed, bonded or both. Contact your state or local licensing agencies to ensure the contractor meets all requirements. Ask the remodeling contractor for current copies of applicable licenses.

Confirm insurance. Ask to see a copy of the remodeling contractor's certification of insurance or the name of his or her insurance agency to verify coverage. Most states require a contractor to carry worker's compensation, property damage and personal liability insurance. Make sure the contractor's insurance coverage meets all the minimum requirements.

Compare bids. There are a number of different factors that go into pricing a

remodeling project. Be sure that every estimate reflects the same scope of work. If the estimates don't fully spell out what work is going to be done, go back to the contractor for clarification in writing.

Find more tips for selecting a contractor at remodelingdoneright.com.tesy of Getty Images



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(Family Features) When you tackle a remodeling project, there are many unknowns, including what types of materials you might uncover.
Hazardous materials must be addressed, and possibly removed, if exposed during a remodeling project. There are also some materials that should be removed to create a healthier home environment

be" removed depends on several factors. It is always wise to consult with trained professionals, such as members of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, when you encounter hazardous materials.

The complete removal of all hazardous materials is the preferred approach, but

Whether materials "must be" or "should

budget is often a hindrance. Thoroughly exploring your options may reveal a lower level of acceptable and more affordable mitigation.

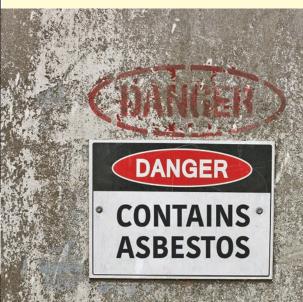


Most common residential hazardous materials are not hazardous if they remain in a dormant or undisturbed location. Typically, they become hazardous during the demolition phase when they are ground, cut, bumped, scraped or disturbed in

some way, causing the materials to become airborne and inhaled.

Examples of common hazardous materials include:

- **Lead-based** paint, which can be found on be anything that is painted or varnished such as windows, millwork, cabinets, siding, walls and other surfaces.
- Lead water lines, which are primarily hazardous after water sits in the lines for some time prior to consumption, although contamination still occurs during normal flow rates.
- **Asbestos**, which was once commonly used in a wide range of materials such as pipe or duct insulation; flooring tiles or sheet goods; ceiling tiles and plaster; wall and attic insulation; and plaster used as a binder.



- **Silica,** which is exceptionally dangerous during saw cutting processes where dust is created.
- Mold, which is not hazardous until the spores are disturbed, become airborne and are inhaled or ingested. Any visible or detectable mold should be removed, and the surfaces cleaned or removed. High concentrations of mold should be addressed by trained professionals, as it can be hazardous if not handled properly.
- **Dust,** which can be hazardous to some individuals who are sensitive or have breathing-related issues. Dust barriers and negative air enclosures can help minimize, but not eliminate, dust contamination to the rest of the home. Commercial dust "scrubber" filtering systems can significantly reduce dust contamination.

Installation

Once the existing hazardous materials are appropriately addressed, new materials will be placed in your home to replace or enhance the project. Due to strong demand by homeowners, you're likely to find many options for healthy products.

For example, prefinished materials (that can be painted, stained or varnished off-site) aid in the reduction of on-site fumes and vapors.

Other products to look for when you're remodeling with health in mind include:

- Low volatile organic compounds, which limit the amount of off-gassing of the materials used in the manufacturing process. Typically, these are paints, stains, varnishes, carpeting and vinyl products.
- **Renewable products,** which can be replenished quickly.
- Heat recovery ventilation systems that exchange the thermal qualities of the interior air with fresh air brought into the home.
- Air purification systems, which may involve ozone, pleated filters, high-micron filters, electrostatic filters or UV light systems, among others.
- **Dehumidification systems** designed to keep the relative humidity levels in a safe range to prevent mold growth.



- Exhaust fans in baths, kitchens, lower levels and workshops, installed to discharge smells, smoke, fumes and humidity.
- **Radon systems** designed to exhaust radon gases to the exterior.

Find more advice to navigate a health-conscious home remodel at remodelingdoneright.com.







For example, selected by a panel of industry experts based on functionality, aesthetics, craftsmanship, innovation and degree of difficulty, these 2021 National Association of the Remodeling Industry National Contractor of the Year (CotY) Award Winners showcase a variety of ideas for upgrading your outdoor spaces. Find the complete list at nari.org/cotywinners.

Residential Landscape Design/ Outdoor Living Under \$100,000

The clients wanted to upgrade a poorly draining, impractical backyard into an

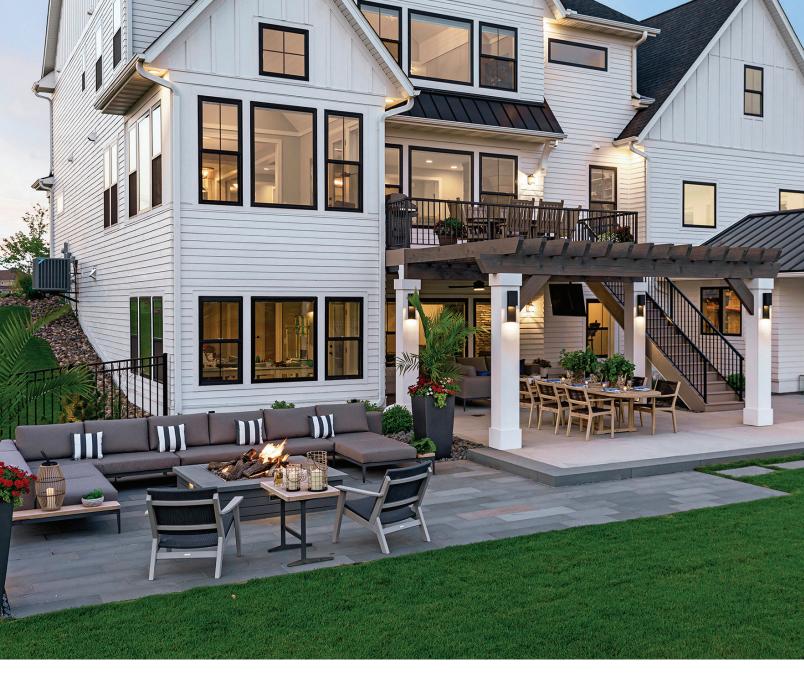
attractive, functional outdoor entertainment space that flowed from the renovated basement. The project included an outdoor area for entertaining, outdoor kitchen, spacious patio with a custom concrete fire pit, oversized ceiling fans, ample storage and landscaping complete with native plants around the perimeter.

"By working on this project, we learned how important it is to take a holistic look at what clients are trying to accomplish with their renovations," said Thomas Boyce, president of Boyce Design & Contracting. "Often with outdoor living projects, designers and contractors look at the exterior of the home in isolation. We learned to look at how the interior and exterior of the home connect to each other to make sure the features and floor plan flow and work well together. By taking this approach, we were able to achieve a better finished product that is more functional and attractive for our clients."

Residential Landscape Design/ Outdoor Living \$100,000-\$250,000

A young, active family was looking to





create a distinct outdoor living space with multiple entertainment spaces that tied in with the existing aesthetic and elevated the home amongst its neighbors. The low-maintenance backyard now features an outdoor dining area, sunken living room, entertainment area and additional storage space built with the home's current architectural features while also maintaining a large enough yard for the kids and their friends to play.

"The aesthetic of the outdoor areas was designed not only for function but also to reflect the interiors and keep the inside-outside living feeling continuous," said Tim Johnson, owner and founder of Livit Site + Structure.

"For example, the shiplap used on the fire table is the same shiplap featured inside the home. Likewise, the Douglas fir timbers used on the pergola are the same as the interior ceiling beams."

Residential Landscape Design/ Outdoor Living Over \$250,000

A 4,000-square-foot project built at four different elevations, this client wanted to include a safe way to move from the upper level to the backyard without coming through the house, a structure for shade and protection from mosquitoes and a pool with features that reflected the home. Adding a covered screen room with individually controlled wall panels, see-through fireplace, fountain, pool with sheer

descent waterfalls, recycled rock walls and staircase from the upper elevation while enclosing it all within a stone wall met those expectations.

"A sound piece of advice for anyone building anything in the backyard: get a plan," said Ken DePratt, owner of KD Poolscapes, Ltd. "Have it match your expectations list. Then, and only then, will you know if it matches your budget. We would recommend doing your research when taking on a pool project of any size. It's hard to push that hole around once it's dug."

Source: National Association of the Remodeling Industry







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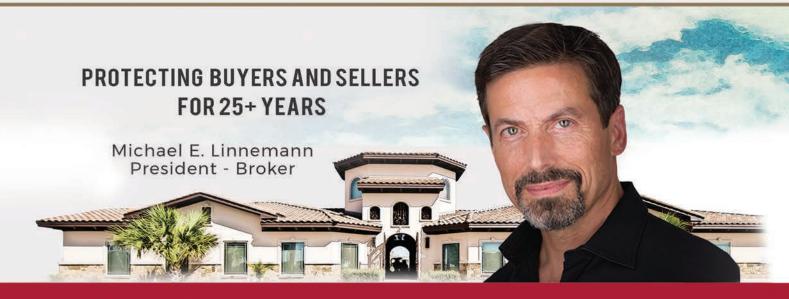
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