

Three major home renovations that are worth the effort



(StatePoint) Building a new home? Overhauling an existing one? Here are three renovation ideas that will add beauty and value.

Don't let that basement sit unfinished and unused. Substantially expand your home's livable areas by turning your attention to the bottom floor. Finishing a basement is an involved project, potentially requiring electrical and plumbing work, insulation, drywall and more – but the end result is worth the effort and expense. What's more, some of the less

technical aspects of this renovation could even be DIY-ed.

Expand Your Living Space

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Before getting started, consider what type of space would most benefit your household long-term. You may even be able to recoup some cost of the investment. For example, turning your basement into an at-home fitness center means ditching the costly gym membership. Want to reduce time and money on your commute? Your basement may just make an ideal home office..

Add a Focal Point

Is your interior design in need of a little something? The right eye-catching ele-

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ments can make a room pop while adding vitality to your living spaces. A fireplace, for example, adds ambiance and comfort while also creating a natural gathering space.

What's more, new models pair the charm of a traditional open-front fireplace with the design flexibility of gas models. The Phoenix TrueView from Heat & Glo offers the convenience of gas without the glass, giving homeowners an unobscured view of the flames against the traditional brick or fade-resistant reflective black glass liner. An optional Bluetooth speaker system allows one to hear the fire as well as see it – making it a focal point for the ears as well as the eyes.

Boost the Backyard

If you find that your household spends very little time in the backyard, figure out why. Is there a lack of shade? Are there not enough places to sit? Take a poll so you can diagnose the problem and take steps to correct it. Consider also how to make this space usable for a larger portion of the year, such as adding a fire pit or an enclosed, heated patio. Lastly, consider aesthetics. A bit of landscaping can make your backyard as visually appealing as your home's interiors.

This season, consider the renovations that will go furthest to boost your home's livability, beauty and value.

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Six home décor trends to make a style statement



(StatePoint) Is your home décor starting to feel a bit stale? Spruce up your interiors with some of the hottest home design trends for 2018 – from customized cozy to natural textures to retro touches.

Here are some stylish ways to incorporate new trends, from one of the nation's most sought-after celebrity interior designers, Taniya Nayak.

4. Get Back to the Future: Give what's old a modern, futuristic update to achieve this trend. Try painting a vintage chair with a pop of color, like the Sherwin-Williams 2018 color of the year, Oceanside, a combination of rich blue with jewel-toned green. This

creates an eye-catching masterpiece that seamlessly integrates into both retro and modern home décor. Introducing bright colors to antiques produces a beautiful new spin on a classic look.

5. Design it with Love: What's "in" in home design this year? Creating warm and cozy spaces that are customized just for you. This is the true essence of DIY. Painting an accent wall in a pastel color, like lavender, will set a relaxed and comforting tone in the room. From there, add personal pieces like a soft woven blanket, a macramé wall hanging or ivory plates on a wall to transform any room to "your" room.

6. Embrace New England Prep: This style embraces the timeless combination of crisp white linens and navy blues, but what really gives a room an authentic New England vibe is the addition of camel-colored leather décor accents. Nayak recommends adding monogrammed pillows to a leather accent chair, or whitewashing your brick fireplace to create a look that never goes out of style.

Get started on your home projects now so you can enjoy your refreshed décor all year long.

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1. Create an Oasis: Make your home a tropical escape all year long. Add floral or banana leaf accents to form a staycation-worthy "at-home paradise" no matter the temperature. Nayak suggests pairing pops of metallic gold with plush greens and crisp white to build a look that is sophisticated, yet fun and exotic.

2. Keep it Simple: In 2018, Nayak encourages DIYers to "go big or go home...in the simplest way imaginable." An easy way to accomplish this is to paint your baseboards, trim or window mullions a dramatic contrasting color, like black against a white wall, for an effortless, yet powerful effect. And when it comes to achieving clean, sharp paint lines, one of Nayak's vital, go-to tools is a premium painter's tape, like FrogTape brand painter's tape that delivers the sharpest paint lines possible. Treated with patented PaintBlock Technology, FrogTape is a fool-proof way to get professional-looking results and eliminate the need for touch-ups.

3. Incorporate Natural Touches: This trend is all about nature's textures – think wood grain, geodes or ocean waves. One way to incorporate this look is to combine earthy tones like browns, beiges and deep blues with vibrant neon colors to generate the effect of the northern lights around the home.

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