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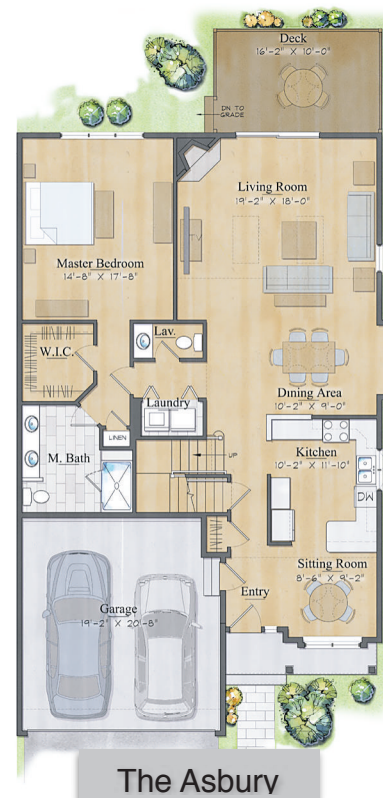


Watch for the new C.P. Berry Homes logo and rebranding across our construction, land development, brokerage, marketing and management platforms as we enter our 36th year of Building Dreams... one home at a time.

The History of the Pineapple as a symbol of hospitality is found in the early American colonies when pineapples were used to signify hospitality and friendship. The legend tells of the sea captains of New England, who sailed to the Caribbean Islands and returned to the colonies with exotic fruits and spices. When clipper ships returned to port, their families would spear a precious pineapple on their iron gatepost as a common symbol to welcome friends and neighbors into their homes to celebrate the safe return of the captain and crew. The pineapple served as an invitation for them to visit, share his food and listen to the tales of the voyage. In early settlements, the pineapple was traditionally given as a gift of friendship. Over time, colonial Innkeepers added the pineapple to their signs, and bedposts carved with pineapples were a common sight at Inns throughout New England. The tradition continues to this day, as homeowners and property owners proudly display and use the pineapple as a symbol of welcoming hospitality.

We look forward to sharing this tradition with you; visit a C.P. Berry Homes community or work with us as we make your new home dream come true.

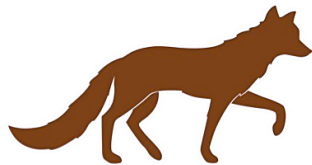
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The Bradford



ROLLING GREEN
AT TOPSFIELD

ROLLING GREEN AT TOPSFIELD

Maintenance-free living in Topsfield from C.P. Berry Homes

C.P. Berry Homes, known for quality-built, maintenance-free condominium communities and custom-built homes on the North Shore, including English Commons at Topsfield, Patton Ridge in Hamilton, Caldwell Farm in Newbury, Fuller Pond Village in Middleton, Ipswich Country Club Homes, Bartlett's Reach in Amesbury, and others, has had great interest in its newest 55+ community - **Rolling Green at Topsfield**. Over 50% of the total of thirty new homes (located on a private 13+ acre setting off Boston Street at the Topsfield/Ipswich town line) are either sold and occupied or under purchase contracts.

The homes feature, on the first-floor: a master suite, a well-appointed kitchen, a dining area, a living room with fireplace, laundry, powder room and access to the attached garage. On the second-floor: a guest bedroom, full bath and a loft, plus generous closet and storage space. The community is designed to have the feel of a traditional New England village, including a center common with a gazebo, walking paths and benches.

Two home designs are offered ranging in size from 2,160 up to 3,450 square feet. All the designs provide for the convenience of first floor living. Additional features include an outdoor deck with an option for a screen room, a front entry porch, a lower level patio in some homes and optional 4-season sunrooms.

Standard interior finishes include oak hardwood flooring, custom cabinetry, granite and quartz countertops, Kohler plumbing fixtures, KitchenAid stainless steel appliances, tile shower stalls in the master bath, and other interior finishes which the home-buyer may select from, to personalize your new home.

Every home is protected by a fire-sprinkler system and a hard-wired, monitored fire and security alarm system. Additionally, all the homes are constructed to Energy Star Certification - meaning energy use will be very efficient. Homes built by C.P. Berry typically use 25 to 35% less energy than a comparably-sized home built to the standard building code, thanks to the comprehensive Energy Star certification process.

The homes at Rolling Green at Topsfield are serviced with natural gas, all underground utilities, town water, private on-site septic disposal, and Verizon and Comcast.

The community offers a maintenance-free lifestyle where all outdoor care is managed by the owners' association, including snow removal, landscape maintenance, building maintenance and more. Exterior finish selections and construction techniques were chosen by C.P. Berry Homes to provide for durable finishes, requiring minimal maintenance and long lifespans. HardiePlank fiber-cement clapboard siding, CertainTeed 50-year architectural laminated roof shingles (installed over an ice & snow barrier covering the entire roof), composite decking, pressure-treated deck and porch framing, vinyl railing systems, granite exterior stair treads, brick paver walkways, are just some of the high-quality products used to construct the homes.

We invite you to visit Rolling Green at Topsfield to tour the Model Homes, which are open Tuesdays through Sundays until 4:30 p.m., or by appointment after-hours. Make the move to maintenance-free living in 2019 - You'll be glad that you did.

Mark O'Hara, Broker 978.807.2954 * 470 Boston Street., Topsfield, MA 01983

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HOMES

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FEATURES

6 FUNDING THE DREAM

Tips for navigating the mortgage process with ease.



11 DESIGN DETAILS

Hardscape features create attractive landscape designs.



22 THE VISUAL BASE

Innovative flooring options abound for every room.



26 MAKE IT POP

Bold color, decorative accents enhance a front entry.

8 INSTANT APPEAL

Staging strategies work to make a good first impression.

8 SEAL THE DEAL

Real estate agents give homes a selling edge.

10 OUTDOOR OASIS

Exterior enhancements boost value and enjoyment.

11 HIT THE DECK

Customize space outside to meet needs, interests.

14 UNEXPECTED ADDITION

Inside today's stylish and multifunctional garages.

18 ELEGANT COMFORT

Pattern, papers and antiques are having a moment.

28 FREE-FLOWING DESIGN

Open-concept home interiors bring vast opportunity.

30 ADDING IT UP

A primer on home improvement financing options.

FEATURED PROPERTIES

9 ESSEX: Natural beauty of the surroundings help create a refuge from it all.

15 EAST GLOUCESTER: Low-maintenance living in a smartly designed townhouse.

19 GLOUCESTER: Shingle-style, contemporary boasts spectacular ocean views.

21 MANCHESTER: Stunning home within minutes of beach marries style, functionality.

23 NEWBURY: Rebuilt 13-room colonial offers exquisite details in a pastoral setting.

27 WENHAM: New 55-plus community affords simplified, thoughtful luxury.

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Ready to buy? Shop for the best mortgage financing deal

Few people are able to walk into a home, like what they see and then pay for a house in cash. In the vast majority of home purchases, mortgages make the dream of home ownership a reality.

Getting a mortgage requires research and some preparation on the part of borrowers if they hope to get the friendliest terms possible.

Homes are substantial, decades-long investments, so it's smart to shop around to find the best rates and lenders available. These tips can make the process of applying and getting a mortgage go smoothly, and may even help borrowers save some money.

■ Learn your credit score.

Your credit score will be a factor in determining just how much bargaining power you have for lower interest rates on mortgage loans, according to the financial resource NerdWallet. The higher the credit score, the



Get your financial house in order before seeking a mortgage in order to qualify for the best rate.

better. Well before shopping for a mortgage, manage your debt, paying it off if possible, and fix any black marks or mistakes on your credit report.

■ Investigate various lenders.

The Federal Trade Commission says to get information from various sources, whether they are commercial

banks, mortgage companies, credit unions, or thrift institutions. Each is likely to quote different rates and prices, and the amount they're willing to lend you may vary as

These tips can make the process of applying and getting a mortgage go smoothly, and may even help borrowers save some money.

well. Investigating various lenders can help you rest easy knowing you got the best rate for you.

Lenders may charge additional fees that can drive up the overall costs associated with getting a mortgage. Compare these fees as well so you can be sure you get the best deal.

■ Consider a mortgage broker.

Mortgage brokers will serve as the middle person in the transaction. A broker's access to several different lenders can translate into a greater array of loan

products and terms from which to choose.

■ **Learn about rates.** Become informed of the rate trends in your area. Lower rates translate into significant savings per month and over the life of the loan. The rate may be fixed, though some are adjustable-rate mortgages (also called a variable or floating rate). Each has its advantages and disadvantages, and a financial consultant can discuss what might be in your best interest.

■ Discuss points with your financial adviser and lender.

Some lenders allow you to pay points in advance, which will lower the interest rate. Get points quoted in dollar amounts so they'll be easier to compare. If you're unfamiliar with points, discuss the concept with your financial adviser.

Learning about the mortgage process can help new buyers navigate these sometimes tricky financial waters.

Recently Sold



32 Pond Street, Beverly



5 Spring Street, Danvers



47 Apple Street, Essex



39 1/2 Boardman Street, Newburyport



4 Echo Avenue, Gloucester



11 Knowlton Square, Gloucester



12 Becker Circle, Gloucester



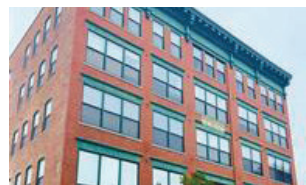
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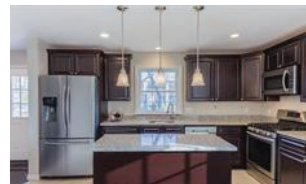
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Simple staging strategies to take you to 'sold'

Staging has long been part of selling a home, and for good reason. When selling a home, it makes sense for sellers to make their homes as appealing as possible.

Here are some simple and inexpensive staging strategies to entice buyers to make an offer on your home:

■ **Clear out the clutter.** Banish clutter from each room in the house, especially in bathrooms and closets, before hosting an open house. Note that it's not just bedrooms and living rooms that should be made to look open, spacious and clutter-free. A luxurious, hotel-quality bathroom that's open and airy can impress buyers, as can organized closets that are not packed with clothing, shoes and other items that tend to take over those spaces the longer someone lives in a home.

■ **Let the sun shine in.** A home that's bright and airy tends to appear more spacious and livable than one in which the windows and blinds are closed. Before hosting an



A well-maintained front yard makes a good first impression on potential homebuyers.

open house, open the blinds and crack some windows if the weather permits.

■ **Start right inside the front door.** A welcoming, clutter-free foyer or primary

entryway makes a strong first impression, immediately giving buyers an idea

of what it will be like to welcome their own friends and family into a home

should they buy it. If you hang your coats on a coat rack in a foyer or entryway that does not have a closet, remove the coat rack before hosting an open house. Coat racks can make the space feel cramped. If there's room, place a small table and bench just inside the door.

■ **Take care of the yard.** You only get one chance to make a first impression, and the first thing buyers will see when they pull up outside your house is the exterior. Landscaping is important; a well-maintained yard suggests to buyers that owners have taken pride in their homes and that may extend inside the home. Make sure the grass is freshly cut, shrubs and trees have been trimmed, bald spots in the lawn have been addressed, and exterior living spaces have been cleaned and cleared of clutter.

Staging a home sounds complicated. But there are various simple ways to make a home more attractive to prospective buyers.

Agents and sellers: Forging a successful partnership

Selling a home can be stressful. Despite this, 5.51 million existing U.S. homes were sold in 2017, according to data from the National Association of Realtors. In many cases, homeowners choose to work with real estate agents to facilitate the process of listing, showing and selling their homes.

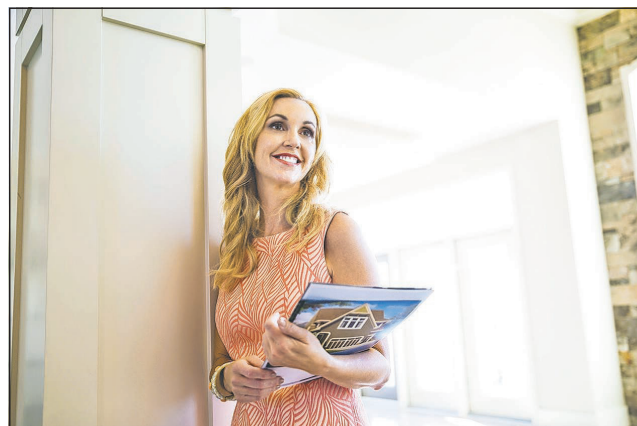
Real estate agents are valuable assets. Agents have neighborhood knowledge, are educated in pricing trends, can filter phone calls or emails from buyers who aren't serious, and can organize all of the people necessary for a closing. Real estate agents provide many services that the average person may not have the

time or the experience to handle.

When selecting an agent to sell a home, homeowners may not understand that the terms real estate agent and Realtor are not interchangeable.

Although both must be licensed to sell real estate, the main difference between a real estate agent and a Realtor is the latter is a member of the National Association of Realtors. The organization ensures that members subscribe to a certain code of ethics.

There are many qualified agents, but an agent cannot do his or her job well without some help on the part of the homeowner. These tips can



Qualified agents can help sell a property quickly, but they need the cooperation and support of the homeowner.

make the process of selling a home go smoothly.

■ **Price the home correctly.** Homeowners should trust

the agent's ability to price a home for the market. Everyone wants to get the most money possible, but listing

the home for more than it's worth may cause it to sit unnecessarily for several weeks or months, which could raise red flags among potential buyers.

■ **Market the home.** A real estate agent will list the home via a multiple listing service (MLS) on a private website, in newspapers, and wherever else he or she feels is pertinent. Homeowners can share the listing via social media and word of mouth to help increase the chances of selling the home.

■ **Be available.** Limiting the time an agent can show the house to potential buyers is in no one's best interest. Sellers should be ready and willing to open their homes,

which is the best way to make a sale. An agent may suggest a lock box so the home can be shown when homeowners are not on the property.

■ **Make suggested renovations.** Agents know which features can make or break a sale. Homeowners should be amenable to certain suggestions, such as neutral paint colors, removing personal effects and clearing clutter.

■ **Give recommendations.** Real estate is a commission-based industry. Agents often tirelessly put in hours and reap rewards only if the house is sold. A homeowner who was satisfied with an agent can then recommend that person to friends or family.

Stunning Essex contemporary brings lifestyle to the forefront

By LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

This spacious Acorn-designed contemporary in Essex is inarguably spectacular in its own right, but its surroundings are what set it apart from the rest.

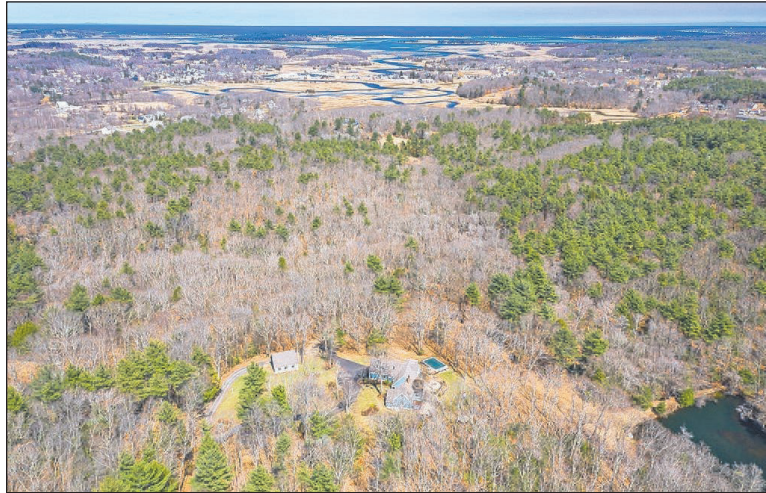
Nestled on more than 14 acres of secluded woodlands and abutting 3,500 acres of conservation land owned and maintained by Manchester/Essex Conservation, the property is further complemented by a lighted, 3/4-acre pond on which boating and skating are encouraged. Brand new to the market, this very unique offering is listed exclusively for \$1,228,800 by Pam Cote of RE/MAX Advantage Real Estate.

“Living here, you will enjoy the natural beauty of the outside every single day by taking leisurely strolls through the woods, going for rigorous hikes to Manchester and Gloucester, and experiencing the clear call of native birds right outside your window,” suggests the Realtor. “This rural home is a refuge from the cares and troubles of everyday life.”

Moving past its beautiful landscape and into the front door, you will find a masterfully renovated home that works cohesively with its bucolic backdrop. A sweeping main level is anchored by a large and somewhat rustic living room amplified by soaring ceilings, exposed beams, built-in shelving, and a wood-burning fireplace. A smart design brings you right into the dining room where glass sliders lend easy access to a sprawling backyard deck.

Should you prefer your entertaining a bit more casual, the gourmet kitchen is as functional as it is handsome. Complete with a generous dining area made light and bright by floor-to-ceiling windows, this space features gleaming hardwood flooring, custom cabinets, state-of-the-art stainless-steel appliances including a Viking six-burner stove, granite countertops, and a large island with an integrated warming drawer and microwave.

The nearby family room with wood stove is an oasis of sorts, bringing the “outside in” with a wall of glass with oversized skylights above. For warmer



The property is enhanced by a lighted 3/4-acre pond, ideal for boating and skating enthusiasts.



The kitchen is a masterpiece, featuring a large dining area, custom cabinets, state-of-the-art stainless-steel appliances, and a generous granite-topped center island.



Pam and Don Cote

AT A GLANCE

- 10 rooms
- 4 bedrooms
- 2 full and 1 half bath
- 3,814 square feet
- \$1,228,800

LISTED BY

- Pam Cote
- RE/MAX Advantage Real Estate
- 978-808-9345
- www.remax-advantage-beverly-ma.com



This beautifully renovated contemporary sits on more than 14 acres abutting 3,500 acres of conservation land.

days or cool summer evenings, there is also a cozy three-season room with gorgeous views of the property. Rounding off this level is a thoughtful master suite featuring walk-in closets, glass sliders, and a spa-like bath outfitted with double sinks, a jetted tub and a separate shower. Sharing the second level are three more bedrooms, a full bath, a home office and a versatile

skylit-loft with a cathedral ceiling and wall-to-wall carpeting. Included on a long list of enhancements are a mudroom with a soapstone sink and two freezers, a two-car garage with side entry, central air and vacuum, a whole house generator, a multipurpose outbuilding, and a full walk-out basement. Back outside, the professionally landscaped yard includes an

underground sprinkler system, stone walls, a gazebo and a vegetable garden with timed irrigation. Meticulously cared for perennials bring stunning colors all year long with an array of peonies, hydrangeas, lilies, cornflowers and hostas, to name just a few. Also on the property, find plush blueberry bushes and an orchard with Honeycrisp, Gala and Fuji apple trees.

“Where else can you find privacy and seclusion so close to town? “This location affords an ideal commute of just 2 miles or five minutes from Route 22,” Cote says. “What an awesome home that is perfect for the self-sufficient, self-reliant buyer.”

For more information on this distinctive property, call Pam Cote at 978-808-9345.

Head outside for renovations that boost home value

Whether home improvement projects are designed to improve the interior or exterior of a house, focusing on renovations that make the most financial sense can benefit homeowners in the long run. The right renovations can be assets if and when homeowners decide to sell their homes.

So how does one get started? First and foremost, speak to a local real estate agent who is knowledgeable about trends in the community. While a swimming pool may be something coveted in one area, it may impede sales in another. It also helps to study generalized trends and data from various home improvement industry analysts to guide upcoming projects.

The following outdoor projects are just a few renovations that tend to add value:

■ **Fire pit:** A fire pit is a great place to gather most months of the year. Bob Vila and CBS News report that a fire pit realizes a 78 percent return on investment.

■ **Outdoor kitchen:** Many buyers are looking to use their yards as an extension of interior living areas. Cooking, dining and even watching TV outdoors is increasingly popular. Outdoor living areas can be custom designed and built. In addition, prefabricated modular units that require a much smaller commitment of time and money are available.

■ **Patio:** Homeowners who do not already have a patio will find that adding one can increase a home's value. Patios help a home look neat, add usable space and may help a home to sell quickly. The experts at Space Wise, a division of Extra Space Storage, say



Patios make a home look neat, add usable space and may even encourage a home to sell quickly.

that refinishing, repairing and building a new patio

offers a strong return on investment.

■ **Deck:** Decks can be as valuable as patios. A deck is

another outdoor space that can be used for entertaining, dining and more. Remodeling magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report indicates that an \$11,000 deck can add about \$9,000 in resale value to the home, recouping around 82 percent of the project's costs.

■ **Door update:** Improve curb appeal with a new, high-end front door and garage doors. If that's too expensive, a good cleaning and new coat of paint can make an old door look brand new. These easy fixes can improve a home's look instantly.

■ **New landscaping:** The National Association of Realtors says an outdoor makeover that includes well-thought-out landscaping can net 105 percent return on investment. Installing a walkway, adding stone planters, mulching, and planting shrubs are ideas to consider.

Enhance your exterior space



BOSTON FENCE

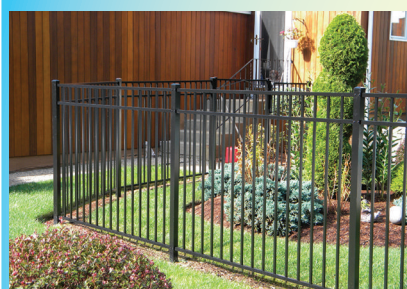
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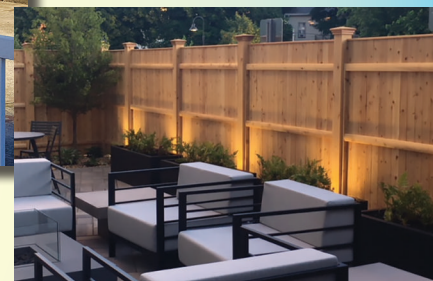
Aluminum



Shadow Box



Vinyl "Picket"



Privacy Screen



Courtesy photo

Hardscaping refers to the elements in a landscape that aren't living, such as paths, walls and fences.

Defining hardscape and how to use it

Curb appeal is beneficial in various ways. Curb appeal can make a home more attractive to prospective buyers and give existing homeowners a place they want to come home to. In its study of the worth of outdoor remodeling projects, the National Association of Realtors found standard lawn care and overall landscape upgrades were most appealing to buyers, as well as the most likely to add value to a home.

Although plants, grass and other items can improve curb appeal, homeowners should not overlook hardscaping.

Hardscaping is an industry term that refers to the non-living features of a landscape. These features can include everything from decks to walkways to ornamental boulders. Introducing paths or paver

walls to a property helps develop that home's hardscape. Hardscape and soft elements often work in concert to create inspiring landscape designs. DIY landscape designers can heed certain tips to make the most of hardscape features on their properties.

Choose materials

As with many landscaping projects, homeowners must first determine what types of additions they would like on their properties. Common hardscape features include patios, decks, walkways of pavers or bricks, and retaining walls. Hardscape elements can be functional or simply decorative features that add whimsy to the yard.

Choose a theme

The right style allows hardscaping and softscaping materials to work

together. For example, homeowners may want to give their yards an Eastern feel, complete with a koi pond and decorative bridge or trellis. A formal English garden, however, may include manicured paths with steppingstones and ornate topiaries. Mixing too many styles together can take away from the overall appeal.

The pros suggest looking at the overall plan of the design, even if all of the work can't be completed at once. This way, the eventual finished project will be cohesive.

Think about the purpose

Hardscaping can look good, but also serve key purposes. Pebbles or gravel can mitigate trouble areas that don't grow grass or plant life well. Retaining walls hold back soil in

yards with sharply inclined hills. Mulch can set perimeters around trees and shrubs, as well as planting beds. Fencing, another form of hardscaping, is essential for establishing property boundaries and adding privacy.

Consult a professional

While many hardscaping additions can be handled by novices, large-scale projects, such as patios and decking, can change the grading of the yard. Professionals can map out how to handle drainage issues and meet building codes. In addition, professional installation can ensure hardscaping features last for years to come. Hardscaping should blend with the nature around it and take its cues from the surrounding environment.

DECK STYLE

Combine form, function for the right fit

Custom-built decks can expand usable outdoor entertaining spaces. Decks can surround pools and create outdoor patio areas that make it easy to establish multitiered living spaces, improving the functionality of backyards.

Certain deck trends have emerged as industry experts' top picks for the upcoming remodeling and renovation season.

For those thinking of revamping an existing deck, or building an entirely new one, here are some things to consider.

Established perimeters

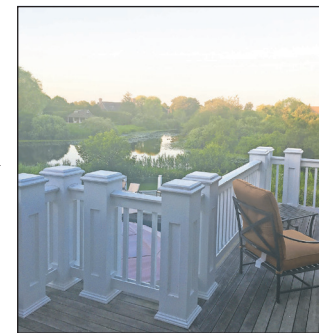
"Picture framing" is not a new trend, but one that has taken greater hold in recent years. The term refers to aesthetically appealing designs that conceal the ends of deck boards for a clean finish. Some designs feature contrasting material colors on the ends for even more impact. This helps create refined perimeters for a polished look.

Rooftop decking

Urban areas also can benefit from decking to create usable outdoor spaces. In fact, many new condominium and townhouse communities are incorporating rooftop decks into their designs, particularly in communities with water views or other impressive vistas. HGTV experts suggest that rooftop decks feature light-colored materials and fixtures to help keep the area cool, even in direct sunlight.

Distressed hardwood

Builder and Developer, a management resource for professional homebuilders, says that the trend for using distressed hardwoods at home has migrated outside. Some decking manufacturers have recently introduced low-maintenance composite deck boards that mimic the look and feel of distressed, rustic hardwood flooring. This



Courtesy photo

With a host of materials and designs, homeowners can customize decks to fit their particular needs.

weathered appearance gives the look of age without the upkeep of real aged wood.

Wooden walkways

Decking can be the more traditional design that people envision with a patio table or outdoor furniture. But it also can consist of wooden walkways or a low-lying patio to accentuate the yard.

Mixed materials

Homeowners may be inspired by commercial eateries, breweries and urban markets in their exterior design choices. Decks featuring composite materials and aluminum railings blend sophistication, urban appeal and comfort.

Personal touches

Homeowners can customize their decks with personal touches. It's not unheard of to wrap columns in stone or glass tiles for more impact. And a vast array of decking colors allows for fun interpretations of outdoor areas.

Fire pit conversation area

Many decks can incorporate water or fire elements for visual appeal. Gas-fueled fire elements can expand the functionality of decks beyond the warmer months or make enjoying them practical on nights when the temperature plummets.

Commercial



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278 Cabot St, Beverly - \$2,346,000



5 Cherry Hill Drive, Danvers - \$2,500,000



30 Federal St, Salem - \$750,000

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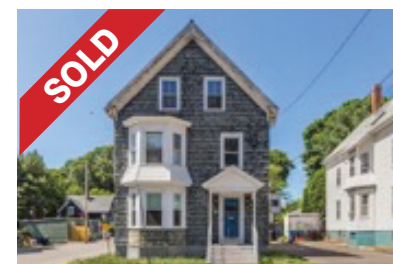
14 Pond St., Beverly - \$862,500



12 Highland Ave, Beverly - \$675,000



10 Summer St, Salem - \$1,775,000



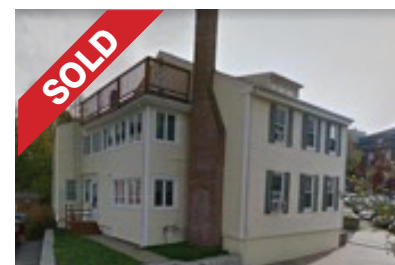
17 West St, Salem - \$492,000



72-74 Grafton St, Arlington - \$1,050,000



5 Knowlton St, Beverly - \$1,050,000



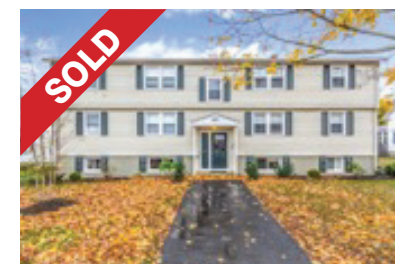
19 Essex St, Beverly - \$890,000



57 Chatham St, Lynn. Sold for \$650,000



10 Oliver St, Salem - \$652,000



43 River St, Danvers - \$1,150,000



67-69 Webster, Chelsea - \$1,335,000

Residential



41 Choate Ave, Danvers - \$1,250,000



5 Chester St, Danvers - \$444,600



149 High St, Danvers - Condos \$280K-\$400K



8 Penn Rd, Peabody - \$527,000



2 Will Sawyer Rd, Peabody - \$420,000



Cove Village Lot 3, Beverly



27 Prospect St, Beverly - \$861,393



25 1/2 Lovett St, Beverly



11 Dodge St, Beverly - \$345,000



10 Doane St, Beverly - \$332,000



3 Salt Wall Lane, Salem - \$663,000



15 Cherry Hill Ave, Salem - \$629,000



13 Nurse Way, Salem - \$614,900



15 Nurse Way, Salem - \$609,900



8 Beachmont St, Salem - \$590,000



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AN INSTANT ADDITION

Inside today's stylish, multifunctional garages

BY MELISSA RAYWORTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

What if your home had a spare room you'd never noticed before? Your garage, even if it has one or more cars in it, can pull double-duty as a gym, a crafting room and even a place to socialize.

Designers and architects tell us that gaining more living space without putting an addition on your house can make the effort worthwhile, even if it means investing in things like upgraded lighting, flooring and heating.

We shouldn't be "treating the garage as a big box," architect Jim Rill said. "Make it another room. It's a lost opportunity if you don't."

Marina Case, founder of the New York-based design firm The Red Shutters, agrees: "A garage," she said, "can be anything you need it to be."

Rill, Case and interior designer Anna Maria Mannarino of New Jersey-based Mannarino Designs offer their advice on creating a well-organized garage that can also function as a flexible spare room.

Floors and walls

Upgrading the look and feel of your garage can start at the bottom: Paint the floor, Case said.

Painting a cement floor a dark taupe or gray can have a big impact, she said, or choose an even bolder color. "You'll feel like you're in this fresh, fun space," she said.

But do test the color by painting a piece of foam core that's at least a few square feet, she said, and leaving it on the garage floor for a few days to make sure you like it. Another option: Showroom flooring is available for as little as \$5 per foot, Rill said. And if you won't be parking cars in the garage and are

instead using it as a "man cave or a she-shed," Mannarino said, consider upgrading the flooring with something you'd normally use inside the house.

Walls come next: "Why is the garage always just a dry-wall box?" Rill said.

If your garage walls aren't sheet-rocked, Mannarino said you can add that and give it a coat of paint. Or put up paneling, Rill said, making it easier to hang items like rakes or hoses. You can add a flat hanging system that includes space for hanging baskets and brackets for shelves. Many closet-design brands offer flat systems that will hold heavy outdoor items.

If you prefer freestanding storage along the walls, add several tall, sturdy shelving units. You can line them with large, clear bins neatly labeled, or fancier storage bins, Case said.

Or go an extra step and have built-in cabinetry installed.

And if your garage ceiling is high and has ample space away from where the garage door opens, consider adding storage on the ceiling, Mannarino said.

"It gives you that much more real estate," she said. But don't cut corners: Have ceiling shelving or storage racks mounted properly by a professional.

Heating and lighting

If your garage gets cold in the winter, you can add a separate heating system that's inexpensive to run. These "mini-split" heating systems can be turned on only when you're spending time in the garage. Adding insulation also helps control the climate, making the garage feel more like an indoor room.

And don't settle for a bare bulb in the ceiling. Replacing it with a larger, more attractive



James Ray Spahn/Rill Architects via AP

If a garage is large enough, it can house a full workshop, shown here, or a home gym, something that's become increasingly popular with homeowners.

fixture can dramatically change the way a garage feels.

Entertaining options

Although it's common to have a workshop in a garage, and many people use the space for messy crafting projects or as a home gym, a garage can also become an entertainment space.

If you're a car enthusiast who works on a vintage car or hotrod, Rill said, why not use part of your garage as a place to hang out with friends talking about cars?

Case suggested adding a bar area with comfortable seating, even if it's small, to make the garage an inviting place to hang out with guests. You can also hang up a flat-screen TV and add a refrigerator.

Rill has a vintage cooler, reclaimed from a supermarket, in his garage for soft

drinks, water and beer. It's used all summer when the family is outdoors.

Along with year-round entertaining inside a garage, these designers point out that an open garage can be a great place to set up a buffet table during an outdoor summer party.

Case suggested adding ceiling-mounted tracks for curtains in an indoor/outdoor material like Sunbrella, so you can draw them behind a serving table in your open garage.

Barn doors or other types of upgraded garage door can make the space more attractive and accessible during parties.

And upgrading your garage door does more than just add beauty to the exterior of your home, Mannarino said. It also gives you the option of adding more windows, bringing natural light into your garage.



One section of a large garage can be used to organize planting supplies, as well as to add an outdoor sink and counter area.

Is there an attic?

Many detached garages have a tiny second-floor attic or loft space, Rill said. Even if its ceiling is low, that space can become a furnished clubhouse for younger kids, a place to practice musical instruments or even a cozy

guest suite.

On one garage project, Rill replaced the solid wooden ceiling in a large detached garage with a perforated metal floor. That gave added natural light to the attic space above, which was then transformed into a kids' clubhouse.

Engel & Völkers By the Sea

Low-maintenance living in beautiful East Gloucester

By LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

Ideally situated at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in the heart of desirable East Gloucester, this attractively appointed and smartly designed townhouse-style condominium is a sea-side lover's dream. Positioned between Niles and Good Harbor beaches, this half-duplex is also within minutes of the Back Shore and Rocky Neck. Just in time for summer, this great opportunity is presented by Realtor Martha Anger of Engel & Völkers By the Sea for \$545,000.

One of just two in the development, this home spans two generous levels and more than 1,700 square feet of living space. On the main level, find a large front-to-back living room with hardwood flooring, crown molding, recessed lighting, a gas-fueled fireplace and a generous formal dining room well-suited for large gatherings. Quite spacious, the adjacent kitchen is complete with cherry cabinetry, newer appliances and granite countertops. For seasonal entertaining and al-fresco dining perhaps, this home also brings a shaded rear mahogany deck accessed by French doors.

One flight above, three nice-sized bedrooms with hardwood floors, including the en-suite master with a walk-in closet, share the space with a second full bath enriched by a skylight and ceramic tiling.

Other amenities include first- and second-floor laundry hookups, a freshly painted neutral interior, a pull-down attic, shared basement storage, a first-floor powder room, two-car paved parking and a beautiful yard. An equitable monthly association fee covers landscaping, snow removal and master insurance.

"The unit was built in 2005

AT A GLANCE

- 6 rooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 2.5 baths
- 1,715 square feet
- \$545,000

LISTED BY



■ Martha Anger
■ Engel & Völkers By the Sea
■ 781-727-4547
■ www.marthaanger.com

and has been well maintained since by the two owners who have lived here. Not only is the setting quiet and private, but the way this unit connects to the other is by a modest portion of shared wall, which means there is privacy from the other unit," Anger says. "Also, the entire property abuts conservation land, so you feel like you're on your very own little oasis."

For more information, or to schedule a showing, call Realtor Martha Anger at 781-727-4547 or visit www.marthaanger.com for additional photos.



Located between Niles and Good Harbor beaches, this townhouse-style condominium within minutes of the Back Shore and Rocky Neck is a seaside lover's dream.



Enjoy seasonal entertaining or al-fresco dining on the shaded, rear mahogany deck accessed by French doors.



In the large front-to-back living room, find hardwood flooring, crown molding, recessed lighting and a gas-fueled fireplace.



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Easing into elegant comfort

Pattern, paper and antiques having a moment in 2019

By MELISSA RAYWORTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

What trends are dominating home decorating in 2019?

When we asked interior designers about the colors, fabrics and styles they're seeing as popular this year, one message came through loud and clear: People are seeking comfort at home.

But rather than casual, farmhouse-style comfort, these designers are seeing a trend toward a sophisticated, elegant comfort achieved through things like warm wall colors, antique wooden items with a patina of age, and rounded corners on furniture.

Along with the physical coziness these items bring, many folks seem to be seeking a degree of emotional comfort in their home decor.

"Someone just asked us if we would do an ombre carpet up their stairs, working with the ombre wallpaper up the wall," furniture and wall covering designer Brett Beldock said. "They want this cocoon feeling. Our surroundings have to be really warm and comforting now ... everything is crazy and we're all up in the air."

Beldock and two other interior designers weigh in on what they're seeing in home design this year.

Comforting spaces

For years, Americans were in love with open floor plans and large furniture. Now, "people want more intimately scaled spaces," designer Dan Mazzarini said. "Not Victorian-small, but not this kind of 'everything open' living."

In response, we're seeing "a temporary pause on oversized things," he said, as people feel like nesting.

Along the way, the color palette is becoming equally cozy. Popular neutral colors



ANGIE SECKINGER/Marika Meyer Interiors via AP

Interior designer Marika Meyer sees a trend toward warm neutral colors and antique furniture in warm wood tones, which she carried out in the living room designs above and at right.



Meyer says shades of green are overtaking shades of blue in decorating schemes, as seen in this breakfast nook she designed in a kitchen by Aidan Design.

have "been so cool for a number of years," designer Marika Meyer said. "We're coming back into more warm neutrals."

Beldock sees furniture shapes changing, too. We're seeing a return to rounded edges and pieces of furniture with big, soft, rounded arms, he said.

Patterns and papers

Expect to see lots of paper and fabric coverings on

walls and ceilings this year. Beldock said murals are popular, as are patterns that can be mixed to create a vibrant space and give walls an appearance of depth.

Meyer agrees that patterns are increasingly important. As part of a "return to traditionalism" in home design, she sees many people opting for "heavy layering of very traditional patterns."

Although many patterns

incorporate a mix of colors, expect to see plenty of rich shades of green in fabric and wallpaper patterns. While blues and indigos have been huge in recent years, Meyer says that "green is the new blue" in 2019. It's likely to be used in everything from upholstery patterns to kitchen furnishings.

Warm woods, traditional styles

Antiques and secondhand



items are also having a moment.

"There have always been the antique lovers that we've worked with," Mazzarini said. But now, a growing number of people "are responding more positively to things that have an actual sense of history."

Meyer agrees: "More and more clients say to me they're interested in a beautiful wood antique chest," she said.

This trend is quite practical in the smaller-scale homes and condos favored these days, Meyer said, because people have a real need for storage space. If a client chooses an antique wooden chest instead of a more modernist Parsons table, "it's concealed storage."

Traditional skirted tables

are becoming popular again for the same reason: Under the soft folds of a fabric table cloth that reach to the floor, you can store items out of sight.

Even for homeowners who prefer a more modern style, warm wood tones are increasingly popular, Beldock said.

"Everyone's using warm woods and walnuts," she said, or "actually doing a fireplace, and around the fireplace having your extra wood in a niche on each side that's the height of the whole wall."

Some clients continue asking for lighter wood tones, Mazzarini said. But even when paired with white items for a very clean look, the wood grain brings a degree of warmth to a room.

Gorgeous Gloucester colonial puts you within steps of the sand

By LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

A literal nod to its Pebble Path address and “Upper Beach” setting, this shingle-style contemporary in Gloucester is fronted by a lush bed of crushed stone. Curb appeal aside, this special home boasts a dazzling interior with ocean views from many of its rooms and an enviable location steps from Coffin’s Beach. Just in time for summer, this exquisite property is presented by Tricia White of Century 21 North East for \$1,725,000.

A large cedar deck with a lovely arbor and a covered entryway with double-glass doors lead you into a gracious foyer. To its left, a casual and comfortable family room affords deck access and French doors for privacy. This sunlit level with hardwood floors and recessed lighting also features two bedrooms, a full bath with beadboard paneling and ceramic flooring, and a convenient laundry room.

A commanding center staircase brings you to the perfectly cohesive and fluid main level. Here you will find a spacious living/dining room



This beautiful home is just a few steps from Wingaersheek’s private Coffin’s Beach.

area featuring large picture windows, custom built-ins for storage and a cozy window seat. Just adjacent, the skylit kitchen is well-furnished with generous white cabinetry, a Sub-Zero refrigerator, a built-in oven and cooktop, and a

very large pantry. A master bedroom with a full en-suite bath is just down the hall — thoughtfully set apart from the aforementioned guest bedrooms on the level below.

While every room in this home is stunning, it is the

sunroom on the third level that offers the “best seat in the house.” Beautifully appointed with a vaulted and beamed ceiling and walls of ocean-facing windows, this secluded space opens to an expansive deck ideal for

entertaining or simply enjoying the spectacular views.

Though there are far too many amenities to list here, additional highlights of this property include an outside hot water shower, a professionally landscaped lot, a

AT A GLANCE

- 3 bedrooms
- 2 full baths
- 1,828 square feet
- Ocean views
- \$1,725,000

LISTED BY



- Tricia White
- Century 21 North East
- 978-697-8097
- www.c21ne.com

freshly painted exterior and ample off-street parking.

“This is such a great spot to relax and take in the sunsets,” White says. “Not only is this a beautiful and meticulously maintained property that can be enjoyed seasonally or year-round, but this unique beachfront community is just 45 minutes from Boston for easy commuting.”

If you would like to receive more information or schedule a private showing, call Tricia White at 978-697-8097 or email her at tricial-white21@gmail.com.

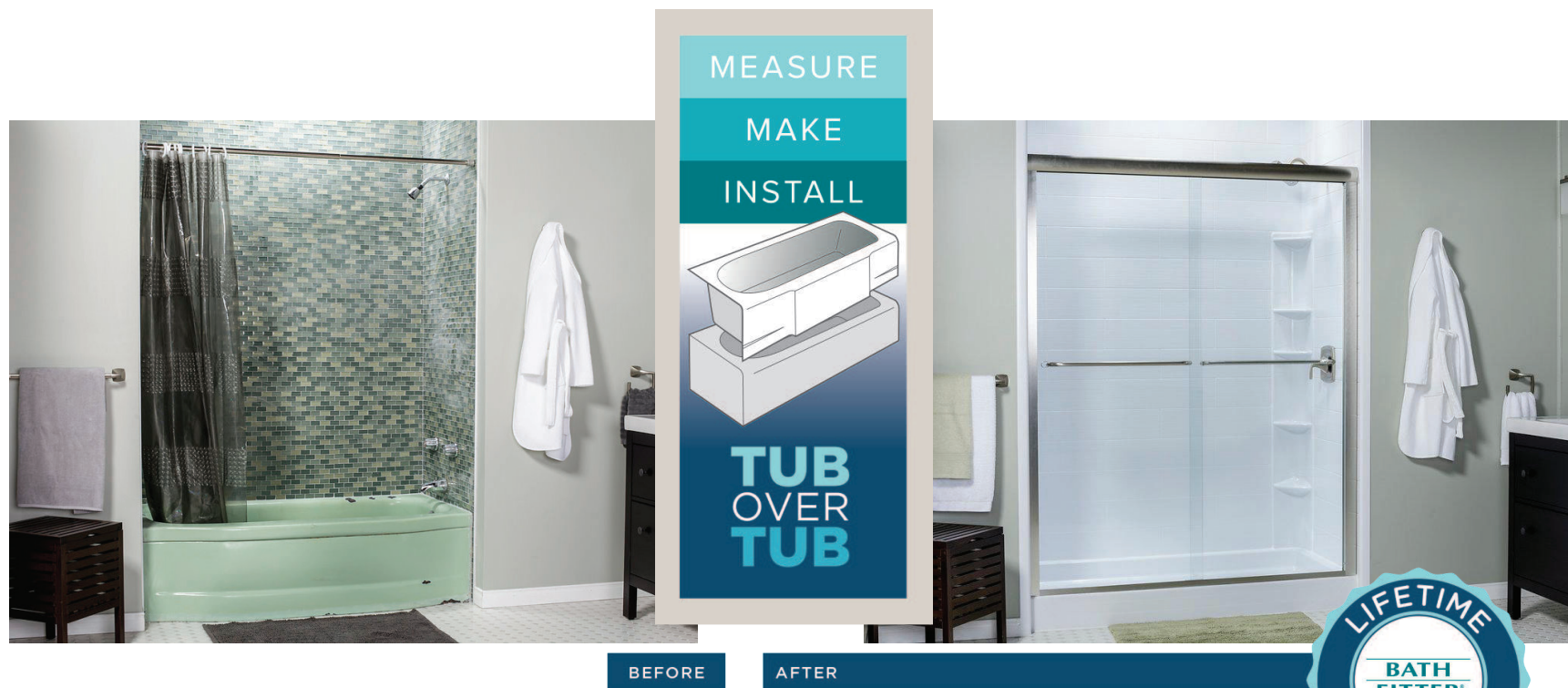


The main living area features a thoughtfully open living/dining room with oversized windows, French doors and custom built-ins for storage.



A unique sunroom on the third level opens to a large wraparound deck with breathtaking ocean views.

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Manchester beauty brings more than meets the eye

By LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

You could search high and low, but you would be hard-pressed to find a home quite like this one, believes Realtor Marianne Round of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, who lists it for \$879,000. Steps to gorgeous Magnolia Beach and just minutes from revered Singing Beach and Tuck's Point, this stunning home is guaranteed to take your breath away.

A welcoming front porch brings you into a sunny interior with gleaming wood floors and ornamental trims. The home's contemporary open design centers around the chef's kitchen, where you will find bright white cabinetry with granite countertops, recessed lighting and an eye-popping Walker Creek custom island made from reclaimed wood.

A separate dining area is outfitted with two sets of French doors — one to a backyard-facing deck and the other to a large, yet comfortable family room with decorative wainscoting. For more formal entertaining, a sprawling living room/dining room is sure to impress with oversized windows and a wood-burning fireplace with granite surround.

Three bedrooms grace the second floor, including a master featuring gorgeous white-pickled flooring and a walk-in closet. Its spa-like, en-suite bath is quite luxurious with

AT A GLANCE

- 5 bedrooms
- 3 full and 1 half bath
- 3,797 square feet
- \$879,000

LISTED BY

- Marianne Round
- Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
- 978-902-5452
- www.coldwellbankerhomes.com



a built-in jetted tub, shower stall and a double granite-topped vanity. One flight up, the expansive third level affords generous storage and an additional bedroom, home office or recreational space perhaps.

A recently converted in-law suite on the lower level is the perfect fit for extended guests, an au pair or a lucky teen. Spacious and secluded, it is well furnished with a kitchenette, living room, bedroom and full bath.

Additional assets in this home include fresh interior and exterior paint, central air and vacuum, a two-car garage; a large, level backyard; and a brand new five-bedroom septic system.

"This really is the best of both worlds as you have the



A welcoming front porch brings you into a sunny interior with gleaming wood floors and ornamental trims.

benefits of both Manchester-by-the-Sea and Magnolia. With that comes proximity to top-rated schools, the commuter rail, fine restaurants and local shops. There is not another property in town that offers this degree of style and functionality," Round says.

Contact Marianne Round at 978-902-5452 to schedule your private viewing. For additional photos, go to www.coldwellbankerhomes.com.

This home's open design centers around the chef's kitchen, where you will find bright white cabinetry with granite countertops, recessed lighting and an eye-popping Walker Creek custom island made from reclaimed wood.



Steps to gorgeous Magnolia Beach and just minutes from revered Singing Beach and Tuck's Point, this stunning home is guaranteed to take your breath away.

THE VISUAL BASE

Innovative flooring options abound for every room

By MELISSA RAYWORTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A stunning sofa or a beautiful wall color might catch your eye when you enter someone's home. But flooring is the key to any room, says interior designer Elina Cardet.

As the visual base for every other design choice, "flooring is the most important decision," said Cardet, an interior design director for Perkins + Will. Beauty matters, as does durability and also comfort: "You're going to be barefoot on this floor," she points out.

Recent technological innovations have created a wide variety of flooring options today. Here is some advice on making this key design decision.

Hardwood choices

There are many synthetic versions of hardwood floors these days — products that promise to look and feel like solid wood but cost less. Some can look lovely, designers agree. But they advise moving cautiously.

"There's not enough history to know if it's going to hold up," said interior designer Lauren Rottet, whereas hardwood offers durability and longevity. "A beautiful wood floor is classic."

Cardet suggests that "if it's possible and your budget allows it, try to invest in hardwoods that are certified, to make sure they come from a forest that was well managed."

Which style of hardwood should you choose? Wide plank floors are popular right now. But Rottet said that since they have fewer joints than narrower plank floors, there is less opportunity for the floor to expand



Perkins+Will Dubai photos via AP

Light-colored flooring will subtly make a room feel more spacious and luminous, says architectural designer Elina Cardet.

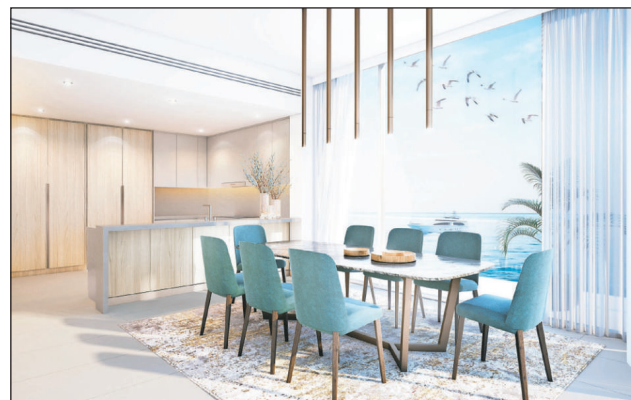
and contract over time. The occasional crack might happen, depending on the climate, and may need to be patched with wood putty and re-stained. Wide planks also tend to be more expensive.

So the traditional, narrower wood planks can be a more practical choice.

New techniques and colors

Cerusing is a technique involving sanding the wood, putting white paint on it, and then sanding it again to create contrast and draw attention to the beauty of the grain. It creates what designers describe as a "smoky" look.

You can also find wood floors that have been "smoked" through a traditional process from the Arts and Crafts movement that involves adding ammonia to the air when the wood



Cardet recommends choosing wide-plank, Forest Stewardship Council-certified hardwood flooring, rather than a less durable laminate, and pairing that with a cozy rug.

is being processed. Interior designer Jacqueline Touzet said the result gives the flooring a range of colors.

What shade of stain should you choose?

Light-colored floors can make a room feel larger,

but Rottet said some light oak floors can fade to a yellowish color. Gray is also popular for wood floors right now. But "you have to be careful with gray," she said, "because it can bleach toward green."

Keep in mind that a floor

that gets lots of direct light may change appearance over time.

Dark brown, nearly black shades can also be beautiful, Rottet said. Just be aware that you may need to sweep often. Darker shades, whether in wood or ceramic tile, will also help a space feel warmer, Cardet said.

Overall, Cardet suggests making conservative choices with flooring colors and styles, then getting creative with area rugs that can be replaced if your taste changes.

Considering concrete, tile

Concrete floors are trendy and can be beautiful. But over time, cracks can form, and there's little that can be done to prevent them. Some people don't mind the look, so use concrete only if cracks won't bother you.

Concrete floors also don't absorb sound well.

Another option is large porcelain tiles that look similar to concrete or stone.

"We love terrazzo instead of concrete," Touzet said. "It's been around for centuries, and you can get the aggregates pretty fine, so it almost looks like a concrete floor."

Porcelain is generally durable, although it can chip. Cardet recommends through-body tile, which is made of the same material all the way through. It can be more expensive, but because the color isn't just on the surface, the look of the floor isn't ruined if there are chips.

In choosing tile or stone, many customers are increasingly aware of durability. "We have been seeing less of limestones that are super-precious and soft," Touzet said. "People want an ease of living with their floor, not constantly maintaining it, putting a sealant on it."

Secret savings

If you don't have the budget to do an entire room in hardwood but wish you could, Rottet has a creative solution: Put down carpeting throughout the room, but add a wood border that's several inches thick around the edges of the room. It will appear as though your carpeting is actually a rug sitting on top of hardwood.

Carpeting is less popular these days, Touzet says, because of concerns about dust and air quality. But you can find a low-pile carpet and choose natural materials such as wool to avoid those issues.

And one affordable, retro trend that may be returning: high-end vinyl floors with the look of stone or wood.

Prepare to be amazed by spectacular Newbury estate

By LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

This newly constructed, 13-room colonial in pastoral Newbury is luxury at its finest. Affording distant views of Plum Island and beyond, the 16.4-acre property on which it sits is complete with a heated playhouse, a gunite swimming pool, a large barn and chicken coop, and a 100-year-old, renovated carriage house featuring a great room with upper mezzanine, kitchen, living room, bedroom and one and a half baths.

It is the dazzling interior of the main house, however, that ultimately steals the show. Boasting an amazing 3,964 square feet of living space and every lavish amenity imaginable, it also brings along with it an interesting past. Presented by Kathy and Terry Sullivan of RE/MAX Advantage Realty, this remarkable piece of real estate is marketed for \$1,475,000.

"The original home, which was built in the 1800s, has been completely rebuilt, except for the foundation," explains the owner.

According to Kathy Sullivan, "It was purchased by the current owner 11 years ago, over which time he totally renovated it, along with the many outbuildings on the property. What really stands out here is all of the finish work. Throughout this home, you will see exquisite and rare details such as hand-rubbed, mocha-finished white oak floors; white ice exotic Brazilian granite, Picasso travertine tile, and top-of-the-line Marvin Ultrex windows. There is nothing that has been left to the imagination."

A soaring, two-story foyer welcomes you into a delightfully airy and open space beautified by recessed lighting, 6.75-inch crown moldings, arched doorways and decorative

AT A GLANCE

- 4 bedrooms, plus 1 bedroom in the carriage house
- 4 full and 2 half baths
- 3,964-square-foot main house
- Renovated carriage house, barn and heated playhouse
- 16.4 acres
- \$1,475,000

LISTED BY



- Kathy and Terry Sullivan
- The Sullivan Team, RE/MAX Advantage Real Estate
- 781-771-9949
- www.sullivanteam.com

columns. The astounding great room features a custom-built, floor-to-ceiling fireplace with hand-selected granite stones, and sliders to a sprawling deck for seasonal enjoyment. The chef's kitchen is truly breathtaking with high-end Shiloh cabinetry with under lighting, professional-grade appliances including a Thermador refrigerator and a Bertazzoni gas range custom-painted "vino," a large center island, and a breakfast room. On this level, also find a dining room, a half bath, a cozy den and a rear foyer with mudroom lending access to the oversized, attached two-car garage.

Sharing the second floor is a laundry room, three full baths and four bedrooms. The two-level master suite is absolutely luxurious with a generous custom-built, walk-in closet; a secluded deck and a regal spa-like bath featuring a heated floor, a glass shower with Portuguese marble enclosure, a separate soaking tub, and a double vanity topped with deep mahogany granite. Ascend to the third floor to find a private home office, deck, balcony and



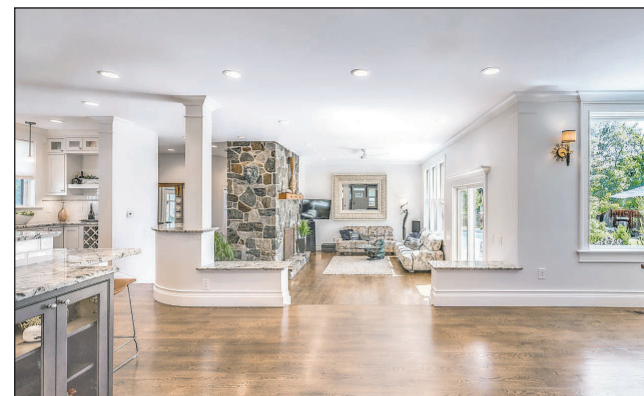
Sited on 16.4 acres, this incredible offering is complete with a newly constructed, 13-room colonial; heated playhouse, gunite swimming pool, large barn and chicken coop, and renovated carriage house.



Except for its foundation, this home has been completely rebuilt, as have the many outbuildings on the property.

distant vistas of the Atlantic Ocean. For even more space in which to work or play, the lower level of this home affords a media room and a second office.

Sited at the mouth of the Merrimack River and surrounded by more than 50 mature specimen trees and shrubs, this extraordinary home is ideally located



Throughout this home, find exquisite finishes, such as hand-rubbed, mocha-finished white oak floors; exotic Brazilian granite and Picasso travertine tile.

within minutes of Route 95 and desirable downtown Newburyport.

"There really isn't anything else quite like this on the local market right now," Kathy Sullivan says. "I know that people in real estate often say this, but in this case it's true — this is an

offering that really needs to be seen to be appreciated."

For more information, call brokers Kathy or Terry Sullivan at 781-771-9949. Additional photos, as well as a virtual tour of this "once-in-a-lifetime" property, can be seen at www.sullivanteam.com.

5 Tips to Prepare Your Home for a QUICK Sale and MAXIMIZE Profit From One of the North Shore's Top Realtors

In the 30 years that I have served as a real estate professional, I have helped hundreds of owners sell their homes in good, bad, or ugly markets. We are blessed that the real estate market is currently thriving on the North Shore. However a seller's property in any price range still competes for a buyer's attention.



Even though we are often referred to as real estate SALES agents, a professional Realtor in these times acts much more as a consultant to guide the process of both buying and selling from start to finish. The ultimate goal when working with sellers is to help them invest their time, energy and money to get the most return on their investment when it comes to sales price ... and add value for the buyer's wants list.



You live in a home one way, but when it comes to selling you need to become an expert at positioning it, even when the market is hot, in order to compete with other properties for sale. Sellers benefit if the home shows at its best to meet buyer's rising expectations today.

Here are my TOP FIVE TIPS to start preparing your home to \$ELL! These tips are essential to enhance the buyer's impression of your home and improve the seller's chance to obtain a higher sales price and/or a faster offer all due to implementing simple planning.



1. PLAN AHEAD

Decide your timeline for when you desire to sell. This means taking the time to come up with a realistic assessment of how much time it will take you to get repairs made, clutter cleared, or make improvements so it shows well. I typically consult with potential sellers in advance of their plan to sell their home. This can be 3 months up to one year for a home that needs some more work. In addition, I recommend the top updates in relation to a seller's timeline, budget and desire that can add the most value to the sales price.. Why do work that does not have a payback for you? Then I help my sellers to get the plan on their calendar, as what gets scheduled, gets done.



2. ACT AS IF YOU ARE MOVING NOW! Purge, Pitch and Pack

Depending on your organizing and time management skills, the months before moving can become hectic with all the moving parts. These are the tips that will help you with both packing and unpacking in an organized way and lessen the stress of both processes. First rent a storage unit or a portable one to give you a head start on packing items you don't use often. Excess furniture, décor and clutter often make a home show smaller than it actually is. Many buyers cannot see past clutter. Your sale will happen faster if you can help them by removing excess distractions during showings. I suggest many of my sellers to start with one category of items at a time to declutter and organize. Pick ones that are easy to get rid of FIRST, such as books, clothes, shoes and toys that typically can be dropped off at collection sites or picked up easily by many local nonprofits. This allows you to make progress from the start, instead of feel overwhelmed by having more piles than you started with in the first place! One rule I find really helpful is -if you have not used it in the past year - pitch or donate it. Momentum is contagious. Then start sifting through things that need more time such as items that have emotional attachment. There are many ways to capture and store photos and mementos today. This is a great way to start without getting side tracked down memory lane. Buyers get distracted by lots of personal pictures and collections. A seller wants the buyer to focus on the home and not their "stuff"!



3. CLEAN! People appreciate and also EXPECT a clean home as it shows you CARED for it.

Cleaning has positive results even for a distressed home or one needing substantial updating. By the way, the home does not have to pass a "white" glove inspection. Open the windows to air out the home. Odors must be eliminated, especially those caused by dogs and cats; soiled diapers and/or cigarettes. If it has been over a year, clean the carpets. Bare floors should also shine. Clean out

closets, cabinets and drawers. Closets should look like they have enough space to hold additional items. Keep the kitchen and baths sparkling clean. Also remember to remove any cobwebs hiding in the basement, attic or garage too. Clean the windows and glass doors inside and outside when weather permits.

4. ELBOW GREASE goes a long way for a First Impression



A fresh coat of paint can work magic and cover up small things that "date" a property. Color is a personal choice and trends change frequently, ask the Realtor or stager for suggestions.

Go with neutral colors on walls or exterior and use a "pop" of color for accent with accessories like pillows, décor items or flowers. A savvy Realtor can suggest the potential value of major updates like a kitchen, bath, patio, or roof for return on your investment based on what buyers are looking for in your market. At the very least make sure smaller repairs such as broken glass panes, doorknobs, leaky faucets & missing lightbulbs are completed to show you care and are not in a pressure situation to sell. Absolutely make curb appeal updates as many people drive by BEFORE making an appointment. With the web today, people decide in 30 seconds or less by viewing the online photos of both the exterior and interior whether they will come see a home. Clean up the front yard, trim the shrubs, add seasonal flowers in pots or plant them. Super clean the front entry & door. Add a splash of color by painting the front door, adding a seasonal wreath or a welcoming doormat to set a positive tone before they even walk through the door.



5. STAGING! The Secret Sauce for Success

Professional staging makes a difference! As I mentioned before, the pictures of a home is what results in appointments with prospective buyers. The staging opens the door for a buyer to visualize and experience how they would live here and excites them to make an offer! Due to exposure to HGTV's real estate shows, Facebook, and Pinterest as well as a multitude of websites on décor and flipping homes, buyers of all ages today have high expectations that homes actually look staged. Decluttering and removing extra furniture is an essential first step in staging. Homes that are staged stand out from the other competing properties. The investment in staging usually pays for itself leading to a faster sale, competing offers versus a price reduction, and ultimately a higher price that yields more profit from the sale....and add value for a buyer's "wants" list.

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- Andy & Erin Clark



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Bold color, decorative items make a front entry pop

Visitors' impressions of a home are often dictated by the home's entryway. Just as one may judge a book by its cover, the same can be said about the impression that a front door and entryway can create, regardless of how accurate that impression is.

Making certain changes to an entryway can go a long way toward improving curb appeal. Entryways also can set the scene for a home's interior. Whether one chooses to be classic or bold, modern or traditional, there are various ways to quickly transform a home's entryway.

■ **Bold front door color:** Color can dramatically enhance an entryway. Painting an existing door or replacing it with a more vivid option can do the

trick. The DIY Network says certain colors stand out as favorites. These include turquoise, yellow, red, indigo, orange and black. The door color should complement the other shades of the home, such as those on siding and trim.

■ **Custom walkway:** Guide guests right to the front door with an attractive (and safe) walkway. Stamped concrete or decorative paver blocks may fit the bill. This walkway can extend to the street or to the driveway.

■ **Container plants:** Landscaping around the entryway should be neat and well-tended. Overgrown plants or shrubbery may give off an air of neglect. Container plants and carefully curated shrubs can create a neat and inviting aura.

■ **Highlight the address:**



A colorful doorway can enhance an entryway, setting the tone for the rest of the house.

Make sure the home can be found easily with bold

and decorative house numbers. Consider two

different address signs: one illuminated and easily

viewed from the curb, and another closer to the front door.

■ **Utilize high-end materials:** The relatively small area of real estate by the front door enables homeowners to splurge on more opulent materials that can really add a feeling of luxury. These can include colorful tiles, ornate planters, decorative wooden doors, or elaborate knobs and lighting fixtures.

■ **Add architectural details:** Find out which architectural elements will meld with the style of the home and then incorporate them. Moldings, columns, shutters and trim are areas to consider.

The entryway to a home garners a lot of attention. Homeowners can enhance these spaces with elements that really make a statement.



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Wenham welcomes luxury townhouse community for those 55 and up

BY LILLIAN SHAPIRO
SPECIAL HOMES CORRESPONDENT

Those enamored by the promise of maintenance-free living and simplified lifestyle will indeed be delighted to hear about the North Shore's latest 55-plus community. Privately set off of Route 1A on over 30 bucolic acres, Wenham Pines will feature 22 luxury New England-style townhouses intended for easy home ownership. Developed by Atlantic Tambone and presented for sale by Coldwell Banker Premier Communities, the average price will be \$1,450,000.

"These homes are being thoughtfully and strategically placed to take full advantage of the beautiful surroundings and to provide maximum privacy. Many of the homes will even have views of Wenham Lake and the adjoining golf course," says Kevin O'Grady, manager of Coldwell Banker Premier Communities.

While there will be two floor plans from which to choose (The Hamilton and The Wenham), every home will bring open-concept designs with red oak hardwood floors, recessed lighting; oversized, two-car garages; expansive decks, ceiling speakers, and well-designed first-floor master suites with "his and hers" walk-in closets and spa-like baths. Gourmet kitchens will come complete with high-end Bosch and Thermador appliances, premium soft-close cabinetry with under-cabinet lighting, granite countertops and generous center islands.

Formal living rooms with soaring cathedral ceilings will feature gas fireplaces and custom wet bars, while dining rooms will be enhanced by coffered

AT A GLANCE

- 3 bedrooms
- 2.5 baths
- 3,085 square feet (The Wenham) and 3,235 square feet (The Hamilton)

■ Average price: \$1,450,000

LISTED BY



- Coldwell Banker Premier Communities
- Jane Lane, Sales Director, 617-921-1342
- Bob Cuddy, Sales Agent, 978-491-1722
- Jodie Salasny, Sales Agent, 617-852-4536
- www.WenhamPines.com

ceilings, crown molding and chair rails. In the family rooms, expect to see vaulted trey ceilings and double sliding doors.

Though all of the homes will feature two guest bedrooms and a shared bath on the second level, buyers who purchase early enough will have the opportunity to add another full bath should they desire. There will also be options for finishing the lower level and/or installing an elevator.

Because energy efficiency and sustainability have been made top priorities, the homes at Wenham Pines are being built with Energy Star-rated Andersen windows; certified 95%-efficient heating systems and tankless water heaters. On the lengthy list of additional amenities find first-floor laundry and powder rooms, smart thermostats,



Privately set off of Route 1A over 30 bucolic acres, Wenham Pines will feature 22 luxury, New England-style townhouses intended for easy home ownership.

Kohler plumbing fixtures, security systems, and professional landscaping with walking paths that meander throughout the community. Designed to preserve conservation land, Wenham Pines will retain over 70% open space and existing tree vegetation. Furthermore, all lawn care, snow plowing, exterior painting and routine exterior home repairs will be covered.

"The builder has done such a great job with standard finishes that most buyers will find no need to upgrade a thing. These are going to be truly spectacular homes," Sales Director

Jane Lane says. "And the location, of course, couldn't be more convenient. Wenham Pines is within minutes of two commuter train stations, Interstate 95, quaint shops and restaurants, and beautiful Crane Beach."

Model homes designed by Timeless Interiors of Hamilton are now open. Interested parties are urged to come by the sales office/design center Thursdays through Mondays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, or to schedule an appointment on a Tuesday or Wednesday, call any of the sales team members.



Model homes are now open. Interested parties are encouraged to visit the sales office/design center Thursdays through Mondays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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The open-concept floor plan offers homeowners a wealth of options for everyday living and for entertaining.

Embracing the open-concept floor plan

The way a home is designed can say a lot of things about it. In fact, many real estate professionals and contractors can determine when a home was built based on the design of its interior. For example, homes with sunken living rooms were likely built sometime in the 1960s and 1970s.

Open-concept living rooms are one trend that might one day make people nostalgic for the early 21st century. Many of today's homebuyers want homes with open-concept floor plans, which can give homes a more spacious feel, perhaps even creating the illusion that a home is bigger than it really is.

Homebuyers who have never before enjoyed open-concept floor plans can consider these benefits to these wildly popular layouts.

Entertainment

Many people who live in homes with open-concept floor plans cite their convenience when entertaining as one of their biggest assets. In an open-concept home, guests don't have to be corralled into a single room in

the home. Instead, hosts and their guests can roam freely from room to room because there are no walls dividing common areas. This can make gatherings feel less cramped than in homes with more traditional floor plans.

Safety

The safety of open-concept floor plans may be most applicable to parents of young children. Open-concept floor plans allow parents to keep an eye on their children while cooking dinner, working from home or tending to other chores around the house. Since there are no walls to divide rooms in open-concept homes, parents don't have to wonder what their curious kids are up to because they can see them at all times.

With an open-concept floor plan, homeowners have the flexibility to make dining areas as big or small as they see fit and can even adjust the rooms on the fly on those occasions when people are coming over.

Flexibility

Open-concept floor plans give homeowners more flexibility. For example, homes with more traditional floor plans may have designated dining areas. These spaces don't leave much room to work with and may not be valued by homeowners who don't often host dinners at home. As a result, such rooms may just be wasted square footage.

With an open-concept floor plan, homeowners have the flexibility to make dining areas as big or small as they like and can even adjust the rooms on the fly when people are coming over.

Open-concept floor plans continue to be popular among homebuyers and might prove to be the most lasting home design trend of the early 21st century.



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HOME IMPROVEMENT How-To

Funding your next project

Before starting a home improvement project, either on one's own or with the assistance of a professional contractor, homeowners must first consider the costs involved.

According to the home improvement resource HomeAdvisor, more than one-third of homeowners do not understand what hiring a professional will cost, and then cannot successfully budget and secure financing once they have set their sights on a renovation project.

HomeAdvisor says that some of the more popular projects, such as remodeling a kitchen or bathroom or building a deck, can cost, on average, \$19,920, \$9,274 and \$6,919, respectively.

Homeowners may find that the more expensive renovations require them to secure some type of financing. Those who have never before sought such financing may want to consider these options.

■ **Cash-out refinancing:** With cash-out refinancing, a person will begin the mortgage process anew with the intention of paying off the current mortgage balance, and then taking out additional funds for other purposes. Cash-out refinancing is a way to tap into a home's existing equity for use on improvements or other expenses, such as college tuition.

■ **Home equity line of credit:** The financial experts at



Consider financing options early on in the planning process when embarking on a home improvement project.

Bankrate indicate that a home equity line of credit works like a credit card, with the house as collateral. There is a credit limit, and borrowers can spend up to that limit. The interest rate may or may not be fixed. However, the interest may be tax-deductible if the financing is used to improve, buy or build a home.

■ **Home equity loan:** Individuals also can borrow

against equity in their homes with a fixed-interest rate through a home equity loan. Most lenders will calculate 80 percent of the home value and subtract a homeowner's mortgage balance to figure out how much can be borrowed, according to the financial advisory site The Simple Dollar.

■ **Personal loan:** Homeowners can shop around at various financial institutions

for competitive personal loans to be used for home improvement purposes. Funds may be approved within one business day, which can be ideal for those who want to begin their improvements soon.

■ **Personal line of credit:** A personal line of credit allows borrowers to borrow only the money needed at the time, and offers a variable interest rate that is generally lower than fixed

loan rates. Again, like a credit card, a personal line of credit gives a person a maximum borrowing amount and is ideal for ongoing purchases.

■ **Credit cards:** In a pinch, credit cards can be used to finance improvements, but they do come with the cost of very high interest rates if the balance is not paid in full by the time the bill comes due. However, for funding smaller

projects and maximizing rewards points through home improvement retailers or specific credit card company promotions, credit cards can be a way to earn various perks in addition to the benefit of improving a home.

Homeowners looking to finance their next improvements should speak to a financial adviser and shop around for the best types of funding for them.

VALUABLE UPDATE

Each year, Remodeling magazine publishes its "Cost vs. Value" report to give homeowners a greater understanding of how much popular home projects will cost across the nation, as well as which renovations will offer the greatest return on investment.

According to the magazine's research, these projects improved in value between 2017 and 2018 and can be smart choices for homeowners looking to add popular features to their properties.

Here are the most popular home

improvement projects and the average cost of the renovations:

- **Midrange bathroom addition:** \$44,717
- **Midrange bathroom remodel:** \$19,134
- **Midrange deck addition (wood):** \$10,950
- **Midrange siding replacement:** \$15,072

■ **Midrange entry door replacement (steel):** \$1,471

■ **Upscale garage door replacement:** \$3,470

■ **Midrange manufactured stone veneer:** \$8,221

■ **Midrange minor kitchen remodel:** \$21,198

■ **Midrange universal design bathroom:** \$16,393

■ **Upscale window replacement (vinyl):** \$15,955

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Beverly \$599,900
36 Colgate Road

Expansive contemporary home with five bedrooms including an awesome master suite, fenced yard and in-ground pool.

Pam Spiros
978.927.1111



Beverly \$1,190,000
126 Lothrop Street

New Colonial with ocean views & beach access, 4 bedrooms incl a master suite, roof-top deck with Jacuzzi & finished lower level.

Michael McNiff & Kevin Pietrini
978.927.1111



Danvers \$660,000
196 Locust Street

Updated antique colonial with 5 bedrooms & 2.5 baths. Featuring pine floors, beamed ceilings & 6 fireplaces. Sit back & relax on the farmer's porch!

Pam Spiros
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Essex \$1,595,000
280 Southern Avenue

Exquisite Shingle-style home sited on 8.2 acres on the Manchester/Essex line. Open floor plan, chef's kitchen, first floor master suite.

Scott Smith
978.526.7572



Gloucester \$769,000
4 Stanwood Point, Unit A

Waterfront, 2 BR, 2.5 BA townhouses to be built on the headwaters of the Little River & Annisquam. Docks and moorings can be added. A Boat Lovers Dream!

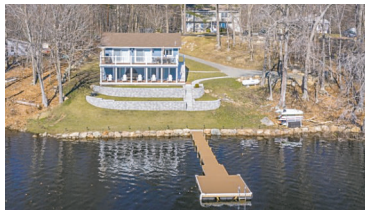
Charleen McCarthy
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Gloucester \$1,175,000
50 River Road

1920 colonial with water views of Annisquam River. Open concept with 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, wood floors, gas fireplace and private patio.

John & Cindy Farrell
978.468.9576



Hamilton \$925,000
290 Echo Cove Road

Beautifully renovated 3 bedroom, 3 bath lake front home on extra-large lot, with dock, easy maintenance, above flood plain.

Marianne Round
978.526.7572



Magnolia \$799,000
29 Fuller Street

Fantastic and flexible describe this beautifully renovated beach-view 2-family home. Six bedrooms, four levels. Condo conversion potential.

Scott Smith
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Manchester \$519,000
11 Allen Avenue, Unit 2

Bright and open village townhouse in excellent condition inside and out. Updated kitchen and baths, private deck. Minutes to train!

Joan McDonald
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Manchester \$689,000
19 Lincoln Street

Village classic 4 BR American Four Square with beautiful hardwood floors, detached garage, wrap around covered porch on pretty, level corner lot.

Kelly Blagden
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Manchester \$879,000
17 Butler Avenue

Spacious and sun-filled 5 bedroom, 3.5 bath home built in 2000. Includes an in-law/au pair suite. Brand new septic system.

Marianne Round
978.526.7572



Manchester \$2,500,000
1 Colburn Road

Stunning 4 bedroom home set on 3+ acres with terrace and pool. Superb updates, state-of-the-art kitchen, media room, master suite with deck.

Nannie Winslow & Joan McDonald
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North Reading \$499,900
32 Winter Street

Remarkable 3 bedroom ranch w/ updated bath. Fireplace in living room & mudroom. Lower level w/ full kitchen, bath, 3 additional rooms.

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Charming two-room studio in a great location, near Bearskin Neck shopping! Living/bedroom combo with wood floors & walk-in closet.

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Salem \$849,999
15 Winter Island Road

Waterfront, 3 BR, 2.5 BA Contemporary Colonial. Great open floor plan for entertaining. Large master bedroom with walk in closet and full bath.

Bob Faulkner
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Topsfield \$438,500
281 Rowley Bridge Road, Unit 9

End unit condo in 55+ community Amberwood Farms. Featuring wood floors, cathedral ceilings in LR, 2 master suites, garage & full basement.

Mary Wood & Michelle Kuppens
978.927.1111



Wenham \$695,000
13 Larch Row

The Francis Merrill house c.1846 with colonial architecture and charm, close to downtown area and offers a 2-car garage with workshop area.

Peter Dorsey
978.927.1111



Wenham \$849,900
157 Main Street

Victorian style home with five bedrooms, oak trims throughout, hardwood floors and new roof, paved driveway and water service.

Michael McNiff
978.927.1111

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