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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Home Additions: Boost Your Resale Value

Expanding your home doesn't just add square footage — it can also boost resale value. However, not all additions are created equal. Gain living space with these renovations that offer the biggest return on investment (ROI).

Outdoor Living Space

In addition to decks and patios, screened porches and three-season rooms offer a great ROI. They add relaxing and adaptable spaces, seamlessly merging indoor comfort with the joys of outdoor living.

Kitchen

Most buyers are looking for spacious kitchen floorplans. If your kitchen is too small or the design is inefficient, consider bumping out the space, if possible. Even minor kitchen remodels can yield some of the highest ROI.

Second Story

If your property constraints limit horizontal expansion, think vertically. Adding a second story to your home is complex and takes time, but increasing your square footage could attract potential buyers in the future. With careful budgeting, the ROI may be worth your time and effort.

Family Room

Homeowners looking to enlarge their space typically build onto the back of the structure to add more comfortable entertaining and living space. This is especially appealing if your house has a small living room.

Bathroom

If similar homes in your neighborhood have more bathrooms, or if your current number of bathrooms is insufficient for the number of bedrooms, adding a bathroom could be a wise choice. Besides a favorable ROI, an additional bathroom can improve your family's daily comfort and convenience.

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How To Decorate Empty Corners

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Transforming overlooked corners in your home is a breeze with thoughtful decor and a touch of style. Consider these ideas for those challenging little spaces.

A **workstation or vanity** gives purpose to these unused areas. If there's a large window near the corner, it may be the perfect place for a **built-in bench** with cozy cushions. Vacant kitchen corners become **breakfast nooks** with a small table and trendy seating.

Adding function and decor to walls is also a great use of empty space. Install **shelves** for extra storage and a place to display collections. Create a **gallery wall** with photos and art to reflect your style.

If you have a corner with ample sunlight, use **houseplants** to bring nature inside. Enhance a dark corner with a **floor-length mirror** to reflect light and make the room feel larger.

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Happy Hydrated Houseplants

Houseplants offer a fun way to bring the outdoors in, but putting a roof over their heads means they rely solely on you for water. Consider these facts to help keep your potted houseguests hydrated.

- Most plants need to be watered when the soil is dry down to about an inch below the surface.
- Think about a plant's natural habitat. Tropical plants need more water, while cacti and succulents need less.
- Avoid diseases that can be caused by excess moisture by hydrating plants with room-temperature water in the morning, allowing plenty of daylight hours to dry.
- Bottom watering using a container or saucer allows the plant to absorb from the roots.
- During dormant periods — usually fall and winter — plants require less moisture.

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Seal Air Leaks Around Your House

In most houses, there's usually one window where a draft sneaks in or one room that never seems to maintain the right temperature. In fact, nine out of 10 U.S. homes have air leaks and insufficient insulation. These energy thieves drive up heating and cooling costs while undermining comfort. Resolving these problems can save homeowners an average of 15% on utility bills. Here's how to get started.

- Apply caulk and weather stripping to windows and doors.
- Use exterior caulk or foam to fill gaps around the chimney and flue, foundation, eaves, and ventilation ducts. Don't forget to check for gaps in electrical, gas, cable, and plumbing connections, too.
- Insulate recessed lights by installing airtight baffles. Fit electrical outlets and switches with foam gaskets to prevent hot or cold outside air inflow.
- Use weather stripping around pull-down attic stairs, or purchase a pre-insulated hatch cover.
- Consider hiring a contractor for larger jobs like sealing gaps in attics and basements.

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Grilled Shrimp and Sausage

Ingredients

18 long toothpicks
1 tsp. smoked paprika
¼ tsp. oregano
1 Tbsp. avocado oil
¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed
18 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 (12 oz.) pkg. cured chorizo or smoked turkey sausage
1 lime, sliced
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

Directions

Soak toothpicks in water for 30 minutes. In a medium bowl, combine paprika, oregano, oil, pepper, and garlic. Add shrimp and toss to coat. Marinate in refrigerator for at least 20 minutes. Cut sausage into 18 slices.

Slide one sausage slice onto a toothpick followed by a shrimp. Make sure the shrimp tail wraps around the sausage.

Heat grill on high. Cook for 1–2 minutes per side until the shrimp is pink and the sausage has plumped. Garnish with lime slices and fresh parsley.



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