

Sweat the details to lower home energy expenses

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frame. Double-pane glass is typically better than single-pane since multiple layers of glass increase a window's ability to control hot and cool air flow.

Clear glass is the most common type installed in homes. Today's clear windows let heat and cool air pass through easily.

To control your energy costs, conduct an annual check up

of your system to ensure that it is operating at its optimum efficiency. Regularly changing the air filters will also increase your system's efficiency and save you money. The harder your system

works, the more money it cost to run it.

It has been estimated that over 40 percent of the average household annual budget is consumed by heating and cooling.

As you may have guessed, a lot of your hard earned money "goes right out the window."

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Faux techniques add to bed and bathroom

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ing cloud-like shapes on a wall in irregular patterns and applying a light blue color to the wall outside the pattern. Then blend in a second darker blue with a sea sponge. After the initial colors dry, the final step entails applying a small amount of white glaze to the edges of the clouds to act as an accent. The Cloud technique is wonderful for bathrooms but can also add a great effect to any ceiling or child's room.

• Frottage Sponging

Another sponging technique to make a wall really stand out is Frottage Sponging. Perfect for the bedroom, this technique yields a very modern, new vogue appeal. Apply three different colors in

two-inch by two-inch areas on the wall. Then take an ordinary sponge and lightly blend the colors together. After blending, take different shapes of torn newspaper and smooth them onto the wall. When you peel off the newspaper you are left with a beautiful, new faux finish. To add a real sparkle to this finish, try Dimensions Metallics from Dutch Boy. When dry, these finishes are translucent and therefore add an amazing shimmer to whatever base coat is beneath.

• Travertine Marble

The Travertine Marble technique adds a soft feel to a room and is a great faux technique for a bedroom. The look is sophisticated and elegant. To create the Travertine Mar-

ble finish, apply three different paint colors in two-inch by two-inch areas, blend them with a sponge, and then finish it off with a white glaze to add dimension and sparkle.

• Diagonal Blend

Take any room to a whole new level with the Diagonal Blend technique. With Dimensions designer colors Satin Keeki Coffee, Polenta, and Indian Tile you can warm up a bedroom with shades of orange, yellow, and brown to give it a cozy feel for when you curl up with your favorite book. Using a rag roller, take each color and apply it to the wall in a short diagonal pattern. Then use a color washing brush to blend the colors with large sweep-

ing strokes.

Repeat these steps over the entire surface of the wall and the finished product will add so much flare that it will look like a giant paint brush swept right across the entire room.

• Granite Stone Wall

Create a classic look in your home with the new Granite Stone Wall technique. With a standard paintbrush apply Old World Plaster finish and the Granite Wall finish to a taped off block pattern on the wall.

Next, use the sea sponge to blend the plaster and granite finishes. Finally, remove the tape from the wall and paint in grout lines where the tape had been. Voila, a granite stone wall. For more informa-

tion on these and other faux finishes, or to locate a Dutch Boy retailer, log onto

www.dutchboy.com, or call (800) 828-5669.

Planning remodeling project? Think about return of classics

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Before undertaking a renovation project, experts advise homeowners to consider these factors:

- What are the current architectural features of the home?

- What materials need to match, such as wood species on cabinetry, millwork, windows and doors?

- What weather conditions or building code requirements must be met?

• What is the budget?

- What is the expected return on investment? High-Tech Materials with Traditional Style Today's building products benefit from high-tech improvements to time-honored materials. Wood is a must for the classic architectural styles that are popular today, but many homeowners have avoided wood due to concerns about rot, termites and high maintenance requirements. Building product manufacturers have answered with a new generation of treated wood that avoids these risks.

An example is JELD-WEN

AuraLast wood, which is guaranteed to resist decay and termites for 20 years. At this level of protection, homeowners don't have to sacrifice the warmth that solid wood windows and doors bring to traditional architectural styles that favor rich, natural tones.

For homeowners who want the look of wood but live in regions with extreme climate conditions, fiberglass entry doors have mastered the look of genuine wood. For example, IWP Aurora Custom Fiberglass exterior doors are cast from solid wood doors and match the look and feel of wood so closely that even experts cannot tell the difference.

- Keys to Classic Architectural Styles

For homeowners who want to unite the classic looks of their homes, here are a few tips on what architectural details to highlight:

- Decorative glass is the key to carrying off Victorian architectural style at the front entryway. Beveled and textured glass brightens the

entry and reinforces the strong geometric shapes of a Victorian home's façade.

The same patterning can be carried throughout the home with custom divided lites for windows. Depending on window type, exterior colors and grille patterns, homeowners can find windows in wood, clad wood or vinyl to match this architectural style.

- The keys to the Craftsman look are symmetry and simple details that emphasize balanced proportions. While glass inserts are still important in Craftsman doors, the fanciful radius and oval shapes of the Victorian style are replaced with symmetrical, squared-off forms and designs abstracted from nature.

Wood windows in pine, made of reliable treated wood like AuraLast, complement this architectural style, which favors rich, natural wood finishes.

- To carry off an Old World look at the front entry, the key is decorative hardware. An otherwise ordinary paneled door takes on a whole

new dimension of style with the addition of a speakeasy grille or decorative straps. Choosing options such as antiquing, hand-hewn finishes and hammered-look hardware can add to the Old World appearance. Shaped casement windows with arched or peaked tops and Gothic divided lite patterns can help carry this design theme throughout the home.

- A hallmark of the Colonial architectural style is a grand front entrance — often a projecting central pavilion or a portico with columns.

For a Colonial entrance, a broad, paneled door with classical proportions and symmetrical sidelights fits the bill. Wood and fiberglass doors offer a variety of custom options within the established set of Colonial-style doors. Double-hung windows in white or ivory with symmetrical divided lite patterns are the perfect match for Colonial style.

For more remodeling resources, visit www.jeld-wen.com or call (800) 877-9482.

Finding faucet that suits your fancy

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a beautifully designed vessel sink, the wall-mount faucet can make a dramatic decorating statement in the bath," added Pannell. These styles also free-up needed counter space and ease cleaning around the sink.

"They're ideal for the discriminating consumer who has a granite or tile countertop and doesn't want to clutter the surface with a faucet."

Make mine a single

But, there's more to a faucet than just a spout. Don't forget to consider the types of handles you prefer. "The choice between a single handle and a two handle faucet is best made by considering your

needs," said Pannell. "Single handle faucets can be easier to use and more convenient, particularly for children or individuals who may have difficulty turning a lever. This can be especially important when hands are wet and soapy or if someone in the family has arthritis or other physical limitations."

Two handle faucets offer a broader variety of design options.

"This style is more prevalent in powder rooms or master baths, where homeowners are looking for a specific style to match a certain décor," said Pannell. "With two handle faucets, you will also have more choices of handle style,

which include lever, cross, or knob."

If you like the look of a two handle faucet, but are concerned about ease of use, choose a lever style handle which is easier to manipulate and provides precise temperature adjustment. Finishing Touches Forget the days of the plain chrome faucet. Today's faucets add personality to any bath not only with their sleek designs, but also through a broad array of designer finish options.

"Chrome will always be a classic finish," said Pannell. "But new finish options can really create an eye-catching look at the sink. Surpassing chrome in popularity are

brushed finishes and oil rubbed bronze," added Pannell. "These designer finishes cost a bit more, but they create a coordinated look and can tie into the whole décor of a home."

With so many styles and options to choose from, there's sure to be a faucet that's right for you.

Pannell says, "Keep in mind what will best suit your needs, your budget and your personal style, and you can't go wrong."

For more information about the Eva Collection from Moen or other bathroom faucet designs, visit www.moen.com or call 1-800-BUY-MOEN.

Outdoor painting prep made a lot easier

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innovative flex disc system allows the disc to conform to the surface for optimal results around flat trim and siding. It can be operated on its edge to remove stubborn paint chips or flat to smooth or feather paint edges to create a perfect surface for

repainting. The disc's open-web design keeps paint and dust build-up to a minimum and allows the disc to glide over surface imperfections, including nail heads or sharp edges, without damage.

The PaintEater is ergonomically designed to allow for multiple hand positions, easing hand fatigue and provid-

ing safety on ladders. It can be used on wood, masonite and cement. Once you have a perfectly prepped surface, choose from one of Wagner's power paint sprayers to complete the job. For a professional finish, and for making quick work of painting an entire house, nothing beats a power sprayer for helping

homeowners paint like pros.

Wagner's industry-leading knowledge of paint removal, paint application and power tools creates a paint removal system that is easy to use. For more information, visit www.wagnerspraytech.com. You can also find Wagner products at home improvement stores nationwide.

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Watch Your Wealth

The wealth you accumulate in a house is no different than money in a checking or savings account. Be as careful and attentive to your home equity as you would be to your bank account. Be cautious about refinancing or borrowing against your home equity. Remember, refinancing isn't always a good idea. Don't let someone sell you a loan you don't need or can't afford. Be wary of pitches like "NO CREDIT, NO PROBLEM" or random mail promising favorable mortgage rates. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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