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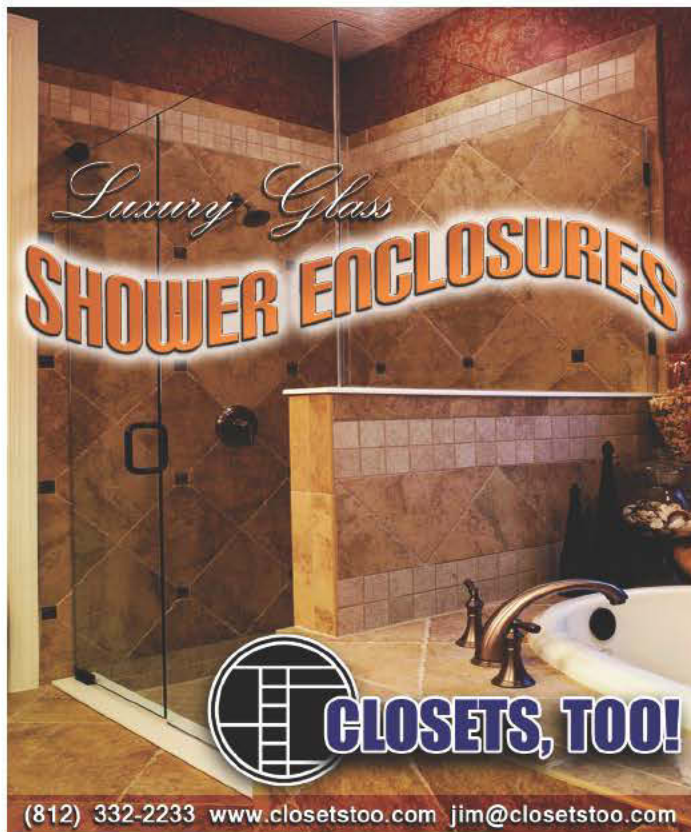
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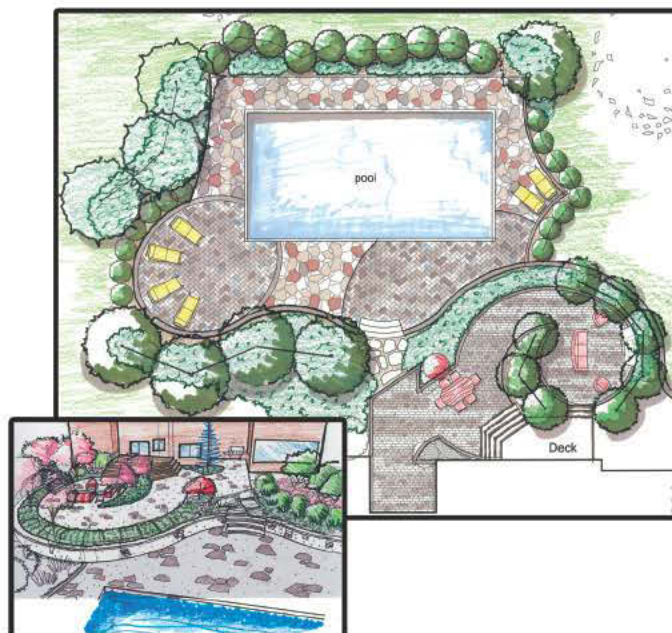
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Tom & Mary's Top 10 Home Improvement Tips

Whether you're improving to sell or plan to stay in your home for years, it's always important to keep resale in mind. Here are the top 10 home improvements that add the most value.

1. BATHROOMS SELL HOUSES

The biggest return on an investment is most often the bathroom. Don't go overboard, but keep functionality in mind.

2. SO DO KITCHENS

Remember the triangle rule—your kitchen should be functional, with a triangular work area between the stove, fridge and counter space.

3. MAXIMIZE YOUR SPACE

Whether you live in a tiny house or a spacious retreat, using your space wisely will show potential buyers what's possible. Creating smart storage nooks or using those empty spaces properly will give you the edge.

4. ROOF, WINDOWS, DOORS

It's not sexy, but replacing old windows and doors and putting in a new roof are infrastructure improvements buyers are looking for.

5. LANDSCAPING

Curb appeal is an essential first impression. If you don't have a green thumb, find some low-maintenance plants and trees. And don't go overboard here—most buyers won't want to keep up your jungle.

6. HEAT, AIR, WATER

Make an investment in a new furnace, air conditioner and water heater. Not only will you be more comfortable and your energy bills go down, but it's one less objection from potential buyers.

7. IF IT'S BROKEN, FIX IT

We've all got those little honey-do projects we've been putting off. Take a couple of weekends to complete the list.

8. IF YOU'VE GOT A BASEMENT, FINISH IT

Homes with unfinished or incomplete basements leave money on the table during resale. You can add valuable square footage and increase your home's value exponentially.

9. FLOORING

Think low maintenance—and think clean. Does your carpeting have questionable stains? Try hardwood, bamboo or cork.

10. BEHOLD THE POWER OF PAINT

The simplest and most dramatic improvement you can make is by repainting. Go neutral—but if you want some drama, use bold colors. Just remember you'll need to tone it down before you sell.

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