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## REMODELING NEWS

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### Tips for leveraging today's remodeling trends

Whether families are expanding, interests are changing, or homeowners are seeking solutions for making everyday life easier and more enjoyable, many homes today are in need of an upgrade. Since moving isn't always ideal — due to finances or the continuing decline of the housing market — many homeowners are turning to remodeling to increase living space. By encouraging homeowners to invest in remodeling projects and sharing their expertise on the subject, plumbing contractors can increase their business and build lasting relationships with customers.

With a focus on family, three new living spaces are turning heads today: outdoor kitchens, built-out laundry rooms and mud rooms, all of which are ideal recommendations for homeowners seeking added space and functionality. With a limited budget, homeowners may not be sure where in their home to spend money on upgrades. Before

beginning their remodel, plumbing contractors should encourage homeowners to research newly built homes in the area for innovative new living spaces or home features that catch their eye.

#### Kitchens turned inside out

Between 2006 and 2007, *Consumer Reports* estimated that approximately 1.2 million U.S. households installed a fully functional outdoor kitchen. Today, "grilling out" has become an outdoor experience centered on elaborate outdoor kitchens and living spaces with all the amenities, encapsulating the amount of decks, patios and porches being built to accommodate homeowners' entertainment, comfort and size needs. Whether in year-round warm climates or regions with widely varying seasons, outdoor kitchens offer an ideal place to relax, eat and entertain. In fact, Property and Environment Research Center reports that 43% of homeowners in the Northeast have an

outdoor room, while in the Midwest, West and South, 32-34% of homeowners assume the role of outdoor chefs.

Building an outdoor kitchen can cost anywhere between \$3,000 for the basics — a high quality grill, counter and patio — and up to \$100,000 or more for a space with higher-end items and all the amenities and appliances. When developing an outdoor kitchen, it's important to recommend that homeowners choose high-quality products that don't require frequent replacement, as well as weather-durable appliances, such as refrigerators, ovens and countertops that resist corrosion. Before meeting with the homeowner, contractors can check out online resources such as [outdoorkitchens.org](http://outdoorkitchens.org) for the latest in outdoor kitchen design.

A quality, functional sink and faucet are also an essential part of an outdoor kitchen. Since the sink must fit the needs of the cook, try to work with the homeowner to help them determine if



JACK KRECKEL,  
contributing writer

they prefer a single bowl, double bowl or triple bowl sink. Also, check if they need a prep sink or clean-up sink, or both. An ideal recommendation in this situation would be a stainless steel sink, such as Elkay Pursuit outdoor



Outdoor kitchens are on the rise. Choose an ideal sink configuration to help facilitate consumer entertainment value.

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top mount or undermount double bowl sink, which is ideal for outdoor kitchens because of its functionality, durability and sleek design that complements the look and feel of an outdoor oasis. Also, all Elkay Pursuit sinks are made of heavy-duty type 316 stainless steel, feature corrosion resistant mounting hardware, as well as enhanced Sound Guard undercoating to meet the demands of these hard-use areas.

Outdoor kitchens also can be suggested as a way to save homeowners money in the warm summer months since cooking indoors emits heat, thereby forcing air conditioning to work extra hard and waste precious dollars. Outdoor kitchens also encourage family and friends to spend time together, enjoy the outdoors and relax in comfort.

#### Mud rooms, a welcome addition to the home

A home's secondary (or back) entryway has historically been viewed as the place where the kids left their toys and the family pet tracked in dirt. It became a room filled with an unsightly obstacle course of shoes, dirt and coats which stood between the homeowner and the back door. However, plumbing contractors can remind homeowners that just because it's called a "Mud Room" does not mean it is doomed for dirt.

In recent years, mud rooms have become a home's primary storage center that can handle whatever one throws at it. By adding on a mud room, the homeowner has the opportunity to (Turn to it's all about... page 32.)

## It's all about sink choice

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create an inviting, organized, and functional space used for storage and clean-up. This must-have amenity provides a smooth transition from indoors to out, and allows the contractor to build his or her business.

Ample storage space is key, which explains why common mud room accessories include cubby holes, cabinets and closets. Large sinks are also a necessity to aid in the clean-up of home improvement projects, muddy shoes and even the family pet.

Whether the space is large or small, the extra storage and clean-up assistance provided by a mud room is invaluable when it comes to saving the homeowner's time and money. With the right design and plumbing features, mud rooms are sure to be a welcome

addition to any home, resulting in word-of-mouth recommendations for the plumbing contractor.

### Luxury laundry rooms

In the search for convenience and functionality, updated laundry rooms have begun to turn heads and grab homeowners' attention. Luxury laundry rooms are here to stay, with an increasing number of homeowners saying goodbye to the cold cement floors, the "Where can I hang this?" frustrations and the "Don't go in there!" attitude. A large, open and well-lit laundry room has become an essential for many families and is another way for plumbing contractors to increase their bottom line.

Upgrading to a built-out laundry room often leads to the formation of a

multi-purpose room that goes far beyond dirty clothes. The growing trend in laundry room renovation is adding cabinets for extra storage and more counter space for folding. Homeowners are also adding drying racks for delicate items and even going high-tech with a smart washer and dryer system, television, computer and a children's area. It's important to remember how plumbing contractors can leverage the fact that built-out laundry rooms will also require sinks that can stand up to dyes, detergents, bleaches and sometimes harsh cleaning agents. The Pursuit indoor double-bowl undermount sink is perfect for soaking stained clothing on one side while handling everyday use in the other — without staining or deteriorating the sink's finish.

Laundry rooms are often overlooked because many homeowners see this space as "just a laundry

room" and don't realize the possibilities. For large families, a laundry room is the nexus of an efficient home system; for plumbing contractors, it's often an untapped resource to grow their business.

### Recommending the right remodel

Homeowners' needs are continually evolving due to their changing lifestyles, as well as the growing trend of customizing and personalizing their homes' design. Plumbing contractors can help homeowners make these desired updates that will help add value to their homes, while increasing the contractor's profits in the process. ■

*Jack Kreczek is vice president, marketing, North America, plumbing products division, at Elkay. Elkay is an innovative manufacturer of sinks, faucets, water coolers and fountains for residential and commercial use.*