

This Old House

homenews { July/August.09 }



NEW PRODUCT

Never let your grill go cold

We hate seeing a roaring BBQ flame out because the propane tank ran dry. With this new translucent fiberglass tank, you'll always know when it's ready for a refill. Plus, good news for your back: It's 30 percent lighter than a steel tank. From \$85 for a 10-pound tank; litecylinder.com



PLUMBING

Toilet trade-ins save water—and cash

The humble commode guzzles 30 percent of the H₂O in your house, so low-flow models not only slash your water bill, they also help places like Bozeman, Montana, whose water needs are expected to double in 20 years. That's why local businessman Kent Madin (above) convinced the city government to offer rebates of up to \$75 to folks who replace their toilets with WaterSense-labeled models that use 20 percent less water. The program saved 3.45 million gallons during its first year. More than two dozen water utilities have adopted similar measures; ask yours if you can get money back for a trade-in.

72%

Percentage of homeowners who look for the Energy Star label when buying appliances



SAFETY

Poolside pointers

It would be a shame to let a lazy day of swimming and sunning turn into a cautionary tale about pool safety, but the facts don't lie: More than 2,000 people are rushed to the hospital each year with pool-related injuries. Here are four things you can do to help prevent accidents.

1. Check that drain covers are intact so that swimmers' hair or bathing suits don't get sucked in and trapped. Opt for dome-shaped covers, whose shape makes them a bit better at preventing this hazard than flat ones.
2. Surround your pool area with a 4-foot (or taller) fence to keep tykes from falling in when no one's around. Make sure the gate is self-latching on the inside so that little hands can't reach it.
3. Apply antislip surfacing tape along pool edges and diving boards.
4. For above-ground pools, remove steps and ladders when not in use.

MONEY-SAVING SECRET → Want to see if you qualify for a government-sponsored loan modification or refinancing program to lower your mortgage payment? Fill out a brief Q&A at makinghomeaffordable.gov.

NEWSFLASH

Workers found a live WW II-era grenade while removing the roof of a home in Texas City, Texas. An FBI bomb technician detonated it safely.



Reporting by Keith Pandolfi and Natalie Rodriguez

INTERIOR TREND

Best kitchen and bath designer? You

Forget monogrammed towels. Many makers of kitchen and bath fixtures now let you put your own stamp on their wares. Go online to mix and match faucet handles and spout styles (calfaucets.com) or vanity and storage configurations (sonia-sa.com). Or bring your ideas for unique sinks (elkay.com) and tilework (tileddecorative.com) to life, like the guy who made his dream for a martini-glass-shaped bar basin (right) come true.

