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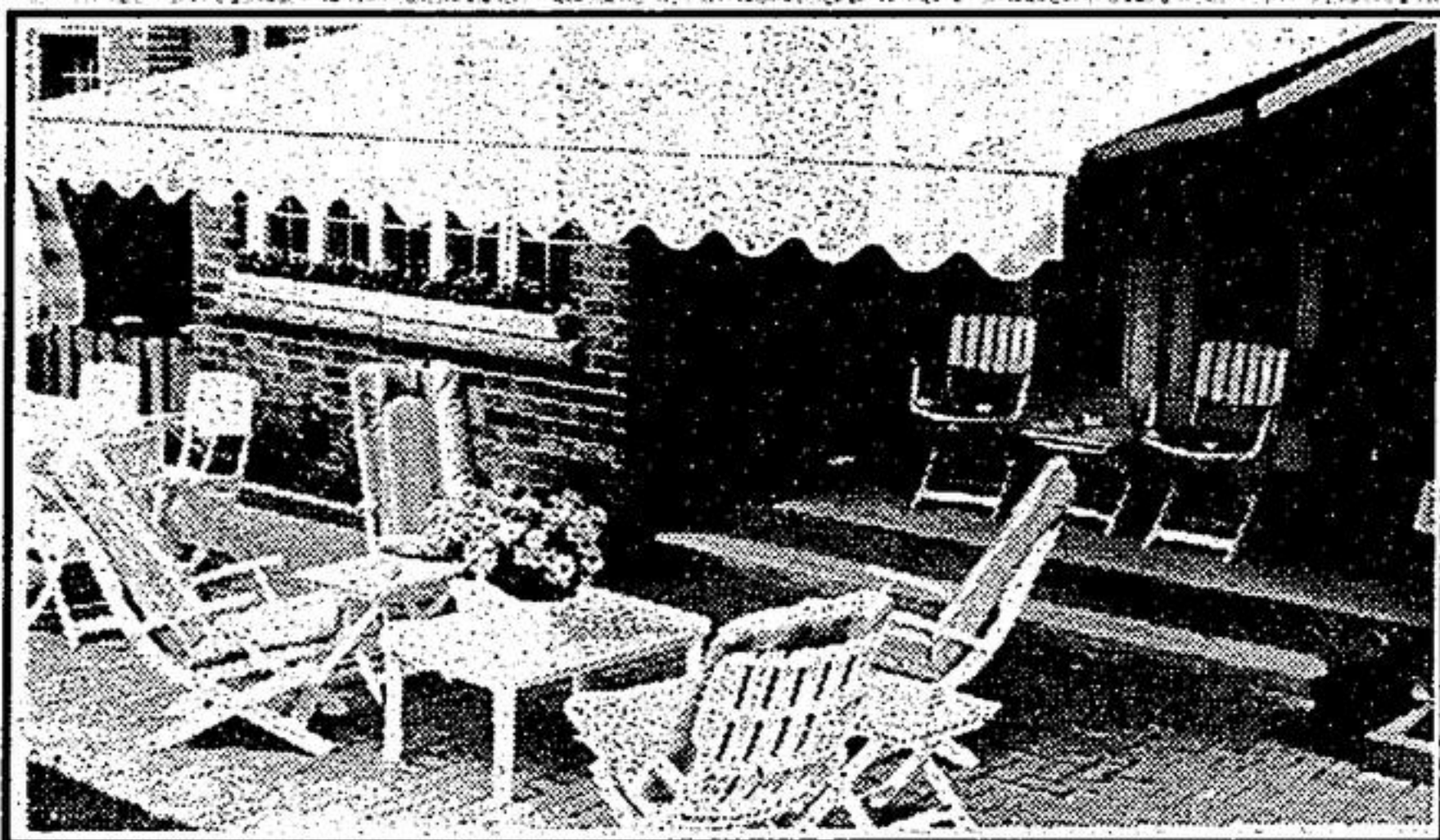
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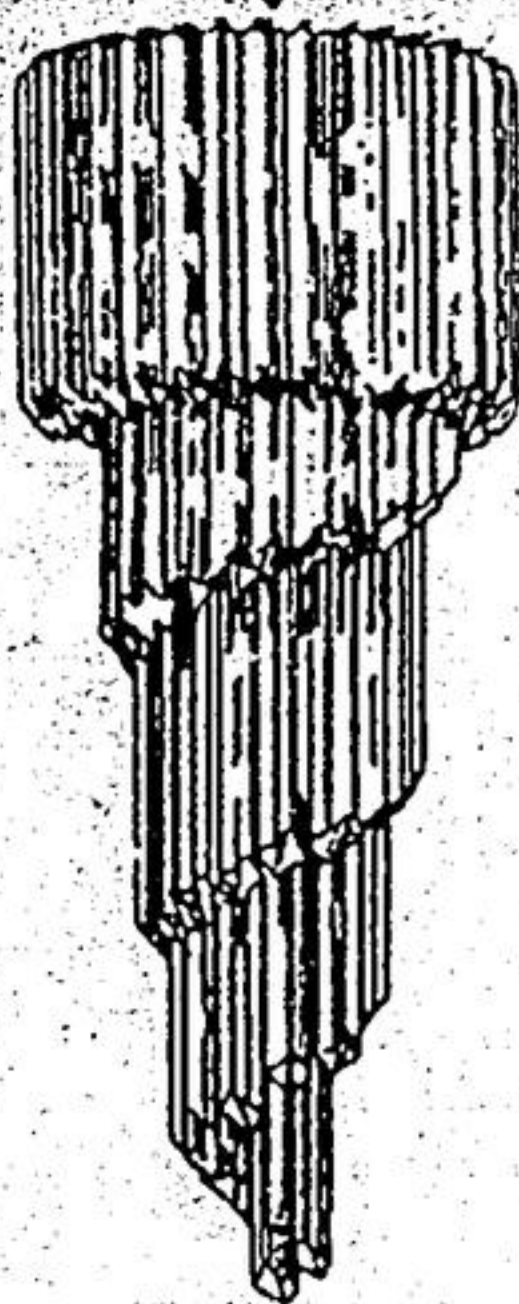
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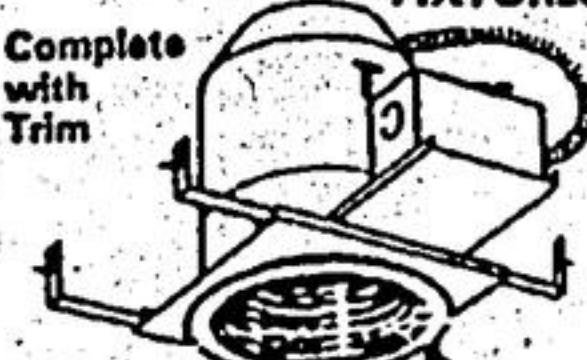
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Home Impressions

A look at renovation trends

The way we renovate our homes reflects who we are, both as individuals and as a society. Trends in renovations mirror larger trends and changes that shape society as a whole. The renovation trends of the early 90s are no exception to this.

The return of traditional values
Today's consumers are looking for a simpler lifestyle. As the baby-boomers — still the single largest group driving the marketplace — age, they are turning to traditional values that focus on the way things were.

How does this impact on renovation trends? Consumers are renovating their homes to look and feel more like those they grew up in, and the result is the warm and personal living environments of the 90s.

Wood is making a comeback. The richness and lasting beauty of wood is once more enjoyed in

hardwood floors, cabinetry, banisters and other decorative touches. Mouldings, available in a multitude of styles and patterns, are making subtle but personal decorating statements in living areas. Colors are back in vogue, from fashionable jewel tones to environmentally sensitive earthtones to delicate, easy-to-work-with pastels.

Cocooning
As part of the return to traditional values, consumers are placing increased emphasis on their personal lives. They value time spent with family and friends, and home is the focal point for social activities. Kitchens, family rooms and dining areas are being combined and kitchens are designed as work and entertainment centres. Outdoors, decks and patios are being added, changed or enlarged to accommodate the favourite hobby of a growing number of homeowners, namely gardening.

Growing environmental awareness

When replacing old windows, homeowners are choosing high-efficiency or "super" windows. Other common energy-efficient upgrades include extra insulation, new furnaces, new doors and weatherstripping.

One of the biggest trends today, according to renovators who have been in the business for years, is the emphasis on the efficient use of space. Concerned about the impact of their renovation on the environment, homeowners are moving or knocking down walls, re-designing their homes to improve spaciousness and traffic flow, before adding that extra room or floor.

A return of traditional values, cocooning and environmental awareness...it all adds up to the life that makes you happy, in the home that makes you feel good.

Kitchens, baths most popular reno choices

Kitchens and bathrooms still reign supreme with homeowners doing renovations. Kitchens account for the largest share of total renovation spending by homeowners and bathrooms the third largest share.

A wide array of exciting new materials, products and innovative designs are turning yesterday's kitchens and bathrooms into the comfortable, convenient, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly living spaces of the 90s.

In the kitchen, atmosphere and convenience are the themes of the day. Well-designed kitchens and open-concept living-eating areas promote easy, enjoyable togetherness. The cosy comfort to today's traditional-looking kitchen combines the lasting beauty of wooden cabinet doors with practical, low-

care laminate interiors.

New kitchen designs include providing for the separation of garbage right in the kitchen — at the source where it makes the most sense. Organic wastes are collected before they are transferred to the outdoor composter, and a built-in recycling bin allows the homeowner to gather bottles, cans and other recyclables conveniently for curbside pickup.

Built-in baskets, shelves and spice racks; garbage disposal systems, small appliances installed to make use of under-cupboard space; built-in microwave ovens and retractable oven hoods all add up to a well-organized, working kitchen for the 90s.

Granite-type countertops in many colours now come complete with

moulded sinks for easy wiping, while the traditional laminate counter is edged with oak or brass for a warm and decorative touch.

Linoleum and vinyl floors are still the number one choice for the kitchen for their easy maintenance, but a growing number of homeowners are opting for the rich look of hardwood floors and earthen ceramic tiles.

The selection of tiles is greater than ever before. Glazed and matte, from a rainbow of solid colours to intricate designs, in sizes from 4 by 4 in. to 12 by 12 in., tiles are providing attractive backgrounds or counterpoints in kitchen and bathroom walls and floors.

Bathrooms, once offered up as private havens of ultimate luxury, are becoming more modest, while they continue to provide a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere. Canadian manufacturers are providing colour co-ordination between product lines, enabling consumers to select individual fixtures such as tubs, sinks and toilets from various price groups without sacrificing uniformity of color.

Glass and mirrors continue to be used extensively to create the visual appearance of more space. Cultured marble products are gaining in popularity as an alternative to tiles around the tub and inside shower enclosures.

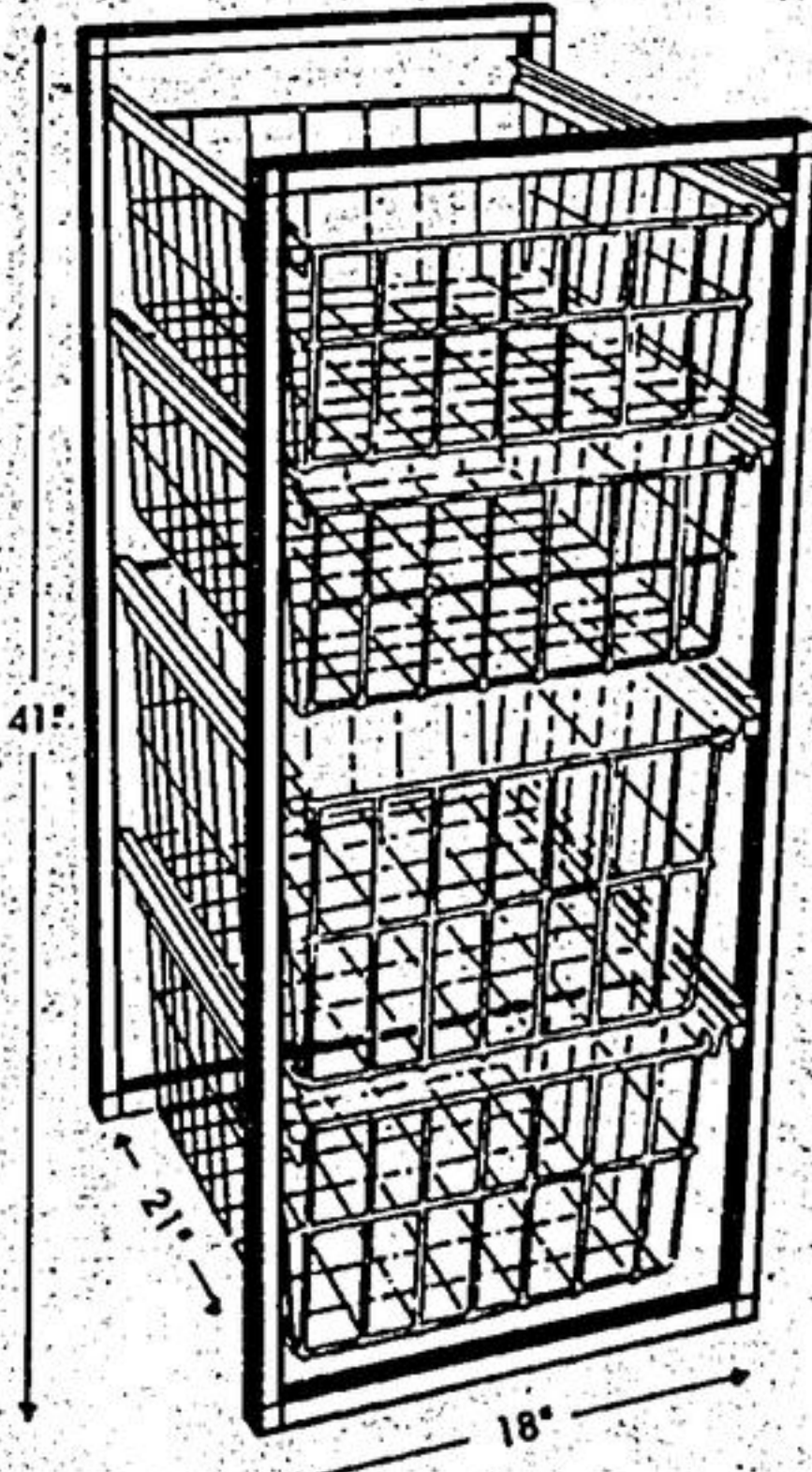
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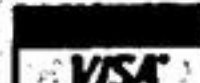
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