

Home Impressions

Ask yourself some questions before redoing your kitchen

Knowing what you want to achieve and how much you want to spend can help when you are planning to renovate your kitchen.

And following these tips by Roslyn Best, owner of Best Kitchens and Renovations can help.

➤ What is your budget?

➤ What do you use your kitchen for? (Preparations and storage or entertaining and eating.)

➤ What is the kitchen lacking? (Storage and cupboard space, too many inaccessible areas.)

➤ What do you want your new kitchen to look

like? (Open concept)

To save money:

➤ Keep the appliances where they are. (Electrical wires and plumbing have to be moved or redone if appliances are moved.)

➤ If you want to change the look of your kitchen cabinets, you might consider refinishing them instead of refacing them.

“(Sometimes) refacing can cost as much as a new kitchen,” says Best.

New trends in kitchen renovations:

➤ The open concept

➤ Pots and Pans draws (where deep draw-

ers slide out for easy accessibility.)

➤ Piano hinged corners – hinges are in the middle, so the whole door swings open. This makes blind corners accessible.

➤ Popular trends in counter tops are laminates, solid surfacing like Corian or granite

➤ Also popular are the ceramic

tiles or laminates that go from the counters to the cupboards.

➤ Removing the box (called bulk heads) above cupboards is popular.

➤ Large sink and a half.

Best recommends people purchasing this type of sink opposed to the double sink. The sink and a half

takes up as much space as a double sink, but is more convenient.

And the work – depending on what is being done – can take as little as two days for making blind corner and cabinets accessible, to a week and a half by removing walls and moving appliances, says Best.

Winter is a good time to do renovations

Spring is still a month away, fall is long gone and summer is just a distant memory. Guess what? You're still stuck in winter and you've got the blahs.

Now is a perfect time to take a look inside your home and get a head start on upgrades that never seem to get done when the weather is nice.

Things like carpeting, wallpapering, painting, adding new lighting or even major renovations can easily be accomplished right now.

Your main consideration is to assess how much a job will disrupt the household. In winter, family members don't have the option of spending time outside.

On the other hand, many home improvements make ideal winter jobs. Installing new carpets is extremely popular for many homeowners. Redoing a den, rec room or bedroom will give greater comfort and warmth.

You shouldn't be concerned about replacing every carpet in your home because slush and snow are bound to be tracked throughout. You should delay re-carpeting your living room or front hallway until the weather

improves.

Wallpapering is a chore ideally suited to winter. It can be a bit messy, but can be completed room by room in a fairly short period.

Value in doing upgrades

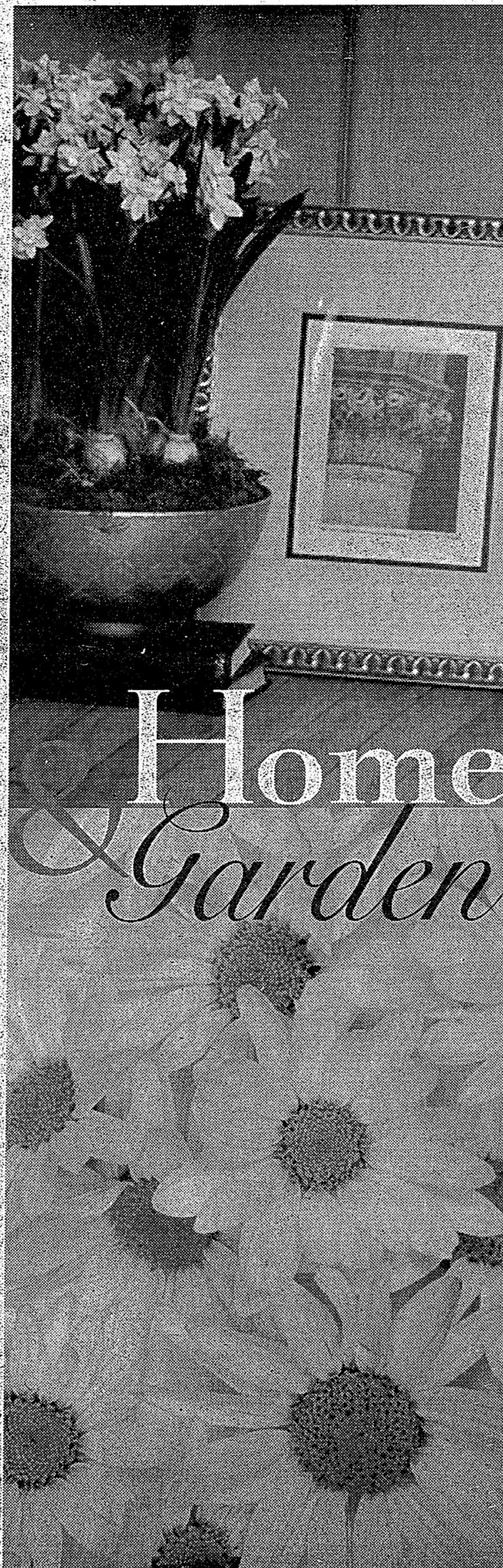
Functional improvements such as kitchen and bathroom renovations are among the most likely to increase the net worth of your home.

Most contractors are busiest in the spring and summer, so there is a good chance of getting a favorable rate.

Another excellent opportunity for improvement exists in your basement. Apart from laying concrete floors, just about anything is possible.

While you're at it, you could take a look at your cellar or garage and build shelving. It would certainly help during spring cleaning when you need somewhere to put the boxes of winter stuff.

Don't let the blahs get the better of you. The winter months offer a great chance to upgrade your home so you'll have more time to enjoy the summer – when it finally arrives.



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