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We would like to say thank you to all of those who visited us at the 2006 Southern California Home and Garden Show. This year's show was another great success and we enjoyed seeing all of you. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about products or services you saw at the show or an upcoming project you may be planning.



## Preparing For Your Remodel

**W**hether you plan to remodel a single room or your entire home, there are many things to consider when beginning any remodeling project. The following tips will help you to be better prepared and keep you on track throughout your project.



- Preparation** – Depending upon the size and scope of your project there will be much to do to prepare for the work that will be going on in your home in the near future. Though most contractors have in-depth plans in place to protect your belongings as they work inside your home it is always best for you to take the initiative by removing personal belongings from the work area and storing them elsewhere in the home. If your project includes a kitchen remodel try setting up a mini kitchen including a small refrigerator, microwave, toaster, crock pot and other essentials in another part of the house.
- Construction** – As the work begins it's hard for most homeowners to let go of the project and allow the workers to do their job. It's ok to have questions and/or suggestions but make sure that you know who to address with any concerns. Most general contractors work with sub-contractors and those subs are not authorized to make any changes to the project without notification from the project manager or supervisor. Even the smallest of changes can affect other portions of your project so always make sure that there is one contact that you will be speaking with on every aspect of your remodel and that you have all of their contact information.
- Designing** – You'll need to decide whether you will be working with a designer, architect, or designer/contractor to plan your project. Regardless of which route you take, you should develop a budget for the project and share that with your designer and/or contractor. They can assist you in sticking to your budget and keep you from planning outside that budget.
- Planning** – Develop a good working relationship with your contractor and keep in mind that communication is the key. Agree upon the terms of your home improvement contract and know who your key contact person is on your project. Work with your designer and/or contractor to begin choosing the materials for your remodel.
- Follow-Up** – Do a preliminary walk-through with your project manager or supervisor and create a list of any concerns, mistakes or items that are incomplete. Once these have been corrected and completed do a final walk-through with the project manager or supervisor to ensure that everything has been taken care of. Discuss instructions for new appliances and equipment and make sure that you receive warranty information for all materials.



Any remodeling project can become overwhelming but careful planning and good communication can stop most problems before they begin. This will make for a much smoother running project and save you a lot of time and stress. By following the steps outlined above you'll be better prepared for your remodel and there will be fewer surprises along the way.



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## New and Notable Products:

### KitchenAid French-Door Refrigerator—

With their newest built-in, the French-door, bottom-freezer refrigerator, KitchenAid has once again created an industry first. Extendfresh technology and touch sensor controls give you continuous temperature management



to ensure that your food stays its freshest. The absence of dividers provides you with plenty of shelf space spanning the entire interior and the outward swinging doors provide easy access. Since their recent release, French Door Refrigerators have become a big hit in a market that is constantly changing to cater to homeowners' convenience.

## A Little Imagination Can Go A Long Way

For most of us, when we begin planning a remodel we think of the larger things that will meet our needs and make our dream home a reality. From the perfect granite color to the intricate custom woodworking details, we strive to add our own personal touch and make our house a home. One thing that many homeowners overlook during a home remodel are the smaller items that can add a lot of convenience and subtle personal touches such as placement of electrical outlets, hidden storage areas and lighting. Here are some suggestions to making your space work for you while looking fantastic.

- **Electrical outlets** – Angled power strips offer convenience while keeping your counters free of cumbersome cords. They can also save you money by removing the need for expensive outlets in tile, granite or stone backsplashes. Adding additional outlets in the bedroom, family room and bathroom can be a huge advantage as well. This way you won't find yourself searching for a place to plug in all those new gadgets that we all have to have.



- **Kitchen drawers** – Everyone wants more cabinet space, however what they really need is more "drawer space". Deeper drawers with plenty of organizational options, such as the Blum Tandem stainless steel drawer boxes, provide a place for everything and keep everything in its place. From utility dividers to plate holders, you'll be the best organized cook on your block.



- **Lighting** – Lights can set the perfect mood but many of us forget the more practical reasons such as safety. Recessed lighting on stairs add a touch of elegance as well as a night light to help you safely find your way at night.
- **Hidden storage** – From drawers to beautifully crafted wood pieces, a place to hide away all that clutter that builds up is important. Create a catchall area near the main entrance with plenty of places to tuck away all those things that clutter counter and tabletops such as keys, electronics, mail, etc. Don't forget to factor into your kitchen remodel special storage areas for cleaning products, linens and small appliances and spaces for makeup, hair products, etc in the bathroom.

Though small, these few simple touches can save you a lot of time and keep your home looking well organized and ready for whatever your family may throw at it.

## Winterizing Your Home

Winter is fast approaching and even in warmer climates there are many home safety issues to be thinking about. From smoke detectors to electrical issues, take a bit of time before the hectic holiday season begins to follow a few tips that can help save you time and money as well as ways for keeping your home safe.

- \* Have your heating systems inspected by a qualified service professional at least once a year including lubrication and cleaning, replacing filters, a check of belts and thermostats and having vents cleared of obstructions, as necessary.
- \* Caulking around windows and other openings can stop the cold air invasion dead in its tracks. A warmer home and lower utility bills can result.
- \* When using a portable electric heater, keep flammable materials - bedding, clothing, draperies, rugs and furniture - at last three feet away, even if it has safety features such as cut-off switches or heating element guards.
- \* When using a kerosene heater, keep a door open to the rest of the house or open a window slightly. This will reduce the chance of carbon monoxide build-up in the room. Also be sure to use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. Never put gasoline in a kerosene heater--it could explode. Before you refuel the heater, turn it off and let it cool down. Refuel outside only.
- \* If you use an electric blanket to keep warm on a cold night, follow the manufacturer's instructions and make sure you turn it off and unplug it when it's not in use.
- \* Install a smoke alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. Test it monthly to ensure it is working properly.
- \* Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath.
- \* Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed. Open the flue and use a sturdy fireplace screen when you have a fire. Burn only untreated wood; never burn paper or pine branches--pieces can float out the chimney and ignite your roof, a neighbor's roof, or nearby trees.