

Cutting Costs Doesn't Mean Cutting Value

(MS) – Over the last year and a half, many homeowners have been forced to scale back their home improvement projects. Though the economy appears to be creeping back, the nation's homeowners are still somewhat reticent to commit big dollars to any one project.

In spite of the country's economic woes, homeowners are embracing more cost-effective projects that don't sacrifice quality for the sake of saving money. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a home's value, these cost-conscious homeowners are finding that traditionally big budget projects are not the sole means to retaining a home's value.

Good Things Come in Small Packages

While the "bigger is better" mantra proved hurtful to the home improvement industry at the onset of the economic downturn, evidence is beginning to suggest that small-budget projects might be leading the way to recovery. In fact, in their annual "Cost vs. Value" report, Remodeling magazine noted that 9 of 12 upscale remodeling projects didn't even appear among the top half of all remodels, prov-

ing that in the current economy bigger isn't better, or at least bigger isn't more popular.

Perhaps no area of the home is more routinely targeted for refurbishing than the kitchen. In many households, the kitchen is the most popular room in the house, and therefore it makes sense that it's the kitchen most homeowners want to upgrade. While granite was once considered the standard for kitchen remodels, nowadays cost- and quality-conscious homeowners are increasingly turning to laminate for their kitchen remodels. Recognizing this "laminate is the new granite" trend among homeowners, Wilsonart® has combined its renowned AEON™ Enhanced Performance technology with stunning laminate designs that take full advantage of a shimmering, durable Gloss finish.

Depositing super-tough aluminum oxide particles in layers within the overlay sheet, AEON technology allows for superior durability and enhanced resistance to scratching, scuffing and marring, making these premium designs three times more wear resistant than the industry standard and five times more scratch resistant than previous Gloss-finish laminates. This elegant new

look is reflected throughout the Girona Series, which boasts a host of options reflective of the polished marble and travertine stone found in European luxury spas and retreats.

Style Doesn't End Atop the Kitchen Counter

Countertops aren't the only places in the kitchen homeowners are finding ways to upgrade while saving at the same time. With their new lineup of stylish, molded acrylic sinks specifically designed to be integrated into laminate countertops, Wilsonart is providing more options for today's custom-minded homeowner looking for affordable luxury in a tight economy. Thanks to the new Wilsonart HD Sinks, homeowners can now bring a new dimension to their kitchen countertop, integrating the top, edge and sink into a complete, captivating piece.

Favoring the curvaceous appeal found in luxury plumbing fixtures and appliances, Wilsonart HD Sinks offer a deeper, more spacious bowl, leaving more room for pots and pans. What's more, the integrated faucet deck holds soap and sponges while ensuring water flows downward into the sink. In



Wilsonart® HD® Sinks bring a new dimension to the countertop, integrating the top, edge and now, the sink, into a complete, captivating piece. Shown: Girona Beach, a Premium Gloss finish Wilsonart laminate design that's "warm to the touch." Available at Kitchen and Bath dealers nationwide. Visit: <http://www.countertop.com>.

addition, thanks to the drain's position at the back of the sink, homeowners love the increased storage space under the kitchen sink. Easily seamed into a Wilsonart HD Laminate countertop to eliminate the trapping of

dirt and moisture, Wilsonart HD Sinks are stain-resistant, heat-resistant and renewable, all while providing a look that was once exclusive to more expensive solid surface and stone countertops. The exclusive line of

Wilsonart HD Sinks can be previewed at www.countertop.com/sinks. Need more remodeling tips? Visit www.home-wire.net.

20 Projects in Just 20 Minutes

(MS) – Since every dollar counts these days, homeowners need sensible home improvement products that can help increase the value of their homes without breaking the bank. Synthetic millwork products are a fast, easy way to reach this goal.

"Easy-to-install urethane and PVC products can enhance the interior and exterior of any home without busting a budget," says Tina Mealer with Fypon. "For a minimal product investment and even less 'sweat equity,' homeowners can gain maximum results."

Fypon's top 20 "no sweat" 20-minute home improvement projects include:

- Project 1 – Place a crosshead over an outside window with a keystone to add curb appeal to the exterior of the home.
- Project 2 – Wrap unsightly metal supports in a finished basement with PVC Column Wraps to add style to the room.
- Project 3 – Use Victorian-style

nips and spires to accent exterior areas, fencing and gated areas.

Project 4 – Upgrade the look of a boring kitchen island by adding decorative brackets or corbels as accent pieces.

Project 5 – Add a urethane pineapple, the international sign of hospitality, above the front entry door.

Project 6 – Dress up a porch area by adding brackets to porch posts.

Project 7 – Cover up unsightly wooden porch posts with a semi-assembled, two-piece classic style PVC Column Wrap.

Project 8 – Install carved leaf or grapevine brackets under kitchen countertops and shelves to add dimension and visual appeal to the room.

Project 9 – Add a two-piece urethane ceiling medallion around a ceiling fan or lighting fixture to "pop" some visual friendliness to the ceiling.

Project 10 – Add moisture-resistant corbels to the top of cabinets to present a more fin-

ished look in the bathroom or laundry room.

Project 11 – Create a unique window treatment by hanging a pair of brackets on either side of a window. Insert a dowel rod through the brackets and drape with fabric for a fast and easy decorative window treatment.

Project 12 – Accent interior doorways with a keystone.

Project 13 – Install a set of moisture-resistant urethane pilasters on both sides of a shower stall and a door crosshead overhead to upgrade the look of

the bathroom.

Project 14 – Create customized shelves to house knick knacks using moulding or PVC boards. Faux finish the pieces to make a collection stand out.

Project 15 – Add a one-piece fireplace mantel surround to an existing fireplace or create a faux fireplace area using these durable accent pieces.

Project 16 – Create a welcoming look over a garage or gable area by installing a urethane

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