

Normandy Builders
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Remodeling Tips

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Things Are Looking UP!

As you are gathering ideas for your next remodeling project, you may be eagerly thinking about your walls and floors, windows and lighting, cabinets and countertops. But have you remembered to look up? Even though ceilings typically comprise one-sixth of all interior space, they are an oft-forgotten landscape in the home when it comes time to renovate.

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Photo by James F. Wilson for New American Home 2008

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Normandy Builders is proud to receive the 2008 GuildQuality "Guildmaster Award"



Normandy was one of only 102 nationwide firms to recently receive the prestigious "Guildmaster Award" which recognizes superior customer service in the construction and remodeling industry. Normandy is committed to providing its clients with an outstanding remodeling experience and monitors its progress through conducting post completion surveys by an outside vendor, GuildQuality. GuildQuality reviews and analyzes respondents' survey answers and provides us important feedback that enables us to measure our success in providing quality and value for our clients.

In order to be eligible for this award, Normandy must have achieved a recommendation rate of 90% or greater and at least 70% of our clients were required to have completed a customer satisfaction survey. Normandy is proud that it consistently receives a 95% recommendation rate from its satisfied clients.

For more information, please visit the web at www.Guildquality.com and click on the 2008 Guildmasters to learn more. Thanks for your trust and for helping Normandy reach Guildmaster status. ■

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Things Are Looking UP!

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Your ceilings offer a tremendous opportunity to add drama and excitement to each room. Other functions of a well-planned ceiling can be to delineate specialized areas in an open floor plan, to help optimize room acoustics, and to provide consistency between the exterior and interior architecture.

Painted treatments: If you desire to lower the perceived height of a ceiling, try painting it a darker shade than the walls. Metallic paints are the rage and applying several layers of color with various brush techniques will make any ceiling come alive. If you wish to expand the height of the ceiling, paint it the same color as the walls. This creates the visual sensation that the walls extend farther up than they do. Hand painted Trompe l'oeil ceiling murals use perspective techniques that fool the eye into thinking the ceiling is a great deal higher than it actually is.

Tin ceiling: Embossed tin-plated steel ceilings, just like those installed in turn-of-the-century general stores, are available in metallic finishes that range from bright copper to antique pewter and can be powder painted any color. Tin-look embossed plastic or wallpaper are other options that achieve a similar feel.

Fancy molding: Combine several different widths and profiles of molding together in a stack to create the effect of a single piece of crown molding several inches wider than usual. A less expensive way to achieve this effect is to install a strip of molding several inches below your existing crown molding and then paint both moldings and the wall in between the same color.

Tray ceiling: Tray ceilings resemble an inverted tray. A tray ceiling has a vertical or angled soffit around the perimeter. It follows the roofline at the wall intersection, then extends from the wall in one to several steps. Tray ceilings often hide recessed lighting.

Beams: Exposing the structural beams or ceiling trusses in certain areas of your home highlights the architecture. For a purely aesthetic application, lightweight box beams or polyurethane beams can be installed over drywall.

Coffered ceiling: Create an elegant grid of boxes by installing several beams perpendicular to one or more other ceiling beams. Each box may be trimmed with an appropriate size crown molding and is usually paneled with wood as well. ■



The 9 ft. ceilings throughout *The New American Home 2008* are decorated with beams, panels, coffers, and trays—including an unusual weave of beams in the dining room.

GO with the FLOW

The serene sound of gently flowing water has a unique ability to soothe the mind and rejuvenate the soul. When this sound is brought indoors, such as at a spa, it has the additional benefit of helping us make a connection with nature—even from within the four walls of a room. As you close your eyes, you can let your imagination whisk you away to a peaceful garden next to a bubbling stream.

Now imagine returning home from a stressful day and being greeted by the tranquil sounds of a water feature installed in your own kitchen or master bath! Experience the pressures beginning to dissolve.

As you are planning for your water feature, keep in mind that the style you choose should blend with the interior design of the rest of your home, whether it has a more rustic and natural feel or a very sleek, contemporary look. The water feature's size and shape can vary greatly, and it may be a freestanding unit or hung on the wall like a painting. Built-in lighting that captures the glimmers of the moving water as it flows over the surface adds drama.

A wide variety of materials can be used to create your water feature: slate, marble, copper, steel, pebbles, river rock, glass and acrylic, to name a few. You may want to have it custom-designed to fit into a specific area of your home—such as an alcove at the front entrance, or in your bathroom. In this case, some of the same stone or tile used on your floor and/or wall surfaces can be incorporated into the design so that the water feature is beautifully integrated with the rest of the room. The result is something totally unique and personal. A less expensive option is to purchase one of the many handmade pre-designed units available. Either way, a water feature can complement your décor as an unusual piece of “water art” that also adds the enjoyment of relaxing sounds. ■



Glass panel and pebble waterfall.

Photo: By James F. Wisjpm/The New American Home 2008



Hand-chiseled multi-color slate in a copper frame.

Photo: Courtesy of Adagio Collection (www.adagiocollection.com)

OPEN SESAME ◀ |||

You gather the orange rinds to toss in the composter under your kitchen counter. With both hands full, you simply touch the cabinet with your knee, and the drawer holding the composter slides open automatically. After you deposit the rinds and peels, you gently push the drawer with your knee and it closes quietly and effortlessly. No need to worry about sticky hands touching the drawer handle. Everything stays neat and clean!

These impressive technological marvels are brought to you by Blum, Inc., a manufacturer of functional hardware for kitchen cabinets. The Blumotion closing mechanism has been offered by Blum for several years and has received a lot of attention from cabinet manufacturers who have been installing it into their kitchen drawers.

The new Servo-Drive automatic drawer-opening feature was introduced at the 2008 Kitchen and Bath Industry Show. This new development is based on an electrical drive that, once triggered, opens the drawer for you. The drawer has no fixed connection to the drive unit, which enables it to stop in any desired position. Servo-Drive is also a welcome device for persons who have arthritis or any other condition that makes it difficult to open standard drawers. ■



Photo: Courtesy of Blum (www.blum.com)

Are You Ready for WINTER?

As winter approaches there is a small to-do list that every homeowner needs to complete before the cold hits. We have put together that list to remind you (or someone else) what needs to be done. Ignore the list and you could be facing some problems when old man winter comes to Chicago.

- Disconnect the hose from the hose-bib. (If you leave the hose connected and pressurized, water can freeze inside the hose bib and expand enough to crack it. The problem may not even expose itself until next spring when you use the hose for the first time)
- Clean out the gutters. (Clogged gutters can hold water, which can freeze and start to form ice damming, eventually forcing water up onto the roof and into the house).
- Change the evaporator pad in the humidifier. (This is an easy fix. Don't do it and minerals can build up causing poor functionality)
- Change the furnace filter. (Just makes good sense for cleaner air and better furnace efficiency).
- Close crawl space vents. (Keep the warm air in and cold air out)
- Put new batteries in the smoke alarms. (Always better to be safe than sorry).
- Schedule to have the sprinkler system blown out.

There you have it. Leave yourself (or someone else) three hours on the weekend and you can get your house ready for winter.

If you are a real go-getter and want to save some money this winter (and be **greener**), then there are three more things you can do to be sure your house is efficient:

- Be sure the caulk around doors, windows, and siding is intact and in good condition. It is very necessary to stop water and air infiltration.
- Check in the basement or crawl space to be sure the space above the foundation and in between the joists (the ribbon) is very well insulated. Over the years the insulation can fall or get moved. This is a spot in many homes that loses a lot of heat because it rarely gets looked at.
- Check the insulation in the attic. Sometimes it gets moved and leaves open spaces that can leak heat through the ceiling. Blown in insulation can help to fill those voids. Plenty of insulation will keep the heat in and the heating bills down. ■

Professional
Remodeler
market
LEADERS

Professional Remodeler magazine has named **Normandy Builders** as the #1 Market Leader in Chicago for the second year in a row. The 2008 Market Leaders program recognizes the top five firms in 20 of the country's top markets.

We are proud to be named to this elite group of remodeling companies for the second year in a row. These are companies striving to provide the best in customer service, quality and design. Our mission is to provide our customers with an exceptional home remodeling experience. Associating with the best in the business will help to ensure we deliver.

Market Leaders were featured in the June Issue of *Professional Remodeler* and can be viewed on www.proremodeler.com. ■