

GET THE MOST **BANG** FOR YOUR **BUCK** on renovations



It's only natural that homeowners want to choose home remodeling projects that will get them the best return on their investment. The common question is "Where do I start?"

Whether you're looking to sell right away or in a few years, a carefully selected remodel can add value and comfort to your home. Steel entry doors, basements, decks, kitchens and bathrooms are the top projects where home sellers receive the biggest bang for their buck, according to the National Association of REALTORS. The next best investments are room additions and new roofing.

What makes these spaces so valuable to buyers? It's where homeowners spend a good chunk of their time and where they do the most entertaining.

Doing a remodeling project yourself could save you money on labor, but it's wiser to call in a professional if you're not confident in your handyman abilities. You can search for a professional remodeler by visiting the National Association of Home Builders online at nahb.org, or looking for one on the Better Business Bureau's website (bbb.org).

ENTRY DOORS

Surprisingly, the upgrade that earns you the biggest bang for your buck is one that most people easily overlook: the front door. Replace your old door with a 20-gauge steel unit, including a clear, dual-pane half-glass panel. You'll spend about \$1,200*, but you'll get a whopping 102 percent of that cost back at resale.

KITCHENS

Upgrading to newer appliances (buyers love stainless steel), replacing old countertops with granite or solid-surface material, and refacing cabinets with raised-wood doors are all wise investments. Also, consider replacing outdated flooring and redesigning the layout of your kitchen, especially if you can add space. Once you add fresh paint, a new sink/faucet and other decorative elements, expect to spend about \$21,000* for a minor 200-square-foot kitchen remodel.



BATHROOMS

Like kitchens, bathrooms benefit from newer cabinets, vanities, sinks and countertops. You can find good deals on granite vanity tops online or in home improvement stores. The key is to modernize your kitchen without overspending for your neighborhood. Remodeling a typical 5-by-7-foot bathroom costs about \$16,000* and includes a new 30-by-60-inch porcelain-on-steel tub with 4-by-4-inch ceramic tile surround; new single-lever shower control; standard white toilet; solid-surface vanity counter with integral sink; recessed medicine cabinet with light; and ceramic tile floor.

WOOD DECKS



Buyers love outdoor spaces where they can entertain and relax. Adding a wood deck costs about \$10,000* for a 16-by-20-foot area using pressure-treated joists supported by 4x4 posts anchored to concrete piers, as well as pressure-treated deck boards in a simple linear pattern. Decks typically net a respectable 72.8 percent return on investment.

BASEMENTS

Add value and square footage to your home by finishing your basement. This is a sizeable renovation project that you'll want to carefully vet with a professional contractor. A typical basement remodel costs an average of \$64,000* (which varies depending on basement size) and includes creating a 20-by-30-foot entertaining area with wet bar and a 5-by-8-foot full bathroom, and constructing 24 linear feet of finished partition to enclose mechanical areas. The average cost also includes walls and ceilings being drywalled and painted, insulated exterior walls and trim painting, five hardboard doors and electrical work.

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*Source: Remodeling magazine's 2010-2011 Cost vs. Value Report

HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

Get your job done right the first time. Use this checklist from the National Association of Home Builders to help you find the right remodeler for your project:

- T** Contact your local homebuilders' association for the names of member builders and remodelers: www.nahb.org/findanhba.
Ask family, friends or coworkers for recommendations.
- T** Ask the builder/remodeler to provide you references, and ask those past clients if they would hire the builder/remodeler again.
- T** Find out how long they have been in the building business. It usually takes three to five years to establish a financially sound business.
- T** Check out the company's rating and if there have been any complaints filed with your local Better Business Bureau: www.bbb.org.
- T** Make sure the builder/remodeler provides you with a complete and clearly written contract.
- T** Request to see a portfolio of the contractor's work, both completed and in progress. Check for quality of workmanship and materials.



Golf Course Community Living - 2442 Genoa Meadows Circle

Immaculate customized patio home in the Genoa Lakes Golf Course community backs to the 9th Fairway. This light and airy home features granite counters, stone flooring, stainless kitchen appliances and mountain/golf course views. The master bedroom is enormous and faces the backyard decking where a pad is prepped for an outdoor spas. A spacious house-length deck affords dramatic Sierra mountain views, sunset and star gazing. For the wine-lovers, there is a completely finished solid oak wine cellar with capacity for 1100 bottle of wine. Spanish tiles cover the floor and stairway to this special hideaway. Offered at \$349,900.



Lakefront Living on Lake Topaz, NV - 2051 Comstock

Lakefront living on Topaz Lake! Walk out your door to fishing and boating with the family and friends. The home was originally built in 1965 with a huge addition in 2007 of the new main living area. Soaring ceilings and huge picture windows capture the dramatic lake views just steps away from the front door. This home was built to accommodate large gatherings. Entertaining in the spacious kitchen or on the back patio and sprawling lawns along the lake's shore is a treat for everyone. There are textured teak and maple flooring with granite counter treatments throughout. Offered at \$959,000.

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