

# DESIGN & REMODELING

## *trends*



Above: A custom two-story deck by Blue Ridge Home Improvement.

## get outside!

Outdoor living spaces help make the most out of your home.

Summer is here. And for some of us, we finally start paying attention to our long neglected deck or patio. So instead of just hosing off the dirt and grime, take a look at some of the reasons to remodel your outdoor living spaces.

### Add Value to Your Home

According to the annual "Cost vs. Value Report" from *Remodeling Magazine*, a deck addition or remodel is one of the top 5 projects that will give you the highest return on investment. In fact, building a wooden deck could recoup more than 75% of the cost during resale.

Since we live in an area with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains, an attractive outdoor living space can help differentiate your home on the market. It's also a smart way to maintain or improve your home's value because it's an affordable option to updating the space while allowing you to increase your square footage.

### Extend Your Home's Living Space

Many people want to get more out of their deck than they used to - it's not just a place for storing the grill and sitting

in plastic lawn chairs anymore. For some, it's a kitchen; for others, a living room. Decks and porches can be places for large gatherings or quiet retreats.

Whatever your needs are, you can easily add square footage and extend your home's living space by simply designing outdoor spaces that flow from the interior. Think about what the space will be used for and how your family and guests will interact with the space.

### Improve Your Home's Safety

Older decks and patios can be prone to wear and tear over the years. In addition to ensuring no one will take a nasty fall or catch themselves on a loose nail, new and improved building products will help you improve your deck's safety and lower your maintenance costs. Be sure to choose a licensed and reputable contractor to ensure your project is code compliant.

So what are you waiting for! Go outside and start dreaming of how we can help you get the most out of your outdoor living space.

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Blue Ridge  
Home Improvement Inc.



# get your grill on!

While we're on the subject of outdoor living spaces, here are three tips for the perfect grill session on the back deck:

1. Marinating quickly tenderizes meat and adds flavor. Use 1 to 2 cups of marinade for every 1 1/2 to 2 pounds of food. The marinade should completely surround the food. Cooked meat should never be returned to a cold marinade.
2. Use tongs to turn the meat. A fork should never be used as it will punch holes and allow the natural juices to escape, causing the meat to lose flavor and become chewy.
3. It's best to turn the meat only once. When grilling meat to a medium or greater doneness, use the lid to assist in cooking. This will decrease the cooking time by applying heat to all sides of the meat at once.

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# a tale of two decks

We're currently working on two outdoor deck projects for two clients in Blacksburg. One is a small screened porch which is an extension from the kitchen and existing deck (above). The other is large outdoor living space that completely transforms the rear elevation of the house (below).

In both cases, the client had specific needs for how they would use the space. They both also needed to flow with the existing structure of the home. The last thing you want is for a deck or porch to look like a random after thought on the back of the house. Therefore, we had to carefully think about the scale and materials used in order to continue the natural flow of the home.

When considering your outdoor living area, think about how you plan to use the space, as well as how it will change the look of your home from both the inside and outside.



# employee *spotlight* Chuck Hammack



When you think of a jack-of-all-trades, you'd think of someone like Chuck Hammack. In 2009, Chuck began working as a carpenter for BRHI and now serves as a designer and estimator for the team. With over 10 years of construction experience and a bachelors degree in Industrial Design from Virginia Tech, Chuck loves using his industrial design skills to create a building model that will be functional, accessible and beautiful.

But that's not all Chuck loves. An avid painter, he has sold his artwork at several local galleries. He also enjoys using leftover building materials to build furniture in his woodworking shop. And if that's not enough, he's also in the process of writing the bylaws for a nonprofit organization that will help develop third world countries in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

Wow, talk about staying busy doing the things you love!



A long time ago, when Tim Lawrence first started Blue Ridge Home Improvement, his customers remarked on how clean his job sites were. "And it's just something that has stuck with me every since," Tim said. "While it sounds like cleanliness should be a simple thing to do, it's something that most contractors don't pay much attention to."

As professional remodelers, we know that clean job sites are extremely important to our customers' safety and satisfaction. Remodeling is a messy process and it's a lot different than traditional new construction because you are living in the same space that is being renovated. One of the things that sets us apart from the competition is our careful attention to minimize dust and disruption.

"They cleaned up the space at the end of each day, and our home never felt like a construction site," said Karen Watson, a BRHI client. "I would employ them again for any future home remodel projects."

Part of our remodeling process is installing protective floor runners and dust doors to separate the construction area from the livable area. In the far right picture you can see Leon carefully closing the dust door before he leaves for the day. And Tim happened to catch Alex Lawrence and Jim Stade going the extra mile as they were unloading gravel on a job site. They took the time to lay down a tarp to catch any debris that may fall off the truck. Both are small actions, but they make a big difference!



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## PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS



## PROJECT FILES

### The Larsen Family

#### PROBLEM:

The family wanted a tile floor for their elevated deck, but traditional building products only allow you to use lumber or composite lumber products.

#### SOLUTION:

Use the SilcaSystem™, a new product making it possible to use stone, brick, tile and pavers on elevated surfaces.



#### WHAT WE DID:

By constantly researching new building products, we came across the SilcaSystem™, which will allow us to install tile flooring in the Larsens' elevated deck. Normally, this would be virtually impossible and we would only be able to use wood or composite lumber. But the honeycomb-shaped design of this revolutionary new product will allow us to bring a luxurious look to this outdoor living space.

