



Most remodeling helps home sale

AMERICANS WHO plan to install a swimming pool in their backyard to increase the sale value of their home may be all wet, financially speaking.

According to one home improvement expert, a swimming pool is the riskiest major home improvement investment of all.

Even those who live in California, Florida or the Southwest, may not get back 50 percent of their investment on resale, says Steve Jackson, vice president of Georgia-Pacific Corp., a building products firm.

Most remodeling jobs will increase the sale price of a home but to what degree depends on the neighborhood, the lifestyle of the potential buyer, and the nature and extent of the project, Jackson says.

INDUSTRY EXPERTS generally agree that in most markets interior facelifts — such as new paneling, wallpaper, ceiling repairs and flooring — yield the largest return on investment, with the recovery on costs sometimes running over 100 percent.

With any remodeling project, Jackson says, the primary consideration should be to make improvements that will provide convenience and comfort now and some financial reward when it comes time to move.

Average paybacks for various improvements, as compiled by Georgia-Pacific, include as much as 100 percent for an attic or a basement conversion which provides a family with more living space.

Other projects which the company says has substantial paybacks include:

— Deck additions, which enhance a home's exterior appeal and provide the amenities of outdoor enjoyment during

the warmer months; 80 percent to 100 percent or more.

— Kitchen remodeling, which improves a family's "quality of life;" 74 percent to 100 percent.

— New siding, which can transform an "ugly duckling" into a prime candidate for resale; 60 percent to 100 percent.

— Roof replacement, a normal maintenance project which protects the house and its contents and helps sell a home; about 45 percent, although the "real" return on investment is often considered to be 100 percent because you can't sell a home with a bad roof.

SOME HOME improvements, however, involve a great deal of money and do relatively little to increase your home's worth, according to Janet Carter, design consultant to Mannington Mills, a manufacturer of floor coverings.

Ms. Carter recommends keeping the cost of all improvements under 30 percent of the current value of the home.

"If you spend more," she cautions, "you may be overpricing your house in relation to the rest of the neighborhood."

One of the least expensive ways to give a home an instant makeover, she notes, is to treat dingy walls and ceilings to a fresh coat of paint, while a worn and shoddy floor will make an entire room look seedy.

"Hardwood floors in fairly good condition will benefit from a professional buffing," Ms. Carter says, adding that foot-worn kitchen or foyer floors could be replaced with sheet vinyl flooring.

"The kitchen represents the most cost-intensive area of the home and is also the room most likely to influence your home's resale value."

—Associated Press

Add some sparkle

THEY GIVE LIGHT TO dark, stuffy rooms. They create the illusion of space. And they often add a little sparkle to your home.

Skylights bring the outside in and often make your home feel larger.

There are two basic kinds: venting units, which open up and allow air circulation, and fitted "roof windows" that do not open. Both types come in various styles, with either flat or domed glass available in clear, transparent bronze or translucent white.

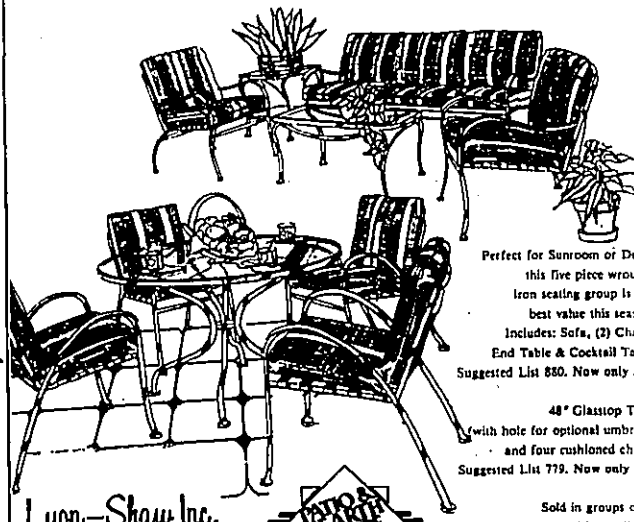
Clear glass allows the sun and sky to be seen from inside; transparent bronze distributes incoming light more evenly, reducing glare; white translucent diffuses light and allows for more privacy.

Tinted models are preferred in warmer climates, since they cut down on the amount of light and heat coming through.

—Associated Press

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