

# *Buyer's guide to* RENOVATIONS



Spilled a drink? Don't panic, the liquid won't be absorbed by the floor and you can mop it up immediately. Quick-Step's Classic collection has the water-repellent HydroSeal coating. The floor's surface is completely sealed, so bacteria, dirt and even spillages don't stand a chance. They can simply be wiped off with a damp cloth, leaving a clean, hygienic surface.

It's time for a makeover. We tell you how to add comfort, space, convenience and oomph to your loving abode

Words/Chanda P Kumar

**H**omes are an extension of the people living in it. And every once in a while, homes also need a face-lift to make living spaces more comfortable and convenient, while resonating the taste and design aesthetics of its residents. The scope for home improvement can range from redoing the whole house, remodelling kitchen and bathrooms, extending spaces like balconies for bigger rooms, adding outdoor spaces like gazebos to summer rooms on terraces, or even redoing the finishes, such as colour, flooring, wall cladding, ceilings, partitions, doors and windows. Modernising homes to suit today's contemporary lifestyles also involves a great deal of upgradation in services, such as electrical, plumbing, air conditioning, lighting and not to forget home automation.

The good news is that it's never been this exciting to redo your home. The Indian market is brimming with interesting products and solutions. Here we give you a complete drill-down on the latest and trending options in flooring, ceiling, doors, windows, wall cladding, paints and wall papers, lighting and more.



The L7 door of Lualdi, designed by Piero Lissoni, is made of aluminium and glass, and is aesthetically pleasing. Available at Ottimo.

## TILE FLOORING

Classic and functional, the traditional white-beige flooring in tile or marble has always been a popular choice for floors. But, why not allow your floors to make a statement? From marbles, porcelain, wooden, ceramic and concrete tiles, the choice and combinations are endless. Bold and dramatic colours are stepping in, and the demand for surfaces in grey, brown and black palettes are going up. However, designers recommend the use of dark shades in places that receive adequate natural light and in large rooms. Also, you must note that dust is more visible on dark coloured floorings. For e.g., footprints would be visible on a brown or black flooring.

In natural stone, Classic Marble Company (CMC) has introduced three new products in its limited edition of natural marble collection - 9th Avenue Thunder Gold, Blue Illusion and Yellow Macasubas. Spruce up living rooms by matching your walls and floors for a dramatic look. Lioli Ceramica has recently launched two new porcelain slab products - Apuane Statuario and Pulpis Grey under the Marble Series of its TechnoSLAB brand, as part of combo applications for the wall and floor. With the natural effects of natural stone, the porcelain slabs unlike marble, are a lot lighter and hardier. When easy installation and reduced load-bearing of the structure is the focus, check out Stonelam, a union of Stonex India and Laminam Spa, Italy, which is the thinnest-

ever slab designed to multiply intended uses and applications. Offering high resistance to mechanical stresses, it can be used in bathrooms, flooring, staircase and wall panelling.

Tiles are transforming like never before. Available across a range of prices, they now come in customised finishes, environment friendly raw materials, large tiles with fewer joints and are highly resistant to wear and tear. Looking at some interesting patterns? Check out Momenti's Crazy Tile ceramic line, which is based on the concept of flat rectangular modules, a format that can be arranged to create a variety of geometries and flexible compositions. With reduced height they are also particularly suitable for refurbishments as they may be applied to existing surfaces. Moreover, made with natural raw materials it is not toxic nor can it be contaminated by biological agents.

Whether tile or natural stone, the only trick for durability is that they are laid perfectly, specially with large tile sizes. Check out Intersekt, the largest one-stop-shop for tiles of every shape, size and design. We guarantee, you will be spoiled for choice.

## WOODEN FLOORING

Nothing can beat the warm and rustic charm of a classic wooden flooring at home. Wooden flooring has evolved drastically and has shed its earlier image of being climate-sensitive, high on maintenance and extremely expensive. Engineered wood flooring's rising popularity is attributed to its benefits, such as easy installation, ability to be laid over existing marble or tile flooring and remaining stable in most conditions



Xylos Parkett's Palace Diamond with a 2 mm top layer and unique patterns is a stylish and durable flooring option.

without the joints disintegrating. Herringbone, parquet and chevron designs are trending world over, while demand for the good old straight planks remains constant. The current trend for wider planks will continue, as well as using mixed width planks which give a less uniform, more individual feel. Grey tones have made a comeback in the decor space, exuding an elegant and chic look.

The engineered wood flooring range by Greenlam Industries' Mikasa has recently launched their Herringbone collection, suited well for contemporary homes and also come equipped with the PlankLoc technology for easy installation. Parquet flooring is in high demand due to its elegantly beautiful decorative effect. Xylos Parkett's Palace Diamond with a 2 mm top layer and unique patterns is stylish and durable, suited to add a touch of luxury and glamour to living rooms, halls and dining rooms. Want wood in trendy shades of grey and white? Try HKS Flooring who have a wide range of wood and engineered flooring options.

In the engineered wood flooring category, veneer thickness start from 0.6 mm going up to 6 mm. If you are looking to replace flooring every ten years, then go for floors with veneers between 0.6 to 2 mm thickness. The thicker and bigger the planks are, the longer they will last.

## WALL CLADDING

Create a signature look of your space with wall cladding, available today in an extensive range of materials. However, limit yourself to highlight just one wall in a room to avoid a disaster. Here, less is more. Dramatic grains in marble, geometrical patterns in veneers, rough stone or brushed concrete and bespoke designer tiles are new ways to deck up your walls. Classic Marble's Thunder Gold is

## GET THE BEST OF WOOD

**INSTALLATION:** The basic prerequisite for installation of a wooden flooring is a zero levelled surface. The installation site should be completely enclosed, with outside windows, doors and thresholds in place. All wet processes (like drywall or plaster) must be finished well before installation. Air conditioning, heating and ventilation systems must be operational. Ensure electricity and water is directly available in the work area. It is also recommended that painting or staining should be completed at least 24 hours prior to installation so the finish is completely dry before the flooring installation begins. Wood flooring material needs to acclimate to the moisture and temperature conditions of the installation environment for at least 48 hours before it can be installed. And lastly, make sure the manufacturers support you with very strong after sales service.

**CHOOSING THE WOOD:** This will depend on the area that it will be used for and hence the amount of final moisture which is needed in the planks. Dry extreme conditions demand the planks to have moisture between 7-8% while hot humid conditions need the planks to have the inherent moisture to be around 9%.





The Bagh e Fiza wallpaper from Good Earth's Charbagh range.



Gulmoharlane's beautiful Persian Garden Daylit wallpaper.

## WALLPAPER

The use of wallpaper came with numerous questions. Will it suit our climate? Will they peel off quickly? How long will they last? Is paint a cheaper and safer option? A host of Indian and international wallpaper brands have entered the market with exciting and durable wallpaper ranges, and India is definitely ready for wallpaper now. Botanical and wildlife to historical and elegant ethnic, are trending currently. Asian Paints' Nilaya has the new Chapter II: India Revival Project, where designer Sabyasachi has showcased India's artistic tradition in a fresh way. The collection captures the textile traditions such as chintz and toile de jouy, detailed Raj era etchings, the beauty of Mughal Gardens and stately French architecture.

For luxurious European sophistication, check out Spanish fabric editor, Lizzo's new collection, Legend, created in collaboration with Italian abstract painter Elena Carozzi. Available in India through RR Decor, the unique embossed finish of the wallpapers adds depth, while rich tones, neutrals, charcoals, lime and blue, add dimension to the collection. Dazzling metallic colours, ornamental motifs, abstract art and geometric prints combined with traditional techniques and natural textures create an opulent environment.

Add a dash of abstract patterns or artistic flair with Crazy Paper by Momenti, a versatile and eco-friendly paper that is suitable for floor and walls. Easy to apply, it hides cracks and is long lasting.



A wall art design from Momenti's Crazy Paper collection.

Waterproofing your homes is a must these days. Choose products that can fix and prevent all common problems related to dampness and seepage. ICI Dulux Aquatech range includes an array of waterproofing products, like pre-treatment coats, exterior and interior base coats, and crack fillers.

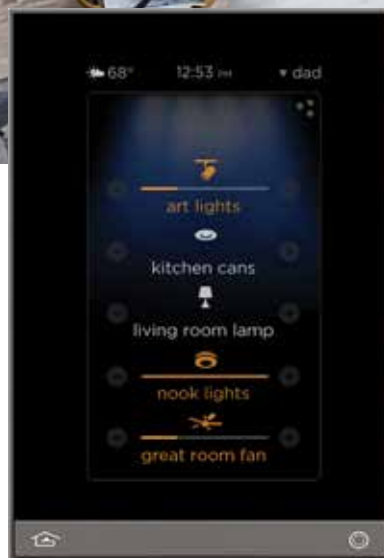


an exquisite luxurious marble with bold colour and design, creating an illusion of a modern art painting. Meanwhile, Greenlam's Decowood has recently added Herringbone collection to its existing wide range of veneers which comes in herringbone and chevron patterns. Going in for a more metallic glossy surface? Strenhagen has unveiled a new range, Kristall tiles, which are inspired by the beauty of crystals. They refract light from clean-cut crystalline surfaces, and no two designs are alike. The collection is made up of Sani-Quartz material with a metallic glossy surface, having a base of the hardest natural ingredients.

## PAINTS

Changing wall colour is probably the most fun and exciting element in home renovations. At the same time, it can be a daunting task too. Take time to delve into available resources online and print catalogues to shortlist the images and you will find the look that you want for your space. Turning down the stress from the outside world, a home must allow you to relax, infuse positive energy and recharge you. Colour allows you to do just that. The colour trends of homes are shifting towards warmth, comfort, cosy to soft neutral hues

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Svarochi's Prima Swivel range work well as accent light while Prima Flexi Strip Light can be used for cove lighting or back lighting. For smart lighting, check out Legrand's Home Automation Equinox41 Lighting.



## Tips

The lighting fixtures should be chosen depending on the lighting effect. While renovating, one must ensure that electrical points and switch boards are placed in required spaces. Use indirect lighting with strip lights for darker corridors, where the light hits the walls and helps in visualising the space. Take more lights from the ceiling and avoid walls. When you decide to adopt a smart lighting, simply ensure that the wiring and terminations at switches are in good condition with no insulation peeling, or patching up with black tape.

## RE-WIRING: DO's & DON'Ts

Here's a checklist for redoing the electrical conduits, introducing automation and security systems as part of renovation:

The use of electrically operated gadgets in homes have changed drastically: electrical rewiring is a must in older homes.

Ensure that the products that you are planning to use are genuine and of good quality.

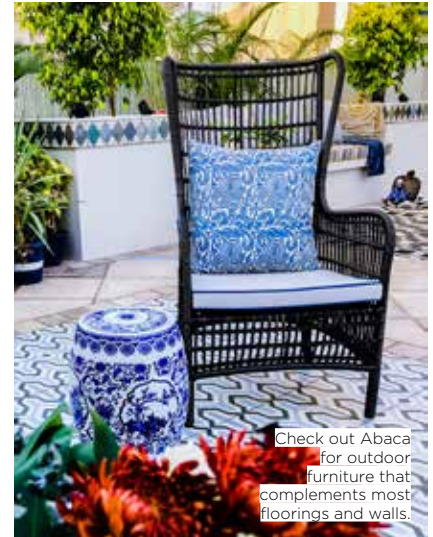
Be sure that your electrician is following proper steps and not using any false product of wiring that can be harmful.

Maintenance must be done at regular intervals, which will help in proper functioning of the technology and help in rectifying any issues beforehand.

Don't go overboard with home automation. They can get complex unnecessarily, where staff at home may not be able to handle them.

Keep automation to only essential spots around the house. Double back with manual switches.

The system or device must be able to update to new technology.



Check out Abaca for outdoor furniture that complements most floorings and walls.

with hints of quirky elements. ICI Dulux this year unveiled Heart Wood as the colour of the year, which represents the warmth of natural wood. The colours embrace across warmer pinks, blushes, baby blues to mustards and olives. Meanwhile, Asian Paints revealed Passion Flower, a luminous shade of amber as their Colour of the Year for the 15th edition of ColourNext.

Today, we even have paints that allow homes to have cleaner air and reduce indoor

air pollution levels. Asian Paints Royale Atmos works by neutralising the pollutant formaldehyde in the air. Nippon Paints too have an air purifying feature, which uses active carbon technology that abets formaldehyde emitted by furniture and carpets. Their paints also feature anti-bacterial technology that provides protection against MRSA, E-Coli and S.aureus, aside from being low-VOC, APEO free.

## LIGHTING

Nothing beats the comfort of daylight streaming in a home, which is a major challenge in apartments today. While renovating, try to maximise the daylight through balconies and kitchen utility areas. Artificial lighting at home primarily includes functional lighting such as spotlights, strip or cove lighting for diffused lighting and finally decorative lighting such



Explore Gyproc India's range for finding the perfect designer ceiling for your home.

Artistic wall and floor tiles by Sisis.



3D wall panels from Ventura's Mabel collection.



Canadian Woods' Western Hemlock range features a fine texture and a straight uniform grain that is ideal for interiors.

as pendants, floor lamps or chandeliers. Get a clean bright white light or set a soft warm yellow. Today you can choose light fixtures that allow you to change colour temperature according to the needs of the household.

Smart Lighting Systems allow you to adjust intensity of the light, set the right tone of light from warm yellow to cool white and also choose hundreds of colour shades, or opt for pre-saved effects to create ambience to reflect your mood. Svarochi's latest products based on Bluetooth Mesh technology, offers smart lighting without the need to change existing wiring, or open your switchboard to put any device. Svarochi's Prima Swivel: LED Smart Swivel Spots and Prima Flexi Strip Light allows you to just plug it on, download the app, and go smart.

## CEILING

Keep it simple. This is the mantra that most designers and architects suggest for ceilings. Opt for an exposed ceiling, which gives you better height. And if you are going in for a false ceiling, ensure it is clean and minimalist, neatly fitting in services such as lighting, audio systems and air-conditioning. Gypsum plastering is a modern day solution to the time consuming and ecologically straining process of sand cement plaster. Gypsum-based ceilings are fast and easy to install and take approximately 1-2 weeks to complete, depending on the complexity.



Aparna Venster state-of-the-art uPVC Windows & Doors are steel reinforced and designed to deliver optimal performance even under the harshest weather conditions.

## Highlight

Acoustics, in particular, is often neglected as an important part of interior design and architecture. Since a ceiling has a large surface area, it also plays an important role in the thermal and acoustic comfort of a space. Thermal insulation in designer ceilings helps cut down on the air conditioning load which subsequently reduces electricity costs. Gyproc India (part of Saint-Gobain Group in India) recently has introduced Rigitone, an innovative range of acoustic ceiling which provides excellent sound absorption qualities. The brand has also launched Habito, a revolutionary gypsum board in drywall solutions that enhances performance in load fixing strength, robustness and acoustics. It also absorbs knocks and bangs and dramatically reduces wear and tear on wall.

## DOORS

When changing doors in your home, ensure they meet requirements such as borer and termite proof, emission-free, uniform thickness and do not expand and shrink in varying weather conditions. Catering to fire safety, Mikasa Fire Rated Doors provide a safe exit in case of fire emergency by preventing the spread of fire and smoke. Get tough with Greenpanel doors' new range which are made using Quadra Pro Technology and have a thicker glue core. The solid wood filler in the door gives them superior screw-holding capacity, and makes them resistant to shock and buckling. Glass doors also have to be checked for resistance to impact and durability. However, glass doors are great to create common spaces and rooms in modern homes, giving a more open and expansive look. Inspired by Japanese interiors, Lualdi's Shoin is a system of fixed panels and sliding doors that are supported by single or double rails.

## WINDOWS

If you are lucky enough to have good height in your living room, use large windows or French doors/windows which allow you to bring the outdoor landscape inside. Choose frames that are slim for a contemporary look. uPVC windows are a popular choice, but keep in mind the resistance to wind load, water tightness, air permeability, heat

transfer quotient and sound insulation, while selecting windows. The most important thing to remember is to buy from a brand, since getting it done locally may not get you the required toughening of the frame, resulting in breaks in a few years. Check out Window Magic, Fenesta and Encraft for a wide variety of designs and price ranges.

## CHECKLIST FOR BATHROOMS

Remodelling a bathroom is a huge task, especially when it is essential to redo the plumbing systems.

- \* Check loose plumbing joint and leakages.
- \* Use flooring which is easy-care and a non-slip surface.
- \* Replace wiring for all electrical appliances you use, such as dryers, straightening irons and razors.
- \* Smart WC requires electrical and plumbing separately.



The autoclean washbasin from Vitra.

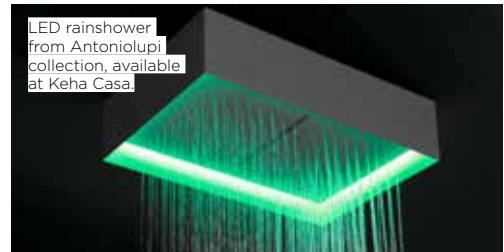




A contemporary bathroom concept from Graff.



Wash basin from Valdama Cameo collection, available at FCML.



LED rainshower from Antoniolupi collection, available at Keha Casa.

- \* Plan for storage & niches for toiletries.
- \* The number of water outlets in bathrooms have gone up with jets, rainfall & showers. This means more water consumption, where a traditional geyser will run out of hot water. But a centralised boiler/ tank style heater is required, which is not possible in apartments.
- \* Keep in mind the hardness of water; even water softeners will leave water stains on surfaces.

## CHECKLIST

- \* Visualise the final look of your home and know what you want. This should be followed up with planning, civil and services and finishing.
- \* Almost all renovation budgets go overboard. So always keep your budget above the estimated cost.
- \* It is recommended to go with firms that design to build, not just a design house for design, or contractor who will only look at civil work.
- \* As a house owner, be involved from the initial stage.
- \* Start from the structural drawings, followed by internal survey and external survey for space dimensions, etc.
- \* Secure yourself from the outside. Many buildings which were built 30-40 years ago didn't come with waterproofing. The durability of waterproofing is for 10 years.
- \* Design in ways to minimise damage of civil structures
- \* Strengthen the structure when you open up walls and windows.
- \* Technical support from an architect and engineer is essential for civil work and upgrading services such as electrical and plumbing.
- \* Intense renovation in apartment will take time, as the work can only be done during a stipulated time of the day, to reduce disturbance for neighbours.
- \* Be ready for surprises and open to changes. Also, the collateral damages must be considered.
- \* Finishing materials are great, but have to be installed effectively.
- \* Don't get carried away with too much detail on surfaces. Remember, you will be adding furniture, carpets, wall art, lights and more, to the room.
- \* Up-cycle and reuse old doors, furniture, cupboards, windows for an old-meets-new-world charm.
- \* Expect challenges in coordinating and managing contractors, plumbers, electricians, etc.