

HOME FURNISHINGS

## Home renovations on the rise as consumers stay home

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*Miele laundry appliances are in high demand as consumers renovate their homes. Image courtesy of Miele*

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By DIANNA DILWORTH

As the COVID-19 pandemic has kept consumers worldwide closer to home this year, many are opting to invest in renovations to make their abodes more comfortable and state-of-the-art.

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Whether it is a new home office, spiffed-up kitchen, installation of a pool or an overall facelift, home renovations are helping consumers feel more comfortable in the spaces in which they are spending the most time.

"Clearly with the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders across the country, most homeowners are nesting," said Glenn Liacouras, managing director and business unit professional of **Miele North America**, Australia and New Zealand, Collegeville, PA. "Families are cooking and cleaning more often and satisfying the need to control and enhance, at least, their own living environments if they can't influence the world around them.

"Many homeowners feel more comfortable to invest in their homes now and are redirecting funds that would have been spent on major vacations, weddings and graduations or new cars," he said. "It's natural for consumers to want to improve the spaces in which they are spending considerably more time these days.

"On top of these dynamics, we know that most Miele customers are those who seek high-quality, high-performance and long-lasting products that represent the latest in design."



*Miele appliances are seeing an increase in demand as lockdowns drive renovations. Image courtesy of Miele*

### Upgrades needed

Miele has seen six major points of consideration for its premium appliances. Consumers who are looking for technology that offer top-of-the-line disinfection capabilities and, secondly, they want appliances that offer the best long-term care for garments, linens, dishes and glassware.

Time remains a top consideration, so cycle times such as wash and dry, or brew times continue to be a top benefit for Miele products.

"Four, of course, consumers are more educated about environmental sustainability than ever before so Miele is a leader in providing appliances that use less water and energy," Mr. Liacouras said.

"Five, consumers want versatile functions with easy-to-use programming and touch pads," he said. "Six, consumers investing in new appliances want them to be beautiful and well designed."

Sales trends for Miele products suggest there is a growing renovation market. Miele authorized dealers are seeing increases in showroom appointments, foot traffic and even virtual demonstrations.

Miele is seeing a higher demand for recipes and accessories for cooking, but also increases in purchases of soaps, vacuums, coffee makers, refrigerators, dishwashers and laundry systems.

"This trend would suggest to Miele that not only is there more cooking and cleaning at home, but there is strong demand for premium, quality equipment to assist with better prepared meals and the cleaner linens and environments," Mr. Liacouras said.

"Unfortunately, there are record numbers of restaurants of all cuisines closing their businesses," he said.

"Investments in products like Miele's may actually inspire cooking and cleaning because they are so well constructed and perform at optimal levels."

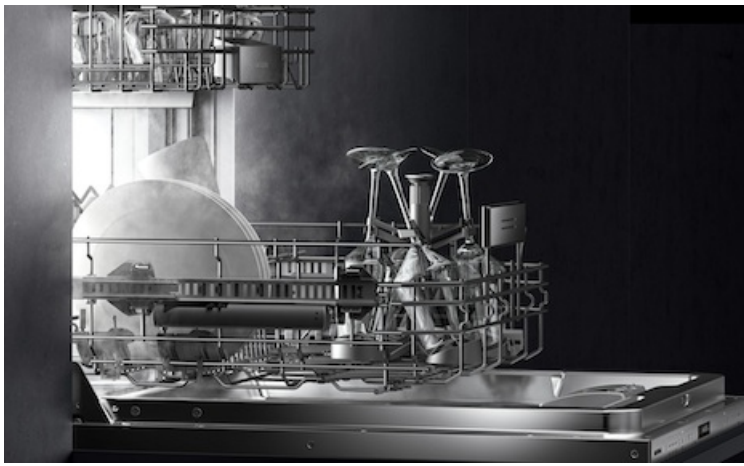
Gaggenau has seen convenience and speed as a major driver of sales this year.

Products such as the Combi-Steam Oven that can deliver faster results than convection has been selling.

Additionally, products that support home cooking lockdown trends have been popular.

"On the other hand, people with time are experimenting more, seeking out YouTube How-To Recipes and want more functionality such as sous-vide, or bread baking capabilities, a great all-in-one oven for many culinary needs is a Combi-Steam oven," said Heather Ryan, director of sales and marketing at **Gaggenau** North America, Irvine, CA.

"Also smart appliances are being requested," she said. "People like the idea of app integration for some appliance setting functionality, recipe integration and ease of ordering accessories for the appliances."



*Gaggenau dishwasher 400 series. Image credit: Gaggenau*

### Culinary investments

Miele has seen full kitchen/laundry renovations that range from \$70 to \$700 per square foot, depending on the amenities and the technology.

Gaggenau has seen consumers spending \$100,000 to 150,000, on average, for a fully equipped kitchen.

"With so many shelter-in-place orders and travel restrictions, luxury clients are spending more time at home than ever before, which means more use of the kitchen and more discretionary income to upgrade with since other activities outside of the home are not happening," Gaggenau's Ms. Ryan said.

"In normal times, a new kitchen does not necessarily mean more cooking at home, but it most likely means more time in the kitchen, hosting and entertaining," she said.

"Regardless of actual cooking happening, the kitchen often is the social hub of the home. However, in these uncertain times where we are all spending more time living and eating at home, yes, people are eager to actually cook and use their kitchens."

Luxury designers and architects are busy this year helping consumers upgrade their homes.

Many luxury clients have shifted their primary residences to what may have been second or third homes to escape congested communities. That is often the impetus to upgrade vacation homes for year-round-living comfort and the amenities, appliances and technology that go with it.

"These homes may not have been designed with such day-to-day living in mind, so these renovations are also happening," Ms. Ryan said.

"People have older or out-of-date equipment and need to live up to today's culinary opportunities," she said.