



THE NEW ERA OF

HGTV HOME & GARDEN

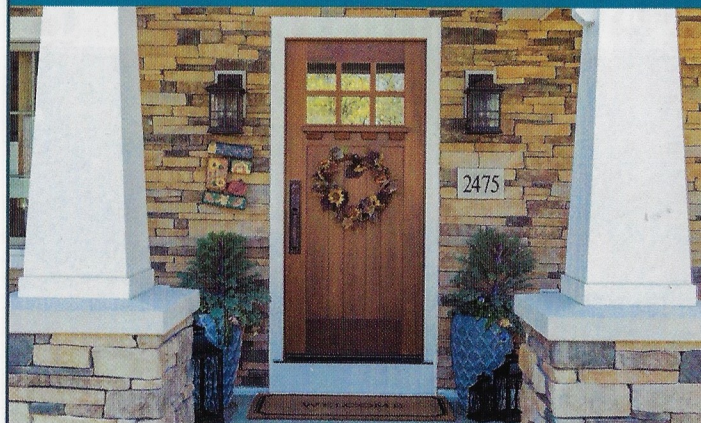
WHY WE LOVE IT AND HATE IT

Who doesn't like to fantasize about an easy home renovation that only takes a weekend and delivers perfectly finished results, complete with clean sheets and fresh flowers? Wouldn't it be nice if the real world worked that way?

HGTV... To many of us residential architects, that's a four-letter word. Promoting unrealistic expectations for most projects regarding time, quality and budget, HGTV has made our job as architects more challenging. At its core, HGTV is entertainment wrapped in product placement, good-looking hosts, and 10-percent useful content.

The truth is that construction, design, bidding, and city approvals are demanding and time consuming. The fruits they yield are awesome and keep giving back for years. But it would not make for good TV if it reflected reality. In the typical HGTV show, the renovation takes an episode. It distills four to six months into neat five-minute segments.

Isn't Your Home Worth It?



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A properly planned home renovation executed by trustworthy professionals can absolutely be a dream come true. But if you want to avoid the nightmare of budget overages, drawn-out timelines, and shoddy workmanship, don't fall for these reality TV fallacies.

1: The Job Always Takes Longer Than They Say

In a statement issued by HGTV, they admitted that they "may abridge and adjust timelines to help manage production and time constraints." Shows depicting super-speedy renovations likely have a professional crew working round the clock for days or weeks to get the job done. From meeting with architects and contractors to selecting materials and finishes, significant planning and preparation goes into a proper renovation. Not to mention the time required for inspections, humane work schedules, and letting the paint dry.

2: How Much Does It Really Cost?

The real world cannot compete with reality TV home-renovation budgets. These shows receive heavily discounted labor and materials through partners and sponsors. On top of that, they've become notorious for using cheap materials and rushed labor to drive down costs. There's no way around it: quality floors, countertops, appliances, and furniture that will last do not come cheap.

3: DIYers Are Doing It Themselves

Remember watching the regular folks on *Trading Spaces* DIY their way to total home makeover? That was all clever editing. DIY projects on TV are actually being supervised and largely executed by pros behind the scenes. This may be one of the most dangerous lies perpetuated by home-renovation reality shows. An untrained person should not be attempting their own demolition, construction, or electrical work. At best you'll end up with subpar workmanship, at worst you could seriously injure yourself or a loved one.

4: The Fancy New Furniture and Décor Is Yours

If you're a fan of the show *Fixer Upper*, you'll be familiar with the beautiful Magnolia Market furnishings, rugs, planters and more that fill the finished homes. Unfortunately for the show's participants, they're only on loan long enough for cameras to capture the grand reveal. The homeowners usually don't have enough room in their budget to keep the goods. Instead, they get a cataloged binder of every item and its price should they decide to buy it.

5: Everything You'll Need is in One Store

On TV, couples make one whirlwind trip to the home-improvement store to pick up everything

they need — usually after the renovation has started. The harsh reality is that sourcing materials can take weeks, and items frequently need to be ordered from distant suppliers. Typically, you need to start this process well before renovation begins. Ideally, many materials have been gathered and delivered before workers arrive, so the process isn't delayed by waiting for lumber or fixtures to arrive.

6: You Can Wing it

The hasty home-renovation process shown on TV would be an absolute disaster in real life. While reality TV hosts seem to swoop in, immediately grasp the homeowners' vision, and start knocking out walls in the same breath, this is pure fantasy. Winging it is a surefire way to ruin your budget, and run into frustrating complications and delays. It leads to last-minute decisions and often leads to a haphazard finished design. Solid planning and preparation are a homeowner's best insurance when embarking on a renovation.

7: You Need to Go on Vacation While Your Home is Transformed

Some home-renovation reality shows prefer to keep the home renovation a surprise for participants. A couple or family may go off on a relaxing vacation for a week and return to a new, barely recognizable space. A proper renovation can be carefully orchestrated to minimize disruption and keep your day-to-day schedule as normal as possible. Still, you may need to live for weeks without a func-

tioning kitchen or bathroom, get used to noise and dust, and share your space with workers. However, even if you can afford to vacation for weeks, it's best to stay close to communicate with contractors.

8: It's Not all Smiles and Hugs at the End

After the big reveal and emotional reactions, the cameras leave, and viewers don't get to see what happens next. There is a growing list of former reality TV participants who were left with shoddy work to repair and redo on their own. In shows like *Extreme Home Makeover*, families sometimes end up with a newly built home they can't actually afford. Mounting taxes and utility bills have even led to foreclosure for some participants.

Of course, everybody knows those shows are edited for time, and the majority of the design work is never seen or even mentioned. But it still has spoiled us, hasn't it?

There's nothing wrong with indulging in the aspirational fantasies served up by these "reality" shows. In fact, they can offer creative ideas and inspire you to finally take up your own project. So, the next time you are watching HGTV, and are blown away by the design concept that's presented after the second commercial break, you will have an idea about some of the work that went on behind the scenes. And when it comes time for your own project, you will understand the real time, effort, and investment that goes into a renovation project.

