

Kitchen & bathroom special | 22 pages of essential reno advice

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Wayd Munro is the builder on our renovation specialists Panel (for more on the Panel, turn to page 132). This month, he uncovers the facts on pre-renovation soil testing.

ask an expert

Each issue, we'll find stylish solutions to all your decorating and design dilemmas from those in the know

Q Do I need to have my soil tested before I start renovating? *Fliss, via email*

This depends on what was on the land before you owned it. Councils keep information on prior use of land and, in NSW, a section 149 certificate provides information about the zoning of the property, state and local planning controls and other property affectations. This includes

whether the land is listed as contaminated, and may need remediation and/or testing before developing. Generally, this will only be required if the land had an industrial use previously, such as a former service station with fuel tanks in the ground that may have leached into the soil. In NSW, the section 149 certificate forms part of the sales contract of a property, but you can get one for a property at any time.

Q I love marble and would love to add it to my bathroom floor. Is it a practical choice for a family bathroom or is it best to leave it for my ensuite? *Gemma, via email*

"The answer to this is dependent on the lifestyle of your family and your choice of marble," says **David Compagnino of Signorino Tile Gallery** (signorino.com.au). "Some stones stain more easily or show certain stains while others won't, so this is also something to consider. Hair dye, nail polish and other products could lead to headaches if proper care isn't taken. Today, there are a huge number of fabulous stone-look porcelain alternatives to marble that could give you the look you love, with the added durability to stand up to the rigors of family use. Regardless of how careful you are with it, stone will always need love and maintenance over its life. It might just need it a little more regularly in the context you're suggesting."



designer tip
Add a sense of luxury and grandeur to floors with large-format tiles



Q We're looking for the right flooring for our outdoor entertaining area: modern, cool underfoot, and budget- and child-friendly. What are some good options?

@ameliaoges, via Instagram

"There are a couple of great options: synthetic grass is soft underfoot, lush and green with no mowing, watering or pest control," says **Lyndall Keating of Garden Society** (garden.society.com.au). These days it's very hard to pick it from the real thing. Or try composite decking, an eco-friendly mix of wood and other materials, which makes it more durable and lower maintenance than solid wood. It creates a modern, sophisticated look and should be splinter-free, so is safer for barefoot children."

Q What should I keep in mind when renovating a bathroom? *Tori, via email*

"One of the most important things to consider when planning bathroom renos are the space requirements," says **David Giorgio, design team manager of Caroma** (caroma.com.au). "For a basin, you need a clear space of 700mm from the front of the basin to the nearest wall. For a shower recess, allow at least 800mm x 800mm, and you need at least 600mm in front of the toilet and around 200mm either side of the bowl for elbow room. You'll also want to take into account the splash zone of the basin, so pair a shallow basin with a standard tap size. Before making any purchases, think carefully about what style will complement the rest of your home, who will be using the bathroom, the size of the space and your budget."



Send us your questions via Facebook or Instagram, or email insideout@news1td.com.au.