

# READERS' FAVORITES **2019**

SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

WE ASKED, AND OUR READERS  
DELIVERED, SHARING THEIR FAVORITE  
LOCAL STORES AND HOME SERVICE  
PROVIDERS IN OUR ANNUAL SURVEY

By: KATE ANDREWS,  
PAULA PETERS CHAMBERS,  
MERIDITH INGRAM,  
KEYRIS L. MANZANARES  
and VANESSA REMMERS  
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Styling by: CJ LANCIONE  
Art directed by: V. LEE HAWKINS  
Hair and make up by:  
VICTORIA BERKELEY  
and JOCELYN BAGBY



*Winner for:*  
**FABRIC**  
U-FAB,  
owners Carley  
and Travis Hamilton

## VENDORS

### ANTIQUES

#### WEST END ANTIQUES MALL

Look for a mix of traditional antiques and quirky vintage items, all thanks to the 200 individual dealers who occupy the mall, says owner Matt Earle. Unexpected finds have included an African tribal mask, pieces from the Richmond Symphony Designer House, even a skeleton rocking chair from the estate of actor Vincent Price. With new items arriving daily, Earle says there's no bad day to visit; semiannual sales are held in May and November. *2004 Staples Mill Road, 804-359-1600, westendantiquemall.com*

*2nd: Gates Antiques  
3rd: Class and Trash*

### APPLIANCES

#### APPLIANCES ON LAKESIDE

From replacement to repair, Appliances on Lakeside strives to meet customers' needs in every direction. With a lengthy list of available brands — and a sales team that has more than 80 years of collective experience — Appliances on Lakeside remains a family-owned business. *5418 Lakeside Ave., 804-266-7621, appliancesonlakeside.com*

*2nd: Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery  
3rd: Appliance Contract Sales*

### ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE

#### CARAVATI'S

Long known as the go-to location for owners of historic homes looking for materials that are true to their homes' style and time period, Caravati's also offers a bevy of options for those seeking creative touches in their newer homes. "Corbels once used under the eaves of a roof can support shelving or kitchen islands; fencing, shutters and old windows are used for wall decor and headboards," notes co-owner Elaine Kastelberg. "The projects are limitless." *104 E. Second St., 804-232-4175, caravatis.com*

*2nd: Governor's Antiques  
3rd: Paul's Place*

### ART GALLERY

#### CROSSROADS ART CENTER

"Life would be boring if everyone liked and wanted the same art," observes Jenni Kirby, owner of Crossroads Art Center. With more than 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the gallery features works ranging from classical European-influenced art to black-and-white photography. "The art that you have in your house speaks volumes about you and your history, your travels, your mindset," she says. "The art you buy needs to speak to you, evoke an emotion and/or tell a story." *2016 Staples Mill Road, 804-278-8950, crossroadsartcenter.com*

*2nd: Quirk Gallery*

**"OUR SHOPPER HAS A SHARP EYE AND IS WILLING TO HUNT FOR THAT SPECIAL PIECE TO ROUND OUT THEIR SPACE AND CREATE A MORE COLLECTED, CURATED, PERSONAL VIBE."**

**WHITNEY O'CONNER**

*Owner of Revival Consignment*

### BARGAIN FINDS

#### DIVERSITY THRIFT

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, Diversity Thrift is still going strong. "It never ceases to amaze me what comes in the door," says Bill Harrison, executive director of Diversity Richmond, which operates Diversity Thrift. "Our store is not the pristine, beautifully organized facility, but it's a great place to buy the unusual, and you never know what you're going to find." Savvy regulars monitor social media for announcements of the 25-cent clothing sales and other promotions. "We try to keep prices low to keep inventory moving," Harrison says. *1407 Sherwood Ave., 804-353-8890, diversitythrift.org*

*2nd: Class and Trash  
3rd: Hope Thrift*

### BED LINENS

#### YVES DELORME

Store manager Shannon Stoughton wants customers to get past thread count. "Fine linens begin with fine cotton," she says, noting that the best sheets are 100 percent combed Egyptian cotton, exactly what Yves Delorme carries. Discerning customers are seeking high-quality, long-lasting linens that are created with artistic integrity and attention to detail, she says. This year's spring/summer collection will bring pizzazz to any bedroom with bold and exotic botanical prints. *6235-B River Road, 804-320-7521, yvesdelorme.com*

*2nd: Frâiche  
3rd: Blythe Linens and Lingerie*

### CABINETS

#### CUSTOM KITCHENS INC.

Designer Kyle Hendrick wants customers to keep an open mind. "Even if you love your kitchen, there's likely something that doesn't work that well," he says. "We can help identify areas that could be more efficient, and we can make those areas efficient." Current trends include color, too, he says. "You may not want a full-color kitchen, but you can show style by pairing white or wood cabinets with an island in a bold color, like red or royal blue." *6412 Horsepen Road, 804-288-7247, customkitchensinc.net*

*2nd: (tie) Cabinet Crafters of Virginia;  
Cary's Mill Woodworking  
3rd: Chesapeake Bay Cabinet Co.*

### CONSIGNMENT FURNITURE

#### REVIVAL CONSIGNMENT

Customers come to Revival Consignment because they want to move beyond catalogs or big-box stores, says owner Whitney O'Conner. "Our shopper has a sharp eye and is willing to hunt for that special piece to round out their space and create a more collected, curated, personal vibe," she says. O'Conner credits the store's consigners for keeping the store fresh, with high-caliber treasures — including a recent pair of vintage Italian giltwood wall panels. *9750 Gayton Road, 804-750-2200, revivalconsignment.com*

*2nd: Impulse  
3rd: Izzie's Consigning With Grace*

## COUNTERTOPS

### CLASSIC GRANITE & MARBLE

Visitors to Classic Granite & Marble's showroom will find an abundance of options, including on-trend and exotic offerings that will set any kitchen apart. "We have noticed that homeowners are choosing more rustic finishes, such as honed, leathered, brushed and flamed," says Lauren Wallace, marketing director. Lighter colors — whites and grays — as well as straight edges (not the traditional rounded edge) are now appealing to buyers. "We've also been busy installing larger-than-life islands for the ultimate party hosting," she says. *14301 Justice Road, 804-404-8004, classicgranite.com*

**2nd:** Artistic Stone Design

**3rd:** Absolute Stone Design

## FABRIC

### U-FAB

While drapes might be the classic way to soften a space, U-Fab owner Travis Hamilton says fabric can personalize any room. "You can stretch a piece of fabric over a frame to hang as art, or cover old and tired side tables and nightstands to add interest and color," he says. Moving away from the graphic prints so popular a few years ago, customers are now gravitating to fabrics that are woven, textured and of heavier weight. *7921 W. Broad St., 804-888-8322, u-fab.com*

**2nd:** Williams & Sherrill Interiors

**3rd:** Artéé Fabrics and Home

## FLOORING

### COSTEN FLOORS

With all the flooring options out there, Costen Floors President Tripp Costen suggests customers think about what's not changing. "You don't want to open Pandora's box," he says. "Pay attention to existing colors and styles if you're only doing the floors." The shop also encourages customers to check out samples, just like at a library, to assess the change in situ. "Flooring will definitely look different at night than it will first thing in the morning," he says. *13212 Hull Street Road, 804-419-7855; 9840 Mayland Drive, 804-527-2929, costenfloors.com*

**2nd:** ProSource of Richmond

**3rd:** Floor & Decor

## GARDEN TOOLS & SUPPLIES

### STRANGE'S FLORIST, GREENHOUSE AND GARDEN CENTER

Different tasks require different tools and supplies, notes Meg Gouldin, Strange's human resources assistant, but everyone needs the basics. "We think having a variety of smaller hand tools — pruners, trowel and cultivator — and a spade or trusty shovel will help do the trick in most projects," she says, adding, "I would never give up my stainless-steel precision pruners; they're compact, easy to use and come with a holster!" *3313 Mechanicsville Pike, 804-321-2200; 12111 W. Broad St., 804-360-2800; stranges.com*

**2nd:** The Great Big Greenhouse & Nursery  
**3rd:** Sneed's Nursery

**"WHEN EVERYTHING HAS A BIT OF INTEGRITY TO IT, AND YOU LOVE IT, THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT WORK."**

SARAH PAXTON

President of LaDIFF

## HOME ACCESSORIES

### U-FAB

Moving into a larger storefront on West Broad Street two years ago allowed U-Fab to expand its home accessories selection, with items from around the world, says owner Travis Hamilton. "We want to be a one-stop shop for all things home decor," he says. "On our buying trips, we kept noticing all these great vendors and items that nobody was really carrying in Richmond." Finds include handmade teak sideboards, vintage pottery, hand-dyed throws, ornate mirrors and vintage rugs. *7921 W. Broad St., 804-888-8322, u-fab.com*

**2nd:** Dolce Designs

**3rd: (tie)** The Lazy Daisy Gift Store;  
Revival Home Furnishings Consignment

## LIGHTING FIXTURES

### SHADES OF LIGHT

The range of products available at Shades of Light is intentional, says Marketing Manager Walter Froh. "We offer a curated collection of what the greater Richmond community wants and the best the lighting industry has to offer," he says. Froh also credits a knowledgeable and adaptable staff. "What is nice to see is how adept our associates are at identifying what the individual customer wants or needs and matching that up with quality products and services." *4924 W. Broad St., 804-288-6515, shadesoflight.com*

**2nd:** Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery

**3rd:** Atlantic Electrical Supply

## ► MIDCENTURY FURNITURE DEALER

### EPOCH FURNISHINGS

Demand for Midcentury modern furniture has surged in Richmond, says Colena Hammond, co-owner with Jake Moore of Epoch Furnishings. "People are downsizing, and these designs work for smaller homes," she says. "Plus, these pieces are so artistically done; they are elegant and timeless." Hammond and Moore acquire finds through auctions. "We travel to Maryland regularly and North Carolina, too," she says. "The East Coast is littered with Midcentury modern furniture." *2401 Stratford Road, 804-677-4026, epochfurnishings.com*

**2nd:** LaDIFF

**3rd:** Dust Vintage Home Furnishings

## MODERN FURNITURE

### LA DIFF

A longtime proponent of shopping local — particularly for furniture — LaDIFF President Sarah Paxton says, "It's important to understand the differences in quality, which is something you can't see on a screen." She adds that modern furniture is a big part of today's design mix as consumers personalize their spaces with eclectic pieces. "When everything has a bit of integrity to it, and you love it, that's what makes it work." *125 S. 14th St., 804-648-6210, ladiff.com*

**2nd:** Ruth & Ollie

**3rd:** U-Fab

# Epoch

*Winner for:*  
**MIDCENTURY  
FURNITURE DEALER**  
Epoch Furnishings,  
owners Jake Moore  
and Colena Hammond





*Winner for:*  
**RUGS**  
Capel Rugs,  
Area Manager  
Marie Hayden

## OUTDOOR FURNITURE

### OUTDOOR DREAMS

Offering high-end outdoor furniture lines such as Mallin, Ebel and Castelle was a natural progression for this design-build firm for outdoor spaces, explains co-owner and lead designer Greg Koehler. In-home consultations make them a local favorite. "We pride ourselves in finding out how the client wants to use the space and also the best use of the space," he says. Where durability was once the primary concern, Koehler says that today, "furniture makers are focusing on comfort." *804-592-1305, outdoordreamsva.com*

**2nd:** JoPa Company

**3rd:** Bon Air Hearth, Porch and Patio

## PAINT & PAINTING SUPPLIES

### SPECTRUM PAINT

"We carry the largest brand portfolio of paint in the area, including Benjamin Moore, PPG and our own private label, SPEC-PRO," says Gentry Stafford, vice president of marketing. With that selection comes an experienced staff. "The people that work for us chose paint as their career, and many have 20, 30, 40 years of experience." She says that Benjamin Moore's Gennex color technology fortifies the paint, enhancing its durability. *4307 W. Broad St., 804-359-5088; 11201 Midlothian Turnpike, 804-794-3334; 10801 W. Broad St., 804-747-7210; 13932 Hull St., 804-739-7777, spectrumpaint.com*

**2nd:** Bridget Beari Designs

## PLANTS

### THE GREAT BIG GREENHOUSE

Manager Doug Hensel says that The Great Big Greenhouse, located on 9 1/2 acres, has "the most extensive collection of tropical house plants in all of Central Virginia," as well as a knowledgeable staff ready to help customers make sense of the vast selection. He sees strong interest in native plants, plants that attract pollinators and vegetable gardening. "You don't always have to have a traditional garden plot," he says. "You can grow vegetables and small fruits in containers if you only have a deck or patio." *2051 Huguenot Road, 804-320-1317, greatbiggreenhouse.com*

**2nd:** Strange's Florist, Greenhouse and Garden Center

**3rd:** Sneed's Nursery

## ◀ RUGS

### CAPEL RUGS

"We can't stress enough the importance of shopping for rugs in person versus online," says Marie Hayden, Capel's area manager. "Colors and texture just don't translate like they do in person." Staff designers can help customers with selecting the right size rug and coordinating colors to pull a room together. Customers can also try a rug at home before purchasing. What's hot? Light-washed vintage looks and bold, colorful patterns. *3995 Deep Rock Road, 804-290-8800, capelrugs.com*

**2nd:** Costen Floors

**3rd:** Amir Rug Exchange

## "FURNITURE IS STILL THAT ONE COMMODITY THAT PEOPLE NEED TO SHOP FOR IN PERSON."

**ROBIN CHILDRESS**

Vice President of Virginia Wayside Furniture

## TILE

### MORRIS TILE DISTRIBUTORS

"We have miles of tile in stock in Richmond," says Morris Tile President Whit Morris, who says it's the largest selection of in-stock tile in Richmond — which can translate to convenience, competitive pricing and expedited projects. Experienced staffers help customers find just the look they want. Morris says larger-format tiles are a growing trend, while classic subway tile and herringbone and penny-round mosaics are gaining traction as well. *2280 Dabney Road, 804-353-4427, morristile.net*

**2nd:** Best Tile

**3rd:** Mosaic Tile

## TRADITIONAL FURNITURE

### VIRGINIA WAYSIDE FURNITURE

Virginia Wayside's selection of traditional and transitional furniture at a variety of prices makes it a local favorite. "Furniture is still that one commodity that people need to shop for in person," says Vice President Robin Childress. "You need to be able to see it and know what you're getting." She says that approximately 75 percent of their brands are American-made, something that has "become increasingly important to our clientele." *10500 Patterson Ave., 804-740-3124, vawayside.net*

**2nd:** Ethan Allen

**3rd:** Decor Furniture & Mattress Showplace

## WALLPAPER

### WILLIAMS & SHERRILL INTERIORS

Wallpaper is a hot design commodity for the color, pattern and texture it brings, says Williams & Sherrill's Annette Harriman. With more than 300 books from companies such as Thibaut, Zoffany, Pierre Frey and more, their sample library "only keeps getting better and better." According to Harriman, Richmond loves bold colors, and while many customers bring images and ideas of what they have in mind, the staff helps navigate the myriad choices. "Everyone has a story of what they're working on, and I love that," she says. *2003 Huguenot Road, 804-320-1730, williamsandsherrill.com*

**2nd:** Dolce Designs

## WINDOWS & DOORS

### SIEWERS LUMBER & MILLWORK

Vice President Richie Siewers says the company's staff and products from "good-quality manufacturers" are why locals name them as a favorite. "Richmond is unique in that we still have a lot of wood windows," he says. "People do appreciate the old window look." He says more customers are opting for fiberglass doors, which hold up well in extreme conditions. "They've come a long way," Siewers says — you can paint them and stain them like their wood counterparts. *1901 Ellen Road, 804-358-2103, siewers.com*

**2nd:** Window World

**3rd:** Custom View Windows & Doors

## SERVICES

### AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING CONTRACTOR

#### JAMES RIVER HEATING & AIR

Talk to James River Air President Hugh Joyce, and you'll hear right away how deeply he cares for the company started by his father in 1967, as well as the Richmond community at large. His recipe for success? "Good service, loving what you do, taking care of your client, listening to your client. ... That works in any market," he says. *1905 Westmoreland St., 804-358-9333, jamesriverair.com*

**2nd:** Woodfin

**3rd:** Air-Pro Mechanical

### APPLIANCE REPAIR

#### APPLIANCES ON LAKESIDE

Need to repair or replace that failing refrigerator? Either is an option through Appliances on Lakeside, which added a service component when they acquired Broughton Appliance in 2017. "We offer a good package of service to the Richmond community — anything from [repair] to also being able to replace an appliance if needed," says owner Tammy Kelley. Expect big things in 2019. "We have plans to grow so we can service our consumers in a more timely manner," she says. *5418 Lakeside Ave., 804-266-7621, appliancesonlakeside.com*

**2nd:** Residential Appliance Specialist

**3rd:** Little Appliance

### ARCHITECT

#### MARK SPANGLER ARCHITECTURE

In addition to his work, Mark Spangler's clients appreciate his respect for budgets. "I find a way to make [it] happen," he says. "Great design is only as important as what you can really build." While he's been busy with traditional additions that include the big family room, kitchen and master suite, he says lately he's been doing more contemporary work than he's done his whole career. "This isn't your mom's town anymore," he says. *804-432-4739, spanglerarchitecture.com*

**2nd:** TM Vavra Associates

**3rd:** 3north

### BASEMENT WATERPROOFING

#### BDRY WATERPROOFING OF RICHMOND

Treating basements and crawlspaces for groundwater intrusion, BDry offers "a product that nobody ever hopes to buy," says Billy Cox, marketing manager. "The [Environmental Protection Agency] states that if you're worried about mold, the first thing you have to do is solve your water problem." Cox says the Richmond location is successful due to its employees. "They have experience in different forms of construction, so they've been able to bring that to the table," he says. *10453 Design Road, Ashland, 804-441-8846, bdry.com*

**2nd:** JES Foundation Repair

**3rd:** A&R Waterproofing

**"GOOD SERVICE, LOVING  
WHAT YOU DO, TAKING  
CARE OF YOUR CLIENT,  
LISTENING TO YOUR  
CLIENT. ... THAT WORKS  
IN ANY MARKET."**

HUGH JOYCE

President of James River Air

### CARPENTER

#### TIE: FABLING BUILT; JACOB'S LADDER CONSTRUCTION

Casey Fabling started as a carpenter's helper at age 14 and has loved the smell of sawdust ever since. Entering his 20th year of carpentry, he founded Fabling Built in 2015. "Richmond is a city full of older homes with really beautiful mill-work," he says, pointing out that the firm's employees "specialize in saving, restoring and maintaining that." Jacob's Ladder President Seth Dorotich says his company, also a painting firm, can "service customers completely when we come across rotted wood." They also build custom exterior features such as pergolas and trellises. **Fabling Built:** *804-822-2625, fablingbuilt.com; Jacob's Ladder:* *804-255-9142, jacobsladder.com*

**2nd:** River City Carpentry

**3rd:** N. Chasen & Son

### CARPET & RUG CLEANER

#### HADEED-MERCER RUG CLEANING

Toddlers wielding markers, dogs tracking mud and guests spilling wine aren't a problem for Hadeed-Mercer Rug Cleaning. They provide the full gamut of carpet cleaning services, from in-home steam cleaning to pickup and delivery service for area rugs. They help customers determine the best cleaning method for all manner of carpets, from synthetics to hand-woven rugs. Plus, you can earn Hadeed Bucks through the company's loyalty incentive program. *3116 W. Moore St., 804-358-3811, mercerrugcleaning.com*

**2nd:** Chem-Dry Richmond

**3rd:** Christian Lorriane

### CHIMNEY SWEEP/REPAIR

#### COUGOT'S CHIMNEY SERVICE

"As hip as we are, nobody's walking away from gas or wood heat," says Dan Fitzpatrick, owner of Cougot's Chimney Service. "Richmond still loves its fireplaces." A lot of his work, other than cleaning and maintaining chimneys, is inspecting fireplaces and furnaces in homes for sale — and because the real estate market in Richmond is hot, Cougot's stays busy year-round. "If real estate is booming, we're going to be busy during the summer," Fitzpatrick says. *6507 Old Warwick Road, 804-798-0855, cougotschimney service.com*

**2nd:** Neat Sweep Chimney Services

**3rd:** Chimney Saver Solutions

### CLOSET INSTALLER

#### CLOSET FACTORY

Bryan and Teresa Mueller, husband-and-wife co-owners of Closet Factory, have done everything from creating built-in wardrobes in older Fan homes with no closets to building a closet with an "entire wall of shoe storage," Bryan says. "I counted 450 pairs of shoes, and then I stopped counting." The couple also uses innovative features such as lighted shelves and glass-topped jewelry storage areas, manufacturing pieces in their shop. *10520 Lakeridge Parkway, Ashland, 804-559-0001, closetfactoryva.com*

**2nd:** Inspired Closets

**3rd:** Closets of Virginia

## ▼ GENERAL CONTRACTOR

### FABLING BUILT

Casey Fabling, owner of Fabling Built, grew up working in shops as a teenager in Louisa County, picking up carpentry and handyman skills along the way. In 2015, he established his Henrico County business, starting with small projects and now taking on larger ones, including kitchens, bathrooms and additions. "It's built around trust," he says, that he and his team will finish on time. *2400 Old Brick Road, Suite 210, 804-822-2625, fablingbuilt.com*

**2nd:** HomeLink

**3rd:** Lane Homes & Remodeling



## CUSTOM FURNITURE MAKER

### WOODS' REFINISHING & RESTORATION

Seth Woods builds all kinds of furniture, but he is really the go-to guy for Windsor chairs. "I'm using the exact same process as the guys used 200 years ago," Woods says. In the past year, he's scaled back to a one-man shop at his house and spends plenty of time in the woods searching for white pine, maple and oak. "It's quite a change from being in a dark shop all the time," he says. *804-441-5193, instagram.com/sbwoods\_furniture*

**2nd: (tie)** Branch Furniture + Design;

**Harrison Higgins; Owen Suter's Fine Furniture; U-Fab**

## DECK BUILDER

### OUTDOOR DREAMS

Michael Newberger, co-owner of Outdoor Dreams, works with homeowners to create that perfect outdoor room with firepits, pergolas and grills. But "the one trend we're seeing with decks is that people are gravitating toward low-maintenance materials" like PVC or hard-woods, he says. "It's really important to work with someone who knows how you want to use the space." Oh, and check your homeowners' association guidelines before starting your project, he adds. *804-592-1305, outdoordreamsva.com*

**2nd:** HomeLink

**3rd:** Fabling Built

## DECORATIVE PAINTER

### ART TO DI FOR

Diane Williams, owner of Art to Di For, often works on ceilings, troweling plaster in intricate patterns around chandeliers and fans. "It's a bit of a mysterious thing I do," she says, because it's different from regular house painting. Although she gets inspiration from traveling abroad (including a 2018 trip to Marrakesh), "what I do is so custom to the clients' taste and decor." Right now, gold metallic features are very popular, she says. *804-894-1409, arttodifor.com*

**2nd:** H.J. Holtz & Son

## DRIVEWAY REPAIR

### SEAL THIS

Specializing in hand-applied asphalt sealing, Seal This employees have worked on more than 12,000 driveways, mending cracks, filling potholes and covering stains. The firm's four-step process begins with a thorough cleaning and priming to ensure your resealed driveway looks good as new. *8346 Old Richfood Road, Mechanicsville, 804-248-1654, richmondsealing.com*

**2nd:** River City Concrete

## ELECTRICIAN

### DAVIS & GREEN ELECTRICAL

Electricians are, of course, crucial for home renovations and other projects, and Davis & Green Customer Service Manager Jennifer Robinson notes that the company completes 25 to 30 large jobs each year. "We assess strengths when making assignments," she says, and that means making sure future electricians are learning the trade, too. Some local teens spend a couple of days a week on site as apprentices and the rest of the time at technical schools. *132 Brandon Road, 804-655-4998, dgelectrical.com*

**2nd:** Smartwire 360

**3rd:** AMP Electric

## EMBROIDERY SHOP

### RICH'S STITCHES

Identical twins Chris and Cecilia Rich opened Rich's Stitches in the basement of their brother's home in 1988 but quickly outgrew the space, moving to MacArthur Avenue, where they are now celebrating their 31st year. Chris says March is "monogram month" featuring specials on monograms and the debut of 20 new monogram styles. "We've done a lot of monograms on pillows, shams, bedding and bath curtains," she says. Cost is based on the size of the monogram and turnaround is about two weeks. *4013 MacArthur Ave., 804-262-3477, richsstitches.com*

**2nd:** Atlantic Embroidery Works

**3rd:** Sassy Bee

## ESTATE SPECIALISTS

### GATES ESTATES

Tim Gates says his entry into the estate-sale business "was truly an accident," with a friend asking him for help at a local house. Since then, "we've helped Richmond's only two-time Academy Award winner, cleaned out a 12,000-square-foot house on Monument Avenue" and many other downsizing projects. It's best to call someone to take care of a home after a loved one's death, Gates says. "You just can't do it yourself." *804-347-0453, gatesestatesllc.com*

**2nd:** Legacy Navigator

**3rd:** (tie) Beck Estates; Blue Moon Estate Sales; Circa Estate Sales



## FENCE BUILDER

### MINOR'S FENCES

Minor Hairfield, owner of Minor's Fences, says it's important to "know who you're dealing with and know what you're buying." For instance, when Minor's employees build wooden fences, they use lumber treated specifically for ground contact. These days, ornamental aluminum and vinyl fences are popular with clients and also adhere to most homeowner associations' rules. "We've been doing this a long time, and we don't cut any corners," Hairfield says. *12152 Washington Highway, Ashland, 804-752-0096, minorsfences.com*

**2nd:** Hurricane Fence Co.

**3rd:** Cartwright Landscaping

## FLOORING INSTALLER

### COSTEN FLOORS

The hardwood floor look remains on trend, but Tripp Costen, president of Costen Floors, notes that vinyl planks and waterproof laminates are also popular, "just because they look so good" and are economical choices. Part of the latest generation of the Costen family to work in flooring (the company is 71 years old), Tripp says the company's success comes from treating its employees fairly both in work and in pay. *13212 Hull Street Road, 804-419-7855; 9840 Mayland Drive, 804-527-2929, costenfloors.com*

**2nd:** HomeLink

**3rd:** Rod Barney Flooring

**FLOORING REFINISHER****COSTEN FLOORS**

On the refinishing side of floor work, President Tripp Costen says a sanded and shined hardwood floor "gives the whole house a new look and is the backdrop to any renovation." Lower-sheen floors are popular, but he's noticed that some clients are introducing lighter shades of wood into their house. "Richmond's come a long way style-wise in the last few years," Costen says. *13212 Hull Street Road, 804-419-7855; 9840 Mayland Drive, 804-527-2929, costenfloors.com*

**2nd:** Old Dominion Flooring

**3rd:** Builder Decor

**PICTURE FRAMER****RICK'S CUSTOM FRAME + GALLERY**

Rick Michaels has a degree in biology, "but I've always liked to build and work with my hands," he says. "Everyone who works here is an artist." With a two-week turnaround for most jobs, Rick's serves both local art galleries and private homes. "We focus on customer service and good designs," Michaels says. "That has worked, and I hope that keeps on working." *5702 Patterson Ave., 804-288-0001, ricksframe.com*

**2nd:** Frame of Mind

**3rd:** Fralin Art & Frame

**◀FURNITURE REPAIR AND/OR REFINISHING****TINKER & CO.**

Housed in the same building as Tinker's boutique, the furniture restoration part of this business has more than 40 years of experience, led by founder Anthony Coleman. He and his team work on well-loved furnishings, bringing them back to life. The team specializes in handling fire, storm and water damage, and all of the restoration, refinishing and repair work is done by hand. *2409 Westwood Ave., 804-359-3301, tinkerandcompany.com*

**2nd:** S.G. Woodworks

**3rd:** Renew Home Furnishings

**GLASS PROJECTS (REPLACEMENTS & MIRRORS)****ACE GLASS**

Open since 1996, Ace Glass guarantees its work, which includes residential, commercial and automotive glass and mirror services. "We stock many types of glass and mirror to enable quick scheduling and turnaround," says CEO Justin Reed, and the company also offers mobile service to its customers. *11525 Midlothian Turnpike, Suite 105, 804-379-3368, aceglassva.com*

**2nd:** Smiley's Glass

**3rd:** Binswanger Glass

## "RICHMOND'S COME A LONG WAY STYLE-WISE IN THE LAST FEW YEARS."

TRIPP COSTEN

President of Costen Floors

**GUTTER CLEANING****MIND IN THE GUTTER**

With last year's near-record rainfall, Ethan Powers says his company stayed busy cleaning and maintaining gutters, although of course most work had to happen when the sun was out. The best plan for most homeowners, he says, is to set up service contracts for regular cleaning. "One myth is that if you put a gutter guard on it, you never have to maintain it," Powers adds. *1551 Oakbridge Drive, Unit F, Powhatan, 804-378-3246, mindinthegutter.com*

**2nd:** All About Gutters

**HANDYMAN****FABLING BUILT**

Casey Fabling, who now takes on all sorts of projects as a general contractor, still sticks to his roots as a handyman. "People need someone to trust," he says. "We have our rapid-response team so our clients don't suffer." Because of 2018's heavy rainfall, he says, "we've had to become much better at repairing roofs." *2400 Old Brick Road, Suite 210, 804-822-2625, fablingbuilt.com*

**2nd:** Ryan Sawyer

**3rd:** HomeLink

**Hardscape Designer & Installer****OUTDOOR DREAMS**

Michael Newberger, co-owner of Outdoor Dreams, says it can be hard for homeowners to figure out what they want in their backyards: "square patio, round, irregular shapes, which materials — also being able to visualize the project." He and his coworkers help to answer questions early so there's no buyer's remorse. Last year, his company began offering appliances and furniture for outdoor spaces. "We're always growing," he says. *804-592-1305, outdoordreamsva.com*

**2nd:** Commonwealth Curb Appeal

**3rd:** HomeLink

**HOME BUILDER****CLAY STREET BUILDERS**

Started in 2012, Clay Street Builders is a smaller home builder focusing on custom work, historic details in new houses and flips. "We try to capture a sense of history," says Director of Operations Elliot Barnett. The firm works closely with clients, architects and antique dealers to achieve American Gothic and Craftsman details, and they are hoping to work with clients on Midcentury modern-style houses in the future. *2150 Carter Gallier Boulevard, Powhatan, 804-897-0144, claystreetbuilders.com*

**2nd:** Jones Homes

**3rd:** (tie) Balducci Builders; VMAX LLC

## HOME MEDIA SALES & INSTALLATION

### LIVEWIRE

In an age where apps to control home appliances and systems crowd cell phone home screens, Livewire360 has concentrated on making life easier. "You can get electronics anywhere. That's not the secret sauce," Henry Clifford, owner of Livewire360, says. The key, he adds, is optimizing the services those gadgets provide. "It's the iPhone equivalent of having 18 different remote controls and turning it into one remote control," he says. *4900 W Clay St., 804-886-3025, getlivewire.com*

*2nd: Avico*

*3rd: INARAY Design Group*

## HOME ORGANIZER

### MINIMA ORGANIZING & REDESIGN

When a job is done, Minima Organizing & Redesign hopes that their clients will have the tools in place to keep spaces organized. "We help our clients declutter and organize their space, creating systems they can maintain after we're gone," owner Kristen Ziegler says. "Organization is something many people struggle with. Getting it taken care of once and for all brings so much peace of mind." *804-592-0435, minimaonline.com*

*2nd: Simplify Me*

*3rd: Compass Home Solutions*

## HOUSE CLEANING SERVICE

### THE MAIDS

A family-owned business that's just hit 15 years, The Maids have had teams service everything from the Executive Mansion to commercial businesses. Manager Christian Ronan says that clients appreciate the quality guarantee in which their cleaners will return to a job if a homeowner sees a spot that may have been missed. "Our in-depth cleans are popular," Ronan says. *7858 Forest Hill Ave., 804-323-9006, maids.com*

*2nd: HomeLink*

*3rd: Molly Maid*

## INTERIOR DESIGNER/DECORATOR

### KATHY CORBET INTERIORS

With more homeowners looking for that "wow" factor rather than just a nicely decorated room, Kathy Corbet says she has enjoyed pushing creative boundaries. "I think people appreciate that I will add whimsy, that I don't take myself too seriously. I don't over-clutter a space, and I want to know your style." Corbet, a self-described chameleon, takes pride in sourcing from local artisans. *5206 Markel Road, Suite 100-C, 804-310-2597, kathykorbetinteriors.com*

*2nd: Sara Hillary Interior Designs*

*3rd: Kenneth Byrd Design*

**"ORGANIZATION IS SOMETHING MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE WITH. GETTING IT TAKEN CARE OF ONCE AND FOR ALL BRINGS SO MUCH PEACE OF MIND."**

**KRISTEN ZIEGLER**

*Owner of Minima Organizing & Redesign*

## LAMP FIXTURES/REPAIR

### SHADES OF LIGHT

Lighting repairs from simple switch replacements and wiring to full restorations are par for the course at Shades of Light. But Walter Froh, merchandise and marketing manager for Shades of Light, says the company stands out for lamp "make-ups." "Customers bring in some fabulous decorative vases and other decorative accessories ... and we turn them into stunning table lamps and pendants," he says. Technicians even turned a stuffed moose into a floor lamp. *4924 W. Broad St., 804-288-6515, shadesoflight.com*

*2nd: Lamp Emporium*

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

### CARTWRIGHT LANDSCAPING

The tight-knit group at Cartwright Landscaping sees each yard as a blank slate. "We come to it with fresh eyes," says owner Jeff Cartwright. "Our people are very passionate. Everyone really loves what they are doing." The essential thing, Cartwright says, is to explain to clients what they plan to do each step of the way. *804-381-8204, cartwrightlandscaping.com*

*2nd: Outdoor Dreams*

*3rd: Fern Hill Landscaping*

## LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SERVICE

### CARTWRIGHT LANDSCAPING

To respond to client demands, owner Jeff Cartwright says the company has expanded to include services such as hardscaping, large tree removal and custom shed building. "We try to reinvent ourselves every year, so there [are] a lot of moving parts," he says. And of course, they spend plenty of time working on general landscape maintenance tasks such as mulching, trimming, pruning, planting and lawn restoration, renovation, and replacement. *804-381-8204, cartwrightlandscaping.com*

*2nd: Virginia Green Lawn Care Co.*

*3rd: Cross Creek Nursery & Landscaping*

## MASONRY

### OUTDOOR DREAMS

With a partnership dating back to middle school, Outdoor Dreams co-owners Mike Newberger and Greg Koehler aim to create artistic outdoor spaces with the highest level of craftsmanship. Much of the time, they meet clients who have a vision but don't know exactly how to make it come to life. "They need a company that can do it from soup to nuts," Newberger says. *804-592-1305, outdoordreamsva.com*

*2nd: Fabling Built*

*3rd: Craddock Masonry*

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## MOVERS

### MOXIE MOVERS

"We have almost zero turnover, and the guys that work here, for years sometimes, love the job. I view it as my job to make sure of that," says owner Jesse Whitacre, who credits Moxie Movers' success to employee investment. "I was a mover for a long time, and I operate and make decisions with their point of view in mind. And that translates into great attitudes and excellent work." 804-928-1111, [moxiemovers.com](http://moxiemovers.com)

**2nd:** *My Guys Moving and Storage*  
**3rd:** *Two Guys and a Truck*

## OUTDOOR LIGHTING

### OUTDOOR DREAMS

The demand for outdoor spaces has really grown, co-owner Mike Newberger says. To respond to that demand, the company expanded services so clients don't have to look for multiple companies to complete one project. "We are a one-stop shop. It helps to make sure the project works together holistically," he adds. Both Newberger and co-owner Greg Koehler decided against office jobs to pursue their dreams of creating artistic outdoor spaces. 804-592-1305, [outdoordreamsva.com](http://outdoordreamsva.com)

**2nd:** *INARAY Design Group*  
**3rd:** *Cartwright Landscaping*

## ►PAINTER

### H.J. HOLTZ & SON

The family-owned business has been around for 83 years, and almost half of their work involves interior painting. Another 30 percent of their jobs are exterior painting projects, while the rest are decorative. "When it comes to aesthetic design, we want to be more of a one-stop shop," says owner Rick Holtz. "We've focused a lot on being able to offer carpentry services." 3106 W. Moore St., 804-358-4109, [hjholtzandson.com](http://hjholtzandson.com)

**2nd:** *Barden's Decorating*  
**3rd:** *Jacob's Ladder*

## PEST CONTROL SERVICE

### LOYAL TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

Practicing integrated pest management, Loyal Termite & Pest Control uses pesticides as a last resort, says owner Nick Lupini. "We look at the whole environment and why insects are there, and change it to make them go away with caulking, sealing and other measures," he says. "We treat the outside and inside [of the home] and focus pesticides just where the pests are." The firm deals with everything from bedbugs and roaches to ants and rodents. "People just think of pest control as bugs," he says, "but without pest control, there would be no food, and there would be disease." 2610 E. Parham Road, 804-737-7777, [loyalpest.com](http://loyalpest.com)

**2nd: (tie)** *Dodson Brothers Exterminating Co.; PestMasters Termite and Pest Control*

## PLUMBER

### ROBINSON PLUMBING SERVICE

Robinson's Plumbing Service often hears feedback from customers about how they appreciate the step-by-step explanation of what their plumber believes needs to be done. "They explain it in a simplified way so the customer doesn't feel forced to make a repair that isn't necessary," says Manager Susan Proctor. "There are times we have more turnover, but that's because we have high standards." 804-491-5268, [robinsonplumbingservice.com](http://robinsonplumbingservice.com)

**2nd:** *Carroll Plumbing & Heating*  
**3rd:** *R.J. Tilley Plumbing & Heating*



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## REAL ESTATE AGENT

### CABELL CHILDRESS ASSOCIATES

Cabell Childress says his agents go above and beyond by performing behind-the-scenes networking for their clients, allowing agents to know that an ideal property is available before it even hits the market. "It gives us a competitive edge," he says. The business sold between 225 and 230 homes last year, he adds, equating to about \$75 million worth of real estate in Richmond's hot market. *11225 Nuckols Road, 804-340-7000, cabellchildress.com*

*2nd: Alexis Morehouse Thompson – River Fox Realty  
3rd: Clocktower Realty Group*

## ROOFER

### JACOB'S LADDER

Many clients appreciate the fact that Jacob's Ladder can serve as a one-stop shop for siding, window and roof replacement in addition to interior and exterior painting and carpentry services such as trim repair. "A lot of people like the fact that they don't have to go to another place to finish a job," Seth Dorotich, company president, says. "We also offer extended warranties on our products." *2405 Westwood Ave., Suite 112, 804-255-9142, jacobsladder.com*

*2nd: (tie) Fabling Built; Hardesty Roofing; Nathan's Roofing*

## SPA/HOT TUB SALES & SERVICE

### LUXURY POOL & SPA

Owner Logan Antozzi says Luxury Pool & Spa sold about 300 hot tubs last year. Customers are adding hot tubs to their backyards in a quest for health and wellness, relaxation, and as a way to spend more time together as a family, he says. Manufacturers are providing options that are energy-efficient and low-maintenance, with saltwater hot tubs gaining in popularity. And they have also upped the ante on design, Antozzi says, "bringing a lot more modern styling to people's backyards." *3426 Pump Road, Henrico, 804-364-3577; 15552 WC Commons Way, Midlothian, 804-794-7721, luxurypoolandspa.com*

*2nd: Pla-Mor Pools*

## SWIMMING POOL INSTALLER

### ULTIMATE POOLS

Co-owner Tammy Jowers says Ultimate Pools takes pride in their completely word-of-mouth business. She adds that the strength of the company lies in the discipline of her husband, co-owner Steve Jowers. "He is like a dog with a bone," she says. "Our mission is to get the job done in good time." *2175 Lanier Lane, Rockville, 804-749-4706, ultimatepools.com*

*2nd: Commonwealth Curb Appeal  
3rd: (tie) JoPa Company; Pla-Mor Pools*

**"ALMOST ANY PIECE OF FURNITURE THAT IS MORE THAN 30 YEARS OLD IS WORTH REUPHOLSTERING, IF YOU STILL LIKE THE STYLE AND COMFORT."**

**TRAVIS HAMILTON**

Owner of U-Fab

## TREE CARE

### TRUETIMBER ARBORISTS

Arborist Scott Turner has a deep appreciation for the outdoors. "I grew up in Richmond enjoying the nature in the city, and playing at the James River or the parks," he says. Today, he helps to manage the city's "urban forest" by pruning, cutting, cabling and bracing trees. He believes Richmond has the opportunity to show how development and nature can coexist. "Richmond is so well-positioned to show a good example of how that can be done well," he says. *3008 W. Clay St., 804-218-8733, truetimber.net*

*2nd: Arborscapes  
3rd: Arbogast Tree & Stump*

## UPHOLSTERY SERVICES

### U-FAB

The adage that things just aren't made as well as they used to be is often true when it comes to furniture, says U-Fab owner Travis Hamilton. "Almost any piece of furniture that is more than 30 years old is worth reupholstering, if you still like the style and comfort," he says. Founded as an upholstery shop, U-Fab has expanded over the years into custom furniture and home accessories, but, Hamilton says, upholstery will always be part of "our DNA." *7921 W. Broad St., 804-888-8322, u-fab.com*

*2nd: Cover Stitch Co.  
3rd: S.G. Woodworks*

## WALLPAPER HANGER

### BARDEN'S DECORATING

Wallpaper has been around for a long time, and so has Barden's Decorating. With more than 30 years of experience, Barden's can provide expert wallpaper installation that gives your home a unique dimension. "The biggest changes in wallpaper have been textured wall covering and the use of technology using digital imaging," says owner Tommy Barden. "Designers and homeowners are now able to re-create any type of photo and have it reproduced into wallpaper." *804-598-4802*

*2nd: H.J. Holtz & Son  
3rd: N. Chasen & Son*

## WELDER/IRONWORK

### SMALL AXE FORGE

Owners Kalita and Bryon Pennington combined their academic backgrounds in business and art to form a small family business. Now they are creating beautiful ironwork. They specialize in custom objects and fixtures, using materials ranging from metals and wood to glass and textiles. Most recently, Small Axe Forge crafted the metal signs for local restaurant Pizza & Beer of Richmond. *510 W. 14th St., 804-916-9918*

*2nd: Doug McDonald Metal Fabrication & Welding  
3rd: (tie) Phoenix Handcraft; Spartan Studios*



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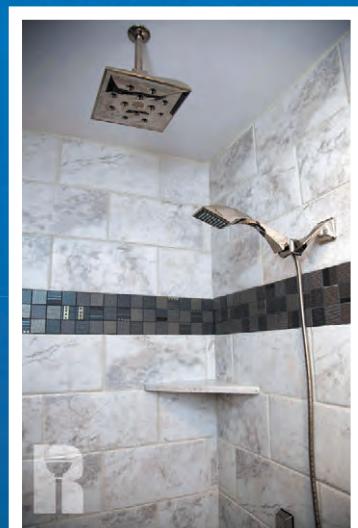
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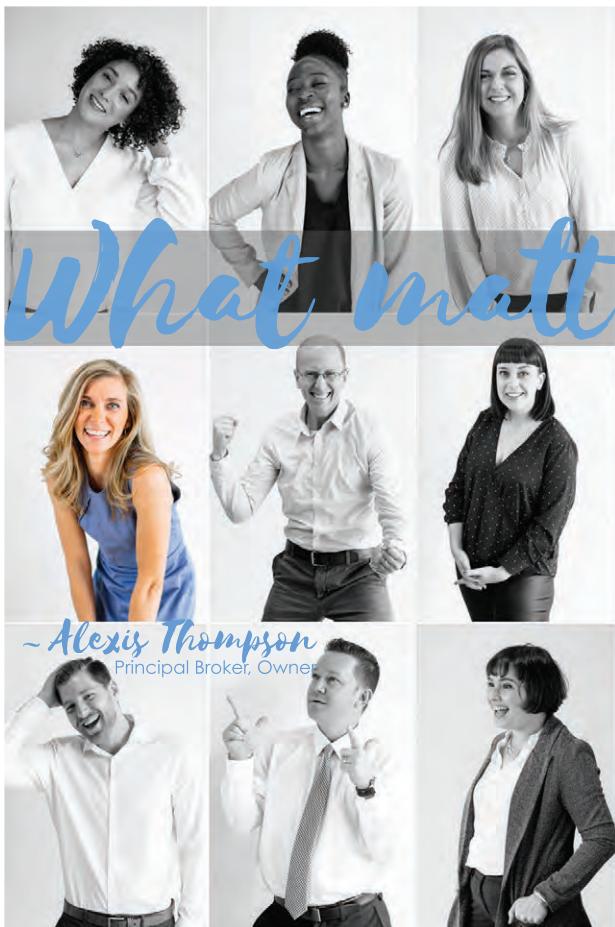
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- Alexis Thompson  
Principal Broker, Owner



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### WINDOW TREATMENT FABRICATOR

#### SPECIALTY DRAPERY

Window treatments are a major design challenge and expense. Specialty Drapery works closely with homeowners to maximize their budget and find the best option. "Homeowners are opting for sleek lines in draperies, roller and Roman shades featuring luxurious fabrics that offer both function and fashion," says Vice President Debbie Lovette. "Technology is playing a huge role as the preferred operating system for window treatments as we look to simplify our lives with high-tech touches." 1221 Admiral St., 804-264-3000, [specialtydrapery.com](http://specialtydrapery.com)

2nd: LHS DESIGNS

3rd: U-Fab

### WINDOW WASHER

#### TOP GUN WINDOW WASHING

Once a small business specializing in window washing, today Top Gun services more than 500 homes in the Richmond area yearly. In addition to window cleaning and pressure washing, Top Gun provides services such as post-construction cleanup and industrial kitchen cleaning. "Do not compromise quality for quantity," says Manager Daniel Cooper. "Quality is best served when your employees are treated in a way that prevents high turnover." 4309 Fitzhugh Ave., 804-334-6781, [topgunrichmond.com](http://topgunrichmond.com)

2nd: A Clear View LLC

3rd: Spotless Window Cleaning

### WOODWORKING AND TRIM

#### FABLING BUILT

Whether it's by looking at Pinterest boards or old magazine clippings, owner Casey Fabling takes time to understand his clients' home vision. "I love it when they share their home mood board with me," he says. "That way I know what they are thinking about and what they are excited about doing to their home." Fabling has a skilled team of carpenters, painters and tilers. 2400 Old Brick Road, Suite 210, 804-822-2625, [fablingbuilt.com](http://fablingbuilt.com) □

### RESOURCES FOR PHOTO ON P. 64

**Carley:** Gown by Yehlee, \$980, shoes by L.K. Bennett, \$128, ring by Stephen Dweck, \$224, all from Baggio

**Travis:** Tuxedo from the Groom's Corner located in Tiffanys Bridal



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