



CLIP

HOME & GARDEN

Books help home in on handymen, renovators

You want to renovate your kitchen, and you haven't a clue. Up until now, your options were to ask a friend for a referral or get out the phone book. Now, you can consult *The Franklin Report*, a Zagat-like ratings guide to home services, ranging from architects to window washers in New York, Chicago and, coming next month, Los Angeles.

"You're inviting people into your home with large power tools, and you want to make sure they're qualified to do the job," says founder Elizabeth Franklin, who hopes to publish books for at least seven more cities.

Each \$22.50 paperback — there's also a Web site, www.franklinreport.com — rates service providers based on interviews with their clients. To be listed, providers must rate a 3 on a 5-point scale in the "would you hire them again" category.

But there's no book for, say, Seattle or Boston, so you might have to go to another series, *The Home Book*, a resource compilation in 22 cities for building, decorating or furnishing a luxury home.

Published by The Ashley Group of Chicago, these \$39.95 books are more like really nice phone books — hardcover, 2 inches thick, thousands of color photos. Most providers pay to be listed.

-Maria Puente