

## Elegance down under

■ **Michael Nash Soluton Named “Best Basement for \$50k to \$100k” in 11 South Atlantic States**

BY JOHN BYRD  
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An extensive makeover to the unfinished lower level of an Oak Hill residence has won Michael Nash Design Build and Homes a regional “Contractor of the Year” (COTY) Award. The project was named best “basement for \$50,000.00-\$100,000.00” in the Southeastern U.S., a region which encompasses 11 states stretching from Maryland to Florida.

The winning solution transforms a builder-grade foundation basement into a family-entertainment suite that includes a full-service bar, two TV-viewing areas, a gaming zone, an exercise room and a guest suite with full bath.

Conferred annually by National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), the regional COTY is one of five that the Merrifield-based remodeler has received this year.

In acknowledging the honor, Michael Nash founder and president Sonny Nazemian praised his company’s talent pool and their cost-sensitive approach to helping local homeowners realize their remodeling goals.

“Since most of our projects are executed by Michael Nash employees, we’ve developed



PHOTOS BY JUNE STANICH

With its eye-catching glass-tile backsplash, pin-drop pendant lights, white stone counter surface and espresso cabinetry, the bar is an elegant jewel amidst a panorama of gray undertones set-off by wide-plank engineered flooring.

a turn-key business model that allows us to offer fixed price contracts,” Nazemian discloses. “This is one of the reasons we’ve won more COTYs than any other local remodeler. The COTY profiles remodeling solutions that outperform the limits of the budget-- and this is our primary mission.”

Grappling with an existing lower level floorplan, which was ill-suited for mainstream use, was the remodeler’s core challenge from the outset. A hot water heater and HVAC unit blocked access to square footage that was envisioned for a bar and TV-viewing area. This appeared to seriously restrict the possibilities of a meaningful upgrade. An encased staircase linking the main level to the basement also reinforced the impression of “descending” into a utility and storage area. Even a

double French door with outdoor access (the builder’s way of implying the “potentials” of an unfinished space) was in the wrong place.

“The owners showed us sketches for the family-friendly suite they had contemplated for years,” Nazemian recalls, “but it was clear to us that nothing on the scale they preferred would be possible without re-routing a lot of the home’s primary infrastructure-- which always entails developing engineering solutions.”

To free-up square footage needed for the bar and entertainment zone, the Michael Nash team relocated the hot water heater, the entire HVAC unit and the stacked ducting system used in heating and cooling the house.

Routing new plumbing and electrical to the footprint designated for the new bar, in turn,



**BEFORE:** The design team began by developing a plan to relocate an HVAC unit and hot water heater blocking the spot envisioned for a full service bar.

entailed breaking through the slab floor and introducing a schematic designed to conduct pipes and wiring to appliance locations.

The finished bar-- which includes a floor-to-ceiling wine captain, a sink and an icemaker-- is now wholly self-sufficient and just steps away from primary gathering zones, including outside locales that are accessible through the relocated French doors immediately across from the serving counter.

To make the bar a focal point, the design team introduced natural materials iterated in contrasting light and dark tones. A distinctive glass-tile backsplash is offset by walnut-hued built-ins; the white natural stone counter surface tops finely-executed espresso cabinetry.

Four front-facing chrome and patent leather stools invite intimate access to the bar keep while, overhead, a tray ceiling serves as a backdrop for frosted pin drop

pendant lights. Meanwhile, wide-plank engineered flooring visually unifies the entire suite.

In the big picture, the remodeler’s goal was to introduce an “open” plan with clearly defined activity zones within a visual continuum that allows guests to enjoy privacy while maintaining sightlines to other parts of the suite.

Removing the walls encasing the original staircase was the first step in this process. Well-developed interior design themes-- starting with built-in display cases and original art-- are apparent at once. A gaming zone and one of two TV-viewing centers are to the right. To the left of the staircase (behind a door), Nazemian found square footage for a master suite complete with full bath.

Continuing into the room past the bar, the second of two TV-viewing zones is both “open” and intimately elaborated. Indirect LED lighting can be adjusted to

change the mood. Custom built-ins are wired with “surround sound” and perfectly accommodate the large plasma screen TV.

“The great room is designed to accommodate a diverse social gathering where guests can explore separate interests while staying in close proximity to each other,” the remodeler explains. “There could be a movie on one lounge-area, a sport event in another, while nearby someone is playing foosball, or shooting pool.”

On the other hand, the guest suite is not only private, but beautifully articulated. The master bath’s Art-Deco style interior is comprised of contrasting light and dark marble panels threaded with decorative black and gray glass tile. The shower is accessed through a frameless barn door enclosure and features a “rain” shower head and “cubbies” for personal items. Vanity mirrors are embedded into the tiled walls and illuminated by pendant lights.

In short, it’s a luxury accommodation-- in what was previously designated as a basement.

“Our project’s are often about simply showing what’s possible in the modern home,” Nazemian says. “It’s always gratifying when your work is appreciated.”

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