

Balancing “we” and “me”

■ Lower level makeover is Regional Chrysalis winner

BY JOHN BYRD
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A comprehensive makeover to the unfinished lower level of a Falls Church residence has won a regional Chrysalis award for Michael Nash Design Build and Homes. The project was named best “basement for over \$100,000” in an 11 states area stretching from Maryland to Florida.

Founded in 1993, “the Chrysalis” is generally considered the most prestigious of the remodeling industry’s peer awards. Qualified Remodeler Magazine and Kitchen and Bath News are among the competition’s national media sponsors.

The Michael Nash solution transforms a builder-grade foundation basement into an entertainment and personal fitness suite that incorporates a full-service bar, a seven-seat home movie theatre, and an exercise studio linked to an infrared sauna, steam room and full bath.

The prize is one of four Chrysalis that the Merrifield-based remodeler has received this year. Last month, the firm became the first-ever recipient of the “Decade of Excellence” award, a special honor acknowledging the firm’s consistently high standards over the past ten years.

In accepting the “Best Basement” kudos, Michael Nash founder and president, Sonny Nazemian, praised his company’s design team and the firm’s cost-sensitive approach to helping



PHOTOS BY JUNE STANICH

Best basement for over \$100,000.00. Converting an unfinished lower-level into a suite of entertainment and exercise rooms has garnered a regional Chrysalis award for Michael Nash Design Build and Homes. The renovation was named category best in eleven states extending from Maryland to Florida. The innovative space plan accommodates a seven seat home movie theatre, a spacious bar and socializing arena, and a extensive fitness facility that includes an exercise studio, sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi and full bath.

homeowners make effective home improvement decisions

“We’re able to offer fixed-price contracts since most of our projects are executed by Michael Nash employees; also, customers can select finishing materials that are sold at our show room” Nazemian discloses. “These options are integral to a business model that allows us to routinely outperform our client’s budget.”

In the case of the recent “best basement” winner, the design team grappled with an existing lower-level, ill-suited for mainstream-use. It was the principal challenge. The hot water heater and HVAC unit were blocking access to square footage needed

for the bar and the home theatre appeared to seriously restrict the possibilities of a meaningful upgrade. Also, given the owner’s wide-ranging use-requirements, the space plan called for an innovative configuration of carefully integrated rooms.

“One enters the newly designed lower level through the home theatre, which segues on an opposite door to a full-service bar and outside spaces beyond,” Nazemian explained. “From the bar one can also access a suite that includes the exercise studio, changing room, steam room, sauna and Jacuzzi.”

To free-up square footage needed for the wide-ranging floor

plan, the Michael Nash team re-located the hot water heater and re-positioned several load-bearing posts. The move increased the volume of available light streaming in from double French doors on the rear elevation.

Routing new plumbing and electrical to places designated for utility connections, entailed breaking through the slab floor and conducting pipes and wiring to specific locations.

To make the bar a focal point, the design team used natural materials iterated in softly-contrasting tones and textures. The distinctive glass-tile backsplash is offset by back-lit glass-facing cabinets; a beige natural stone counter sur-



Seven reclining Ottoman-style leather chairs equipped with tray tables set the tone for a pleasant viewing experience. Overhead star panels, stepped row seating, and black velvet curtains enhance the ambiance,

face tops finely-executed maple cabinetry.

Four front-facing chrome and leather stools invite intimate access to the bar, while an egg-white ceiling provides a crisp backdrop for frosted pin-drop pendant lights. Below, wide-plank engineered flooring visually unifies the primary entertainment zone.

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 eye-contact with other parts of the suite.

Meanwhile, the luxuriously-appointed home movie theatre boasts a 120” LED screen and ceiling-hung projector. A state-of-art audio system provides commercial quality-sound.

Seven reclining Ottoman-style leather chairs equipped with tray tables set the tone for a relaxed viewing experience. Stepped-row seating, a ceiling embedded with twinkling star panels and black velvet

curtains draped along the rear wall evoke a “movie-palace” ambiance,

The exercise studio, which features floor-to-ceiling mirrors and a backyard view, connects to a steam room, sauna and Jacuzzi. There’s a toilet and vanity on opposite walls just inside the door. A dressing area with lockers is situated between the toilet and the sauna.

“This was a fascinating assignment,” Nazemian says. “Developing and balancing an unusual space plan is always a challenge, so we are pleased with the peer recognition.”

For more information, call: 703 -641-9800 or visit <http://www.michaelnashkitchens.com>

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