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HOME REMODELING

For the Suite Life

ENTERTAINMENT CENTER VOTED “BEST BASEMENT REMODEL” | BY JOHN BYRD

A sweeping family-entertainment suite introduced into an unfinished 5,100 sq. ft. basement has won a “Contractor of the Year” (CoTY) award for Michael Nash Design Build & Homes.

The design solution, which integrates an open floor-plan with several independent activity and gaming zones, was executed in a three-story Colonial-style residence in McLean. The project was recently named the Washington-area’s “best basement remodel” by the metro DC chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI).

In acknowledging the honor, Michael Nash president and founder Sonny Nazemian pointed to the many ways the traditional American home is being radically transformed by emerging owners requirements.

“Homeowners are increasingly focused on developing more personalized, long-term uses for their homes,”

Nazemian said. “A remodeler has to meet an ever-broadening array of needs – often arising within the same family. This can require more engineering and interior design skills than were typically available from a single source in years past. Our goal is to stay ahead of evolving needs – providing customers with an informed awareness of what’s possible now.”

For the McLean homeowners whose project won such plaudits from professionals, the remodeling process began a year ago with a simple assessment of goals and priorities.

“The owners had purchased the house several years before, but intentionally left the lower-level unfinished because they didn’t like the plans the builder had proposed,” Nazemian explains. “They had been stockpiling ideas – looking for a remodeler who could help them articulate a vision that

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consisted of many complicated parts.”

A home and garden magazine feature about a Michael Nash project inspired the owners to visit to the remodeler's Lee Highway showroom in Fairfax; soon after, the research process began.

The core problem with re-doing the lower level, however, was structural: the two upper floors were partially supported by beams attached to solid steel vertical supports situated in the middle of square footage the owners wanted to re-work into open floorplan. On this score, the hot water heater and an HVAC unit also plainly obstructed space the owners envisioned as a central concourse for the entire makeover.

To the make the “build-out” feasible, Nazemian and team insinuated a horizontal support beam balanced on new vertical supports flanked to either side of a nearly 800 sq. ft. open expanse. Two of the existing support beams were subsequently eliminated. Re-locating a hot water heater and an HVAC unit, likewise, entailed considerable re-rerouting and re-engineering.

With the structural issues resolved, attention quickly turned to the satellite of private-use components revolving around the lower-level's primary living space: the home theater, a wine cellar, an exercise studio, guest quarters with full bath – all to be integrated within a softly understated design scheme that turns every challenge to aesthetic advantage.

“The only source of natural light in the lower level came from a course of windows on the west-facing rear



Page 43: A comprehensive family-use plan for a previously unfinished 5,100 sq. ft. basement to a McLean home has won a “Contractor of the Year” (CoTY) award for Michael Nash Design Build & Homes. The design solution combines an open floorplan featuring a bar and media zone with private guest suite, an exercise facility, and a 22’ x 20’ home theater.

Above: The remodeler maximized natural light availability. A single door was converted to a double French slider that accesses an outside patio. Large-scale porcelain tiling throughout the entire basement confers visual unity while complementing the ledgestone-wrapped structural columns; and a spacious walk-in shower with many luxury fixtures; the full bath can also be used for cooling off after a session in the exercise room.

Opposite: Built-in cabinetry and wainscoting distinguish the finely-detailed interior design scheme.



elevation which looked out into the back yard,” Nazemian recalls. “When available light is lacking, lighter colors and textures can be employed to generate warmth in rooms that are appreciably below grade. This is partly psychological, yet the very essence of what good design requires.”

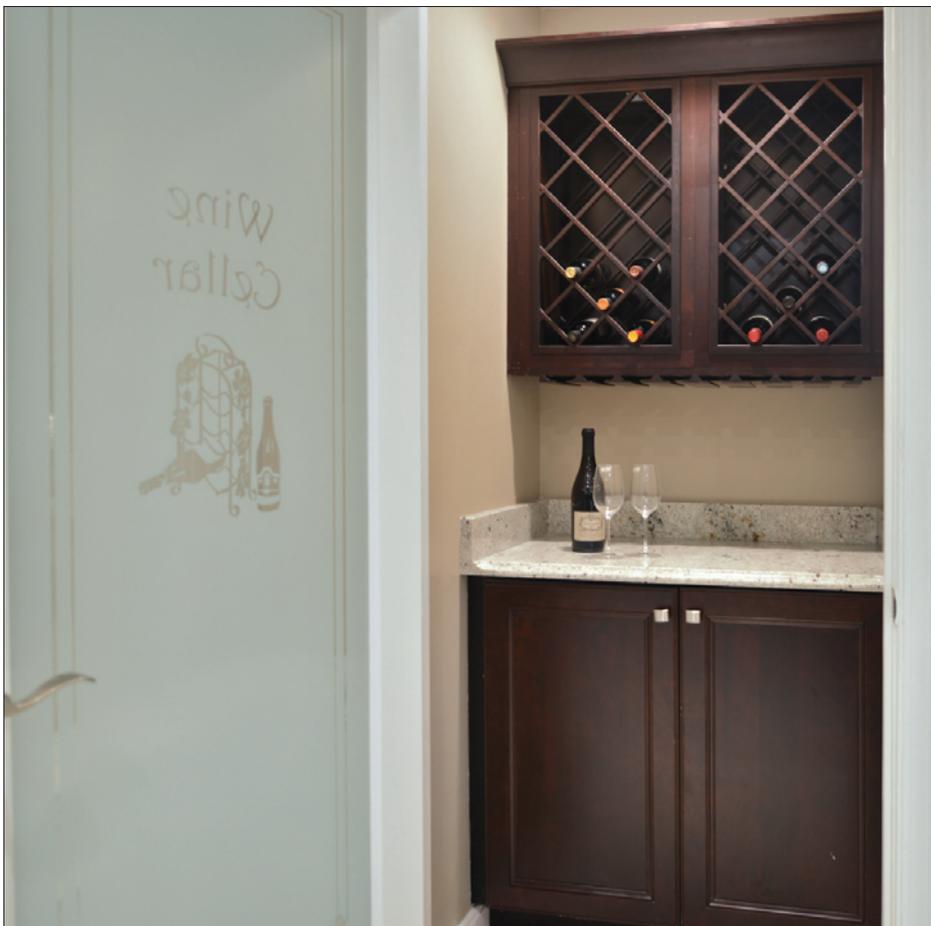
These goals in mind, 160 sq. ft. on the west-side of the new footprint was designated for the bar and refreshments area.

As a zoning solution, the build-out is within easy reach of a cozy niche with fireplace designated for TV viewing, and a just a few steps from window-aligned floor space allocated for billiards, Foosball and other indoor recreations.

To set the tone for a warmly inviting interior, Nazemian and team designed an eye-catching counter space and back bar. With its Tuscan brown quartzite surfaces mounted on a base of espresso-hued mahogany,

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the bar presents an intriguing light-dark tonal contrast.

The ledger stone backsplash and herringbone patterned porcelain flooring brighten a rear corner anchored by dark-trimmed open cabinetry and stemware.

Overhead, cage design pendant lights glow softly.

The counter surface, in turn, offers seating for six within easy reach of a small dining table. The fully self-sufficient kitchen is equipped with a wine refrigerator, microwave and warming drawer.

To neutralize, the suite's ceiling and walls are off-white. Throughout, a subtle checker-board interplay of lights and darks softens the angularity of bulkheads; support posts impaneled in wood facings are, likewise, capped with crown moulding.

The ledgerstone motif is repeated in the media viewing zone where a linear fireplace parallels to a flat screen TV presents a striking postmodern image.

In all, the primary gathering concourse is more than 1,000 sq. ft. – enough for up to 80 guests.

But the suite also provides well-differentiated play spaces, and in these the plan succeeds admirably, as follows:

Home Theater: Turn left at the bottom of the stairway and left again, and one comes to a pair of doors that access a 22" x 20' home theater featuring an HD projector screen and six reclining leather chairs raked for optimal viewing. In addition to playing movies, the



Opposite: Gathering place. With its Tuscan brown quartzite surfaces mounted on an espresso-hued mahogany base, the bar presents an eye-catching light-to-dark tonal contrast. The backsplash is ledgerstone; flooring is wood-grain porcelain tile in a herringbone pattern. The bar (which seats six) is equipped with a wine refrigerator, microwave and warming drawer. Opposite, left: A 12' x 18' sq. ft. wine cellar accommodates the owner's exquisite collection. Inside, premium redwood wine racks stacked index a diverse portfolio

Above, top: A gaming table is within easy reach of refreshments. At right: To accommodate six reclining leather chairs, Michael Nash designed a "tiered" floor for the home theater. The room is furnished with a state-of-the-art AV system and surround sound.

Photographs by June Stanich



HD projector screen is hooked up to a video gaming station. The sound system is first-rate, and the room is thoroughly sound proofed;

Wine Cellar: Behind a custom wrought iron door, Nazemian and team designed a 12' x 18' wine cellar to the owners' requirements. Within, premium redwood wine racks are stacked to the ceiling to accommodate more than 1,000 bottles.

Exercise area: The exercise salon (across the hall) is equipped with an elliptical bike, bench press and bar bells. A wall-sized mirror offers a visual means to track work-out progress. The rubber floor absorbs sound.

Guest quarters: Situated away from entertainment zones, a 18' x 15' guest quarter offers an en suite full bath. A useful addenda for a large family with out-of-town relatives