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HOME REMODELING

A Lower-Level Paradise

MICHAEL NASH EARNS NATIONAL "CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR" AWARD
BY JOHN BYRD

A sweeping family-entertainment suite introduced into an unfinished 2,400 square foot basement has won a National "Contractor of the Year" (COTY) award for Michael Nash Design Build & Homes. The award for "best basement remodel" was conferred by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). The makeover had previously garnered top prizes from NARI's metro DC chapter and was later selected as a category best in 12 south Atlantic states ranging from Florida to Maryland.

The design solution, which integrates an open floor-plan with several independent activity and gaming zones,

was executed in a three-story Victorian in Ashburn.

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

"Homeowners are seeking more personalized, long-term uses for their homes," Nazemian says. "A remodeler has to meet an expanding array of needs – often arising within the same family. This requires more engineering and interior design skills than were typically available from a single source in years past. Our goal has always been to stay ahead of the curve – providing customers

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with an informed awareness of what is possible within a budget.”

For the Ashburn homeowners, the remodeling process began last year with a simple assessment of goals and priorities.

“The owners had purchased the house several years ago, but left the lower level unfinished because they didn’t like the builders’ plans,” Nazemian explains. “They had been stockpiling ideas – looking for a remodeler who could help them articulate their vision which included finding optimal ways to store a world-class wine collection.”

A home and garden article about a Michael Nash project prompted the owners to visit the remodeler’s Lee Highway showroom; soon after, the research process began in earnest.

The core problem with re-doing the lower level, however, was structural: The two upper floors were partly held up by beams attached to solid steel vertical supports situated in the middle of the square footage the owners wanted to convert into an open floorplan. The hot water heater and HVAC unit, also, plainly obstructed space the owners sought to re-deploy as a central concourse for



Page 35 and above: Custom-designed arched door confers an elegant look on the spacious 120 square foot wine cellar. Premium redwood wine racks reaching the ceiling accommodate over 1,000 bottles. The ceiling is beaded stain-grade; decorative medallions are imbedded in the marble flooring.

Right: A full bath offers a convenient spot to freshen-up after a work out. With its frameless barn-style shower enclosure and chiseled stone vessel sink its a thoroughly guest-friendly accommodation.

Opposite, top: The multi-component great room features a bar finished in travertine stone and mahogany cabinetry. The adjacent lounge area faces a fireplace and plasm TV.

Opposite left: A frosted glass door opens into an exercise salon complete with an elliptical bike, treadmill and NordicTrack®. Wall-sized mirrors on two walls provide a visual means to track workout progress, and the rubber floor absorbs sound.



a spacious family entertainment suite.

To the make the build-out feasible, Nazemian and team introduced a horizontal beam balanced on new vertical supports. Two existing support beams were eliminated. An exacting schematic was developed so that a hot water heater and an HVAC unit could be re-located.

With the structural challenges resolved, attention now turned to differentiating the plan's key components: a seven-seat bar, a wine cellar, an entertainment zone with fireplace, an exercise studio, a full bath – all to be integrated within an understated design scheme.

“The only sources of natural light came from a couple of transom windows and a double door that exits to the backyard, Nazemian says. “When available light is lacking, we’ve found that lighter colors and textures can generate a great deal of warmth. This is partly psychological, yet enormously effective — the very essence of what good interior design requires.”

With these goals in mind, some 150 square feet in the new footprint was designated for an English pub-style bar and refreshment area. As a zoning solution, the build-out is within easy reach of a



comfortable niche designated for a fireplace and TV viewing zone, and only a few steps from floorspace allocated for card games 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 marble surfaces and dark cherry wood cabinetry, the bar offers an intriguing light-to-dark tonal contrast.

The natural stone backsplash and wide plank Brazilian cherry wood flooring lighten a corner anchored by Cabernet-stained cabinetry.

Overhead, pendant lights in postmodern design provide a golden glow.

The counter offers seating for seven within easy reach of a spacious lounge area. The bar is equipped with a wine refrigerator, microwave and warming drawer.

The suite's ceiling and walls are off-white. Throughout, a subtle checker-board interplay of lights and darks softens the angularity of bulkheads. The ledgerstone motif is repeated in linear fireplace.

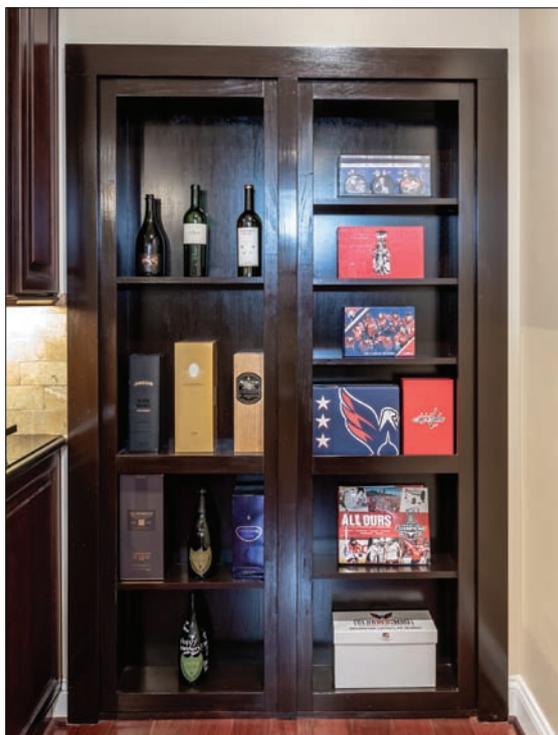
In all, the primary gathering concourse is more than 2,000 square feet – enough for gatherings of 80 or more.



Above: To create square footage needed for the master plan, the Michael Nash team relocated both the HVAC unit and the water heater from the middle of the basement. Shifting loads from the floor above to a concealed support beam allowed designers to eliminate a visually obstructive vertical beam.

Left: An L-shaped leather sectional is optimally positioned for viewing the large-screen plasma TV. The framed jerseys cover cabinet doors which conceal storage cubbies.

Right: Additional dark mahogany storage cubbies.



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

Electronic entertainment zone: A wide-screen plasma TV comfortably accessed via L-shaped sectional seating is just steps from the bar but also offers ample privacy as needed.

Wine Cellar: Behind a custom-stained four-panel arch door, Nazemian and team created a 120 square foot wine cellar to owner requirements. Premium redwood wine racks that reach to the ceiling accommodate more than 1,000 bottles.

Exercise room: Just down a corridor to the left of the wine cellar, a frosted glass door opens into an exercise salon complete with an elliptical bike, treadmill and NordicTrack®. Better yet, wall-sized mirrors on two walls provide a visual means to track workout progress, while the rubber floor absorbs sound.

Full bath: Next to the exercise room, this full bath provides a convenient spot to freshen-up after a workout. With its frameless barn-style shower enclosure and chiseled stone vessel sink, it's a thoroughly guest-friendly accommodation.