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+

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A checkerboard pattern painted in black and white (Benjamin Moore Jet Black 2120-10 and Simply White OC-117) adds to the fun ambiance of the games room. A scoreboard created with Benjamin Moore Studio Finishes® Chalkboard Paint and corkboard panel finish off the multi-purpose recreation area.



jane lockhart INTERIOR DESIGN

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Interior Design and Story by Jane Lockhart
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Photography by Brandon Barré courtesy of Colour Confidential, W Network

STYLE RENOVATING AND UPDATING LOWER LEVEL LIVING SPACES **DOWN UNDER**



When you own a home, achieving maximum use and enjoyment from it is an essential part of managing this major investment. Although you may have initially loved elements of your home when you first purchased it, over time, your needs become more clear and the importance of renovating increases.

Interior renovation is a key way to augment the usability and comfort of your home and increase value of your property. One of the most common ways to increase a home's value is to finish unused or "found" space. Basements or lower levels, which often come unfinished in new homes and require updating in older homes, are an excellent place to invest money.



CREATE A FOCAL POINT

Walls painted in Benjamin Moore Golden Retriever 2165-30 and Van Buren Brown HC-70 (accent wall) in the media room create a bright cozy space.



Basement renovations not only claim unused space but also present an opportune time to check the foundation for leaks or other potential problems. In addition, adding or increasing insulation to all walls in this area can have a very positive affect on the energy efficiency of the entire house. Prior to finishing this space it's important to determine if additional services will be required on the floor above so these can be added before a finished ceiling is installed.

In basements, a family or media room is a very popular installation. With so many advancements in technology, this space can easily become the home's entertainment headquarters where family and friends can gather for movies, music and net surfing. With today's top-quality soundproofing designed for media rooms, basements are the perfect spaces to consider for all your home recreation and entertainment



Basements have become a popular space for home gyms and activity rooms



activities. Basements have also become a popular space for home gyms, steam baths, spas and activity rooms for kids complete with ping-pong tables and dartboards. No matter what activity is added to a basement, it adds tremendous value to the house and creates an entirely new level for family living and entertaining.

Perhaps one of the biggest problems with lower level spaces is the lack of natural light. This can be resolved in several ways so that the atmosphere feels more like bright main-floor spaces. Recessed halogen pot lights, commonly used throughout the main and second floors are an excellent ceiling light source for basements. Add warmth and character with the addition of task and accent lighting where possible, particularly in areas where it's most needed. In the games room add a chandelier or pendant light over a pool table or card table to bring the light down and closer to the surface.

In addition to lighting an inexpensive way to brighten dark spaces is with paint. Choose a colour that has a yellow undertone. Colours that are tinted using yellow tend to reflect more light. This doesn't mean that you have to pick light yellow but instead consider gold, caramel or café latte hues. To further enhance the warmth and luminosity of a room, tint your white ceiling paint with a touch of yellow so the lighting reflects onto it and a pale golden glow reflects back.

Create a focal point and add a little drama. This is something often overlooked in lower-level rooms. Install an electric or gas fireplace to make the space more inviting and comfortable or create a media wall designed with shelves to hold the TV, stereo, books and decorative accessories and help keep the room tidy. To really make your feature area stand out, paint this wall a different colour from all the others so it commands attention in the room.

YOUR KITCHEN, YOUR STYLE



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CUSTOM CABINETRY & RENOVATIONS TO SUIT YOUR LIFE



Once all the constructions and painting is complete it's time to decorate. Formerly a space where old furniture went to die, furnishing with cast-offs just won't cut it in your new space. Designed for hours of family relaxation and entertaining it's important to choose durable furnishings that are comfortable and stylish. Purchase sofas and chairs made from solid hardwood and upholstered in fabrics like microfibres or weaves that will stand the test of time. Select pieces that can be easily taken down the stairs. Sectional sofas with slim arms and an optional chaise lounge are a great solution and will offer a more relaxed look and feel to the space. Upholstered swivel chairs offer flexibility in a multi-purpose room as you can turn them to catch all the activities going on in the space. For those of us who love kick back and put our feet up while snacking and watching the big game, a large ottoman upholstered in leather or vinyl rather than a coffee table is a practical and stylish solution. Ottomans are softer and safer, given what may happen in an active recreation room and they can double-duty as extra seating. [HL](#)

Although basements are often thought of as dark, unusable space, they can increase your living space by almost a third when finished to suit your lifestyle. When renovated correctly basements can provide maximum return on your home's value and significantly increase the enjoyment you get from your home for years to come.



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