

## **Attaining the Basement of Your Dreams**

Does your basement, with cobwebs and piles of your not so valuable belongings, feel more like a dungeon than the foundation of your home? Well, your basement doesn't have to be an embarrassment. With the progression of basement remodeling, it can be an entire floor added to your home which can be used however you see fit. General remodeling contractors are now able to seamlessly integrate a basement with the rest of the home in order to make it a warm, comfortable living space. So if you've decided to finish your basement, your next thought is most likely 'what should I do with this space?' From decorative trim and recessed can lighting to steam showers and theater rooms, there are quite a few popular design trends that can help you attain the basement of your dreams.

### **Design Options**

There are quite a few design options that can give your basement the elegant, bright look that will be the envy of your friends and family. For that distinguished look, decorative pillars featuring raised panels and crown molding is an option that can also serve a dual purpose of separating sections of the basement. Crown molding can also be used on decorative archways as a luxurious alternative to doors. Instead of regular drab white walls, cape cod wainscoting with chair rail can create a visual track for your eyes to follow around the basement.

### **Electrical Options**

Lighting in a basement is a very important part in creating the desired ambiance. Recessed lighting, otherwise known as cans, are a very attractive way to light the basement because they provide just enough light without being overbearing. Also, because they can be arranged in a variety of ways, you can get creative to give your ceiling a distinct, symmetrical look while also providing proper lighting for all of your activities. Wall mounted sconces, while not very effective for lighting purposes, can accent certain areas to give them a lush, warm look.

### **Bathroom Options**

To truly make your basement feel as if it is an extension of your home, a full bathroom is a necessary addition. The reality is that a bathroom can also be a relaxing and beautiful addition. A tile shower base with steam shower heads can relieve the stresses of the most difficult day at work. A stone tile heated floor can also warm you up on those cold winter days. As far as lighting goes, a decorative wall mounted fixture and sealed shower recessed light can provide you with soft, gentle light. For your toiletries and such, a custom vanity sink with granite countertops can give your bathroom a substantial, one of a kind look. So if your spouse is complaining that you are taking too

long in the upstairs bathroom, a simple trip downstairs to your new upscale lavatory can solve the problem quickly.

## **Media Area**

Most couples have a tough time agreeing what to watch on T.V. Well, you won't have to sit through the championship game if you don't want to by incorporating a media room in your basement. Whether it's your husband, your kids or yourself, everyone will benefit from having a large flat panel T.V. as the focal point in the room placed on top of a lush mantle. If you are the movie going type, then save the money on those pricey tickets and create your own theater in your basement with leather theater seats, dimming lights, and a projector with a large screen. If your husband likes to blare his music or movies so that the entire neighborhood can hear, then using various options like acoustical insulation in the ceiling will lessen the chances that your neighbors will call the cops. Double French doors with brushed nickel lever style doorknobs can be a grand entrance to your fortress of entertainment.

## **Bar and Gaming Area Option**

When many homeowners are asked what they will use their basement for, one of the most prevalent responses is to entertain. A bar and gaming area can accomplish this by giving guests an area to relax, interact and have fun. A popular type of bar is a wrap around bar with a pub feel to give the illusion that you are in an actual pub and not in a basement. You can elaborate on this by including a bar sign and even built in tappers for kegs. To really drive that sports bar feel home, you can include a pull down flat panel T.V. for the big game. Most people want a wet bar with a sink installed, along with appliances such as microwaves, mini fridges, and some even put in dishwashers so you essentially have another kitchen in your basement. Some people like a more exotic looking bar with granite countertops, custom cabinetry, nice corbels and wainscoting. Now while you can carpet under the bar, most like to place ceramic tile or hardwood floor in the bar area in order to handle spills and also to separate the bar from the rest of the basement. A separate area with custom wooden racking and a chiller for your wine collection can add a certain sophistication to the area.

A gaming area is usually located next to or fairly close to the bar area. Most homeowners who are interested in a gaming area like to have it centered around a pool table, although some have ping pong or maybe even a poker table. A pool table light is pretty common above the table, and some even install another T.V. in the corner. Also, a drink rail is a nice addition along the wall by the pool table as a place to put your drinks while you play. For the kids, many make the gaming area larger to include a foosball, ping pong, or air hockey table to keep them busy and you sane.

## **Choosing a Contractor**

Throughout this article, you have been given a few decisions to make regarding different aspects of finishing your basement. But the most important decision that you will make throughout the entire project is choosing a contractor. It sounds silly, but most people spend more time planning a vacation than they do choosing a qualified general contractor for a project on their home. A vacation lasts all of 1-2 weeks, but an addition to your home, especially if it's a bad one, can haunt you for the duration of your time living there. Not to mention the value of your home can be directly affected positively or negatively depending on the job your contractor does. So what steps can you take in order to choose the one that is right for you? The first thing you should look for is professionalism. How accommodating are they to your schedule? How long did it take them to get back to you either after your initial call or with the estimate? When they came to your house, how was their appearance and were they friendly? Did they explain things thoroughly or were they in a rush? The answers to these questions can be tip offs to whether this is someone that you want to work with for the duration of a project, which depending on the size of the basement can last for 6 weeks to 3 months.

Now price is a factor, but it isn't the biggest factor. If someone comes in very low with their bid, then it is usually a tip off that they are cutting corners, using non licensed sub contractors. For the safety of your home, you should say that you want to get a permit for the work. If the contractor states that you do not need one or that they do not do permitted work, it is a red flag that this is not a reliable person. Also, ask for references from customers that are willing to let you go and see their finished projects so you can get a feel for the quality of their work. Check and see if the company is listed with the Remodelers Council and also check with the Better Business Bureau to make sure they have no negative reports levied against them. By taking these steps, you can make sure that your remodeling project is a good experience that allows you to have a beautiful finished basement you can enjoy for years to come.

Written by Sebring Services