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Remodel

Ideas for Your Home

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Your
Style?
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Ideas for Every Room



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Let the Games Begin

A DREARY LOWER LEVEL BECOMES HANGOUT CENTRAL,
MIXING TRADITIONAL STYLE WITH MODERN AMENITIES.

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Most parents want their house to be the hangout of choice for their teenage children. The problem is figuring out how to make that happen. One couple's answer was a variation of those *Field of Dreams* words of wisdom: If you rebuild it, they will come.

With the help of architect Jean Rehkamp Larson, the couple transformed the dated, lodgelike lower level of their early-1900s brick Colonial in Edina, Minnesota, into an entertainment oasis. Among the amenities are a billiards table, a wet bar, a foosball table, and plenty of built-in storage for games and movies.

But it isn't just the bells and whistles that make the space shine. Much of its sparkle is in the details. "Our main goal was to fine-tune these [lower-level] spaces to make them feel as if they were always there," Rehkamp Larson says.

LEFT: A small sink, undercounter refrigerator, icemaker, coffeemaker, and microwave keep snacks and beverages close at hand. The adjacent bar is the perfect spot to set a drink and wait your turn while playing a game of pool.

THIS PHOTO: A Minnesota couple made the lower level of their home more inviting by expanding the windows, replacing the dated cabinetry, and incorporating architectural elements from the main level.

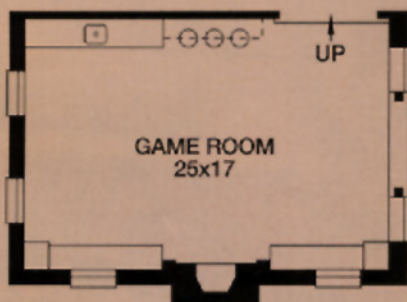


THE CHANGE

An underused and dated-looking lower level is transformed into an entertainment haven for a Minnesota couple and their three teenage children.

WHAT IT TOOK

- * Lowering the windows and expanding the openings to increase natural light and allow for new casement units and trim.
- * Adding a mini kitchen and bar area for snacks and beverages, complete with a sink, compact appliances, and seating.
- * Replacing cabinetry to lighten the look and provide more efficient storage.
- * Incorporating architectural details found in the home's upper levels to add warmth and create a sense of continuity.



“The goal was to make it feel more like a grown-up space rather than a secondary, less important space.”

—architect Jean Rehkamp Larson

To accomplish that, her team and interior designer Carol Belz incorporated some of the main level's elements, such as painted millwork and buttery wall hues, while retaining a few of the lower level's original features, including the terrazzo floor and the iron handrail for the stairs. “That level of refinement makes it feel like this space is as important as the level above,” Rehkamp Larson says.

ABOVE: The refinished limestone fireplace was inspired by a similar one on the home's main level. Light-colored walls and white-painted millwork replaced dark pine cabinets and paneling, making the space feel bigger and brighter.

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THIS PHOTO: Furniture-style cabinets with exposed hinges reference details found throughout the home. Tearing out the old carpeting uncovered the original terrazzo flooring.

