

a perfect pair



Above: The finished basement provides lots of space for year-round entertaining.
Left: The finished billiard room contains contemporary low-voltage lighting.



contractor and electrician team up for award-winning renovation

by Karen Appold
photos by Ozzi, RVOiii Photography, RVOiii photo.com



Left: A delicate arch and columns separate the two areas while keeping the floor plan open.

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The finished bar area provides seating for three.

A couple residing in a small ranch house needed more space in their Franconia Township, Montgomery County, PA home. Specifically, they desired a second family room, bar area with pool table, second bathroom, finished laundry room and more closet space. Because of the home's location and surroundings, they decided not to move and instead renovate the basement.

The couple asked John Gemmi, CR, owner, Gemmi Construction Inc., and Wes Carver, certified remodeling specialist and owner, Wes

Carver Electrical Contracting Inc., to tackle the project because of their reputation and vision. Gemmi and Carver proved to be an award-winning combination, as the project captured a 2005 National Association of Remodeling Industry (NARI) Award for Residential Interior under \$100,000.

PLANS TAKE SHAPE

Gemmi and Carver addressed integral features in the design phase. "We needed to configure the small rooms, such as a powder room, laundry facility and walk-in cedar closet, so they were not in the main traffic areas and would fit into the back corner of the finished space," Gemmi says. "We also had to account for a large area devoted to the pool table and place the bar accordingly."

Flooring had to be durable and low-maintenance because of high traffic areas. Tile flooring was selected and electric radiant floor heat was added throughout to help warm the space.

Neutral beige tile was chosen to counter the wall's vibrant colors.

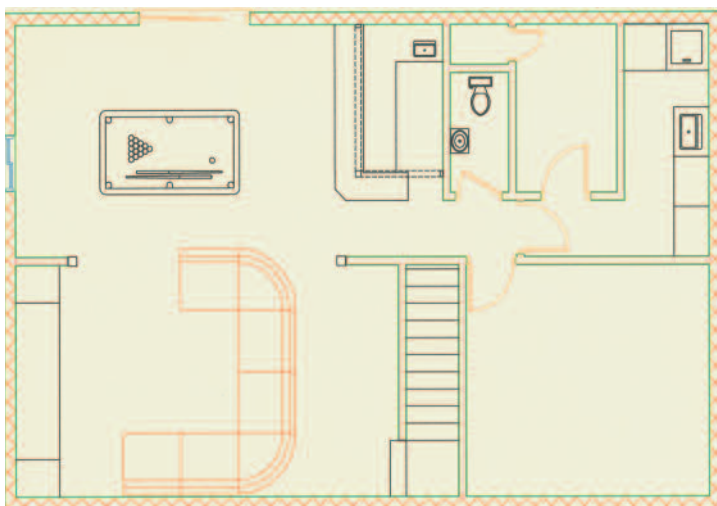
Gemmi added a structural beam to open up the floor plan. Plumbing, electrical and HVAC lines required relocation. Sloping concrete floors also had to be addressed. Robert Crook, tile contractor, installed a wet bed to level the floors and accommodate the electric radiant floor heating.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

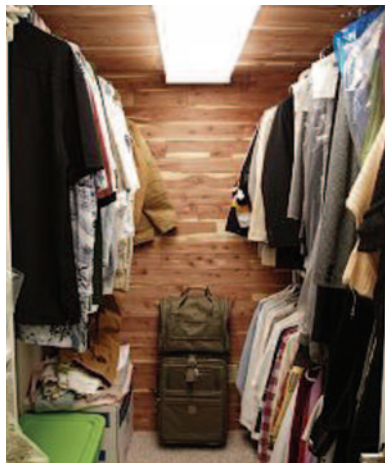
Relocating the plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems added since the house's construction in 1978 proved to be a challenge. Because of limited height, as well as aesthetics, a drop ceiling was not an option, explains Carver. Therefore existing plumbing, electrical wires and heating and air conditioning installed below the ceiling joists were placed into the ceiling so a drywall ceiling could be installed.

The bearing wall was removed to increase traffic flow and views throughout the main room. "We built two temporary walls to support the house during the installation of a new 14-foot engineered beam," Gemmi says. "The first floor joists, notched to accommodate the new beam's size, increased the clearance (headroom) under the arch. The arch was also used as both a focal point and to provide a subtle separation between the two spaces."

Additionally, the basement was moist due to excessive groundwater from an undersized gutter

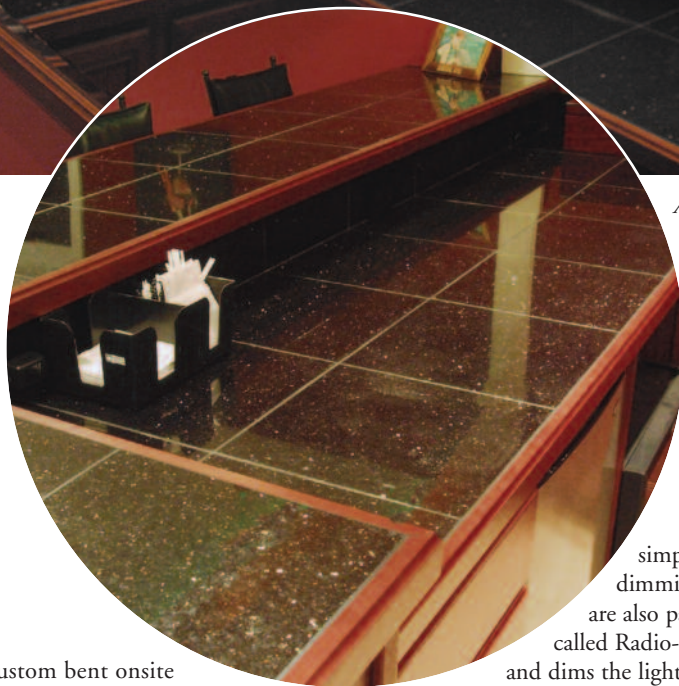


The layout accommodates all of the homeowner's desires. The main areas flow together and the renovation almost doubled the home's square footage.



Above: The laundry room provides enough space to wash, dry and fold laundry.

Left: The cedar walk-in closet offers plenty of storage space.



Above: The liquor shelf, mirror frame and counter edge were constructed from basic molding pieces ordered from the cabinet supplier. Low-voltage lighting was installed to light above and below the shelf and glass rack.

system. This was replaced and groundwater was directed from the house. Dry-lock, a waterproofing paint, was applied to the masonry walls in the basement.

LIGHTING CHOICES

Small low-voltage recessed lights were installed in the theater, Carver says. The light over the coffee table is controlled independently to accent the artwork in the table.

The lighting for the billiard area consists of a combination of small recessed lights, track lighting and cable lighting, Carver says. The track and cable lighting were selected to add interest and blend with the contemporary theme. The track lighting, purchased in straight

pieces, was custom bent onsite for a unique, customized look. Cable lighting was used in place of a typical hanging billiard table light.

The lighting for the bar area is also layered with various lighting effects. Low-voltage lighting was installed in the glass rack and the top and bottom of the liquor shelf. Recessed lights were positioned behind the bar for task lighting and pendant lights were hung for both task lighting and visual interest. The LED cove lighting adds drama and effect, Carver says.

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM

The lighting in each area is controlled by a Grafik Eye control. Rather than wall switches, it allows

simple control and dimming. These controls are also part of a larger system called Radio-Ra® that controls and dims the lighting throughout the entire house by programming simple scenes. Both controls can be integrated into a learnable remote control for the home theater, Carver explains.

AV SYSTEM WIRING

Wiring for the audio and video system was a team approach, involving both Carver and his employees as well as World Wide Stereo. World Wide Stereo designed the system and Carver's team did the wiring. "We also integrated the lighting into the remote control and programmed a 'movie scene' so when a movie begins, the lights will slowly dim just like they would in the theater," Carver says.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

With plans formed and challenges addressed, it was time to focus on the details. Intricate moldings, architectural elements and a dramatic lighting plan set off the area. "Attention to detail separates this project from the average basement," Gemmi says. "Good space planning and vision helped to transform a virtually unusable space into a relaxing and fun environment while addressing many of the features that the original home lacked."

A bar, custom built onsite to accommodate standard-sized base cabinets, includes a refrigerator, wine cooler and bar sink with abundant storage space. The counter area and cabinet layout were designed for maximum space. "We used stock cabinet moldings to create a lighted liquor shelf, custom mirror frame and counter edging," Gemmi remarks. One-foot granite tiles were used on the countertops and backsplash.

For a flush look, the wall was framed so the 28-inch deep television recessed. A custom face frame surrounds the television. Surround sound speakers were recessed into the walls and ceiling. World Wide Stereo integrated the home theater with the home audio system.

To make the carpeted, theater area level with the tile, a DRICore® sub-floor and thick padding was laid underneath the carpet. Now carpeted areas are insulated and the flooring doesn't have a basement feel.

SPLASHES OF COLOR

The homeowners wanted an expressive and playful, yet elegant, color in the living room and bar area. A rich burgundy fit the bill. To further accent the color, they chose a warm gold for the powder room. The playfulness is also exhibited in the powder room's border, which adds interesting contrast with blues, cream and gold and exemplifies the couple's love for nature.

Finally, the lady of the house says, "I went all out with the laundry room. Since there's no natural light, I opened up the room with a bright shade of lime-yellow. The border adds interest and fun with leopards while pulling the colors together. The basement's overall color scheme shows our personality well; we like to stand apart from the rest and we love nature and travel."

REFLECTING ON THE PROJECT

Gemmi and Carver agree that the highlight of this job was the client's willingness to give them creative freedom. "When the general contractor and sub-contractors are working as a team towards a common goal and sharing the same vision for the project, the results can be extraordinary," Carver says.

The couple says the project exceeded their expectations. "Now we can entertain year-round, not just during the summer when the outside deck and yard could be used," they say. "No one has laid eyes on the new basement without exclaiming, 'Wow!'"



Above: John Gemmi, Paul Landis, Nari President and Wes Carver.

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