

# Real Estate

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## Basement Remodeling, Fancy and Fun

**By JULIE GRIFFITH**  
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Want to convert that dank, poorly lit basement into a fantastic living space?

Area building and renovation specialists have a host of ideas on converting basements into extraordinary recreation getaways. With a bit of creativity and the input of professional design and construction experts, basements can be transformed into private spas, media lounges or customized wine cellars.

### Customizing for Clients

BOWA Inc., a custom builder and renovation company based in McLean, has had years of experience creating one-of-a-kind recreational and living spaces for area residents. "One client wanted to use his basement as a trophy room," said Josh Baker, president of BOWA Inc. The client hunted exotic animals from all over the world and wanted a place to house his collection. The space required a 12-foot ceiling, so the company

called in a structural engineer to assess how the higher walls would affect the exterior walls.

Another client wanted a wine cellar and tasting room with a rustic cave-like setting. It required installing climate- and humidity-control equipment. Racking comes in redwood and mahogany, and the overall cost will depend on the complexity of the project. "Cost will be affected by the complexity of converting the space, the size of that space and the finishes that are chosen," said Baker.

Another project that BOWA was involved in was customizing a computer area into a family office.

The original project involved converting an upstairs area, but a basement is a viable choice for the same design. "A lot of adults are telecommuting these days, and we can create a space that doubles as a family office. We set up separate computer areas for parents and children. The children's computer can be connected to the parents' computer network to allow for monitoring. It was essentially one

room, but with separate work areas," said Baker.

### Extravagant Additions

The company has also converted basements into spa and exercise facilities complete with extravagant multimedia additions.

"Sometimes clients want to create something that reflects their past and individual tastes. One client wanted to install an antique canoe in his office space, which reminded him of his childhood. We created a space with an elevated ceiling and had to cut into the roof and reframe the attic to accomplish the change," Baker said.

Another more elaborate project created an entertainment area that dealt with family and guest needs.

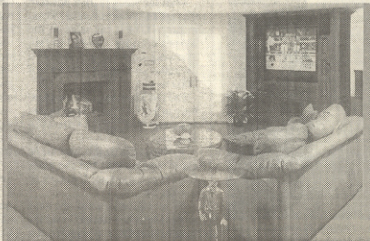
Conceptually, the floor plan calls for well-defined, visually linked play zones that receive direct natural light from the west-facing doors and windows.

Like a classic British pub — which the owners chose as one of the interior design themes — the

room provides spaces for private pursuits (reading, video, cards, billiards) that were also designed for easy interaction.

Setting the tone, a full-size pub bar — complete with custom-designed countertops, corner booth and adjacent gaming areas — is the first stop on a tour that begins immediately on entering the new space from the upstairs.

The company specializes in large-scale remodeling projects, and accepts projects with a minimum budget of \$150,000. But for some, turning a dream into a reality is worth the price. BOWA develops projects for clients in Great Falls, Arlington, McLean, Potomac, Chevy Chase, the Bethesda area and northwest Washington, D.C.



The entertainment room.