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## Modern man caves focus on solace, sports and luxury

THE MAN CAVE

BY KELLY MERRITT

Florida Weekly Correspondent



Man cave by Luxury Home Solutions. VANDY MAJOR / FLORIDA WEEKLY

The concept of the man cave is evolving. It used to simply be a space all his own, where all manner of sporting and automotive paraphernalia remains hidden from view, where he and his pals can watch what they want on TV and relish in their manliness far from feminine eyes. These days, men can be every bit if not more astute as their female counterparts in creating spaces that rival the rest of the house in both luxury and fun.

“One type of man cave is set up like a garage with cabinets and metal inserts, old gas pumps, more of a hang-out with your buddies and look at cars, while others are a little more sophisticated,” says Norman Bloxham of Luxury Home Solutions. “There are man caves and then there are man caves.”

Luxury Home Solutions built the latter in a paradise-inspired stone grotto of epic proportions. It is the embodiment of a quintessential man cave bucket list, fulfilled. The homeowner wanted a game room, shuffle board court, darts, pool table, bar, wine room and piano bar among other wish list items,

plus being able to come home to a steam room and sauna after a long day at work. To achieve this tall order, Mr. Bloxham and his team rocked the project, literally. From bottom to top, they built a rock retreat that looks as sturdy as it does luxurious.

“We also did some special things with baseboard and colonial trim so the rock could go right to the bottom of the crown molding, and we created a separate system for the wine room and you can go right into a little theater where you can watch TV,” he says. “Between all of those functions, he’s even got a misting system.”

Mr. Bloxham had built the client’s home, so when they called to request an in-law suite, he went to the home and crafted a wish list and a must list. Next, the most important step in designing a man cave happened: penciling it out.



“The conceptual drawing is really important as you’re dreaming of this special place so in the drawing the customer can see what they were envisioning on paper — that’s where the best man caves begin,” says Mr. Bloxham. “To create a man cave, you need to sit down with someone who is very, very creative and who thinks outside of the box.”

Mr. Bloxham’s clients wanted a walk-in wine cooler for a place to house their wine collection. He designed the room to light from the floor, along with cypress ceilings and chandelier. The homeowners wanted a piano bar, so whether they wanted to have it auto play or have a pianist entertain, the piano could be heard throughout the stereo system.

“They also wanted to be sure their new addition didn’t look like an addition, but part of the house, so we used all the same features and characteristics to enable the addition to flow naturally right off the family room into the game room,” says Mr. Bloxham.

And like most man caves, they are so cool everyone wants to use them — kids, wives, in-laws, buddies — Mr. Bloxham’s homeowners love that this is where everyone wants to be. There is also a guest suite with an attached separate door to go outside with sleeping quarters.

Weber Design Group in Naples has designed several masculine rooms including a game room, super cool roadhouse garage and bar they designed specifically with men in mind.

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“We love working closely with our clients to develop rooms of great interest, whether man cave, sewing and craft room, or simply an intimate place to play music or read,” says Weber Design Group President Bill Weber, who has seen it all from virtual golf simulators to bowling lanes.



Man cave by designer Karen Benson. COURTESY PHOTO

In one of the man caves he designed, a built-in wet bar and zero-corner glass sliders combine with gender-neutral furnishings and easy accessibility to kitchen and outdoor living areas. The Weber Design Group game room has a billiards table, wet bar with double wine fridges and built in entertainment center with surround sound and pocketing glass sliders. Perhaps his most striking man cave project is the roadhouse pub/ garage within a private motor court in a detached garage with guest living quarters above it featuring a dedicated motorcycle garage, collector car storage and roadhouse pub with built-in bar and stage.

In the Minto Turnberry Grand model at TwinEagles, this manly room has a massive television (required for any respectable man cave). However, this room has several other facets that up the cool factor. A luxurious layout of double couches provides optimum comfort for viewing the big game. The wet bar is near game tables with a large balcony lanai with seating that overlooks the Eagle golf course.

### **Furnishing the man cave**

Vivian Armenti knows that furnishing a man cave requires interesting pieces that are also functional. Featured in her Miromar Design Center showroom are Henredon, Barbara Barry Realized by Henredon, Drexel Heritage, Hickory Chair, Lane Venture, Pearson, Maitland Smith and La Barge.

“We have bars, decorative games, poker or foosball tables and handsome upholstery and occasional pieces such as our infamous alligator side table,” she says. Such pieces can help define the theme of a man cave and add character, helping transform a drab space into something special.



Man cave by Design West. COURTESY PHOTO



Man cave by Weber Design.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Tonino Lamborghini CASA collection is produced in cooperation with Formitalia Luxury Group S.p.a., which includes furnishings that look like works of art. While Tonino Lamborghini's name is synonymous with luxury given his family's history with the iconic Lamborghini, the furniture company is not affiliated with the automotive arm of the same name, which is now part of the AUDI-VW AG group. However, it's easy to see mechanical inspirations. Materials used include high-tech materials like carbon fiber, Kevlar trim, satin-finish steel and metal braids. The furniture group is more than 30 years old and its location in the Palazzo del Vignola Renaissance villa outside Bologna is reflected in the sultry, masculine nature of the materials.

Some men simply need a space to be more man cave, less office. Clive Daniel designer Wilfredo Emanuel is often called up to transform spare rooms into what he calls the

'Floridian cave man office'.

"The contemporary man cave must be a space that holds the devices a man, especially our busy executives here in Southwest Florida will need to run his business remotely," says Mr. Emanuel. "Today with all the technology, smaller, cleaner furnishings is more suited for men."

### **Wine and sports rule**

Interiors by Design West President and CEO Glenn Midnet is a fan of wine bars in man caves. He says for men who enjoy wine, wine bars can be incorporated into very small space but still provide enormous impact.

"You want to keep the space practical for the owner's lifestyle and consider what the man likes, his hobbies, what he will be using the space for and the aesthetics," says Mr. Midnet.

"From an esthetic point of view, the space should be visually pleasing and create a focal point, while from a practical stand point, the room needs to function well and accommodate your guests, whether you are entertaining a few friends or having a large super bowl party."

Laverne Gehman built a man caveesque game room for himself complete with Harley-Davidson and Tony Stewart memorabilia.



Man cave by designer Laverne Gehman. COURTESY PHOTO



“What made doing my own man space fun was that I did not have to worry about how the final outcome may be judged by anyone else,” he says. “I could do whatever my heart desired and the theme dictated, so the fun elements included black and white checkerboard, “Victory Lane” tile floor and orange and gray compatible with the Harley Davidson logo for a wall accent.”

Sometimes the making of a man cave requires compromise. The challenge for Herscoe Hajjar Architects in building a VIP game room in their client’s Port Royal home was to create a space that did double duty. The room had to work both as a man cave for the men in the homeowner’s friends and family circle, but could also function as a fun space for other age groups. What resulted was this sleek game room with entertainment area and L-shaped bar with seating for five.

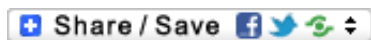
“The primary purpose for the design of this room was a man’s retreat for a group of friends, who meet regularly, for weekly gatherings,” says Rob Herscoe, AIA of Herscoe Hajjar Architects. “The challenge for the architects was that the room had to be flexible enough for kids and guests to use at other times.”

A host of do’s and don’ts factor into building the perfect man cave. Mr. Bloxham cautions that what you don’t want in your man cave is as important as what you do want to include in it. “Do have a budget in mind,” he says. “And for homeowners who aren’t sure what they want, make sure you work with someone who can do some creative conceptual drawing.”



Planning a man cave of your own? This February, designers Diane Torrisi and Dirk Anderson will team up to discuss the psychology of the sexes in designing home spaces and share their design experience. The “Man Cave vs. the She Shed” seminar will take place at Miromar Design Center in February 2016. |

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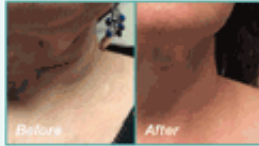


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