

DIVIDE AND CONQUER





LUXURIOUS TOUCHES TRANSFORM A TRADITIONAL HOME INTO A MODERN OASIS

From the outside, the façade of Randal Golden's traditional-style West Bloomfield home has a bit of a French feel. But inside, there's a whole lot of modern going on.

When Golden, one of the owners of SEE Eyewear, built his home five years ago, his taste was a little more traditional. Though the home may have held on to its traditional bones, Golden developed a penchant for a more transitional tone. "My taste changed over the years," he says. "You change. You evolve."

Today, with the help of Caroline Smith, design principal at Caroline Inc. in Royal Oak, the house has taken on a fresh new feel. While the designer added some lively touches to spice up the main areas of the home, such as colorful tiles that accent the range hood in the kitchen and a hanging glass installation in the living room, perhaps the *pièce de résistance* is the lower level.

As Smith explains, the lower level of the home was designed mainly for entertainment. "We coupled that with a relaxation area so Randal could come down here and use the gym and the steam room and have a bit of a spa-like feel," she says. "The challenge was making it lively enough for a party but serene enough for relaxation."

Now, the previously unfinished space, which boasts more than 2,000 square feet, contains a variety of living spaces, including a media room, bar area, home office, gym, guestroom, steam room and lounge area.

Though the aesthetics were obviously a priority, the various functions had to fit the homeowner's lifestyle. "Randal wanted to live comfortably instead of more formally," Smith says. In the media room, a metallic bronze sectional sofa lives up to the challenge by providing the perfect place to perch, whether lounging alone or with a roomful of guests. Smith says the furniture is flexible because the pieces can be pushed together or pulled apart. A handful of ottomans provide additional seating.

To help with the asymmetrical balance of the space, Smith turned



the longest wall in the media room, which features a 100-inch projector screen, into the center of attention. Not only do leather panels help with acoustics, they bring plenty of style to the space in the process. A small section of hickory wood cleverly disguises storage. Faux fireplace logs bring traditional warmth to the modern setting while adding texture too, Smith says. Edgy new technology comes in the form of recessed wall sconces with LED lighting that can be set to different colors to alter the mood.

Dazzling glass doors, featuring a broken-line pattern etched and then painted by artisan Paul Hudacheck, clearly define the spaces without blocking the views. Smith says the color chosen for the unique design was pulled from the fabric that wraps around the gym. "I love pattern and texture," she says.

A double-sided concrete-poured fireplace that faces the media room can also be enjoyed in the home office. "The raised fireplace is a more modern hearth," says Smith, who adds that a nearby opening in the wall allows sound to travel from one room to another for the TV or conversation. "It also visually extends the space."

Wool carpet adds another layer of comfort and texture to the mostly neutral space. The well-equipped (and well-stocked) bar looks like





something straight out of a four-star hotel. Featuring a wood base and concrete top, the details include decorative tiles in the design. Custom cabinets are by Kitchens by Richard in Birmingham. Backed with colored glass, they set the tone for the clubby feel. Behind the bar, ample amenities include a dishwasher, convection oven, two refrigerators, a freezer and more. This makes setup and serving a breeze for large parties, which often involve a caterer and bartender.

In a quiet seating area reminiscent of a modern-day spa, wallpaper with a ginkgo leaf motif distinguishes the subtle space. "It's a little bit more serene," Smith says. Highly textural rattan chairs and gothic-inspired light fixtures let visitors know they are in for a visual treat. "The lights soften it up and give this area a little bit of weight," Smith says.

The requisite lower-level structural support columns went from awkward to artwork when covered with the same grass cloth that is found on the walls. All of the woodwork was done by Facility One in Detroit. In the steam room, a shapely sink made from cast concrete is balanced by an asymmetrical mirror. The guest bedroom features plenty of sleek storage and display space along with a raku finished stoneware sculpture from a gallery in New York.

It's obvious from the well-appointed rooms that Golden loves to entertain. "We have Super Bowl parties, summer parties," he says. Or, as

Smith chimes in, "Any excuse for a party." It doesn't hurt that a pool with a waterfall is right outside the door.

Though Golden is hard-pressed to pick a favorite space, he does favor the look and function of the bar area. Among his favorite design details are the glass doors and fabric covered columns. The media room is "a real comfortable area for watching movies and sports, and I use the gym fairly regularly," he says.

And even the gym is luxurious. "The mirrors and lighting allow you to really feel depth in the space," Smith says.

With all the smoke and mirrors, one would never guess that there is only one window in the entire space. Smith says they wanted to create a feel that was anything but your average lower level.

It's no wonder that visitors are instantly seduced by the space. As the homeowner says, the wow factor is there. "Everyone loves it," says Golden, who was going for something that was casual but cool looking. "It's very comfortable and cozy down here. I had a vision for this place, and Caroline executed it really well."

In the end, the designer says, "It's really about a feel and creating a mood. The psychology of this space says that it's comfortable enough for a party, or simply a place to relax." 👑 – Jeanine Matlow