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Friday, June 13, 2014

## At Home Living: Creating the 'Man Cave'

By **Todd Epp**

*Special to The Capital-Journal*

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Grandpa had the barn or the shed. Dad had a woodshop or a study.

But today's man—if you go by online sites and home remodeling magazines—wants to go back in time—way back in time—and have his own cave.

Man cave that is.

The wealthy might be able to afford a man cave with their Ferraris and Lamborghinis as centerpieces along with Grand Prix memorabilia and a massive oak wet bar stocked with 20-year-old single malt scotch.

But for most American men, their needs—or are they wants? —are much more modest.

**“To me, a man cave is a refrigerator filled with beer and junk food, a big TV and comfortable chairs,”** said Rick Knobe, 67, a radio talk show host from Sioux Falls, S.D.

So, whether the man cave is for watching the tube while downing some brews or just a place to go to reflect, how much can you expect to pay?

That depends on the scope of the remodeling and how much stuff—some might say junk—you want to put into the space for decorations.

According to [improvementnet.com](http://improvementnet.com), the average cost of a **basement remodeling project in Kansas is approximately \$16,500.**

One full-service Kansas remodeling contracting service with 20 years in the business says remodeling costs depend on several factors, including whether the space is new or existing or will have a wet bar.

“With unfinished spaces, as a general rule, we advise customers to expect at least \$20-\$30 per square foot, with average finishes and characteristics,” said John VanSickle, vice president of S&A Construction, Inc. in Wichita.

A wet bar alone, VanSickle notes, can cost \$5,000 and up.

VanSickle also warns that making the man cave too particular to one's dreams can create problems later—especially if children are part of a young couple's plan.

“When finishing spaces, the biggest mistake I feel customers make is using a single layout to set up the entire space,” VanSickle said. **“With most homeowners, needs and wants change over time, i.e., change of TV, furniture, game tables, etc. When there is no thought of a secondary TV location, additional seating, etc., it makes these spaces harder to accommodate future needs.”**

Thus, VanSickle says it pays to think of multiple ways to use the space. He has a three-car garage as his “man cave”—but it is more.

“It serves not only as a function to protect my vehicles, but a space for my children to play when it rains outside, a place for my friends to culminate on the weekends,” VanSickle said. “We use this space (600 square feet) all year-round.”

Regardless of whether the man cave is sole or multipurpose, it has to have cool stuff in it. In **furnishing the man cave, the first step is to inventory what is already in the house that could be repurposed.**

Have an **old refrigerator** sitting in the garage? There's the **beer chiller.**

Need to **replace the living room sofa** with a new one? There's the **grand stand for the big screen TV.**

Is the Xbox hooked to the TV in the living room? It has a new home in the man cave, out of the way when there's more formal company over to visit.

For those who are even more budget conscious, there's always the **local thrift store for items big and little.**

“Old people LOVE **big overstuffed chairs from the 60s and 70s**, and they get donated all the time when their estate is resolved,” one commenter noted on Reddit's “AskMen” area. “Smell it, sit in it, test it out, then buy it, shampoo it and enjoy—**usually under \$10 to \$20.**”

Boxes of **personal sports memorabilia** collecting dust in the closet also make for a free—and personal—**means to decorate the man cave.**

A final consideration is insurance.

Since many man caves go in the basement—which can be vulnerable to flooding from storms or sewage backups—it's **important to make sure the improvements, gadgets and memorabilia are properly insured** if Super Bowl Sunday turns into “The Poseidon Adventure.”

Ultimately, however, the space needs to reflect the “cave dweller's” larger living space.

“These spaces should be extensions of your existing home with complimentary finishes to the home's existing feel,” VanSickle notes.

With a little planning—and a dose of reality—the man cave can serve not just the man but the family and the home as well.

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