

**FUNCTIONAL AND MODERN** In the house, sports space is reconstructed by creating entertainment and recreation rooms for both adults and children. On the bottom level (below), a retro hanging bubble chair is a playful choice.



# game **PLAN**

AN INDOOR VOLLEYBALL COURT IS GUTTED, MAKING WAY FOR A TWO-LEVEL TRANSFORMATION THAT'S DECIDEDLY MORE STYLISH THAN SPORTING

TEXT ANDREW FINDLAY PHOTOGRAPHY JO-ANN RICHARDS

It might be the ultimate transformation, taking a cavernous indoor volleyball court and turning it into a stylish complement to a seaside home geared for entertaining and recreation.

“When we purchased the house six years ago, the lower two levels were configured as a volleyball court. Since this is a seasonal home for us and we expected to use it for large family gatherings and out-of-town guests, we decided we

could make better use of the space,” says Kathy, the owner of the luxury Maple Bay home, near Duncan on Vancouver Island. She’s referring to the renovation project that focussed on 1,800 clunky square feet of downstairs space. “We wanted to have a large entertainment area and games room combined with ample and innovative sleeping space,” she says.

The job had to fit several criteria. It needed

to capitalize on the natural surroundings – the ocean views overlooking Maple Bay and beyond to Saltspring Island’s Mount Maxwell. It also had to be functional and modern, yet jibe well with the traditional architecture of the roughly 5,000-square-foot house. Kathy, whose main residence is in Calgary, decided to enlist the Meade Design Group for this West Coast reno. In turn, Ivan Meade, the interior designer, realizing that



**DOUBLE DUTY** A striking pool table made from maple wood and topped with custom-made tan felt, is a classical entertainment item, plus it can be transformed into a table for hosting a crowd.

Kathy was busy and would rarely be on site – but wanted to be engaged in the process – took a novel approach to communication. He had his in-house web developer create a special site enabling real-time dialogue around plans and drawings, furniture and fabrics, and prices and budget, helping to “make things go really smoothly,” Kathy says.

Using the web to keep the homeowner informed and engaged, Meade got to work on this puzzle of structural upgrades and creative design with the goal of emphasizing the views while creating space for sleepovers, entertaining guests and grandchildren.



The custom futon (above, left) works as seating, but also can accommodate overnight guests. The home theatre (shown at right) is framed by a long sofa and armchair. The glass panels help keep both areas functional and don't interrupt the visual flow.



“It was a very unusual project. Honestly, when the client called I was kind of intimidated,” Meade says. “We had around three months to work with, so the time constraints were considerable.”

There was no point in duplicating what the three-level house already contained: plenty of functional living space in the two floors above the volleyball court. The main floor incorporates



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**EAT, SLEEP, ENTERTAIN** Dining and lounge areas on the upper level of the reno are flooded with light. Bunk beds have retro appeal and can accommodate a crowd.

living and dining rooms, plus a den. There's also a kitchen, pantry, powder room and garage. Four bedrooms and two bathrooms are on the uppermost level.

Instead of the dark subterranean atmosphere of many games rooms, this renovation is an exercise in light, matching the ambient light from outside with carefully chosen paint colours, furniture, fixtures and accessories.

First, structural upgrades were made to the former sports court. The addition of reinforced beams and other structural components allowed Meade to divide the space into two levels. Then came the design details. The upper level is adult-oriented, encompassing a home theatre area, games and dining area and bar and lounge. The latter features a custom futon for extra sleeping space, as well as a striking pool table of maple



## RENO RUNDOWN

**BEST BARGAIN:** Meade took standard bunk beds and then modified them to whimsical and personal effect, building a closet at the head of each of the beds and curtains that can be drawn around the individual bunks. "People who have slept there say it is reminiscent of the experience of sleeping in a bunk on a train," says the homeowner.

**BIGGEST SPLURGE:** Custom pool table with a matching wood cover made to fit on top of it. "We use it for dinners now when we have masses amounts of people," says the homeowner.

**BEST DECISION:** Keeping the space very light and open rather than reverting to a traditional games room style.

**BIGGEST REGRET:** "I wish we had installed in-floor heating. We decided not to do so for budget reasons but it would be cosier in the winter," says Kathy.

**TOTAL COST:** Around \$150,000, including construction and all furnishings.



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**SOAPSTONE**





**SOOTHING SHADES** A neutral backdrop is contrasted and complemented by darker materials, as seen in the bar cart and wood floors.

wood and tan felt, custom-made by a Victoria-area craftsman. The bedroom on this floor features stylish bunks that sleep four, and an adjoining powder room.

The lower level is designed mostly with kids in mind, complete with hanging bubble chair, games table, and more sleeping space, as well as a gym featuring two mirrored walls. Windows are sized and situated to match the waterfront views, while railings of diffuse glass and open stairwells help draw the natural light to the bottom floor.

The colour palette on the lower level is refreshing, with varying aquamarine blues and greens on a neutral background of beige and taupes, which harmonizes well with the green-yellow colour scheme upstairs. Splashes of concentrated colours in floral arrangements and accessories like vases and pillows keep everything working in concert, while adding liveliness to the once sports-focused space.

These soft colours are offset by contemporary upholstered furnishings in deep browns, crisp

whites and punchy blues. Hard furnishings make the most of the natural beauty of wood, including oak, rosewood, maple and zebano. Some pieces were custom-designed by Meade, like the TV unit, dining table, barcode accent wall, bunk beds and trundle bed, while other pieces were selected from various boutiques, all with an eye to maintaining clean and simple lines throughout. As Meade notes, the accessories, lamps and pillows were chosen to complement, not distract.

In the end, what emerged from the reno was almost as original as an in-house volleyball court; so much so that it caught the attention of producers at HGTV, which named the space one of the top 10 games rooms in North America and called it a wonderfully warm and contemporary space “that gives a nod to the past.” But most important of all, it scores top points with the client, which is the ultimate goal of any major renovation. “The biggest surprise for us,” says Kathy, “was that it turned out exactly the way we had envisioned it.” ■

See SOURCES on page 76