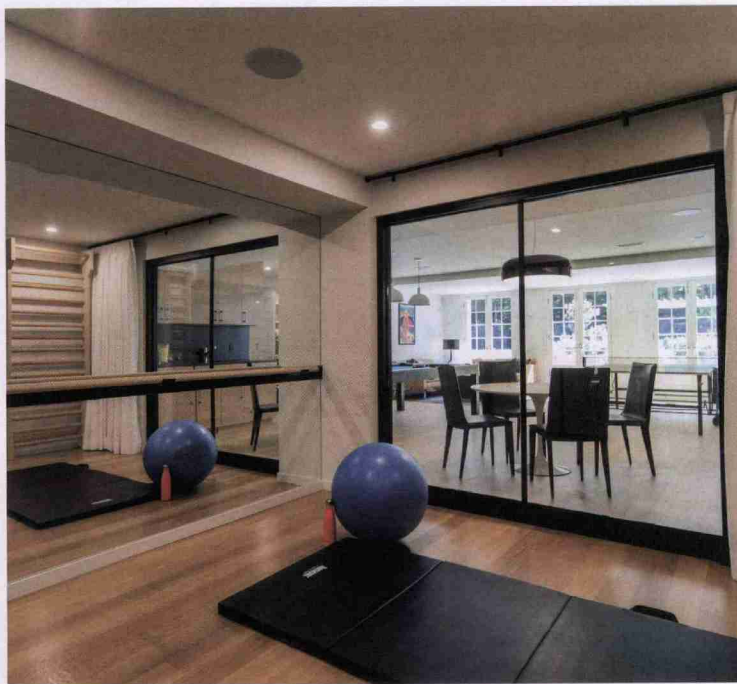




PROJECT OF NOTE

Dream Basement

THIS 2,500-SQUARE-FOOT SPACE WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A LIGHT-FILLED FAMILY ACTIVITY CENTER



Play Time (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM LEFT) Glass partitions through Westport Glass allow light into the yoga and exercise spaces. A fireplace lined with Porcelanosa tile is flanked by a personalized mural by Timothy Goodman, while a trio of Schoolhouse Shelby Mod pendants illuminates a pool table from Blatt Billiards. A custom liquor cabinet anchors the back wall of the leather-lined retreat, where Eames chairs invite lounging. A Flos Smithfield Suspension light illuminates a Knoll tulip table in the game room. See Resources.

When asked to transform a neglected basement at an elegant family home, architect Nancy Thiel of Thiel Architecture + Design delivered a top-of-the-line family activity center with something for everyone. By replacing walls with glass partitions, she introduced natural light deep into interior spaces. A crisp palette of black, white and caramel anchors the design—from the bright game room to the richly appointed leather-lined retreat—while a bespoke mural by Timothy Goodman captures the interests and history of the family. Here, Thiel provides the backstory about the project. —*Catriona Branca*





What was your starting point? The homeowners wanted to add an exercise room to their walk-out basement but recognized that more work needed to be done. We made it our goal to pull in as much natural light as possible. That meant removing walls and replacing them with glass partitions. We also chose to finish the entire basement ceiling, which made every area, including the unfinished support spaces, feel very polished.

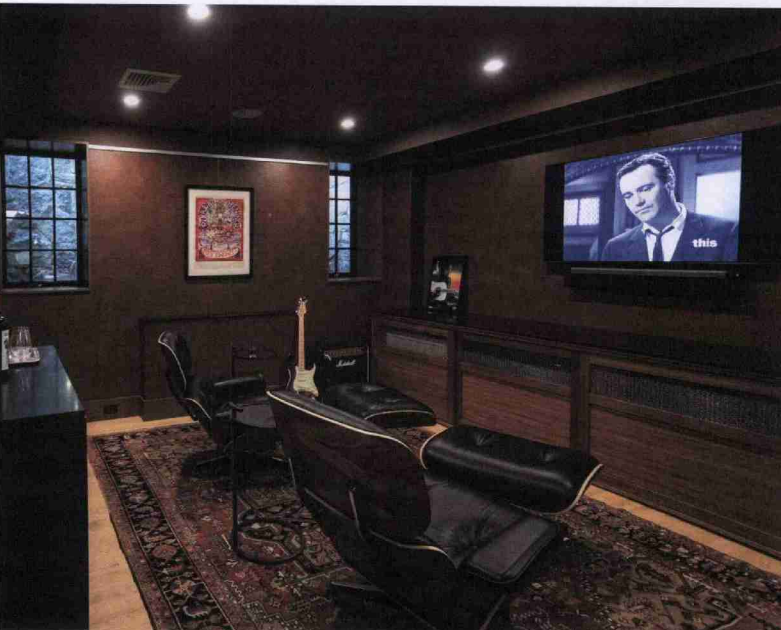
What was the thought process behind the division of space? We rethought their neglected playroom and turned it into a game room that the entire family could use. We placed the exercise area directly behind it with a glass partition between. Loads of natural light floods the room, and those working out have great views of the backyard. Early in the design process, we discovered another great space in the basement with natural light, and it became the perfect spot for the wine room and retreat.

Tell us about the fitness area. Designed primarily for the wife, the fitness room has a host of features including mirrors, a ballet barre and a stall bar. The flooring is engineered wood with radiant heating while easy-to-maintain wood-looking vinyl flooring is used throughout the rest of the basement. The drapes in the exercise space create a sense of privacy when needed and allow a soft diffused natural light.

Does the retreat have special features? We had to do some mechanical gymnastics in the leather-lined retreat. In addition to a glass-enclosed wine room, the husband wanted the humidity in the retreat to be good for his guitars; a way to take care of cigar smoke; and a humidifier for his cigar collection. He also wanted acoustical separation from the rest of the house and, as the room is located at the far end of the basement, it required its own mechanical system. Our solution was to design a custom credenza that included a mini split system, a humidifier, an air scrubber and a custom humidifier. I don't think we could have packed one more thing into it!

What is the homeowners' favorite thing? The mural in the game room is everyone's favorite part of the project. It was a labor of love. Working with the homeowners, we came up with a list of things that were personal to the family, and renowned graphic artist Tim Goodman created this incredible custom mural.

What is your favorite part? It's hard to say one particular thing. We are happy with how the mural pulled the game room together and really gave a focus to the project. But I think the most important thing we brought to the project was to make a basement feel nothing like a basement. Even the support spaces feel clean and bright. I have to say, it's a pretty remarkable achievement.



PROJECT OF NOTE

Pages 62–63: Architecture and interior design, Nancy Thiel and Julie Hanselmann Davies, Thiel Architecture + Design, 69 Lyons Plain Rd., Weston, 917-679-8070, thieldesign.com. **Contractor,** Rottjer Renovation Company, 216 Teller Rd., Trumbull, 203-895-2877. **Mural artist,** Timothy Goodman, tgoodman.com. **Electrical,**

Superior Electric, Trumbull, 203-268-0343, iwirestuff.com. **HVAC,** Thermocare, Stamford, 203-595-9321, thermocarellc.com. **Fitness room: Glass partition walls and mirror,** Westport Glass. **Ballet barre,** Custom Barres. **Stall bar,** Infitness Equipment. **Drapery rod and fabrication,** Plaza Park Interiors. **Drapery fabric,** Kravet. **Flooring,** Graf Brothers Flooring & Lumber. **Game room: Wet bar fabrication,** Britt Newman Design Concepts. **Faucet,** Hansgrohe. **Sink,** Elkay. **Game table pendant,** Flos. **Table,** Knoll. **Chairs,** Design Within Reach. **Flooring,** Next Floor. **Mural fabrication,** Murals Your Way. **Fireplace,** M&K Hearth and Fireplace. **Fireplace tile,** Porcelanosa. **Pool table,** Blatt Billiards. **Pendants over pool table,** Schoolhouse Electric. **Stools,** West Elm. **Retreat: Leather walls,** Keleen Leathers. **Eames chairs,** Herman Miller. **Side tables,** RH. **Custom credenza fabrication,** Rottjer Renovation Company. **Paint,** Benjamin Moore. **Vintage posters,** All Posters. **Framing,** J.Pocker. **Art installation,** Stasgroup. **Liquor cabinet fabrication,** Rock

Ridge Millwork. **Hardware,** Rocky Mountain Hardware.