





BUILDING A BETTER MAN CAVE

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Every completed project has a special place for each of the partners involved in the design journey. Every mother wants an incredibly spacious and well-organized mudroom with cubbies and cabinets, drawers and closets. Every cook, whether the husband or wife, wants the perfect kitchen with the commercial gas range, farmhouse sink, double island and double dishwashers. Every wife wants the glorious walk-in closet with center dresser and comfortable lounge chair, shelves for dozens of shoes and luggage storage closet.

Sometimes, something very unique is even requested. In my professional career as an architect, I have been asked to design:

- a she-shed
- a fully glass enclosed, temperature-controlled wine room
- a spiral sliding tube from a third floor to a second floor
- a narrow closet to allow for the later addition of a second interior staircase only 2 feet wide (reminiscent of the 1700s)
- to a safe room hidden behind a paneled wall never to be found by others



- a rotating bookcase that exposes a hidden file room
- a floor system that allows for a TV to be tucked away and out of sight when not in use

What is always true is that these are dreams and wishes expressed by clients designing a custom home. When these spaces and structures are requested, we really have some fun! The client is always passionate for these long-desired places.

Man caves come in the form of incredible paneled offices with TV and fireplace, wine cellars filled with collectible bottles and sophisticated tracking systems visible to visitors, bar rooms with pool table, game table and dart board, and lastly, the most significant car collection garage, or in this case, building. The timber-frame structure (reflected in the photos) is approximately 4,000 square feet and includes a large room for the client's car and motorcycle collection, two workshop areas organized as true car shops, a motor coach bay, and a second floor studio and guest area. The Douglas fir structure was designed by my firm, Purple Cherry Architects and was fabricated by Maine Barn Company. The construction included wood interior wall and ceiling finishes. The exterior board and batten siding was stained dark red to reflect a true barn color. The elongated



clerestory cupola allows natural light to flood the interior. At night, it glows like a beacon. Large-scale mahogany out-swing doors provide the genuine character of a classic barn, not modern garage.

Inside, clever touches become talking points to visitors. The powder room wall is covered in diamond plate. The ceiling is filled with collector garage signs. Modern track lighting highlights restored gas station clocks. An early 1900s refurbished garage worktable commands a prominent end wall. Two lifts allow the double-staking of collector cars including the owner's original red convertible corvette from 50 years earlier and the *Speed Racer* movie race car. Stainless steel cabinets on rollers create a small kitchen.

Outside, refurbished gas pumps decorate the front parking area as well as an original "Citgo" flying horse in the peak of the structure. The French doors along the back open up to allow entertaining and the screened porch supports casual conversations while rocking peacefully.

This is the epitome of a man cave. Every time you take a tour of the building, you find the men remain behind and don't come back to the main house until an hour or more, later. The stories go on forever. This should be the measure of a successful man cave...when our men disappear for hours!



Cathy Purple Cherry and her husband of 37 years are returning home to the Shenandoah and Blue Ridge mountains. Born and raised in Virginia, Cathy ultimately landed in Annapolis where she grew a large architectural firm specializing in high-end custom homes and estates. With three children transitioning to independence, she has come back to the mountains of her childhood and is excited to be building her final home on top of Ennis Mountain in Afton. Cathy is passionate about extending her 25-year old practice through DC and down the range to Charlottesville. Cathy's intense love for the mountains has always been deeply rooted in her, as has her strong commitment to community—this mountain girl is excited and proud to call Charlottesville her home. Purple Cherry Architects, purplecherry.com