

# The Big Reveal

Basements rarely command the design spotlight, but with some creative space planning and a polished design scheme, this once-seldom-used lower level becomes a jewel box for family and entertaining.

BY TAYLOR HUGO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM KRUGER, LANDMARK PHOTOGRAPHY

The “before” photo would look familiar: a dark, wall-to-wall carpeted lower-level walkout that didn’t see much of the Medina couple and their two young kids who live there. “It was very 1990s—dark wood, carpet,” says builder John Kraemer of John Kraemer & Sons. “The family wanted to make it a useable space, a space they would actually bring people down to.”

Kraemer and interior designer Carrie Ellington of Martha O’Hara

Interiors were called to reimagine the space, having worked with the homeowners on their main-floor remodel years earlier. After they flip-flopped the location of the bar and TV areas to take advantage of the walkout’s natural light, the design became an extension of the rest of the home—a palette of whites, grays, and pops of color mimics the main floor. “The trick was to treat this space like we did the main living area,” Ellington says. “That changed everything.”



**POWER OF PINK**  
Pink chairs around a game and craft table add a pop of personality. “We used a really vibrant shade to keep it less girly,” says designer Carrie Ellington. “As with any color, don’t overuse it. We just did the chairs, a couple of poufs, and a rug.” The bright hue contrasts with the white cabinetry, which store towels and pool supplies, and the gray faux wood tile floor from Tile X Design.



**GATHERING ZONE**  
Color and texture can help make a lower level feel more inviting, says Ellington. Here, a varied palette of neutral gray hues for the sectional and ottoman fabrics and the rug focuses the space. Gold-toned accents—such as the mirrors and sconces flanking the TV and the hardware on the custom media cabinet—add warmth and depth.



**POOL PARTY**  
Simple gray and white tones are punched up with a fun wallpaper from Orvieto Wallcoverings in the pool bath. This room was a new addition to the lower level, demonstrating that you don’t have to be constrained by your current floor plan when remodeling. “Think outside the box and think of it as an empty space,” Ellington says.



**LIGHTING THE WAY**  
“Lighting is super key” in darker spaces, says Ellington, who used lights to define each area of the lower level. In the bar, gold pendants complement the navy low-back Jessica Charles chairs and cabinets, painted in Benjamin Moore’s Marina Gray. The classic subway tile backsplash gets a modern twist in a slate color.

“The look is somewhat traditional, but made more modern with the shapes, sizes, and colors that we worked with.” —CARRIE ELLINGTON, INTERIOR DESIGNER





### A SOFT TOUCH

Vibrant pink is softened to blush in the guest room, where the homeowners' sister often stays. "You have to think about colors that you like to live in," Ellington says. "Everybody has colors they are drawn to." While the room is a sophisticated space, cheetah-print lamps on the nightstands offer a youthful, glamorous punch you don't expect.

### MAKE ME BLUSH

In the guest room's connected bath, the lower-level color scheme is continued with a light pink wallpaper (if you look closely, you can see the crisscross pattern that adds a hint of visual interest). A contrasting marble-esque tile floor partners perfectly with the vanity, painted in Benjamin Moore's Gravel Gray and accented with gold hardware.



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