

THE FUN'S DOWNSTAIRS

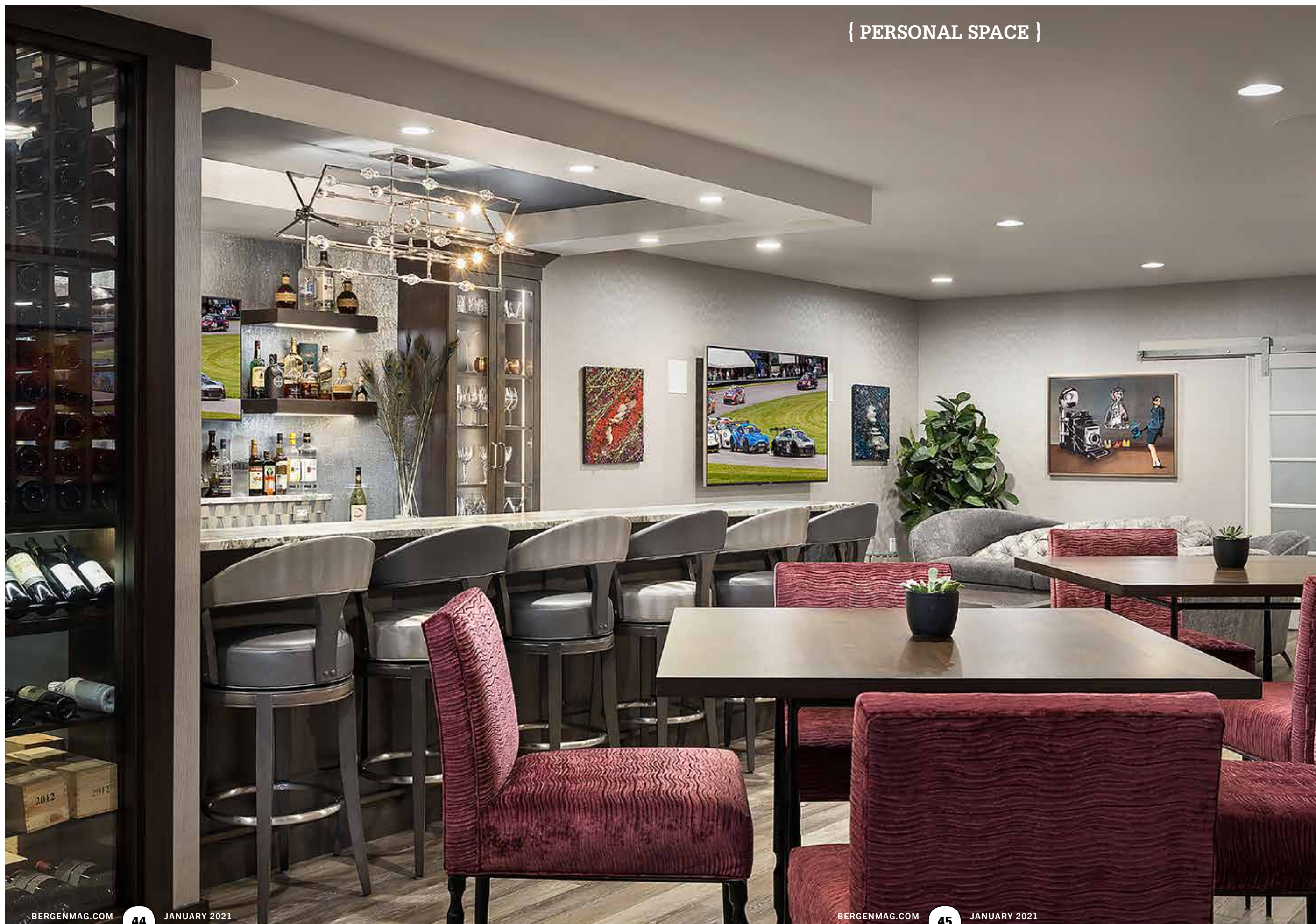
With their new multifunctional finished basement, a Wyckoff family will be hanging out at home a lot even when they don't have to.

By **Haley Longman**
Design by **Sharon Sherman**
Photography by **Mike Van Tassell**

Staying indoors during winter—and maybe putting in extra time there as the pandemic rolls on—holds no terrors for one Wyckoff family. Back in 2018, the two working parents with three children, four dogs and one nanny realized they needed a good indoor recreational space. So they hired designer Sharon Sherman of Thyme & Place Design, also in Wyckoff, to bestow upon a large, unfinished lower level (really one long, narrow room) a club-like atmosphere perfect for watching sports, taking in movies, sipping wine and having a splendid time.

"The clients had several requirements to create different 'zones,'" says Sherman.

A "big sports and entertaining family" in Wyckoff hired designer Sharon Sherman to turn their unfinished basement into a luxurious and multipurpose space. The focal point is this custom bar, anchored by a walk-in wine cellar.



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This page, left: Half a dozen bar stools, a lighted glass cabinet and floating shelves displaying the liquor options give the home a real bar feel. The bar also contains an under-counter fridge, a built-in garbage/recycling center and custom storage for beer, soda and mixers. Opposite page: Oversized sconces draw attention to the metallic accent wall and the big screen TV mounted to it, the most essential component for family movie nights.

“They are wine enthusiasts, so the walk-in wine cellar, which anchors the bar, was a key component. We also created an exercise room, an adult seating area with a TV, a bar area, a dedicated kids’ zone, a small kitchenette and an oversized storage room.”

To make things intimate and create the “glam speakeasy feel” the homeowners were going for, the design team changed the ceiling height by installing recessed lighting and soffits to accentuate the bar, certainly the basement’s focal point. A raised waterfall quartzite countertop by Stone Surfaces of East Rutherford, with shades of taupe, gray, blue and white, provides seating for six guests, while a pair of high-top tables, intended for “Final Four” watch parties, are a versatile choice; they can be used for stand-up cocktails or combined for larger gatherings. The custom light fixture above the counter is inspired by a glass wine rack, and floating shelves and a lighted glass cabinet display the liquor and illuminate the back bar without blocking the view of the television. Also convenient: All the lights in the basement are centrally controlled by an energy-saving Lutron system.

The glamour factor is seen throughout all 1,500 square feet, thanks to a sophisticated mink-and-metals color palette that isn’t too matchy-matchy. “Blue and silver cork wall coverings in the bar area and metallic vinyl wall covering on the walls give the room a

definite personality,” says Sherman. The quirky art selection—including colorful prints from Daleno Art, a “space-warming” picture from a friend and original glass sculptures blown by a local artist—adds a pop of personality too, not to mention cohesion. The flooring throughout is made of cork-backed vinyl tile, and it’s waterproof and pet-friendly.

In the movie-watching zone, an oversized sectional from Michelangelo Designs through Thyme & Place Design and a gas-fueled fireplace beckon for snuggling. Bonus: The film du jour won’t interfere with sports viewing, because a duo of millwork columns and an eye-catching server separate the two areas (and two TVs) seamlessly.

Sherman loves that this project is a true interpretation of her clients’ requests and tastes, but it also has subtle design details that make it special. For example, the custom bar stools are upholstered in two different colored fabrics, and were inspired by the glass and stone tile in the bar’s backsplash. “The backsplash had an alternating colorway, so we repeated it in the counter stools,” she says. “It is unexpected and makes the space unique.”

So, sure, when the homeowners started this revamp, they didn’t reckon with a long period of obligatory time at home. But now, with the basement of their dreams, how bad can being homebound be?