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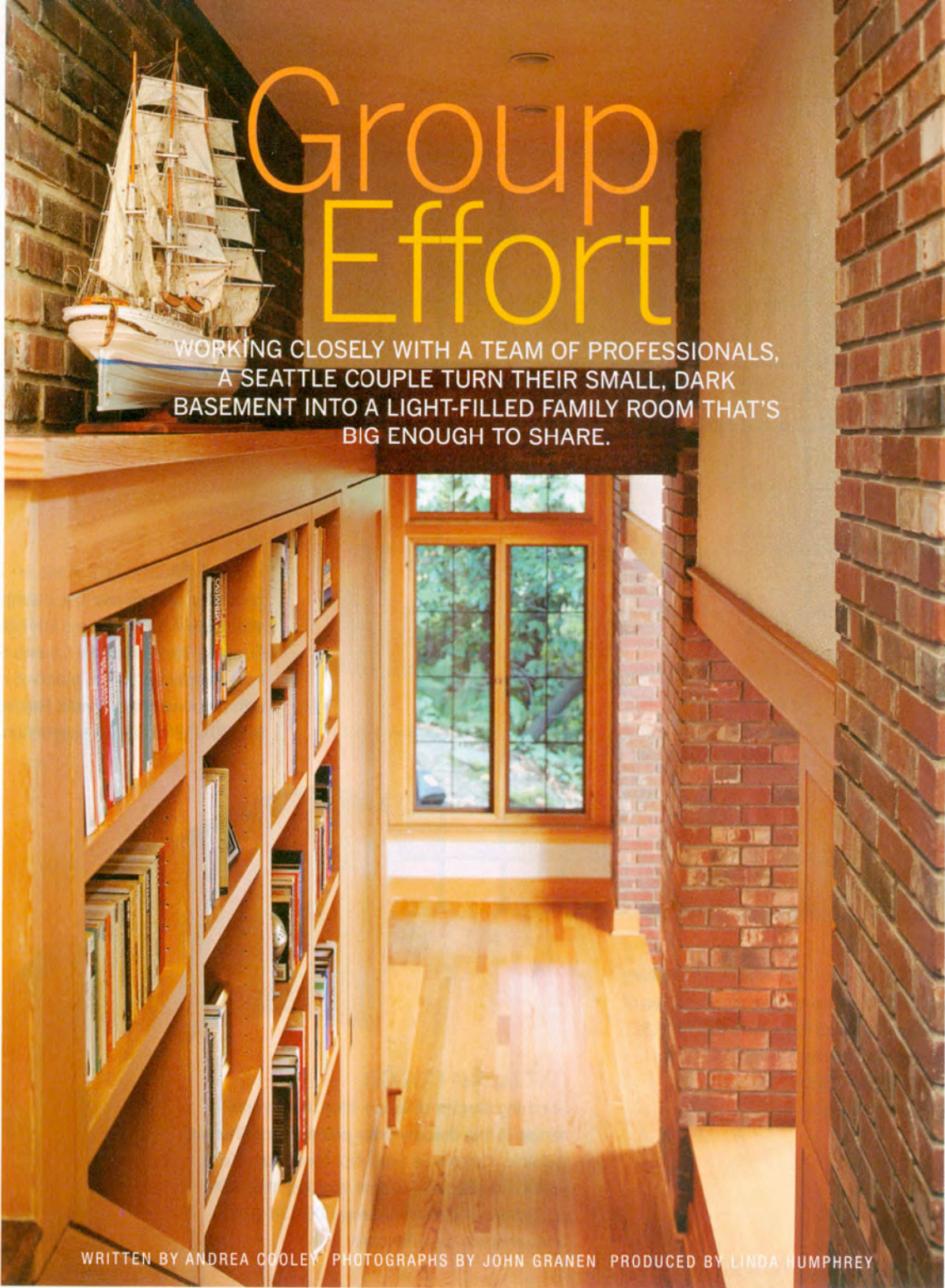
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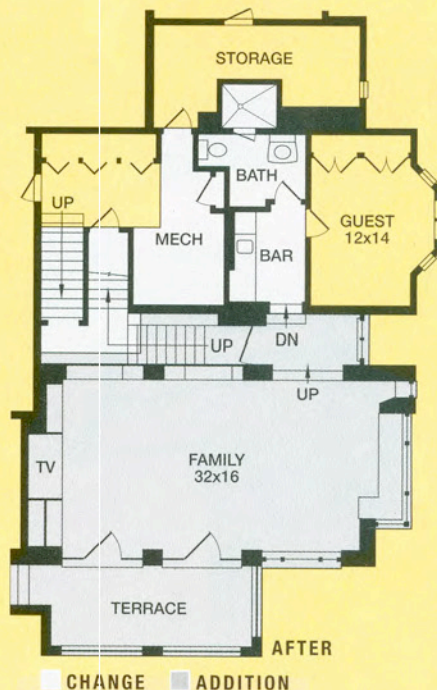
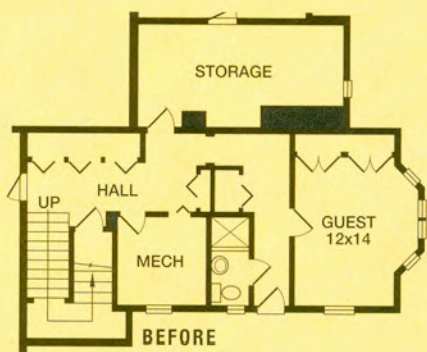
They say it takes a village to raise a child, but JoAnn Forman would say it takes a village to complete a successful remodel. When JoAnn and her husband, Barry, wanted to create a space for their kids to hang out in the basement, they knew they couldn't accomplish it on their own. The couple teamed with architect Nils Finne and contractor Mark Schilperoort to expand their dark and dingy basement into a welcoming family space.

JoAnn told Finne she wanted "a place where the kids could go and be comfortable and invite their friends." Having worked with him on previous projects, JoAnn knew she could trust Finne to take her dreams to the next level. "He took the basic reasons why I wanted the room and the very specific things I needed and made it a beautiful place to be," she says.



THIS PHOTO: French doors and windows line one side of JoAnn and Barry Forman's basement, filling the space with natural light and providing easy access to the outdoors. The beam structure of the vaulted ceiling complements exposed beams and rough plaster finishes found throughout the house.

OPPOSITE: The Formans wanted the lower level to feel connected to the main level, so there is no door at the top of the stairs. A pivoting door and sliding panel at the bottom of the stairs help control noise. Bookshelves line the stairs to maximize storage.



THE CHANGE

A small, uninviting basement becomes a spacious multipurpose family room with a lower-level addition built out of the hillside.

WHAT IT TOOK

- * Extending the existing basement out from the hillside to create a much larger, open space.
- * Redirecting the stairs to lead naturally from the home's main level down to the new family room.
- * Excavating several feet to create sufficient headroom under a dramatic new vaulted ceiling.
- * Using brick on the walls to match the exterior and connect the addition to the style of the rest of the house.
- * Adding large windows and French doors to open the room to the outdoors.



OPPOSITE AND ABOVE: The basement was designed to be both soundproof and open to the upstairs. A pocket door can be opened alongside the stairway or closed to keep noise from traveling upstairs.

BELOW: JoAnn planned for plenty of storage in the new space. Custom cabinets contain the entertainment center and hide all the audio equipment, including surround-sound speakers.

Finne had to keep two things in mind as he designed the addition to the basement. The first was the style of the existing house, a 1926 Tudor designed by prominent Seattle architect Arthur Loveless. Finne wanted to maintain the home's original style, making sure the lower level wouldn't look like it was tacked on. The second challenge was making the new space feel less like a basement and more like a family room.

The key to making the basement a fitting extension of the house started with the staircase leading to the space. "The path [to the basement] is where the design begins," Finne says. "It is just as important as the space itself." The staircase has no door at the top, allowing traffic to flow downstairs. The problem with not having a door was the noise traveling up the stairwell; the solution was to add a pivoting door at the bottom of the stairs.

Because the home is built on a hill, Finne was able to add large windows

4 DESIGN TIPS

You don't have to add on to your basement to gain additional living area. Here are things to consider if you want to turn your basement into an inviting space:

- 1. Bring in more light.** You can create a light-filled basement even if the space doesn't have any windows. Indirect lighting pointed toward the ceiling works well. Recessed lighting is also a good option for areas with low ceilings.
- 2. Cover a cold concrete floor with engineered wood.** Unlike solid hardwood, which can warp in moisture-prone areas, engineered surfaces can handle changes in humidity, making them suitable for basements. To avoid moisture problems, consider a subfloor panel system.
- 3. Seal sound from the upstairs.** Using a solid-core door, adding an extra layer of drywall to the ceiling, and sealing cracks are good strategies to absorb sound.
- 4. Avoid moisture problems.** Install breathable insulation, and direct drainage away from the home's foundation.





4 KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL REMODEL

JoAnn Forman credits the success of her basement addition to the team of professionals who worked on the project. Here are her tips for making your remodeling project run smoothly.

- 1. Communication:** The most important thing is choosing a designer who understands your needs and communicates with you easily.
- 2. Trust:** You need to trust your designer or architect to make your vision a reality.
- 3. Budget:** If your budget is tight, make sure your team is aware of this and willing to make changes to accommodate it.
- 4. Teamwork:** When hiring multiple professionals, it's important that they work well together. If a designer recommends a contractor he has worked with in the past, it's usually worth using his choice.

and French doors that flood the room with natural light—a real luxury for a basement—and provide outdoor access.

Perhaps the most striking element is the vaulted ceiling. “It is the exclamation point,” Finne says. “You don’t expect to see that at all.” The foundation had to be excavated several feet to create room for the 13-foot ceiling, which was inspired by crypt spaces found in French cathedrals and by the vaulted doorways throughout the rest of the house.

The result is just what the Formans wanted—a light, bright, welcoming space that blends seamlessly with their home. JoAnn says the basement has become a multipurpose area for the whole family. “It’s a very happy room,” she says. “It’s a place where we entertain other adults, where families get together, and where the young kids go.”

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TOP: The family room has plenty of space for a regulation-size pool table and is a popular hangout for the Forman kids and their friends. Hardwood floors, rough-hewn wood beams, and exposed-brick walls ground the space.

ABOVE: A small niche designed to house pool cues matches the cabinetry throughout the basement.

OPPOSITE: A corner window seat offers a perfect perch for pool players or book lovers.



WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU LEARNED FROM THIS REMODELING EXPERIENCE?

“It is a team effort. Don’t think you can do it by yourself. We had a contractor, an architect, and me;...the coming together and really working together made it happen.”

—homeowner JoAnn Forman

