

From Lowly to Lovely - Updating the Mansion from the Bottom Up

Designer Embraces Repurposing Trend When Updating Lower Level of Governor's Residence

(St. Paul, MN) - Every Minnesota basement has its challenges and the Governor's residence is no exception. Twenty years since its last facelift, the lower level was dark and uninviting at 1006 Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

"My first thoughts were to lighten the dark masculine tones and make the space more welcoming," says Barbara Hafften, the allied ASID interior designer who led the renovation project. "I wanted it to be a space where governors and their families could entertain guests and would like to spend some time."

The current repurposing trend expanded Hafften's options when working within a tight budget. Although it is the 'people's house,' updating the Governor's

provide additional storage for glassware, dishes and serving pieces.

The long, narrow room needed organization, so Hafften arranged the furniture into three zones: TV/fireplace, pool table and refreshment/bar area. The fireplace became the new focal point, with the television moved to a nearby wall for easy viewing. Swivel chairs let guests watch TV, enjoy the fire, or cheer on others during a pool game. A classic leather sofa adds comfort with understated elegance.

A new area rug and coordinating accent pillows bring splashes of burnt orange, a trending hue that can easily be replaced when the color falls out of favor.

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mansion is not part of the state budget and renovations are done through private fundraising.

"I wanted to retain a sense of history and tradition by holding on to certain pieces, and I was able to find some great items in the attic," she said. Reusing furniture or moving pieces around in a home is not a new idea for interior designers. Hafften was able to transition the lower level into the 21st century for future governors and maintain its history by incorporating the treasures from the attic.

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Downstairs, an existing TV cabinet was repurposed into a custom beverage center with a granite countertop, small refrigerator and microwave. "There are no kitchen facilities on the lower level," says Hafften, "so this added modern convenience." Built-in cabinets

A mid-sized window near the pool table is the only source of available light, so installing brighter, warmer bulbs in recessed fixtures and replacing the over-the-table pool light brighten the room. An existing bench, reupholstered with updated fabric, provides additional seating. Hafften added two sets of pub tables and chairs to encourage lingering in the space.

Since the update, the residence staff has heard compliments from guests and notice people wanting to stay and enjoy the room, completing one of Hafften's goals.

Barbara Hafften holds a B.S. in Design from the University of Minnesota. She has been an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers since 1992 and served on the ASID Board of Directors. Barbara has been asked to speak at many interior design engagements and holds a 2009 Presidential Citation from the American Society of Interior Designers.

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The Results

BEFORE



AFTER

