



Left: built-in storage and gas fireplace make this lower level feel like anything but. Above: the smart walk-up bar with antique brown marble top and matching cabinetry.

# Cats, Dog & Ducts, Oh My!

## Lower Level provides Creature Comforts

BY MARGARET ANNE FEHR · PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

**K**RIS AND CARRIE WANTED AN OPEN CONCEPT multi-purpose room downstairs that would match the style of the upper levels of their five year old home. Their list of ‘must-haves’ included a luxe bathroom that would incorporate a traditional sauna, a two-person walk-in shower complete with body sprays, heated flooring and marble top vanity. That was the list that was presented to Brian Arnold of Trikor Construction, the company that the couple chose to take on their 950 square foot renovation.

And by the way, the space needed to be pet-friendly, since this young couple include 4 cats and a dog within their family, so it was important that flooring stand up to the inevitable patter of paws over the long term.

Brian said, “Right away, we chose to go with a high quality laminate set on a dry core sub-floor system. It enabled us to get everything up off the concrete to get away from the cold concrete floor feeling and also to get some air movement underneath to control any moisture issues. There’s roughly a ¼ inch air space

between the sub-floor product and the concrete floor.”

Brian, Kris and Carrie consulted throughout the process, working out from the bathroom layout to design a workout area, a TV viewing area complete with built-in storage, a direct vent gas fireplace with rock inset for a very modern look, an extra bedroom, as well as a utility area complete with cat door entrance.

“The ductwork in the lower level was challenging,” says Brian, “and required a bit of creative framing. We were trying to hide the ductwork and to make it blend in with the rest of the ceiling. It’s an obvious necessity down there, but we spent a fair amount of time trying to minimize its impact.”

“In the back area where the exercise room is set, the ductwork was a bit of an issue because it ran almost right up to the back window. We went through a few solutions because we needed to give Kris and Carrie enough headroom for their workouts while still giving enough

clearance for the ductwork and also trying to let in as much light from the window as possible.”

The ductwork between the TV area and the walk-up bar also required some adaptation. In order to install pot lighting in the ceiling, a miniature coffered alcove was framed to accommodate the lights by finding some space between the cold air return duct and supply duct to bring the lights up and out of the way. Says Brian, “It kind of ended up as a really nice look besides offering the functionality we needed and ties in well with the angular shelving treatment on the TV feature wall.”

The lights also shine down on the walk-up bar complete with wine cooler, bar fridge with beer on tap, and Antique Brown marble counter that’s set within cabinets that match the corner wraparound bookcase in the adjacent TV room.

A half-wall separates the bar area from the workout space which has direct sight lines to the TV that can be swiveled towards the back area, an obvious benefit of an ►



Two views of the luxury bathroom. Features include: marble counter top, heated flooring, two person walk-in shower and sauna.

open concept floor plan. Both Kris and Carrie are extremely pleased with the professionalism that Trikor provided during the renovation. “They were professional right from the beginning”, says Carrie, “even when I called their answering service, I could tell. They were very thorough in their estimates and really listened to what we wanted.”

Looking back, Brian says that besides the ductwork, the other challenge was coming up with a design that would incorporate everything the couple wanted in their plans. Brian’s personal favorite is how the bathroom turned out. “It ended up becoming the showpiece of the job! I think it turned out more like a spa than just a bathroom.” <sup>®</sup>