

Masterful Moment

CHAOS CONTROL

To fend off unappealing clutter, designer Karen Sealy outfitted this basement lounge space with tons of storage, both open and concealed.



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PHOTOGRAPHY DONNA GRIFFITH

heat pad

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FIRE STARTER

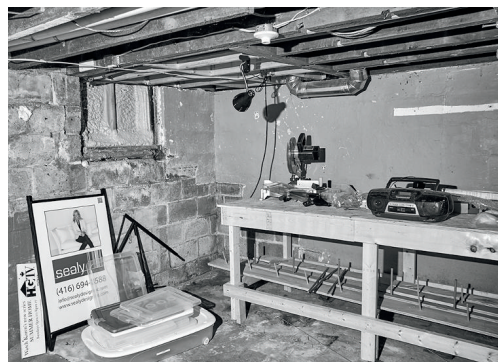
Nothing dispels the chilly, damp basement maxim like a fireplace. “You can beautify a room,” says Sealy, “but if it’s cold or drafty, it’s not enjoyable and no longer beautiful.”

Despite its cold, dark and cluttered reputation, a basement can be cozy and inviting, as this subterranean space proves.

“EVERYONE WANTS A WARM, WELCOMING INTERIOR,” says Karen Sealy of Sealy Design Inc. That’s easier said than done when dealing with a dark, unfinished 500-square-foot basement, but the Toronto-based designer was up to the task.

Envisioning a spacious, bright suite complete with a family room, kitchenette and bathroom, Sealy began with some intensive structural work, including underpinning to add ceiling height and relocating windows to increase natural light. “Structural changes aren’t as sexy as decorating,” says the designer, “but they can make all the difference.” Other game-changers include a gas fireplace and heated concrete floors throughout, which ensure year-round coziness.

To soothe the eye and imbue that serene, welcoming feel, Sealy went for a mostly neutral palette and emphasized clean lines. But the real magic is unseen: In the family room, the off-white shiplap covering much of the fireplace wall conceals ample storage space (including a full closet!), and in place of a conventional TV—which would have dominated the small room—a projector and screen are tucked away when not in use. The result is a surprisingly roomy and warm space that’s as perfect for reading on the sofa as it is for hosting a movie night.



BEFORE



Masterful Moment

LIKE COLOURS

"Contrast makes a room feel smaller," says Sealy, who stuck to a neutral palette of creams, light browns, warm greys and just a touch of orangey-red inspired by the delightful heated concrete floors.

Masterful Moments

ALL LIT UP

From the newly positioned windows to the mesh staircase enclosure, Sealy capitalized on sunlight, but she also added ample lighting fixtures for a luminous effect any time of day.

WARM WOOD

The plentiful white finishes have a bright, rather than stark, effect thanks to a healthy dose of honey-toned wood, including the sheets of stained pine on the ceiling.

Classic Gray OC-23 WALL PAINT, benjaminmoore.ca.
VANITY, mutikb.com. VANITY FAUCET, grohe.ca.
MEDICINE CABINET, robern.com.



Karen Sealy's Top Basement Renovation Tips

THINK AHEAD

Consider your current needs and also what you might require in the future, whether that's room to grow your family, a potential rental space or resale value.

PACE YOURSELF

Don't jump ahead to decorating. Unfinished basements let you start from scratch, so plan any structural changes first.

LAYER LIGHTING

Include multiple types—overhead, sconces, task lamps and pendants—and put them on dimmers so you can tailor the mood.

INVEST WISELY

Furniture and fixtures that get a lot of use will expose poor quality quickly, so don't skimp on faucets, doorknobs or sofas.