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Interiors

Designers respond to rising demand for homes with a 'man cave'

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By Kate Watson-Smyth

Popular requests include DJ booths, cigar humidifiers, wine fridges and bespoke pool tables



heodore Roosevelt had his trophy room, George Bernard Shaw a summer house

It wasn't just Virginia Woolf who wanted a room of her own. Men, too, have always hankered after their own space - be it a shed at the bottom of the garden or a

▲ that revolved to catch the sun and Thomas Edison a library complete with bed.

gentleman's study. In recent years, designers and architects have in



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"man caves" in the home: rooms that are a designated male space fitted with everything from DJ booths to cigar humidifiers, wine fridges and bespoke pool tables. Caroline Takla, managing director of The Collection LLP, a London property-buying consultancy, says segregated space within homes is on the rise and

describes one masculine room filled with furniture

made from different aircraft parts, including a desk

from a Boeing 747 engine cowling and an armchair

made from Spitfire fuselage and leather.

increasingly been commissioned to create so-called

"There is an increasing trend for men and women to live separate lives under the same roof and the desire for a man to have his own space is just as popular as it is for women to have a dressing room," she says. "We have found that the discovery of a man cave can

secure a purchase. The wife might make the overall

buying decision, but finding a man cave, which gets the husband excited, can be the icing on the cake." Laurence Bray, a guitarist with the band The Pre New, has recently set up PYLØN with five other musicians, artists and designers, sourcing and selling furniture

space: some original art, at least two pieces of classic furniture - such as a 1970s Falcon chair, antlers, chrome-and-glass tables. And strictly no cushions. "Cushions or pillows represent rules. They're always perfectly placed in your aunt's house,

designed to appeal to men. He has a list of ingredients for the perfect masculine

provide men with a place to buy the furniture they want." chairman of the franchisee Octagon International Qatar, has a man cave which was designed by Katharine Pooley. It is, he says, the

ultimate male idea of luxury. "It is the only room in the house that is completely mine so I wanted it to be as masculine as we could make it. In Qatar men

Lochie Rankin of Lichfields, a property search company in central London, says that now cinemas and bars are commonplace there has been a push towards rooms that

"Generally, these rooms will be painted in a darker palette, combining materials such as suede and Alcantara on the walls, leather seating and walnut or mahogany woodwork and classic movie posters." Interior designer Maurizio Pellizzoni, director of the Chelsea-based MPD design

who had just bought a five-bedroom house. "We created a purple pool table and a bar and painted it in dark masculine colours

practice, was recently given free rein to design a "playroom" for a 25-year-old client

whether it's a study or a playroom. "Often it's set up as a study. Adding a bar can be a common feature and there has to be a desk, although it's not really

Alan Waxman, director of Landmass property developers, has recently finished one man cave which included a wine fridge, a waterfall, a large television screen along with sunken

seating and a fireplace. The coffee a Gaggenau cigar box. "Often we add good surround sound," he says.

screen and projector.

with the decor. Simon Williams, of London-based Olive Audio Visual, was asked by one client to install a DJ booth and sound system as well as a drop-down cinema

we had the speakers custom-finished in the precise RAL colour of the walls," says Williams. Daniel Kostiuc, of London design company Intarya, has worked on several projects

for snacks. Full automation is also popular - to control blinds, lighting, air conditioning and audiovisual equipment, all from an iPad." When it comes to paint, while dark tones are always popular, Kostiuc has recently started using richer colours such as navy and emerald green. "We try to steer away

inspiration, says Sharon Elalouf of Ash Design London.

Men are generally drawn to a structural approach and take hotel suites and bars as

greens, browns and duck-egg blues and furniture from Vitra, Smania, Armani and Edha."

a leather-and-brass reading chair, says the main aim is to create a masculine space within a house. "We don't want to be stuck in the basement and hidden away. We long for islands among the family where we can express our personality," he says. "I can often be found in my wingback chair, which has a dedicated reading light and high sides so I can hide in plain sight with a whisky and a book."





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Contracts & tenders Analyst research PropertySales.com RSS feeds there's no room for them in a man den. Get a luxurious rug instead," he says. "When you have a wife and kids, your own space can get diminished and we felt it was important to Nasser H Al Ansari, a Qatari businessman and

Hirshorn Chair Spitfire, £1,995.

andrewmartin.co.uk

and women entertain separately so it's the perfect environment in which to entertain my friends for hours on end. It has everything I need including a bespoke bar, billiards table and Wurlitzer jukebox."

are more than just a quiet hide-out. "These include tables for wine tasting with

cigar humidors and bars.

temperature-controlled storage that wouldn't be out of place in high-end restaurants,

with black wallpaper and a grey sofa. There is often so little room for a man in a house and they are trying to find their own space to go away from the family -

there for work."

machine was built-in and there was even bookshelves to give a library feel. Or perhaps a gym area, and there has to be really A sound system tends to be one of the key requirements, but it must not interfere



where the technology had to be concealed. "We have had 95-inch televisions hidden

behind panelling and even a fully stocked bar complete with fridge, sink and shelves

"The visible equipment had to fit in with the aesthetic of the Italian design team and

from classic brown and towards dark furniture rather than dark paint to create a masculine and calm environment," he says.

"They like Poliform wardrobes and built-in desks. The finish is very important – lacquer, leather and crocodile skin with black-and-white photography. We use olive

Massimo Minale, of Buster + Punch, whose designs have included a bespoke bar and

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