

Where the Weekend Happens

By Craig Argenti

Photography by Joseph Tiano



A blank basement becomes a luxe, multi-zone entertaining hub with a full bar, wine wall, gaming lounge, and more – designed by Ruth Casper Design Studio.



THE VISION

When a young first-time homeowner moved into his new townhome, the basement was an untouched concrete canvas. Searching for the right designer to bring his vision to life led him to the Michigan Design Center website, where the portfolio of *Ruth Casper Design Studio* immediately resonated. Confident in her approach, he reached out—and the collaboration began.

The dream was clear: a space that could host 20 - 30 family members on the weekend, blending lounge, gaming, dining, and bar. Designer Ruth Casper translated that into a series of connected zones, each intentional, uncluttered, and ready for action.



“He wanted clean, intentional design — everything in its place. That discipline let us create a space that feels inviting even with a crowd.”

— Ruth Casper

Basement BEFORE



The lower level's centerpiece is a full-service entertainment bar.

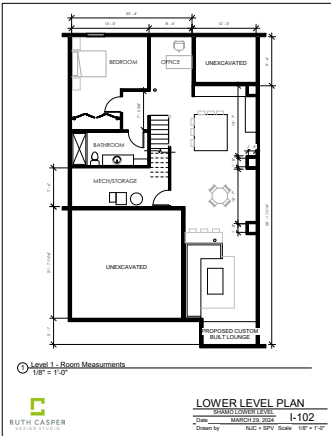
THE BAR THAT SETS THE TONE

As guests descend the stairs, they are immediately greeted by a sleek corner bar anchored by fluted wood millwork at the island, and a vertical-groove tile backsplash—details that pull the eye upward and visually heighten the space. Custom oak floating shelves, routed with concealed LEDs, showcase the homeowner's extensive tequila collection. A French-door refrigerator, dedicated beverage fridge, and ice maker keep crowds served, while a high-pressure glass rinser offers a quick, professional way to prep glasses.

The transformation from bare concrete to a full-service bar is captured in Ruth’s original rendering.

FROM SKETCH TO REALITY

Uninterrupted counters were planned to fit catering pans and chafers. Bar stools were intentionally placed so every seat is within view of a TV—ensuring no one misses an important play. Stock cabinetry was customized by the studio’s carpenter with roll-outs, a tailored liquor cabinet, and other tweaks, showing how Ruth and her team “reverse-engineered from the budget” to deliver a custom look with cost-efficient choices.



A JEWEL UNDER THE STAIRS

What might have been dead space is now a conversation piece: a glass-front, under-stairs wine display and cigar humidor in rift-cut oak with matte black pegs. Midway through the project, a new humidor required deeper shelving. Ruth solved the challenge with a slim black channel and infill—a clever adjustment that extended the shelf by three inches while adding a refined, stylish accent.



“The long room needed rhythm, not a single endless wall of white. I insisted on a bold, matte-black TV wall to break up the volume—a move my client now loves!”

— Ruth Casper

THE GAMING HUB

At the heart of the open floor plan, four swivel lounge chairs cluster around the main gaming screen. Inside the slatted black media credenza: 16 dedicated outlets, charging for controllers, and a concealed IR (“red-eye”) system—so gameplay is grab-and-go with zero cord clutter. Performance upholstery stands up to marathon sessions, while the luxury vinyl plank underfoot is as durable as it is handsome.

THE LOUNGE THAT LIVES LARGE

In the main living area, deep sectional seating anchors the area with space for up to eight, creating a true gathering spot for family and friends. A structural post became a design feature thanks to a petite bar-ledge clad in the same fluted wood seen at the island in the bar area.

The dramatic multi-TV “video wall” is composed of four individual screens that can be synced together for a stadium-style viewing experience or split to stream multiple games at once—ideal for game day hosting. Along the adjacent wall, three framed art pieces add rhythm and balance; one cleverly hinged to disguise the electrical panel for quick access.



THE NICHE THAT BECAME A RETREAT

A custom built-in daybed transforms an awkward niche into the coziest seat in the house. Sized roughly like a queen bed, it invites lounging with layered pillows and textured upholstery, while painted fluted panels echo millwork details seen at the bar and post ledge.

Practical touches elevate the comfort: two full-width drawers beneath store blankets and pillows, while slim ledges along the perimeter provide resting spots for drinks during movie nights or casual gatherings. Sculptural sconces flank the bed, casting a soft glow which gives the niche its own sense of place.



The guest bath pairs warm wood cabinetry with a clean, monochrome palette and a graphic vertical tile motif that nods to the main space. Rather than multiple niches in the shower, Casper designed a single half-height ledge with a quartz cap—streamlined to install, simpler to keep tidy, and kinder to the budget.





LOOKING AHEAD

For Ruth Casper and her team, the reward was seeing their client's starter home transformed into a destination where family and friends gather week after week. And for the homeowner, this successful collaboration is just the beginning. With plans to move into a larger home in the future, he's already looking forward to teaming up with Ruth again—proof that great design builds not only beautiful spaces, but lasting partnerships.

All furnishings, fabrics, and fixtures were sourced through
Ruth Casper Design Studio