

# COVER STORY

## game rooms

Tiffany lit. Colorful Tiffany-style lamps illuminate a pool table in the Moran game room in Bloomfield Hills.



## Entertaining for the 21st century

By LINDA ANN CHOHIN • SPECIAL WRITER



Remember going down to the recreation room in the basement to shoot a game of pool with friends? Times change and with it the terminology. Twenty years ago, leisure time meant playing pool, darts, or pin ball in the basement. Today, a game room houses video games, air hockey, football, and other forms of recreational equipment.

Tiffany style billiard lamps, neon signs, juke boxes, home theater wall systems and popcorn wagons decorate this amusement area of the 1990s in style.

"Game rooms in Michigan take place in the lower level of the house. The reason for having a separate area for recreational activities is because people are staying at home more, plus it's a place where the kids can bring their friends," said Bob Seroka, owner of Billy-Bob's Game Room Furnishings in Royal Oak, West Bloomfield and Sterling Heights.

"It's great for an evening at home and lots of fun," Billy Bob's specializes in fun and functional furniture for game rooms. Depending on whether you prefer to sit in front of the television to relax during leisure time or play any one of a number of games, functional pieces like a gold plated slot machine from the 1930s to pub tables and chairs will create an environment tailored to activities you find pleasurable.

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**Bob Seroka**  
owner, Billy Bob's Game Room Furnishings

The type of furnishings for a game room is up to you in more ways than one. Solid cherry, white washed oak, golden pecan, and formal black pool tables come in all sizes and finishes to coordinate with existing home decor.

"A lot of people usually want to add a 2 in 1 or 3 in 1 game table because it takes up less space than a pool table. The home computer is a big part of a game room also. Home office furniture is a big adjunct because computer games and computers are a way of life," Seroka said.

The next part of doing a game room is that you can do it piecemeal adding to it as finances permit. You can spend as little as \$4 to 5,000 to more than \$60,000 for a game room fully outfitted right down to the poker chips that are personalized.

John Moran would rather not say how much the game room in his Bloomfield Hills home cost. Designed by Robin Wilson of Perimeter Furniture in Franklin, the area houses a 2 in 1 game table, an ornately carved Brunswick billiards table, and a home theater center with projection TV. Moran spends many a night here playing poker with pals. A refrigerator and microwave oven located behind the wet bar enables him to prepare a quick snack without leaving guests to run upstairs to the kitchen. The dishwasher smiles clean up easy.

"It's gone from a raw basement to a

wonderful place to entertain. I never had a functional lower level as a kid so this room is used," said John Moran.

"I entertain a lot and have a 17-year-old son who uses it. I wanted to make something comfortable for myself to enjoy and for everyone else to feel comfortable. I'm very happy with the way it turned out. It's just a wonderful thing to do for yourself. The projection TV is probably better than going to the movies."

At Viscount Pool and Spa Centers in Livonia and Waterford, this is the season for gaming room sales. Many customers come in looking for Christmas gifts of electronic dart boards, air hockey or football for their kids and end buying a pool table for the family.

If space is at a premium, consider buying a table that doubles or triples functionally.

"Pool tables are real popular now because it's a winter sport. We offer a game room package of a pool table that converts to a ping pong table," said antiquesman Michael Miller.

Still unsure as to whether you want to devote an entire area to a game room? Amusement Sales Inc. in Redford sells used pin ball machines, coin activated pool tables, and video games.

"People say they're buying a game for their kids but they're buying it for themselves. The older pieces are what people want because they're more affordable. With the pinballs like Pac-Man or video, they make them only one year, so they're hard to find once an arcade installs the new games," said manager Sahar Samaha.

"Right now darts are hot sellers because many people play in dart tournaments."

One last thought before buying equipment for a game room: Measure the area where the game room equipment will be located. Be sure to leave enough room around pool, air hockey and football tables to play the game. Then, measure the game or furniture before you buy it.

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This table can be used for a variety of games and is the regular site of poker games at the Moran house.