

# DESIGN + DECOR

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**KATHLEEN POIRIER  
ARCHITECTS**









The basement is both a boon and a bane of home design. Though it offers unlimited potential to expand a home's functionality, design savvy is required to create a welcoming rather than sepulchral atmosphere. For this multipurpose basement renovation, architect Kathleen Poirier of Kathleen Poirier Architects, LLC, was also tasked with creating a "modern Texas ranch vibe."

The space was conceived to serve three specialty functions: an entertainment and lounge space with a bar, fireplace and wine room for adults; a separate game room and homework zone for the children; and a full-sized gym and bath with steam shower.

Kathleen was strategic in both her material and aesthetic choices. To make the space more inviting, she chose a vinyl floor tile that simulates the look of wood, since wood flooring cannot be installed on a subsurface slab. She also ensured that all ductwork and ceiling pipes were concealed from view. Since authenticity was important, Kathleen sourced limestone for the fireplace and bar area directly from Salado Quarry in Florence, TX, and the rustic wooden bar top from a local sawmill. All the doors are of stain-grade plank-style wood.

To keep with the ranch motif and improve the flow from the main house to the space, Kathleen's team replaced the standard straight-run enclosed basement staircase with an open flaring stair, replete with wrought-iron balusters selected by the homeowner. Kathleen used the Texas-sourced limestone for an exterior stair entrance to connect interior with exterior, and also used it in the stone landing for the stairs. "We wanted to create the look of posts and beams of a ranch house," she says. "Our posts were built up out of 5/4- by 8-inch cedar to give the illusion of large-scale solid wood. We coffered the ceiling with the same cedar material."

Comfortable upholstered furniture in cowhide finishes accompanied by decorative artwork and accessories make the space unmistakably Western casual, yet modern. Like a 10-gallon hat, rustic and iconic, the space Kathleen has created captures the vibe of the majestic Wild West.

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