

before & after

# Maximizing Style in an Unusual Space

Shannon Keough



*Designer: Kathie Chrisicos (above), Chrisicos Interior Design, Boston, MA. Workroom and installation: That Covers It!, Sterling, MA. Photography by David Snow, Andover, MA. Fabric: roman shades: Fabricut, Pindler & Pindler; skylight fabric: JF Fabrics; draperies: Pindler & Pindler. Hardware: skylight: Kirsch tension rods; draperies: Kirsch standard traverse rods; roman shades: RollEase. Faux-painted wall by Dawn Evans Scaltreto, Watertown, MA. Accessories: New England Silk and Accessories, Needham, MA. Rugs: ProSource, Woburn, MA. Gym flooring: Bolon from K. Powers & Company, Needham, MA. Bar and media cabinet: custom-designed by Chrisicos Interior Design, built by Dough Bashaw, Orleans, MA. Home-theater contractor: Eytan Vestin, Jamaica Plain, MA. Furnishings: Selva, CTH Sherrill, Westlake, Cox, Southwood. Lighting: Arc Light, Nashua, NH.*

Kathie Chrisicos faced a unique challenge with this conversion project. Originally designed to accommodate a lap pool, her clients wanted to convert this 65' x 16' space into a multi-function room consisting of a gym, billiard area, home theater, and space for entertaining.

Chrisicos considered a variety of factors when planning the design. The unusually long shape of the room had to be addressed, as well as the prominent arches. In addition, the design would have to work with existing sliding doors that led from the space to the outer garden. The home-theater area would need to be sufficiently darkened, and treatments would need to be designed to block cold air in the winter and hot sun in the summer.

The final design incorporates the existing structure with minimal changes. The most dramatic change to the space came with the

installation of a faux-painted parquet wood wall between the home gym and the entertainment area. The wall acts as a backdrop to the plasma-screen TV and adds visual interest, while complementing the other wooden features in the room.

"My clients wanted a simple look that would appeal to both men and women," says Chrisicos. The window treatments she designed were understated, allowing the custom-designed furnishings in the home theater to stand out. Classic pinch-pleat draperies block outside light for movie-viewing, while a sheer-fabric treatment over a skylight is a soft addition to the many hardwood surfaces in the room.

The result is a warm and inviting space ideal for entertaining. "This was a most rewarding project because of the clients—they are lovely people, and I had the pleasure of creating a look that they love coming home to."



*[Top] Originally built for a lap pool, the clients wanted to convert this space into a multi-function room including a home theater, billiard area, gym, and a bar space for entertaining.*

*[Above] The billiard area includes a custom bar with recessed arched panels designed with reference to the arched shape of the room.*

*[Left] The design of the gym is more contemporary than the rest of the space, featuring Bolon flooring, a twisted vinyl product, and modern art and lighting.*

## Designing a Multi-Function Room

Unusual spaces—pool rooms, carriage houses, four-season porches—can be a rich source of work for a resourceful designer. With more clients taking an interest in special-interest rooms like home theaters, spas, and gyms, it pays to keep an eye open for untapped spaces in your clients' homes. Here are some suggestions for making the most of a non-traditional space.

### [1] Work around the existing architecture

Chrisicos considered a variety of approaches to the prominent arches, which appeared to be bleached-out from the room's former incarnation as a pool room. She decided to stain the arches to match the walls. "My goal was to blend the arches with the walls to eliminate the stark contrast you see in the 'before' photos, and also to minimize additional labor hours and cost to the client," says Chrisicos. "The gel stain I used could be wiped or painted on the arches without additional preparation or sanding."

### [2] Mix styles by creating distinct spaces

The home gym features a more contemporary style, as reflected in the lighting, seating, and artwork choices. "The home gym is suitably separated from the home theater with a punch of color on the wall taken from the Bolon spruce flooring," says Chrisicos.

### [3] Focus on utility

Chrisicos kept functionality in mind while finalizing the design. The classic pinch-pleat draperies darken the space for home-theater use while blocking out the elements. The wall she installed between the gym and the theater breaks up the exaggerated length of the room, creates a focal point, and allows for varying styles in each space.

### [4] Create continuity across the design

Chrisicos paid special attention to the most dramatic features in the room, taking care to downplay their prominence so as not to overwhelm the design. She stained the arches to match the other wooden surfaces in the room and commissioned an artist to create the parquet wood wall—a feature that draws the eye while blending with the overall design. **WF**

Your design could appear in a future *Before & After* feature. Contact Shannon Keough at [shannonk@gracemcnamarainc.com](mailto:shannonk@gracemcnamarainc.com), or call 651/762-2022 for more information.