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A ROMANTIC MADISON GETAWAY

THE HOME ISSUE

A VISIT WITH NJN'S
KENT MANAHAN

GREAT GARAGES





Gorgeous Garages

This long neglected "room" is getting a makeover



BY ERIN MURPHY SANDERS

High-style garages aren't just the latest craze; they have their roots in current lifestyle trends. The garage is the "new front door" and homeowners want to make a good first impression. Sellers need to differentiate their homes in the current soft real estate market. Empty nesters have downsized their abodes, but not their stuff. Homeowners are looking at this underutilized space as a potential exercise room, workshop or entertainment area. While active families want to get the toys, sports equipment, gardening tools – and the cars – inside. As far as home improvements go, it's a win-win situation. According to Les Hutton, owner of GarageTek in Stirling, "You'll recoup your investment and make life comfortable while you're there."

BIGGEST ROOM IN THE HOUSE

Depending on the homeowner's needs and budget, Hutton says projects can range from a single wall to a complete makeover, as in this Whippany garage. Designed to withstand extremes in temperature and humidity, GarageTek's modular system is durable and flexible. The shock absorbing material on the columns protects car doors as well as kids' craniums. ➤



TAKING BACK THE GARAGE

When the Whippany homeowners decided to put a theater in the basement, they needed to look elsewhere for storage space. After trying to do it themselves, they turned to the professionals. Above: Clear the decks. With four active children, the family needed a multifunctional sports rack to keep bats, sticks, balls and helmets organized and off the floor. Right top: Everything has its place, from bikes to hand tools. Middle: Long term and seasonal storage (like holiday ornaments) are up high in bins, while jackets, muddy shoes and boots, and school backpacks are just outside the door in this supplemental mudroom. Paint and a nonskid tread were applied to the formerly unfinished stairs. A handy auxiliary pantry, to the right of the stairs, stores bulk groceries like paper towels and cases of drinks. Bottom: Hutton of GarageTek says the trick to organizing is to make it easy, like this basketball holder. "We have hundreds of storage solutions," he says.