

Newsday

Lhome



Vance and Raeanne Gillenwater turned an old closet into a centrally located bar in their Huntington Station home.

Top shelf

HOME BARS WITH SPECIAL INGREDIENTS CAN COST HUNDREDS TO THOUSANDS **C6**



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Raising the **bar** on

How homeowners carve out spaces to serve up fun

BY LIZA N. BURBY
Special to Newsday

When Raeanne and Vance Gillenwater of Huntington Station wanted to display his grandfather's collection of 200 shot glasses last year, they turned to a 5-by-7 catchall closet centrally located among the living room, dining room and kitchen.

"The shot glasses were in a cabinet that didn't display them well; they were too hidden," said Raeanne, 52. She and Vance, 62, are both teachers, but met in 1993 at a restaurant where they both worked.

"We're a family that enjoys the atmosphere of food and spirits, which is a reason we built a bar," she said.

Many Long Island homeowners like the Gillenwaters have been entertaining in their houses more since the pandemic shutdown. Because of that, they are often looking to create hosting options that are both convenient and offer a "wow factor." So, they've been incorporating bars into their kitchens, dining rooms, home offices and even their bedrooms, said Sherry Gossett, a designer and manager of Rochon Cabinet Makers in Greenvale.

But these are not the Formica basement bars of the 1960s and '70s. Many have custom cabinetry and lighted shelving behind glass to display expensive alcohol collections. Countertops can include a sink for a wet bar and high-end appliances, like a wine cooler with drawers and a freezer. Gossett, 55, of Bellmore, said many have antique mirrors and stone backsplashes. A popular color for both countertops and cabinets is navy.

As for the location, bars can replace a china cabinet in the dining room or be a separate open bar area in the kitchen. John Packard, owner of Packard



Nava Slavin built this coffee bar in her home with a European design as a separate unit between her kitchen and dining room.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Moving the party from crowded kitchen to basement bar.
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Cabinetry in Sea Cliff, said he's also been designing bars in family rooms and butler's pantries, which serve as hidden bars between the kitchen and dining room and offer a transitional serving station for hosts. Many are also incorporating high-end coffee makers either in the bar or as a separate coffee bar, designers said.

According to Nava Slavin,

president of The Creative Edge Inc. in Roslyn, whether you are serving alcohol or coffee, the trend is to locate bars closest to where you're likely to be entertaining.

"Some clients have two bars, with the open bar in the living space and the coffee bar in the kitchen. We've even done coffee bars in bedrooms," she said.

Packard, who lives in Locust

Valley, said that all of these bars are like staging areas that draw guests away from food preparation spots where they tend to congregate. An open bar can have counter space for drink mixes and appetizers, while the coffee bar can be where you serve dessert and set up the cups, milk and sugar.

Packard said that custom cabinetry typically runs \$1,500 to \$2,000 per foot. A countertop in granite or quartz and backsplash tile is at least \$3,000. Lights can be embedded into the sides of cabinet doors for about \$500 per cabinet, or you can run a switch to the cabinets by hiring an elec-

trician for a cost. A sink can start at \$200 and requires a plumber. Contractors tend to cost about \$300 per hour. With coffee bars, Gossett said that some opt for custom built-in machines with water plumbed in that start at \$4,000.

"We're not talking about this as a little investment, as you can easily spend \$20,000 on this area with custom cabinetry," said Gossett. "If you hire a designer the range is \$10,000 to \$30,000."

A CONVERTED CLOSET

The Gillenwaters gave themselves a deadline of a 2022 Christmas party and com-

home entertaining



Vance and Raenne Gillenwater turned a closet into a bar that is centrally located.



Martin Steiger has a vintage Pepsi vending machine in the bar in his Riverhead home.

pleted their bar in a few weeks. The conversion included utilizing seven existing shelves and exposing the chimney brick, and adding a removable countertop repurposed from a coffee table. They also added a half door, cut down from a full door, and 10 shelves on which to display those shot glasses. A small freezer slipped into a wall space for access to ice, and they added a mini fridge for wine.

Also on display is a picture Raeanne drew in the '90s of an East Meadow bar that no longer exists called Potter's Pub and vintage beer cans from the World's Fair where Vance worked. Mixing necessities, like bar tools, as well as wineglasses and old steins are also on display.

"It's definitely been fun. It was a great addition to the household," said Raeanne.

BASEMENT PARTY PLACE

Martin and Patricia Steiger, 61 and 60, respectively, of

Riverhead, like to entertain every year in their contemporary-style home with several parties, like a wine tasting, Prohibition-theme and on St. Patrick's Day. But everyone likes to gather around their kitchen island, which limits the hosts' movements. During the pandemic, they decided to redo their basement and while they hadn't planned it, an odd corner lent itself to a bar.

"My wife and I are social people," Martin said, referring to Patricia, an assistant director of nursing at Northwell Health. "Redoing the basement as another place to congregate and meet seemed like a good idea."

The couple designed the bar and hired a contractor to help with the base and lighting. Over two months in 2021, Martin, who is retired from law enforcement and 24 years in the Army Reserves, finished the bar rail, foot rail, trim work and black walnut counter, painted and stained the frame

and installed the shelving.

The finished bar is 126 inches long, 47 inches high and 36 inches wide. The décor is a collection of antiques and collectibles the couple bought over the years. Shelves on the back wall that hold liquor are old pipes and railroad ties from architectural salvage. They also have a working jukebox and a Pepsi machine that fit well in the space.

"People tell me I have a nice man cave down here, and while I didn't relate to it from that perspective, I guess you can say that it's a nice place to go," Martin said. "We do utilize the bar and it's just a nice open space to gather. Now when everybody gathers we try to keep the food upstairs and everybody congregates downstairs in the bar."

A KITCHEN FOCAL POINT

As president of her company, Slavin has been designing home bars for clients. But

as a homeowner who likes to entertain once a month, she created a wine/coffee bar in her Manhasset kitchen 15 years ago.

Borrowing from her European design style, she created a separate unit between her kitchen and dining room, which keeps her refrigerator and cooking prep areas separate from her guests. There's a window between the kitchen and dining room, as well as a double sink, wine refrigerator and a separate dishwasher for bar items. She also has a built-in coffee maker and below that a micro convection and an oven, both used to heat appetizers. A decorative shelf, cabinets with inside and outside lighting and a countertop complete the bar.

"When people come into the house, the bar becomes a focal point where we have liquors, wines and drink mixes," Slavin said. "After dinner it becomes a coffee and dessert bar. Frankly,

guests love the idea so much that I had to design something similar for all my neighbors."

NO ROOM INDOORS? TRY THE BACKYARD.

When Holly B. Brainard, 56, of Stony Brook, won a 65-inch television during the pandemic, she wanted to enjoy it while entertaining outdoors. So Brainard, who is also a broker with Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty, bought a discounted 8-by-10 shed with double doors and added lighting, creating an outdoor spot with the TV as the focal point. She also installed a butcher block counter with a sink, a full refrigerator and bar paraphernalia, including a blender and martini glasses.

"The bar is open for business from early April until the beginning of December. I also have a portable fire pit outside and we sit out there on outdoor furniture and watch the TV," she said.

RICK KOPSTEIN

MORGAN CAMPBELL

buying in Deer Park



The Tanger Outlets shopping mall is a major draw to Deer Park.

BY LIZA N. BURBY
Special to Newsday

THE SCOOP Deer Park is known for the shops at Tanger Outlets and its central location between the city and the Hamptons, as well as easy access to the Ronkonkoma LIRR line, the Long Island Expressway and the Southern State Parkway.

“It’s an old-fashioned, diverse and caring community and a great place for families,” said Suffolk County Legis. Tom Donnelly, who represents the 17th Legislative District, which includes Deer Park.

But what stands out, Donnelly says, is that many people who grew up in Deer Park tend to raise their own families there, too. He’s lived there since he was born; his parents bought a house in Deer Park in 1955 and he raised his family there as well.

Typical home styles are high ranches and center-hall Colonials. Prices tend to be in the \$550,000 to \$650,000 range. The hamlet also has condominiums and 55-and-over developments.

Other highlights include Geiger Park, which has an interactive spray area and playground, and Birchwood Park. There is also Edgewood Oak Brush Plains State Forest, with more than 23½ miles of trails for hiking.

The hamlet earned its name when Jacob Conklin, one of the first settlers in the region in the 1600s, told people that his farm was in the “deer park” because he had to share it with them. As late as 1870, Deer Park had only a blacksmith shop, railroad station and a dozen



NEWSDAY

houses. Like much of Long Island, there was a population boom in the hamlet after World War II, and by the 1970s, the population hit 30,000.

Babylon Town and a planning group are studying ways to revitalize the hamlet, including the creation of a more defined downtown. Babylon Deputy Supervisor Tony Martinez’s office said he is continuing a dialogue with residents. Some of the areas of discussion in-

clude economic development, beautification, traffic and infrastructure improvements and sewers.

CONDOS AND CO-OPS There is one condo on the market priced at \$424,900.

SALE PRICES Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, there were 240 home sales with a median sale price of \$550,000, according to OneKey MLS. The low price for that period was \$242,250 and the high was \$775,000. During that period a year earlier there were 293 home sales with a median sale price of \$529,362. The price range was \$300,000 to \$860,000.

OTHER STATS

Town Babylon
Area 6.17 square miles
ZIP code 11729
Population 28,837
Median age 42.9
Median household income \$114,230
Median home value \$536,000
Monthly LIRR ticket from Deer Park \$327
School district, graduation rate Deer Park

(91.6%), Half Hollow Hills (94.6%)
Parks Birchwood Park
Library Deer Park, Half Hollow Hills
Hospitals Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
Transit Suffolk County Transit Routes 2A, 2B, 23, 29, 33

Sources: 2020 Census; 2020 American Community Survey; OneKey MLS; LIRR, data.nysed.gov

ON THE MARKET



MICHAEL WANDT

\$699,000
This high ranch was built in 1961 on 0.17 of an acre and has been completely renovated. It has a new kitchen and an open floor plan into the dining room and family room, with four bedrooms and two bathrooms. Taxes are \$10,183. Jacqueline Dworkin, Homes By Mara, 516-426-6034



HOME MEDIA GROUP

\$649,000
A corner expanded splanch built in 1958 on 0.21 of an acre has four bedrooms and 2½ baths, as well as an attached one-car garage with extra storage. A fenced yard offers space for entertaining. Taxes are \$12,537. Heidi Liu and Xiaofang Shen and Laurell Frein, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, 516-921-2262.



ROBERT WACHSMAN

\$424,900
A three-bedroom, 2½-bathroom townhouse unit in the Quail Run development features a washer and dryer, eat-in-kitchen and dining area. The development has parking. Taxes are \$4,349; HOA, \$118.25; common charges, \$355.45. Robert Wachsmann, Coldwell Banker Kueber Realty, 646-523-9500.

RECENTLY SOLD

\$730,000
Adams Street
Style Colonial
Bedrooms 4
Bathrooms 2½
Built 1964
Lot size 0.23 acre
Taxes \$12,984
+/- List price - \$9,900
Days on market 93

\$558,000
West 4th Street
Style Ranch
Bedrooms 3
Bathrooms 2
Built 1964
Lot size 0.11 acre
Taxes \$9,267
+/- List price - \$1,000
Days on market 48

\$390,000
Old Country Road
Style Ranch
Bedrooms 3
Bathroom 1
Built 1953
Lot size 0.24 acre
Taxes \$8,535
+/- List price - \$25,000
Days on market 66

ON ONEKEY MLS

Number of listings 25
Price range \$399,000 to \$735,000
Tax range \$4,349 to \$14,600