



## Homes

# The Home Front: Converting your home into a comfort and entertainment haven

*Interior designer Joy Chao shares her top tips on designing wine cellars, home bars, home theatres and workout spaces*

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Joy Chao is lead interior designer at John Henshaw Architect Inc (JHA). Since the pandemic, people have doubled down on converting their homes into places of comfort and entertainment, says Chao.

At JHA, they've noticed increasing requests from clients to convert smaller areas of their homes, like the space underneath the stairs or hallway closets, into bespoke wine cellars, and garage spaces into home gyms.

Chao shares her top tips on designing wine cellars, home bars, home theatres and workout spaces.

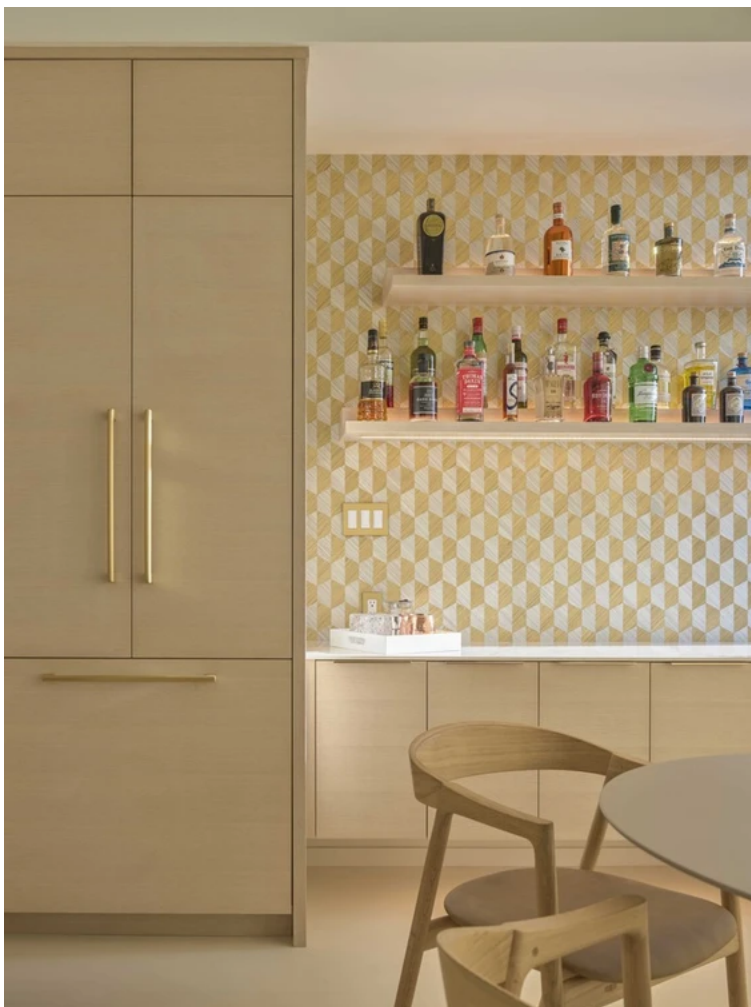
## A night out at home

For those passionate about wine, converting your basement into a wine cellar and tasting room is about as good as it gets, says Chao.

In turning two clients' basements into wine cellars, Chao and her team used a "professional grade cooling and moisture control" system to keep these valuable wine collections at "their optimal level," she says.

Chao says that if you don't have the space, budget or desire for a wine cellar, a home bar is great for entertaining.

A stylish bar and wine fridge within your recreation room is an excellent idea if you're watching sports, hosting movie nights or spontaneous karaoke sessions.



For one of their clients, Chao says they designed a bar for their extensive gin collection in a space adjacent to the kitchen. LED linear lighting within the bar shelving created a quintessential bar mood, "essential for fostering a warm and inviting atmosphere."

Good lighting is essential for wine cellars and home bars, adds Chao.

"Thoughtful architectural lighting showcases genuine care for clients' wine and liquor selections while also setting the perfect mood."

## Home offices are now the office

With so many more people working from home now, home offices need to be highly functional and comfortable, says Chao.

In designing a home office for two consulting engineers who work primarily from home, screen space, desk surface area, and lots of storage were the key focus areas.

"We crafted a workstation that caters to their professional needs. Additionally, a concealed storage area ensures the secure preservation of historical files, while a furniture linoleum on the desk surface minimizes echoing and provides a comfortable writing surface."

In transforming a former storage space into a home office for a client, Chao says they used "creative lighting solutions" because of a lack of overhead lighting (being a concrete high rise). They ran under-counter linear LED lighting along a new shelf.

"This not only ensures even lighting and minimal glare but also visually enlarges the space, making it feel more open and inviting."



### Home theatres

Home theatres experienced a dip in popularity during the iMax era, says Chao. But with the rise of streaming services and movie platforms, they're more popular than ever.

Not everyone wants traditional theatre seating in their home entertainment room. One client wanted seating that encourages group discussion.

At JHA, they design home theatre rooms that also double as vibrant karaoke spaces. For one client, they transformed a windowless space into a home theatre room, says Chao.

They kept lighting low for a "true theatre-like ambiance" and added stylish blue LED wall lights to heighten the cinematic feel.

They also used a mid-tone grey for the room to create a neutral backdrop that wouldn't interfere with the colours of the movie.

To create "the epitome of a theatre experience" for another client, Chao says they used a 120" projection screen, in-wall and in-ceiling theatre sounds, soft padded walls for optimal sound effects, and lighting that automatically dims when the movie begins.



Fitness room and wellness space. PHOTO BY SUPPLIED JHA /PNG

### **Fitness and spa rooms**

Home workout spaces continue to be popular, says Chao, and now people want to add home spa spaces, as well. This can be achieved through steam rooms, home saunas and “luxurious bathrooms” adjoined to workout spaces.

<https://vancouversun.com/homes/the-home-front-converting-your-home-into-a-comfort-and-entertainment-haven>





Home gym and playspace. PHOTO BY ANDREW LATREILLE /PNG

During the pandemic, one of their clients transformed a large, open area of their home into a dance studio “to embrace wellness and creativity,” says Chao.

“We installed full-height mirrors and a mobile ballet barre catering to ballet, yoga, and various exercises. To enhance the experience, a pre-wired TV on the opposite wall of the playroom allows easy streaming of exercise videos.”

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