



# Game On

## THE GIFT

A game room containing an antique pool table, vintage pinball games, and custom poker and foosball tables.

Starting at \$1.4 million



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✱ **MAN CAVE HAS ENTERED** our vocabulary as a synonym for *game room*, and when such a room is badly lit and crammed with carelessly arranged attractions, the term seems particularly appropriate. You can prevent a game room from looking like a cave, says interior designer Monique Lafia, if you allot ample space for all of its contents. “You have to design a room that’s large enough for a pool table and a foosball table,” she says. “If the room is an afterthought, you’ll have problems.”

Lafia, who is based in Santa Monica, Calif., and her business partner and husband, Chris Arvin, say that many of their clients now request game rooms or billiard rooms for their homes. “It was gradual,” Arvin says. “Before, they would want just a media room, but [the requests] grew into a billiard room and then a separate, full game room or recreation room.” Lafia concurs, adding, “A lot of men dream of having a game room or a

billiard room. They’re looking for spaces to entertain, and it becomes more of a social gathering place for family and friends.”

For this gift, Arvin and Lafia will design a room that covers all the bases. They propose a 34-by-30-foot space containing a pool table from Bankshot Antique Pool Tables of Albany, N.Y., a pair of vintage pinball games, a dartboard, and a five-seat wet bar flanked by two 60-inch plasma TV screens. In addition, Vermont furniture maker Mark Lackley will craft a four-seat poker table that has a pull-out chessboard, and Scottish company Eleven Forty will create a custom foosball table with 22 handpainted player figures, each of which can resemble anyone you want—David Beckham, President Bush (either one), a friend, or a family member.

Arvin and Lafia will use decorative elements to unify the game room’s various accoutrements. “There will be a lot going on,” Lafia says. “It won’t be just a blank room with a few paintings. Your eyes won’t just go straight to the bar or the pool table.” The designers plan to fashion a custom light fixture to hang over the pool table, and they will conceal additional lighting in the hollows of the coffered

walnut ceiling. They also will decorate the walls with eel skin, a material that they long have wanted to use. “The reddish eel skin will give the room color and warmth,” Lafia says, “while the vertical lines [created by layering the skins] will provide texture and richness. Eel skin is not flat. It has a little bit of shine and luster.” Together, diamond-patterned carpet, the wall coverings, and heavy mahogany doors will muffle the sounds of play and confine them to this part of the house.

A set of custom poker chips from Trademark Poker, collectible pool cues from Virginia-based dealer Dick Abbott, and a set of chess pieces from Elizabeth Gann (see “Chess Queen,” page 138) also will serve as functional art. “A beautiful antique chess set can be part of the decoration,” Lafia says. “It would not be tucked away, it would be left on the table.”

“It’s a sanctuary,” Arvin says of the room. “Guys like to play pool, like to play darts, like to watch the game. You can lock the door and have the silence you need to enjoy the tennis match or the baseball game.” Or even to hibernate for the winter. —SHEILA GIBSON STOODLEY

Lafia Arvin, 310.587.1141, [www.lafiaarvin.com](http://www.lafiaarvin.com)

{ The game room will require a minimum of 18 months to complete. }