

Funky Family Room



Golnar Zamani and Matt Mansouri approached their basement renovation as if they were their own clients. Space was tight in this 1,350-square-foot townhouse. With 500 square feet to work with in the basement, the goal was to create a space that was both functional and relaxing.

Zamani and Mansouri had a few requirements for their new space, which included a built-in home theatre system, a built-in fireplace, a small dry bar for serving drinks, and built-in seating areas that would be more efficient, and less bulky, than purchased furniture.

Also on the wish list was the incorporation of unique niches and nooks to accommodate books, art and DVDs, as well as hidden storage spaces. These shelves and recesses in the wall would showcase custom art and precious heirlooms, and they needed to be well lit as did the rest of the basement to provide a bright and comfortable haven. A hand-painted mural and faux finishes were added to complete this personalized sanctuary.

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Wild Blueberry Canapes

Brie & Wild Blueberry Filo Parcels

MAKES 12 CANAPES

Brie & Wild Blueberry Filo Parcels

2 sheets	filo pastry
4.5 oz (125 g)	unsalted butter, melted
1	portion of Brie

For blueberry relish

½	small red onion, finely chopped
5 fl oz (150 ml)	virgin olive oil
1 tbsp	caster sugar
2 tsp (10 ml)	balsamic vinegar
2 oz (50 g)	dried wild blueberries, soaked in boiling water for 20 minutes and drained
1	head of curly leaf lettuce
1	bunch chives

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spread one sheet of filo pastry on a work surface, brush with melted butter. Place a second sheet over the first and brush with more butter. Cut the filo pastry in half, brush one surface with butter and place one on top of the other. Cut out into 1.5 inch (4 cm) squares (approx). Place squares onto a baking sheet and bake in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes until golden.

To make wild blueberry relish, heat the onion in oil for 5-10 minutes until soft. Add the sugar, vinegar and wild blueberries, bring to a fast simmer and reduce juices to a syrupy consistency. Allow to cool. To assemble, place a piece of lettuce onto each filo shape, position a cube of Brie on each, then top with a small heap of wild blueberry relish. Finish with a length of fresh chive.



How to choose a central vacuum

Be sure to analyze the practical needs of your home before choosing a central vacuum system. The size, quality and length of the hose, for instance, are just as important as the size and power. So are the companion nozzles and tools.

Would an electric brush be best for your carpets, for example? What are the best tools for dusting furniture, removing pet hair, pollen and other allergens? Is there anything new for tight corners, under appliances, or for computer keyboards?

Once these cleaning benefits are assured, the next step is to select the central unit based on size, air filtration, and suction power.

"There's no point having a superior unit in the basement, if the other features fall short of your day-to-day practical needs," says Andres Lelarge, marketing manager for Beam Canada. "The most satisfied home owners make sure they get both—and that should include ultra-quiet performance with an advance air filtration system, plus a variety of companion accessories, including an electric power brush and a crushproof hose. All of this could actually make vacuuming a pleasure."

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