

Decorate like a man

You know you're decorating for a guy when ...

Before you start riffing on that one, let's hear from an expert. That would be David Grout, a principal at Gary Lee Partners, a Chicago design firm. He's done homes and offices, coached collections into shape and hung a '57 Chevy in a guy's basement. Honest.

"Men want their needs met — like technology and comfort," Grout says. "And women — they're a lot more about the style, how it feels and the impression it makes."

"Men want to know about the process of how it's made, who did it and how it's done as opposed to just the overall look of it."

"But men want their needs met first of all."

And these would be?



PHOTO BY TONY SOLURI

The throne:

Because sofas come in different depths, Grout has clients give sofas a "sit test." Male sofa shoppers may also employ the "guy test" — lying prone on a few to check their comfort level.

The TV(s): Men want the largest TV they can get and "want it visible." Women want to minimize it and hide it. To "hide" it, "custom is good," he says, "but there are even versions at Ikea that are great." Integrate the unit into your home's design and organize the cords.

Gizmos: Guys love AV controls, lighting, television, the cable, the stereo system. "We've done homes with a Crestron system," he says, "so you can turn off the lights as you walk out of the house from one location or you change the volume on the wall as opposed to walking over to the stereo. ... The convenience and the technology factor is always fun to show off."

Sweet sweat: "A steam shower's probably the priority, probably not where the towels go," Grout says. "A lot of those have a bunch of bells and whistles, different settings, different heads. Even Kohler has one that they integrate into different series of movements and color."

Cool stuff: You collect MLB autographed jerseys or wines. Your home need not resemble a gallery at Cooperstown or California *cave*.

Display a sports collection in a game room, perhaps in clear Plexiglas shadowboxes, Grout says. "I even think bathrooms are a great place if it's a men's bathroom."

Man stations: Instead of a plastic jug for coins and tossing keys and cell phone wherever, Grout suggests a charger. "You know that thin drawer in your bedroom is the best place for that."

— Judy Hevrdejs