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To create your ultimate man cave, you'll need time and imagination. If you're not sure where to start, find one piece you really love and then build your theme/style around it. Possible themes include a gentlemen's club, Irish pub, poker room, gamer cave, cabin or lodge, fitness gym, ski/snowboarder's chalet, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s or 80s music room, artist's sanctuary or comic book room, a library or biker's paradise.

For more exuberant and specialised media and cinema rooms, call in the experts. Cyberhomes in Thame and London specialise in home automation, home cinema design and installation, and multi-room audio/video systems. According to their website you can achieve a better movie experience at home than at your local cinema.

As far back as the 1990s, the merits of man caves were being discussed. American author and relationship counsellor John Gray sold more than 50 million copies of his book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, in which he discussed the difference in the way each gender reacts to stress. Gray stated, "When men's tolerance to stressful situations is exceeded, they withdraw temporarily, retreating into their cave, so to speak. Often, they literally retreat: for example, to the garage, or to go spend time with friends. In their "caves", men are not necessarily focused on the problem at hand; the "time-out" lets them distance themselves from the problem and relax, allowing them to re-examine the problem later with a fresh perspective".

Whatever the reason for having your man cave, it can be the perfect excuse to try a different style of decor. Be bolder, brighter and experiment with patterns, colours and textures that you may not feel confident enough to use elsewhere in your home. Many of the fabric and wallpaper houses have designs suited to man caves. And if you haven't got a spare room, shed, garage or basement to allocate to a man cave, don't be disheartened, any space in the house could perform the same function. A lounge chair and a set of headphones may be all it takes to drift off into another world and return later as a calmer, more relaxed version of your pre-man cave self.

