

The evolution of the man cave

Cavemen may have invented the wheel, but modern cavemen's creation of the man-cave is just as necessary BY ALICIA MCGARRY

IT'S AS THOUGH THE VISION that befell Eric Offill and his four partners was one borne of an even greater collective conscious and of the plethora of time-tested man-caveman's storage needs. Folks throughout the Midwest – mostly men, though some women, too – have been flocking to learn more about a gloriously mystical man-cave place... a place where men can peacefully convene and do what men do best: stand around, drink in hand, marveling at their latest Boy-Toy Kingdom conquests (cue: holy light and choral music).

A few years ago, Eric Offill, Greg Earlenbaugh, Joe Nuti, Kent Yohe and Brad Burton found themselves frustrated with the Midwest's lack of high-caliber storage space to keep their prized possessions. Having all spent extensive time traveling for business to both

coasts and seeing the kinds of garage condo communities that existed there, the four men wondered why such a place couldn't exist right here in the Midwest, as well.

"It was through our own frustrations in how this area lacked quality storage places that really solidified our concept," Earlenbaugh says.

"We had seen the garage condominium concept, and we felt like that melded very well with what we sought. But even if you look at garage condo concepts around the country, they look nothing like this – we went very much more for the aesthetically driven design," he continues.

"I think we can do this," Nuti remembers saying during their moment of revelation.

And so, from the minds of four highly



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successful businessmen was sprung perhaps the single-most idyllic concept for the ultimate man-cave ever, the likes of which have yet to grace the Midwest, or really, the anywhere.

Earlenbaugh explains that Carriage Houses of Johnson County will be much more visually alluring than any of the similar concepts seen on the coasts. In fact, the community's entrance will rival that of the area's most affluent subdivisions with its stately gate and waterfall.

“In every way, this will be different than the typical storage facility,” Earlenbaugh says. “When people drive by, I want them to marvel and wonder what exclusive property lies beyond this gated community's entrance.”

There will be a clubhouse constructed strategically within the carriage house community that will be plushly appointed, complete with a flatscreen

TV and other, high-end features one might expect to find in a private clubhouse.

While it may be tempting to hang out here all the time, the Carriage Houses of Johnson County are intended to serve as an offsite garage that contains whatever valuables its owner sees fit. It is for this reason Earlenbaugh notes the top-notch security system that will include closed circuit monitoring from any computer.

“You have the option to call on to your own security camera and look at the complex. You will be able to watch your assets from anywhere you are,” he says.

One of many key distinctions between such carriage houses and any other storage space is ownership. As such, Greg, Eric and the other guys behind the concept will allow the proud

owners to do almost whatever they please with their personal carriage house... not just store cars.

Greg says that prospective man-cave dwellers will have four sizes from which to choose, ranging from a 10'-by-20' Shop, to the big daddy: a 15'-by-42' Stable.

Whether to store classic or luxury car collections, serve as a woodworking shop or even store inventory, man-cave dwellers will be able to do it there.

While storing boats, RVs and every other kind of vehicle imaginable is the most immediately apparent use for the carriage houses, the guys have been downright inspired by the myriad other uses man cave-dwelling hopefuls have discussed – a driving range, model railroading, collecting hot rods, keeping hunting vehicles and more.

Ofill recalls one interested cave man – an airline pilot – who asked if he could actually build aircraft in his.

Without missing a beat, Ofill's response was: “Why not? It's your space.”

While on a business trip, Joe Nuti says he was conversing with a couple American Airlines pilots who were thrilled by the idea of having a carriage house to call their own:

“We could all take our ‘Vettes out there, work on em’ and then sit around in your clubhouse and watch sports



while barbecuing outside? Sign me up!”

No matter the size and contents owners choose to call their own in the Carriage Houses of Johnson County, one commonality remains: What Eric, Greg and their partners want for the most is a place for men to retreat from their busy schedules, commune and relax.

“Eric and I are just man-cave junkies,” he says. “We love the opportunity to celebrate the things that men like to do – work on cars, talk about RVs and play music.” ♦

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