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JANUARY 2006 NO. 176

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# Tricking Out the Garage

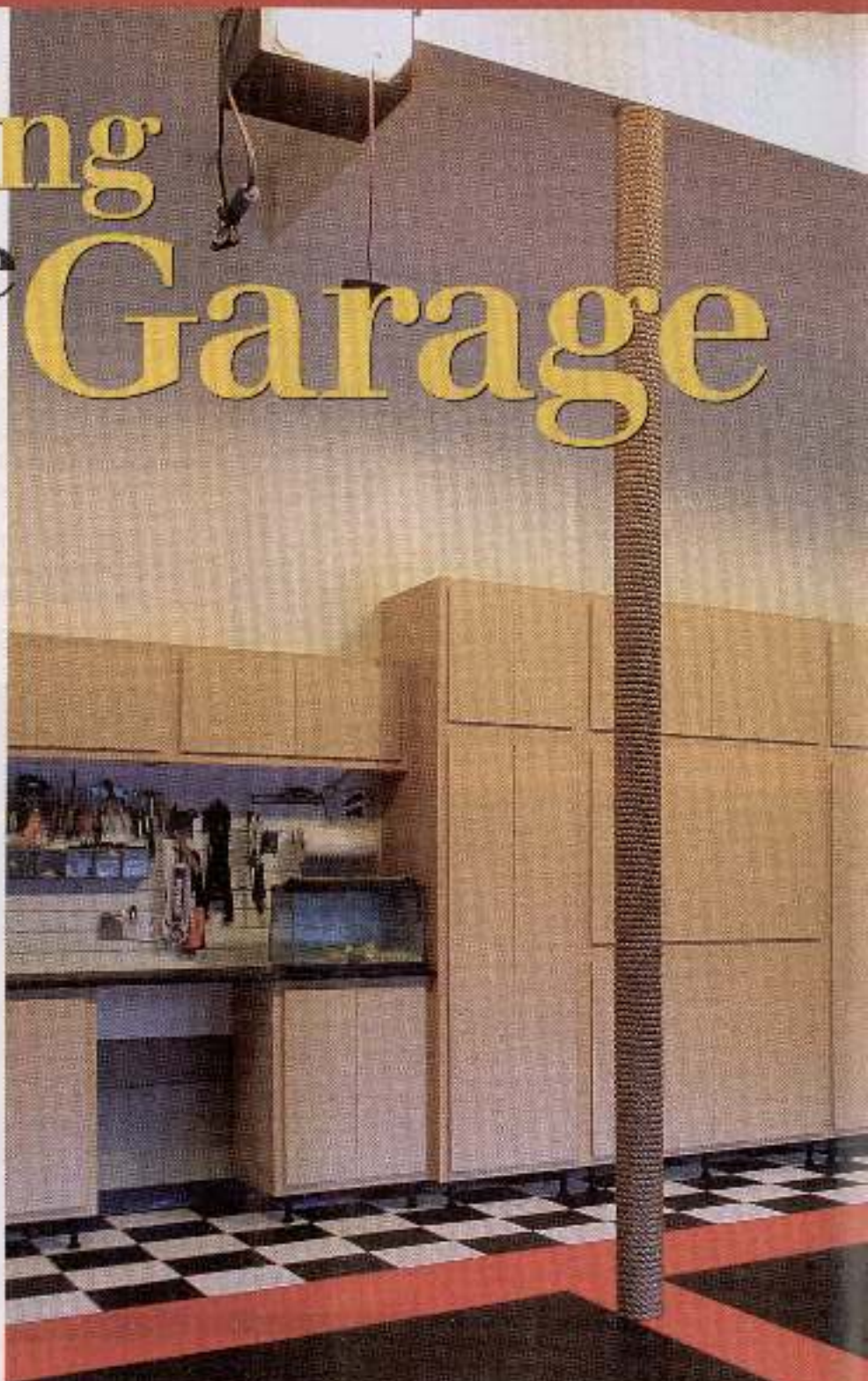
BY CHARLES BICKFORD

Since the days of the Model-T Ford, the American garage has become an integral part of the house, sheltering our beloved cars in addition to providing a refuge for those escaping domestic bliss. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, we own about 65 million garages. And given everyone's interest in revitalizing their real-estate investment, those garages represent space waiting to be refined—if we can find the space. Let's face it, most of us are hard-pressed to find anything in the garage because it's stuffed with paper bags, trashcans, paint cans, soccer balls, baseballs, bikes, scooters, lumber, 100-lb. sacks of pet food, fertilizer, rakes, hoes, shovels, gloves, the odd chair awaiting a new finish, and the car, if it still fits. We know who we are.

In the past few years, an entire industry has sprung up to service this neglected part of the house. Homeowners are turning to the garage for their next remodel: It's less expensive than a new kitchen, and it can improve the garage's appearance along with its storage capacity and organization. Contractors who specialize in garages report that remodels average between \$2,000 and \$10,000, depending on the region. It's work that many homeowners can tackle, too, although the fixtures may be a little hard to find. Whether you're a builder or a homeowner, there's a lot going on in the garage: lines of cabinetry made just for garages, storage racks, stylish slotted wall panels that replace the old brown pegboard, and more flooring choices than you'd think possible. ("Garage goods," pp. 54-55).

#### Choose durable cabinetry

Because many people use the garage as their regular entrance to the house, most have a



There are plenty of new options for storage and organization; you might even reclaim some parking space.



## CABINETS: HIGH AND DRY STORAGE

Because the garage is open to the outside, cabinets should be weather resistant and tough-skinned, and not get in the way when the garage is hoisted out or swept.

### Plastic

Plano, Stanley, GarageTek

**Pros:** Waterproof, inexpensive, readily available

**Cons:** Not as sturdy as wood, potentially susceptible to temperature extremes, limited sizes, appearance

Approximate price  
\$10 to \$70 per lin. ft.



GarageTek

### Melamine/plywood

GSC, Slide-Lok, Logical Cabinetry, house brands

**Pros:** Sturdy, easy to assemble and install, many sizes and configurations available, attractive

**Cons:** Not waterproof

Approximate price \$50 to \$80 per lin. ft.  
\$150 to \$180 per lin. ft. (installed)

### Midlevel steel

Gladiator, Sears, GarageTek

**Pros:** Strong, weather-resistant, stylish appearance

**Cons:** Pricy  
Approximate price \$100 to \$140 per lin. ft.



Gladiator

### High-end steel

Lista, Baldhead

**Pros:** Durable finish, heavy gauge steel, choice of colors, excellent hardware

**Cons:** Very pricey, not readily available

Approximate price \$200+ per lin. ft.



Baldhead

Photo Courtesy of the author's firms

*Detailing for style, too. A typical garage remodel like this one might include a colorful floor of interlocking panels by RaceDeck, melamine cabinets by Slide-Lok, wall-storage panels by storeWall, and Lally columns with a protective wrapping of manila rope.*