



# The **ULTIMATE** *Do-It-Yourself Gameroom*

... for less than \$50,000.

You might not want a two-story pool practice hall in your backyard, like LeRoy and Susan Petty, but you might want to know their tricks for doing it on the cheap.

## By Mason King

It started with a pool table.

It was 1999, and Susan Petty had just taken up pool again after flirting with it a few years earlier. She wanted to improve, and she figured she needed to get a nine-foot table with tight pockets for practice.

Problem was, her home deep in the woods outside of Terrell, Texas, was too tiny for a table. But she and her husband, LeRoy, had 10 acres to work with. So, why not build a little, free-standing practice room? And, while they were at it, why not get a bar table, and add a full bath, and a TV for watching pool videos, and a guest room, which would require another full bath, and maybe a convenience kitchen, and central air, and, oh, wouldn't it be great to have a juke box? ...

Started in late 2000, the all-but-completed pool *chalet* now stands two stories tall and measures about 1,400 square feet. It's a full-fledged pool-room, really; the Pettys have dubbed it "PettyPoint Pool Hall" and created a logo for the room. Uncommonly handy, the Pettys did most of the work themselves. But what's more impressive than their Herculean portion of elbow grease is that they built the structure, connected utilities and completely furnished it for less than \$50,000.



The two tables were the biggest-ticket items in the whole project: \$7,000 for the pair.

You could take a lesson or two from the Pettys. If you subscribe to this magazine, chances are you have a gameroom at home or have desperately wanted one. Maybe you have a couple free acres, or just a junk room that needs clearing. No matter the

scope, let the Pettys be your gurus and realize that, at a time when some folks are spending \$100,000-plus on a single entertainment center, you don't have to spend much to create a great gameroom.

"It's not fancy; it's not elegant; it's not

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ritzy,” Susan Petty says. “But it’s mine. I love it. It’s my place to go.”

Actually, Susan may be selling PettyPoint short. It’s not an upscale place, but it has a ton of personality and is exhaustively decorated. And some of her money-saving solutions were as elegant as anything in *Martha Stewart Living*.

The Pettys hired contractors for only a few tasks: laying the slab, shingling the roof, and installing the ductwork and air conditioning. So, here’s your first lesson: Shop around and find someone who can do the work for less. For example, they found a guy who would lay the concrete foundation slab by himself for \$3,300 — though it took three months, due to inclement weather. That’s another thing to keep in mind: Fast and cheap rarely go hand in hand, so have some patience.

LeRoy, 60, got to work on the exterior structure, which included a barn-style second level engineered with I-joint beams, which allowed for a “free-span” first floor with no support columns. Hand-made roof trusses assembled on site required more than 17,000 nails.

The Pettys ran electricity and plumbing lines to the site. To the structural skeleton they added shingling, insulation and vinyl siding. With a roof overhead, they installed solid oak flooring.

LeRoy’s portion of the work was finished in 2003, leaving Susan to do plumbing and electrical work, and furnish the interior.

“Progress went a lot slower, since I don’t work as fast as LeRoy does,” says Susan, 48, who works full-time as a software engineer outside of Dallas.

It turned out that the biggest ticket items for the whole project were the pool tables — a nine-foot Diamond Professional and a Valley barbox. Together, with accessories such as balls, sticks and overhead lighting, the brand-new tables ran about \$7,000.



These décor pieces cost less than \$10 each: pool print ads, underwear and ties.

## YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

Don’t have \$100,000 for a game room? The Pettys say not to sweat it, as long as you don’t mind doing most of the work yourself. The rest is mostly common sense:

1. Make plenty of room in your budget for your pool and game tables, and maybe one or two more big-ticket items. Go for quality and be happy with your purchase.
2. Need inexpensive furnishings? Start scouting eBay now, and hit auctions and garage sales.
3. Let friends and family know, and ask if they can contribute pieces or make something in trade.
4. Get creative with decorations. Check your attic, basement and closets for unique knick-knacks.
5. Don’t rush. Wait for the bargains to come.

“It’s all about the tables,” Susan said. “I think that furnishings are secondary. You’re there to play pool. You want a good table.”

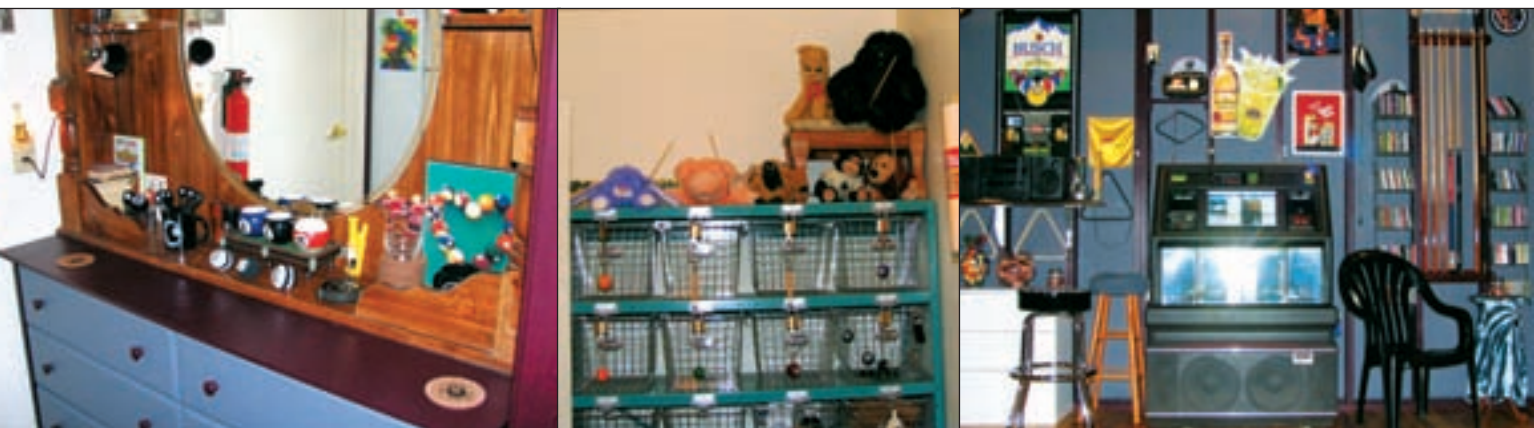
Without a whole lot of cash left for furnishings, Susan got crafty. From early on in the process, she started scouting the eBay online auction site for pool effects and memorabilia to help flesh out the room. She found a plethora of posters, pictures and old print advertisements for less

than \$10 each. She also discovered plenty of liquor-sales effects, such as neon signs and a toy José Cuervo blimp, for practically nothing. Many were hung on the exposed studs that the Pettys didn’t bother covering on the exterior walls. The foam insulation surface looked fine on its own, with a coat of paint.

Then Susan went really far afield. Her searches on eBay pulled up dozens of pool-themed neckties, so she bought them and hung them from the ceiling, on the walls and on the stairs as decor. She also found pool-themed boxer shorts and suspenders, and displayed those as well.

The *piece de resistance*, however, was the 100-CD jukebox that Susan had been dreaming about for years. She had been plotting the music selection for many months, and then found the jukebox she was looking for on eBay for \$1,200.

The lesson here, of course, is to avoid paying retail. Susan found items at auctions and bargain stores. Instead of getting the full-service bar she originally wanted, she settled for a dresser from an unfinished



From left: the “bar,” which ran less than \$100; wire baskets for valuables; and the prized \$1,200, 100-CD juke box.

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## TIGHT BUDGET

Here are several key entries in the Pettys' budget, plus examples of inexpensive items they procured via eBay or sales:

\$7,000	Two pool tables, w/accessories
\$3,300	Concrete foundation slab
\$2,000	Oak flooring
\$1,300	Plumbing
\$1,200	Vinyl siding
\$1,200	100-CD juke box (eBay)
\$200	Carousel hot-dog cooker (eBay)
\$10 each	Decorative neckties for wall (eBay)
\$10 each	Pool-themed wall hangings (eBay)
\$100	Dresser and headboard, rigged to serve as a bar (sales)

furniture store and a headboard with a mounted mirror that she found at a garage sale. Total cost: less than \$100. For authentic poolhall food, she bought a carousel hot-dog cooker on eBay for about \$200. Susan won a commission from a local metalworker at a local charity auction, and had him create a version of the PettyPoint logo to hang from the front porch.

Most of the furniture was taken from the Pettys' home or storage. They already



The Pettys installed the \$2,000 oak floor; a friend supplied the Coors table light.

owned the battery of wire baskets that serve as the depository for guests' valuables. The two beds in the upstairs guest room were already in the family. Relatives supplied knick-knacks, and a friend donated a Coors pool-table light that now hangs over the barbox.

The Pettys hosted their 25th anniversary

party at PettyPoint, as well as gatherings of fellow posters on *BD's* online Cue Chalk Board. With that came the realization that no matter how much money or work goes into a place, the real measure of value is the company that enjoys it. Says Susan: "It's a fun place when people come over, but it's the people who make it fun." 🎱

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