

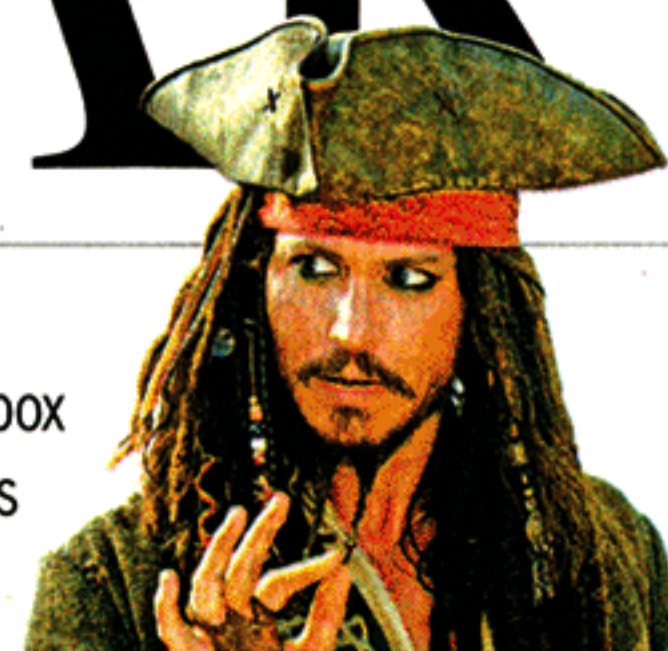
SPORTS

Eighteen-year-old Ryan Kudla of Oxnard is one of the top motocross riders in the nation. **C1**



ARTS & LIVING

"Pirates" plunders the weekend box office, smashing previous records with its \$135.6 million take. **E1**



BUSINESS

Garage Envy fills the desire to have a storage place for every box, ball and bike. **D1**

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"We've done some extravagant garages. However, we deal with a lot of people who just want to get the stuff off the ground and onto the walls and into the cabinets."

Jaime Diethofer, co-owner of Garage Envy in Pasadena

Some elaborate makeovers can cost as much as \$30,000



Photos by Joseph A. Garcia / Star staff

Gil Bussanich, director of operations for Garage Envy, puts the finishing touches on a renovation job in Camarillo. Garage improvement is a \$3 billion annual market in the United States, a market researcher says.

Garage renovation companies are putting the fun in functional

Desires for workout rooms, wine cellars are helping sector to grow

By Curry Chandler

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When Herbert Hoover was campaigning for President in 1928, he promised Americans "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." Perhaps today Hoover's garage dream would go well beyond a car to a wine cellar and workout room.

In the booming industry of home improvement, garage renovation is the fastest-growing sector, according to Peachtree Consulting Group Inc. MarketResearch.com reports that garage improvement is a \$3 billion annual market in the United States, and it is expected to grow to \$5 billion by 2009.

Jaime Diethofer, co-owner of Garage Envy in Pasadena, says that for most Americans, using the garage simply for car storage has become impractical.

"People have been stressed out and renting storage units just so they can get their car back in the garage," he said. "At a minimum, a two-car garage is a 400-square-foot space. It's a large percentage of the home, and that's space that can be utilized for family room space."



A primary reason homeowners renovate garages is to gain storage space and make room for vehicles.

Garage Envy does garage renovations through local contractors in Arizona, Oregon and California, including one in Santa Barbara.

To start, a designer goes to the home to discuss the

GARAGE

From D1

logistics of the specific project. Then a 3D computer-generated model is created to visualize the appearance of the finished work.

While some Garage Envy projects have just been adventures in cabinetry, other jobs have been elaborate transformations of the space. The average cost for a Garage Envy makeover is \$7,800, but some designs have cost as much as \$30,000.

"We've done some extravagant garages," Diethofer said. "However, we deal with a lot of people who just want to get the stuff off the ground and onto the walls and into the cabinets."

A current Garage Envy project in Malibu involved a total renovation of the deteriorated, rat-infested space. The homeowner wanted a wine cellar in the garage, and was willing to dedicate the space.

Diethofer points out that these more extravagant renovations are more likely in Southern California than in other parts of the country.

"Southern California is a minority, first in home value and also in income," he said.

Sharon Rich has a one-car garage attached to her guesthouse in Camarillo. After seeing one of



Joseph A. Garcia / Star staff

Gil Bussanich, director of operations for Garage Envy, shows off a garage the company renovated in the Santa Rosa Valley.

the advertisement-laden trucks, she realized that the before pictures seemed all too reminiscent of her own garage. She sought out the company's services as a Christmas present for her husband, who had always wanted a workshop area.

Garage Envy's work on Rich's garage included the addition of plumbing and electricity to the space. It also uncovered an attic area that she had been unaware of, and opened up the rest of it.

"I could park a car in there," she said. "A nice little sports car. That'd be nice."

She also says that the gift was

well received by her husband.

"Let's just say, that's where he is," Rich said. "When we don't know where he is, that's where he is."

Rich plans on having Garage Envy work on her two-car garage with the main house this summer.

Diethofer said he believes that the traditional notion of what a garage is and what it is used for seems to be changing.

"It's not just a garage anymore," Diethofer said. "We're creating something that is usable space. It doesn't have to be the ugly duckling of the home."