

spaces



# CELEBRATING FAMILY, FOOTBALL & THE FARM

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THE WEGENERS' BARNWOOD BASEMENT

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BARN  
STAYS IN THE BARN





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Nick and Jessica Wegener love to entertain on football game days, so when they built their 1½ story home in The Hamptons in Gretna, they decided to create the ideal hangout space for friends and family. The home's lower level, which has been a work in process since moving into the residence in December 2018, offers a relaxed, fun atmosphere with personal and sports memorabilia, and nods to Nebraska's rural life scattered throughout.

"We're constantly having family over, maybe too much," Nick Wegener said with a chuckle. "And we're all big Nebraska football fans, so if we're not [in Lincoln] at the games, we're down in the basement watching."

Wegener built a wall to accommodate three large-screen TVs in the home's movie room to allow for prime game day viewing. "We watch a lot of games, actually. We call it our pseudo college football room."

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Nick grew up in rural Nebraska and has been a loyal Cornhusker fan all his life, while Jessica joined Husker Nation a bit later. "She's from Minnesota and attended UNL on a gymnastics scholarship," he explained. Jessica's University of Nebraska letter jacket hangs on display as part of the basement's sports décor.

Nick attended Creighton University and said he enjoys watching CU sports as well. "I'm very much a Jayster."

Concert posters from the Wegeners' favorite country music artists are featured throughout the space, as are mementos from the couple's years together. Among them, a champagne bottle from when the two got engaged, an engraved bottle from an Eric Church concert they attended together, and another from a vacation the extended family took to the Dominican Republic a few years ago. The bottles are displayed on custom-made riveted steel shelving hanging behind the bar.

Wegener added a rustic Nebraska feel to the basement by creating an accent wall made of reclaimed barnwood harvested from a farm a couple miles from his own family's farm near Hebron.

"I bet we toured 120 houses, which is where we got the idea for using reclaimed wood," Wegener said. "Then we learned about a barn on a neighboring farm dismantled in a windstorm. A guy I went to high school with was currently farming the land there, and we approached him about using the wood for our basement." Wegener estimated the barn was about 80 years old.

When the farm's owner agreed, Wegener and friends set about cutting a large span of wood directly out of the barn wall. After letting the wood dry for months, the panel was transferred to the basement wall to hang just as it had hung outside for decades. "I wanted it to look like a true barn, so we hung it with the wood vertical. It really does look like a barn wall, weathered paint and all."

Wegener also harvested several items from his own family's farmstead near Hebron, which remains owned by his father. Doors from the house and barn were reclaimed, then stripped, restained and sealed with a clear coat (for protection from lead paint), and used for doors for the Wegeners' movie room, laundry room, and a cedar room.

Wegener says the homestead relics not only offer the rustic look he and Jessica desired, but also serve as nostalgic reminders of his youth.

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