

Real Estate Feature

Custom-Made Garages For Car Lovers

Matt Woolsey

When the auto collection includes a \$700,000 Porsche 959 or a [McLaren F1](#) (like Jay Leno, below) built for an Indian Maharajah, a concrete garage filled with flickering lights and oil slicks simply won't do.

"Garages can't be an afterthought," says Arthur Gallego, vice president of communications for SHVO Marketing, a New York City company specializing in residential design. "[They need] to be elevated from florescent and cement into a nice place."

Jerry Seinfeld would surely agree with that sentiment.

[His garage](#) on Manhattan's Upper West Side can hold 20 cars and is reportedly filled mostly with the comedian's Porsche collection. It has terrazzo floors, wood paneling and a top-end climate control system. Not a bad place to preserve Seinfeld's \$700,000 Porsche 959, a model which is technically not street legal.

And some say it's not even the most impressive garage on the island.

Heavy Lifting

Farther downtown in Chelsea, developers at [200 Eleventh Avenue](#) are building the city's first en-suite garage system. The 15-unit building's car lift system promises to deliver residents, in their cars, to their apartments.

As the car nears the garage, a computer chip installed inside the vehicle alerts the automatic gate. Once it is open, the driver turns in to the back of the building where the elevator is waiting. Once the car is in the lift, the elevator registers in which unit the car belongs and delivers it to that floor, where the resident then backs into single parking slip which opens to their apartment.

[Cars that drive themselves, park themselves and run on hydrogen. What a great year for car technology. Sneak a peek at cutting-edge models here.](#)

Leonard Steinberg, director of sales for the property under Prudential Douglas Elliman, says the buyer of one of his units "doesn't park on the street, and schlepping through the rain or snow to a garage is a humbling experience."

The only drawback is that the building only has 14 parking spots for 15 units. It seems the odd man out will have to settle for a driver at the front door.

For residential properties, lift systems serve both to maximize space and to provide security for pricey cars.

American Custom Lifts, based in Escondido Calif., design a variety of parking systems from basic multi-car lifts to subterranean garages. Their [PhantomPark](#), which runs \$50,000 for parts and installation, has two platforms that raise and lower cars from a single street level slip.

High-end homeowners "want to be sure about security," says Brad Davies, president of American Custom Lifts. "If you've got a half-million dollar car, you want it in a place where a robber can't get to it."

Greenbacks Into Garages

Designers like Davies say the market for customized garages is booming. In 2004, according to the National Association of Home Builders, consumers spent \$2 billion on garages. Today, that number is higher than \$3 billion.

"The garage is where the home theater was 10 or 15 years ago," says Chad Haas, founder of Vault, a top-flight custom garage goods company based in Beaverton, Ore. "If you wanted to spend \$10,000 or more on a TV or sound system at that time it would have seemed crazy, but now it's commonplace."

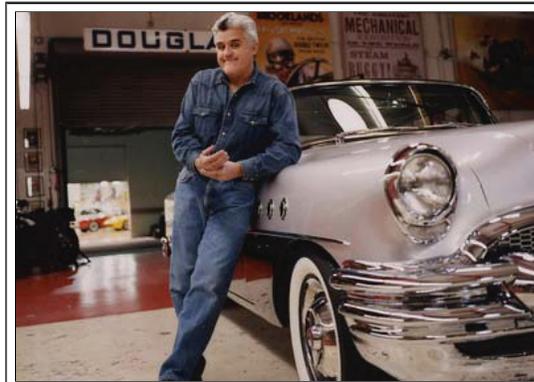
Why all the hoopla surrounding garages?

With the size of investment made in a car collection, its only natural garages should follow.

The better the cars, the better garages need to be at servicing and protecting them. A brisk sea breeze can be great for driving in a convertible, but the salty air hurts the chrome and paint. In Corona Del Mar, Calif., at the \$75 million [Portabello Estate](#), owner Frank Pritt, founder of software company Attachmate, has an underground parking lot, which holds 16 cars.

Given the ultra-modern design of the house itself, and its smooth architectural lines, it's only fitting that Pritt's garage should be stocked with classic drop-top Cadillacs. Cars are raised and lowered to a gallery filled with the iconic fins and long bodies of cars iconic to the West Coast beach culture.

"Of all the over-the-top amenities that you see being put into buildings, [luxury parking systems] will stand the test of time," says Steinberg. "Everyone drives cars."

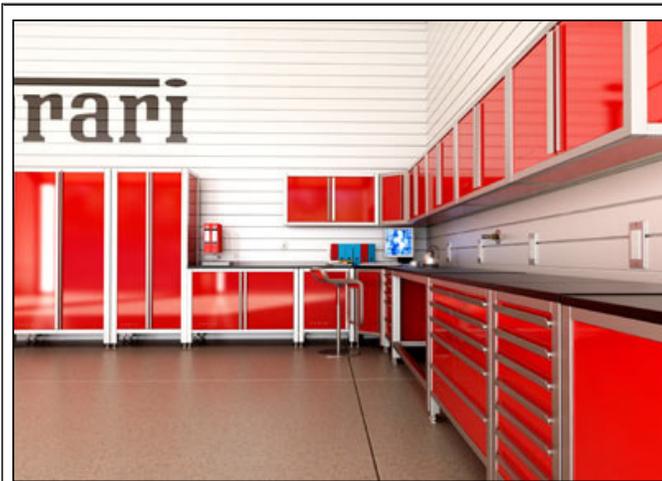


Jay Leno

Los Angeles, Calif.

The gold standard of garages, *Tonight Show* host Jay Leno's Big Dog Garage is practically an airplane hangar at 17,000 square feet. Besides holding a wide range of impressive cars, from a McLaren F1 to a 1913 Packard, the garage has its own mechanic's shop capable of manufacturing parts. Oh, and there's a gourmet kitchen for breaks.

© Blake Little/Icon International



Work Benches

Vault

Beaverton, Ore.

Price upon request

For assembling parts, a mechanic needs adequate work space and a strong, custom-built stainless finished work space. Underneath the brushed steel countertop of this Vault system are welded, brushed-stainless drawers with enough capacity to hold every tool imaginable.

© Vault



Portabello Estate

Corona Del Mar, Calif.

This garage matches the ultra-modern design of the \$75 million mansion in which it is housed. Cars are raised and lowered to a gallery filled with the iconic fins and long bodies of drop-top Cadillacs reminiscent to the West Coast beach culture.

© Coldwell Banker



Jerry Seinfeld

New York, N.Y.

The comedian's garage on the Upper West Side of Manhattan can hold 20 cars and is reportedly filled with the comedian's Porsche collection. It has terrazzo floors, wood paneling and a top-end climate control system. Not a bad place to preserve Seinfeld's \$700,000 Porsche 959, a model which is technically not street legal.



© Vault

Signs

Vault

Beaverton, Ore.

Auto-garage neon signs are icons of Americana. For the true aficionado, the only neon Mobil Pegasus or Phillips 66 logos that fit in their garage are those of classic design, such as the model seen here.



© AutoMotion

123 Baxter Street

New York, N.Y.

The first residential automated parking system in New York City, built by AutoMotion, it parks and delivers residents' vehicles within two and a half minutes.



© Vault

Humidor

Vault

Beaverton, Ore.

Price upon request

What better way to celebrate suping up an engine or rebuilding a transmission than with a humidor built into your gear cabinets? Designed to preserve the life and flavor of the finest cigars, the Vault humidor locks into the cabinetry as a secret storage space in case your spouse thinks you've quit smoking.



PhantomPark

American Custom Lifts

\$50,000

A subterranean system designed to house two cars--one in an underground space and one at road level--the PhantomPark maximizes available space and doubles as a high-end security system. Drive a car onto the platform, press a button to lower it and park another car on top. Built in sensors and tracking systems ensure safety, meaning gearheads and their children have nothing to worry about.

© American Custom Lifts



200 Eleventh Avenue

New York, N.Y.

The 15-unit building's lift system promises to deliver residents, in their cars, to their apartments. A computer chip installed inside each auto alerts the automatic gate. The driver turns in to the back of the building where the elevator is waiting. Once the car is in the lift, the elevator registers in which unit the car belongs and delivers it to that floor, where the resident then backs into single parking slip, which opens to their apartment.

© Prudential Douglas Elliman



Richard Solove

Columbus, Ohio

The Ohio real estate developer is widely considered to have one of the world's finest collections of Rolls Royces in the world. Such high-end automobiles, including a 1911 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost built for the Maharajah of Mysore, India require a garage to match. Italian marble flooring and a custom built banister--worth more than \$100,000 and made of Rolls-Royce emblems--house the world's finest collection of pre-war Rolls-Royces.

© Car Collector Magazine



Cabinets

Gladiator Garage Works System

Benton Harbor, Mich.

There are a couple different ways to configure a cabinet system. One is by using multiple rolling components and modules, which attach to sliding wall mounted supports, like the model seen here. Made with welded steel, these boxes and cabinets range in price from \$170 to \$500 and keep gear safe and secure.

© Gladiator Garage Works