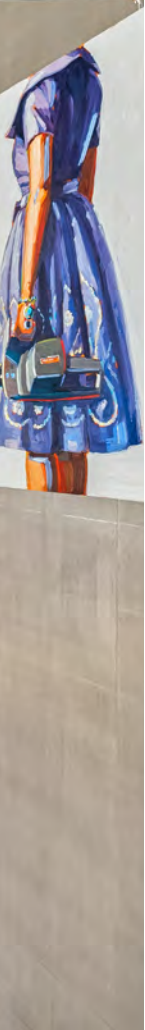


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◀ Chanoyu House in Dallas boasts such green features as solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and a Tesla home battery.

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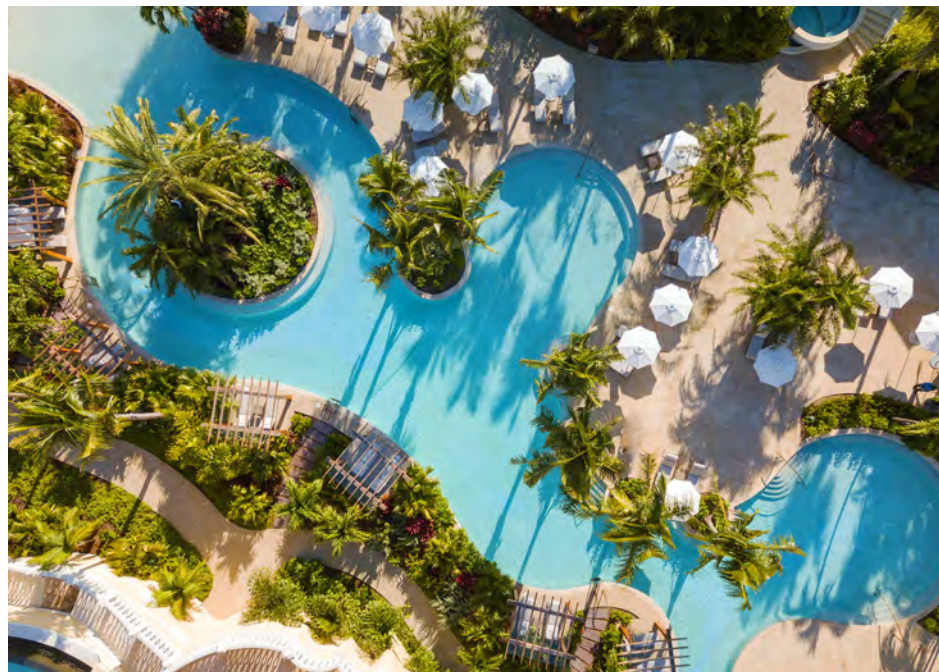
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Sleek, modern home "showrooms" let car collectors put automotive eye candy on display.

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▶ Part of the TLC travel trend, Rosewood Baha Mar in the Bahamas focuses on relaxation with cabana-lined pools, sleep retreats, meditation, and more.

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A

Q U I E T

Floor-to-ceiling windows and zen-like decor set the stage for communing with nature at this Aspen residence.

RICHARD POWERS



**With homes
multitasking in new
ways, owners are
crafting innovative
sanctuaries
dedicated to
decompressing.**

by Jeanne O'Brien Coffey

PLACE



This living room invites one to settle in for a quiet respite with a good book.

ONE OF California-based home designer Sarah Barnard's clients recently asked her to create a bedroom space that "felt like a hug." Barnard crafted a cocoonlike room, cloaked in shades of purple, with ethereal lighting to exude a dreamlike ambience and neon artwork to softly illuminate the sleeping area.

"The room encourages the homeowner to melt into the space and leave the world's chaos behind," says Barnard, who specializes in personalized, sustainable spaces that support mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

We could all use a hug these days—literally and

metaphorically—as well as a way to leave chaos at the front door. But when the daily commute for many of us still involves taking a few steps down the hall to a dining room table or a home office, our worries about work and the outside world are naturally *inside* the front door with us. What's more, the ongoing pandemic has made traditional mini-breaks more difficult and less dependable, which means that spending an hour browsing a local bookstore, enjoying a latte at a favorite coffee shop, or indulging in an afternoon at the spa isn't always possible. As a result, fostering a soothing

environment at home is top of mind for many people.

“Our homes have taken on new roles and require much more flexibility, creating stress on both the physical space and ourselves,” Barnard says. “Having designated areas to escape and recover from stressors has become increasingly crucial for well-being.”

SPACE AS EMBRACE

From upgraded spa bathrooms to meditation studios, setting aside a part of the home for decompression is on nearly every homeowner’s wish list now, according to experts. “We still want to find a work-life balance, although work is technically in the home,” says Kelli Lamb, editorial director of interior design magazine *Rue* and author of the new book *Home with Rue: Style for Everyone*.

Some people set the stage for unwinding by building an inviting place for family and friends to reconnect,

“Having designated areas to escape has become increasingly crucial for well-being.”

—Sarah Barnard, home designer



Earthy hues, cushy textures, and landscape wallpaper lend a sense of escape right at home.

Sarah Barnard designed this sanctuary for sleep with rich purple tones.



often with deep, cushioned seating areas. “I’ve seen an uptick in game tables in a lot of living rooms, encouraging more human interaction than media consumption,” Lamb says. “The same goes for more elaborate home bars. Folks want to bring the joys of the outside world home in a way that is intentional and purposeful.”

For others, a private reading nook or a bathroom with a freestanding soaking tub provides the ideal antidote to life’s daily pressures.

Don’t feel bad if your needs involve being alone, says designer Rachel Cannon. “Many introverts feel selfish when they don’t want to watch a movie with their partner,” she says. “Our culture tells us it’s rude to ask to be excused. But many of us need a quiet room where we can recharge our batteries so we can show up at our highest level for friends and family.”

Thinking carefully about what helps you relax and reboot is an important first step, Barnard says. “Each home and person will have a different set of needs when it comes to wellness,” she explains. “Someone more introverted may require solitude from their

relaxation spaces, while social interaction is crucial for decompressing for others.”

Homeowners whose needs are a hybrid sometimes add different wellness spaces to their properties, giving themselves options to suit their needs on any given day. Barnard used this approach for a client who craved variety and needed spaces that would deliver unique experiences. She designed diverse wellness nooks throughout the client’s home, each with a different color palette, tone, and theme, but all meant to provide a relaxing, restorative experience.

SMALL SPACES, BIG IDEAS

If you want to establish a zen space in an apartment or cottage where allocating an entire room might not be possible, Cannon encourages creative thinking. She recently used an inventive approach for a client with a young family: turning the pass-through room that connected the master bedroom to the closet into a private retreat for the wife, an OB-GYN. Normally this would have served as extra closet space or perhaps held exercise equipment; instead Cannon outfitted it with comfy seating and a small desk.

“It works out nicely, as the room is closed off from the rest of the house, ensuring that it’s always quiet and ready to provide rest after a long day of work and family activities,” she explains.

Guided by her client’s tastes, Rachel Cannon designed this sitting room for recharging and inspiring creativity.



▲
Walk-in closets, nooks, and too-small bedrooms make idyllic retreats.

According to Cannon, the most common mistake homeowners make when they move into a new house is not to take the need for peace into consideration. “We design rooms for every activity other than quiet time,” she notes. Fortunately, it’s never too late to carve a sanctuary out of your existing space.


When it comes to fashioning a quiet place, ignore anything that doesn’t speak to you personally, regardless of what’s trending, advises Dina Fenili, director of sales, marketing, and brand at Miraval Resorts. The spa group is renowned for its soothing aesthetic, created in collaboration with New York City–based Clodagh Design.

“Stick to the design elements that you love,” Fenili advises. Choosing your favorite colors, textures, and other design elements will ultimately result in a space you love to spend time in and that increases your sense of joy and well-being, she says.

Finally, consider banishing screens from your sanctuary, *Rue’s Lamb* suggests. “We’re consuming our work, school, news, fitness, and social life all through screens,” she says. Having a room, or even a corner of a room, where you can sit and read or reconnect with friends and family without constant notifications and distractions can provide a sense of separation from the workday and the outside world and lower your stress level.

“A ‘soothing space’ goes beyond a quiet yoga room or luxe primary bathroom. It’s about intentionally designing around a feeling of calm,” Lamb explains. “It’s less about a singular room for a singular activity and more about a space that would accommodate a calmer moment in our day.”





When it comes to fashioning a quiet space, ignore anything that doesn't speak to you personally, regardless of what's trending.

—Dina Fenili, Miraval Resorts

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL WHOLE HOME 2021/FRENCH & FRENCH INTERIORS/STEPHEN KARLISCH

Designers French & French created this jewel-box-like family media room as "a space to disconnect in order to reconnect with each other."