

THE Report

WITH WELLNESS TOP OF MIND, *LUXE* DIVES INTO DESIGN DEVOTED TO REST, CONNECTION AND CLARITY.
WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY GRACE BEULEY HUNT

PHOTO: ERIC PASECKI.

TAKE COMFORT

Take care. Stay safe. Be well. Who could have guessed the weight these phrases would take on in this uncharted new decade? Times of introspective nesting have illuminated that such directives start at home, reinvigorating a discussion on the many ways design can enhance our mental and physical well-being. Here, we share an assortment of restorative spaces whose principles—thoughtful details, indulgent amenities and ample conversation with nature—provide ideas for sanctuaries large and small.



To celebrate the agrarian history of a family's Bridgehampton property, Historical Concepts and Michael Davis Design & Construction envisioned a structure reminiscent of traditional potato barns in the area. Cedar board-and-batten cladding and masonry details, including Connecticut fieldstone retaining walls and natural bluestone cleft slabs designed in tandem with Hollander Design Landscape Architects, speak to the old-meets-new ethos.



Knowing that the indoor pool would be used through the colder months, the team nestled the feature in the ground, adding a south-facing skylight. "Between the warmth of the rammed earth and the natural light, it's a perfect winter pool," says Historical Concepts principal Kevin Clark. "It doesn't feel like a cold conservatory."

PHOTOS: ERIC PIASECKI

Surrounded by tiered rows of apple trees, the sunken Rebound Ace tennis court (right) is maintenance free. The vaulted great room (below) earns its keep as an office space, entertaining area and lounge between tennis matches.

1 Sweet ESCAPE

A BRIDGEHAMPTON SPORTS BARN OFFERS THE ULTIMATE FAMILY RETREAT.

"With a remote property, you have the opportunity to create a destination," says Kevin Clark, principal of Historical Concepts. And so it came to be that a family's brief for a recreational outbuilding on their Bridgehampton estate evolved into a sports barn laden with wellness features.

Surrounded by acres of pristine farmland, the structure demanded a sensitive approach, one that Historical Concepts—an architecture firm known for legacy properties rooted in place—was well-suited for. Alongside interior designer Steven Gambrel, landscape architect Edmund Hollander and master builder Michael Davis, who assembled the team, plans were drawn for a low-slung, cedar-clad activity center softly folded into the rolling terrain.

The decision to nestle the barn into, not onto, the landscape is an exercise in both historical accuracy and ingenuity. First, it references semi-subterranean potato barns local to the region. Second, it meets a Hamptons building code limiting accessory structures to 20 feet high, while still allowing for a three-story structure for all the family's amenity wishes to live in harmony. In full, the sprawling retreat includes family offices, a large vaulted great room, a kitchen, an indoor lap pool and spa, men's and women's locker rooms and an exercise room—plus a sunken tennis court with viewing pavilion.

"The lay of the land and the feel of a place reveal themselves when you put pen to paper," says Clark. "The top floor gym has a wonderful



view over the property, and the sauna, steam and massage rooms round out the indoor activities," shares Davis. "In addition to the gathering room, there is a suite of three family offices particularly helpful during these times."

Throughout, Gambrel's interiors scheme—a medley of warm woods and chalky blue, green and sand hues—sets a restorative tone. "The palette is muted, based on the environment as inspiration," he explains, and indeed, the natural setting inspires. Complementing the agrarian landscape, Hollander took care in employing native plantings, such as bayberry, winterberry and viburnum, to welcome birds, bees and other pollinators. "Healthy, living landscapes are essential to the wellness of all visitors, all species," he notes.

Like many affluent New Yorkers, the family decamped to their country residence in the early days of the pandemic. In turn, the beloved barn has become a haven beyond anything client or design team could have planned for—a hub of safety, togetherness and health. "One of the most rewarding parts of our job is when you see a place you designed be truly life-altering for a family," says Clark, adding, "When you treat home as resort, there's something magical about that."



2 GOOD VIBES

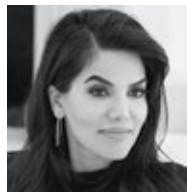
THREE DESIGNERS SHARE A PRINCIPLE THAT SHAPES THEIR PERSONAL PRACTICE.



LAURENCE CARR
New York, New York

Wabi-sabi is a worldview rooted in Japanese origin all about taming desire for perfection in design, freeing us to live more sustainably and impart truly authentic style in our homes. To seek it is to honor the patina and character of our interiors and collected pieces, find harmony with nature, honor simplicity and do away with excess clutter. I help clients seek wabi-sabi through utilization of the seven Zen principles—one of which, for example, is incorporating unique pieces from our clients' own collections. This practice shifts focus from trendy items to those that have been built lovingly, and with noble materials. Together with our clients, we identify character-rich pieces and intentionally place them in different rooms as the sturdy roots of our interior design approach. laurencecarr.com

plants, stone, wood, water and natural light, or “biomimicry,” which are shapes and patterns that remind us of being outdoors. The benefits are substantial: Close proximity to nature triggers a dopamine response in our brains that promotes well-being, lowering blood pressure and stress. Starting from the most basic ways to inspire biophilia, you can paint walls in colors we find in nature, like green, blue and brown. Then move on to adding motifs and plants. Advanced options include stone walls, water features and changing the building’s access to natural light. studiomahal.com



NINA MAGON
Houston, Texas

One way of fostering well-being at home that I believe in and have used with great results is Vastu Shastra, an Indian system of architecture similar to feng shui. In Vastu Shastra, there are 5 elements: Earth (Bhumi), Water (Jala), Air (Vayu), Fire (Agni), and Space (Akasha). The central part of a house is ruled by the space element. As all directions meet in the center, it is the holiest and most powerful zone. So when possible, I like to ensure that the most-used room—often the living area—is located in the direct center and designed with a minimal aesthetic for less clutter and low furniture to allow for plenty of natural light. This approach harmonizes the flow of energy throughout the home, which facilitates good health. contourinteriordesign.com



MACELLE ALBEDA
Pasadena, California

Biophilia stems from Greek as “love of life” and is about our innate human need to be connected to nature. Biophilic design focuses on how to layer nature into interiors, whether through actual elements like



GOOD VIBES ONLY PORTRAITS: CARR PHOTO: EVANUED IMAGERY; MACELLE ALBEDA PHOTO: ROBIN FOLEY PHOTOGRAPHY; MAGON PHOTO: JULIE SAEFER PHOTOGRAPHY; LOST IN REVERIE PHOTO: WILLIAM ABRAMOWICZ/ART + CULTURE.

3 LOST in REVERIE

There are serene rooms and then there are rooms where serenity seems to emanate from the walls, softening your disposition on viewing. This elixir of a bedroom in Jackson Hole, Wyoming—a collaboration between WRJ Design and Bohlin Cywinski Jackson—is decidedly the latter. Here, designer Rush Jenkins and architect Ray Calabro sound off on achieving Zen in tandem. wrjdesign.com; bcj.com

Set the scene. RC: The site for the house is on a butte that overlooks the Snake River Valley with extraordinary views. The bedroom is located at the southern, most private end of the home and is embedded into the gentle slope of the site, connecting with the landscape at a more immediate scale. **RJ:** There’s a calmness and a majestic beauty that surrounds you. That’s what the color palette, the lighting, the simplicity of the design were about—creating harmony with nature.

Material connection. RC: The southern wall is smooth-formed cast-in-place concrete, the flooring is white oak with a custom finish, the window wall is aluminum with a clear anodized finish, and the ceiling is composed of panels of white oak. **RJ:** The rug is bamboo silk, the bed is really luxurious suede, the pillows are a cashmere plaid from Loro Piana. Those tonal elements are about continuity with the exteriors and the architecture.

Design highlights. RC: The water feature that stretches along the master suite is dynamic. We placed mirror-finish stainless steel panels on the roof overhang above the stream. The combination of gently moving water and mirror reflects constantly changing patterns of light into the master suite throughout the day. The effect is magical. **RJ:** The seamless windows in this room actually open from the bottom. Can you imagine waking up hearing the water rippling and the birds chirping in the garden? Sometimes, you’ll see a moose having a drink. You don’t get closer to nature than that.

Dream team. RC: WRJ’s selections reinforce the quiet elegance of the home. The luxe finishes and fabrics express their commitment to quality and attention to detail that are guiding principles in the architecture. **RJ:** This house was a unified vision. The client wanted peace and simplicity, and every team member came at this design from the same philosophy.

4 Home WORK

Some decamped to dining tables. Others converted spare rooms to studies. In the immediate wake of the pandemic, remote work culture shifted inexorably, and with it, the landscape of home office design. With more and more companies adopting permanently flexible policies, it's no surprise that designers are seeing an uptick in office updates. On deck? Spaces that foster productivity and focus, certainly—but also tranquility and mood-boosting chic. Take a cue from these calming desks around the country.



BETTER TOGETHER

With restorative garden views for the taking, designer Bryan Yates aligned a Dallas, Texas, couple's work areas along a single window wall. The decision has a reverse fishbowl effect: The elegantly minimal design can be conversely enjoyed from the outdoor entertaining spots. yatesdesygn.com

▲ FRESH PERSPECTIVE

In Vero Beach, Florida, designer Kevin Dumais' unconventional furniture configuration is twofold. First, it makes way for foot traffic between the room's two entrances. Second, it sets the client up to take advantage of the resplendent views and shifting sunlight throughout the day. dumaisid.com



▲ CENTRAL STATION

With space at a premium in Brooklyn, designer Jenny Dina Kirschner added a petite "study" by backing a desk against the living room sofa. Behind, modular shelving reads as design statement while discreetly housing a printer and a variety of homework and office supplies. jdkinteriors.com

5 Simmer DOWN

DESIGN PARTNERS LINDA SULLIVAN AND SILVIA HENDRAWAN REFLECT ON A FIRM FIRST: A TEA ROOM IN ATHERTON, CALIFORNIA.

AS TOLD TO GRACE BEULEY HUNT

From the very beginning, it was meant to be a place of rest. The architect picked the location for its amazing natural light and we worked with a feng shui master. Building started in September to encourage good luck and prosperity for the home. It was a special brief in that way—there was meaning behind every detail.

We're seeing more and more clients asking for specialty rooms, but these clients—two first-generation Chinese sisters—really use this space. After a hard day's work, they retreat to drink tea together, practice calligraphy and meditate.

They wanted to honor their heritage—but to modernize, too. Tea room window treatments are traditionally bamboo; we chose a light grass Conrad shade. The Chilewich rug is textured like a tatami mat and the white-oak furnishings are custom by Chi Wing Lo, a Chinese furniture designer living in Italy. The table has natural stone for water draining and a metal plate for the hot teapot to rest on.

In spring, the sisters drink Longjing tea. In summer, jasmine tea paired with red bean pastry. In autumn, black tea with moon cake and in winter, Pu'er tea. They have an incredible collection of ceramic vessels; their most-prized is a Gongfu tea set from Yingge, a town famous for its production of porcelain. It was an inspiring project in that we learned so much from our clients. It also showed us how important it is to have a room dedicated to feeling good in—to feeling happy. We're now looking to incorporate this principal into more of our designs. sullivanandhendrawan.com



THIS PAGE: PHOTO: BRAD KNIPSTEIN; OPPOSITE: FRESH PERSPECTIVE PHOTO: JOSHUA MCHUGH; CENTRAL STATION PHOTO: CHRIS MOTTALIN; BETTER TOGETHER PHOTO: MICHAEL WILTBANK