

Room to Meditate



Usually Associated With the Outdoors, Contemplative Settings Cross the Threshold



Given the frenetic pace of our lives and the excessive demands on our attention, sacred spaces in the home provide us a way to regroup, re-energize and relax. Traditional homes in Europe and Asia often kept icon corners or areas devoted to prayer and meditation. Today, thanks to the emphasis on the home as a place of refuge, personal sacred spaces are starting to find a resurgence.

Sarah Susanka, architect and best-selling author of *The Not So Big House* series of books and *The Not So Big Life: Making Room for What Really Matters*, designed interior and exterior spaces at her home for contemplation and meditation. She transformed an attic space, accessible by ladder, for her writing and meditation. With a low ceiling, it offers a snug, protected area away from the noise and hectic pace of the day. The ceiling forms a triangle with the floor and she integrated floor pillows and a low altar decorated with dried flowers, feathers and objects from her travels. Wind chimes and a mandala decorate the space above the window.

Susanka, who has designed many residences, prefers natural materials like wood, brick and stone. She also has an outdoor meditation garden that winds along curving outdoor paths lined with ancient trees, natural stone, water fountains, chimes, statues and an ammonite fossil.

MISSING

**Stark Carpet
Full**

continued from page 62

Calming Effect Flourishes Indoors

Charlotte resident Cheree Culpepper created her home with a sense of the sacred in mind. "One of the places we are most in touch with our faith is in nature," she says. In her home at The Sanctuary, she purposely decorated to bring the outdoors in to help her and her husband Fred achieve the sense of reflective calm they find in the natural landscapes around their home.

"When I feel stress, I go out there on our property and my shoulders just drop," she



Irillumsandre eros non velis nonsecte vel d

says. Culpepper found a natural waterfall that gave her a sense of calm and quiet on a creek that flowed through their estate. She asked her designer to re-create the same waterfall indoors. The built-in floor to ceiling water element produces a lovely sound of trickling water and has become a favorite feature. She and interior designer Wanda Horton of Interior Concepts have also brought nature inside through the grouping of framed antique prints of birds of prey and botanicals.

continued on page 67



Irillumsandre eros non velis nonsecte vel del do odorper sit vel iustrud tie cortio commod doloborperit ametummy nos

REJECTED

**Summer Classic
Full**

PROOFING

**Unique Oriental Rugs
Full**



Irillumsandre eros non velis nonsecte vel del do odorper sit vel iustrud tie cortio commod doloborperit ametummy nosldunt ametue eros dunt at lore feugait wisit, quat, quam, ver am,

continued from page 64

With stone, wood and natural light, Culpepper and her husband have created a space that she says makes them slow down and appreciate the moments they spend at home. A scarlet tanager, a rare Carolina bird, appeared during their building and on moving day and has remained an important and meaningful personal symbol. Customized stained-glass windows of the bird were built into the doors to the master bedroom as a sort of icon. Visible from the sunroom and the porch, the outdoor space maintains natural landscaping without lawns. Culpepper spends much of her free time in these areas, watching the birds and enjoying the deer and wildlife.

A private meditation room and sacred space by Duda Paine Architects in Raleigh, designed for Duke Integrative Medicine, on the Duke Center for Living Campus in Durham, draws on an Asian style. With low



Irillumsandre eros non velis nonsecte vel del do odorper sit vel iustrud tie cortio commod

windows, boulders and pebbles integrated into the floor plan, the views integrate the Japanese-influenced garden and merge it with the interior as a visual element. Duda Paine used subdued colors found in nature to provide a sense of serenity. The enclosed sacred space uses light streaming through fir beams and a ceiling to floor water feature with plants to create an environment conducive to calm.

Silence Is Golden, and Blissful

Anthony Lawlor, architect and author of "A Home for the Soul," suggests creating mini gardens inside the home including stones, plants and water fountains to create a soulful corner.

"The rooms we inhabit can serve the needs of the spirit," he says. He advises focusing

continued on page 67

APPR

**Capel Rugs
Full**



continued from page 67

on the feeling desired in a sacred space and what qualities of the individual it might reflect. A personal altar on a shelf might include a combination of artwork, sacred objects like antique icons, bird nests, quartz, amethysts, and photos of family and friends. The items should be invested with personal meaning. Altar means "sacrificial burning," so it can become a place to burn away frustrations, hurts and anxieties of the day.

Generally, a sacred space at home is set off in an area with a door or closed away from the noise and is sparsely decorated. It's a place of solitude, a retreat away from demands that create stress. In addition to being a place to clear the mind and connect with the spirit, it can also create an environment conducive to healing the body and finding solutions to what seem to be insurmountable problems. "In the silence of such a place, we can listen to the soul whispering its needs and dreams," Lawlor says. ^{SP}

For credits, see page 94.

**OPEN
1/4**

**Affordable
Custom
Closets
1/4**