

Lhome



HOME, SWEET OFFICE

DESIGNING A COMFORTABLE, FUNCTIONAL PLACE TO WORK **C10**

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Home office

Professional spaces that are functional and deeply personal

BY LARA EWEN

Special to Newsday

If your idea of working from home is spreading files on the kitchen countertop or propping your laptop on the living room couch, then it's time for an upgrade. Converting a spare space — even a small one — into an office creates a separation between home and work, and makes it easier to concentrate on the task at hand. Plus, you can close the door at the end of the day and find a work/life balance that, well, works for everyone.

The most important thing is that it be functional, says Jody Sokol of Jody Sokol Design in Northport. "Make sure you have enough storage space for all the computer components," she says. "And make sure you have a comfortable computer chair." Sokol advises against bringing anything too distracting into your workspace. "You want to be able to focus," she says.

That includes considering the location of the office, says John Starck of Manhasset-based Showcase Kitchens, which, despite the firm's name, also designs home offices. "Never position the office in an active part of the house," he says. "You should be able to close the door and have complete quiet."

But designers also say setting up a home office is an opportunity to create a space that's completely yours. Carmela Posillico of AMi Design Enterprises Inc. in Huntington says that today's offices often are intensely personal spaces that combine work and retreat. She suggests adding artwork and collections and also installing dimmers so that lights can be bright for office work and dim for relaxing. Posillico says that in addition to finding space for computers and printers, it's important to find ways to make a space your own. "This is a room that you have the opportunity to customize to your aesthetic and functional needs."

Here are three Long Island home offices that manage to do both for their owners.



The floating credenza behind the desk was designed by Carmela Posillico to display the owner's collections.

Minimal and modern in Muttontown

In this contemporary office, designed by Carmela Posillico of AMi Design Enterprises Inc. in Huntington, memorabilia is the focus, and extra shelving is cleverly hidden. The space was created to give homeowner Diane Blank's husband some privacy while corralling his collectibles, including sports and movie memorabilia. "Having a separate space where my husband can work without interfering with the rest of the household is great," she says. "He can keep his space organized so that it functions the best way for him." Posillico created a flexible display wall using a Rivelli Floating Shelf System, which allows her client to display whatever items he's most proud of at the time. The bold colors of the American flag contrast well with the dark wood Boxeo desk. The rest of the room was left intentionally minimalist. "My client felt that most of his work and correspondences would be through his iPhone, so he did not need a lot of storage or library book shelving," says Posillico. Instead, she designed a walnut floating credenza, which she had custom-built by John Acerra of GACO Custom Cabinetry in West Hempstead, and she finished it off with a dark neutral brown metallic to serve as a backdrop for her client's art.



S that work



HEATHER WALSH



HEATHER WALSH

A shared space in Stony Brook

When two people split a home office, it can be especially challenging to design a room that works for both. In this space, designed by Jody Sokol of Jody Sokol Design in Northport, the key was finding a happy medium. “The challenge for this project was how to merge two different styles,” says Sokol. Marty Buchman, a teacher, needed space to spread out papers and store files, while Elyse Buchman needed a base from which to run the Stony Brookside Bed & Bike Inn, a bed-and-breakfast that offers bicycle tours on the North Shore. Sokol brought in a low-maintenance laminate desk and a comfortable leather chair for him and a gray faux shagreen desk with a feminine Parsons chair for her. Then Sokol made the space work for both — arranging the furniture so it would capitalize on views of Stony Brook Mill Pond and the Stony Brook Grist Mill as well as encourage husband and wife to communicate.



VERONIQUE LOUIS

Jody Sokol designed this office to give both users a space that suited their styles.

Relaxing at work in East Hills (on the cover)

For Dr. Michael Schwartz, a busy orthopedic surgeon and the chairman of the Department of Orthopedics and Sports Medicine at ProHEALTH Care in Lake Success, his home office had to serve multiple purposes. “When Michael approached me with this project, he stressed the need to have a great place to work, but also to kick back and watch a game,” says John Starck of Manhasset-based Showcase Kitchens. “It’s man cave-meets-home office.” He designed the space with assistance from Manhasset-based Karen Arpino, who used custom-stained walnut and worked with the home’s architect and builder. Schwartz says he appreciates the scale of the space as well as its details. “It’s a modest-size room, but when you walk in, it appears expansive, and the elements within provide everything that I would want in a home office.” Unusual details include semicircular panels that were hand painted, large windows along a curvature and built-in custom cabinetry. “It gives the office a traditional and formal appearance, while giving the room a bright and open feel, particularly during the daytime,” says Schwartz.



HEATHER WALSH

The surgeon who uses this office, designed by John Starck, appreciates it as both formal and bright.

Posillico created flexible display space using a Rivelli Floating Shelf System. Each panel in the flag folds down when needed.