



THE FEMINA BOOK OF

Rs 75

INTERIORS

Living & Dining Rooms, Bars, Dens & Studies

Dens



Left: A place to chill and unwind
Photograph courtesy Pengo

Below: A place where you are inspired and even creative!
Photograph courtesy Haro hardwood



By definition, a den is a hideout. By design, it is a cosy, comfortable, private domain, where "denning" means retreating into intimate seclusion to unwind after a stressful day. Designed to meet specific personal priorities, dens are used for reading, working at personal accounts, pursuing hobbies or even merely meditating. Privacy and quietude from the sounds and normal distractions of a household are therefore of prime importance in accessing and locating this room on plan. Dens are best located furthest away from kitchen clatter and television cacophony. An ideal position is next to the master bedroom or even appurtenant to it.

The Retreat

Civilisation and advancement have nothing to do with man desiring a den that he can call all his own. Designed to meet personal priorities, dens are used for reading, working at personal accounts, pursuing hobbies or even merely meditating. YASHWANT RAMAMURTHY writes about this private retreat where we often lose our folks!



Top: Austerity, not ostentation, is the mantra
Photograph courtesy Pergi

Below: Artifacts here should be loved not beheld
Photograph courtesy Yashwant Ramamurthy

SIZE DOES NOT MATTER

Dens don't have to be large. In fact, when limited to an optimum size as dictated by activity requirements, intimately scaled rooms achieve a homely feel-good ambience of reassuring informality. Designing a den is not an exercise in high style. Success results from a harmonious combination of functional, ergonomic furniture with adequate shelving. Accessories and artifacts displayed here should be loved, not beheld. An eclectic composition of old family portraits, academic memorabilia, intrinsically mundane but cherished "treasures," give this room an easy ambience that comforts in its simplicity rather than startles with style. Austerity, not ostentation, is the mantra.



PERSONAL PARAPHERNALIA FOR THIS PERSONAL SPACE

A commodious writing desk, a comfy armchair and foot stool, a computer corner with space for peripherals, a cabinet for personal documents, book shelves, storage for hobby paraphernalia — are some ideas for furnishing a den. A combination of well-worn furniture, inherited family legacies and odd chairs might sound seemingly incongruous. However, with co-ordinated upholstery and matching wood stain you can achieve a curiously harmonious whole. Skip your den on the Grand Guided Tour of the house. This is a very personal space where privacy is sacrosanct to its user. As such, even some of the clutter can contribute to its lived-in look.

LIGHTS, COLOURS AND TEXTURES

Adequate day lighting should be complimented by uniform general illumination at night. Reading lamps and pedestals provide localised solutions. Sufficient 5-amp sockets should be planned for systems and other electrical equipment. Given the low traffic density in a den, laminated or natural wood parquet is ideal for flooring. If discreetly used, veneered wall panelling combined with shelving adds the desired warmth to a den. Leather or woven jacquards suit well for upholstery while cotton blends, fashioned into Roman blinds can substitute for conventional drapes. Colours should be quiet. Brown, grey moss green, navy or burgundy are solid base colours to work the palette around. With dull tones and matt finishes, you can suffuse your den with informality. Above all, the den should symbolise the character of its user. Space being at a premium in an urban apartment, one can effectively create a small den by enclosing a balcony off the master bedroom.

A den has to be comfortable and warm. A writing desk, computer or TV can easily be a part of a den

Photographs courtesy: Vishwanath Rameshwarthy, Maheshwar Enterprises and Pingo



Den

This young couple in their '30s, wanted a room where they could watch movies and play board games, listen to music and also have a relaxed drink with friends. The basement seemed ideal for this. It offered the right mix of privacy and snugness. I designed a four-seater sofa, which could be put together in a square; the same could also be separated and placed along with regular sofas to seat 12 people. Since the wife wanted an exposed brick wall, I used that as a starting point to design the basement. The basement was a long rectangular room, so we could kind of break it up area wise. The next decision was to use wooden flooring to add warmth. The red exposed brick (Rs 25 per sq ft) and maple flooring called for a subtle contrast. I used the combination of blue and beige silk in the tapestry to add the right colour. The walnut polish on the furniture completed the look. Paintings by Panwar and a woven hanging by Rajan Chowdhry made the basement come alive. To make the bar more interesting, I used round mirrors and staggered glass shelves to store wine glasses and added a wine rack in line with the tastes of the client. The entire room cost about Rs 3.50 lakh.

— Arlene Thakore



>>Top: Exposed bricks and wooden flooring create perfect mood for a den

>>Below: The basement was ideal to have a family den. It's also used for entertaining and watching movies
Photograph: Arlene Thakore