



As outside stress builds, many New Jersey homeowners are looking inside for tranquility. The result: Unique home spaces designed to soothe the soul.

by Lauren Payne

SOOTHIN



A long-time yoga practitioner, Michele O'Shea tried several different styles of the discipline in search of one that would resonate with her. This quest took her to India, where she found inspiration in Kundalini yoga, "considered the original, the mother of all yogas," she says. "It's very pure, very clean, very comprehensive." Encouraged by this revelation and inspired by the rich culture and deep hues she found in India, O'Shea returned to her home in Wyckoff determined to transform its stately, book-lined library into a personal yoga space.

The library had seemed like a good idea when O'Shea and her husband, Rob, built the home six years ago, but it had sat mostly unused. Located in a separate wing of the

sprawling home, with its own separate entrance, the library was adjacent to the small office O'Shea uses for her business as a life coach. It made sense, then, to transform the entire space—entry, office and library—into an Indian-inspired, color-saturated retreat.

O'Shea called on her longtime collaborator, interior designer Rina Capodiec-Quinn, to take over. "We wanted to create an experience that brought you out of your own element," says Capodiec-Quinn. Working with her design team, Lindsay Nally and Amanda Arditti, she did just that.

"We tried to make the rooms more serene, more Zen," says Nally.

Key to this strategy was downplaying all the wood surfaces while still allowing the room's unique architecture to shine. "We

OM AT HOME
Michele O'Shea's former library, opposite, was transformed into a yoga room by designer Rina Capodiec-Quinn. Above left: A tented ceiling accents the India-inspired foyer. Above right: A gold-leaf ceiling, sheer drapes and a sculptural wood divider add drama to the yoga room's sitting area.

G SPACES

tried to soften the spaces and make them flow,” Nally continues. Panels of sheer fabric were draped from the ceiling in the yoga space, while another room was given a tented-ceiling treatment. A gold-leaf ceiling added drama to the adjacent sitting room. Fabrics and walls are bold and vibrant, in rich, saturated colors. “We were inspired by the Indian culture, the fabrics and textures,” says Nally.

In the yoga room, bookshelves were kept bare. “Someone came in, a highly regarded figure in the world of yoga, and she suggested to have the room as bare as possible to heighten the experience,” O’Shea says. “She pointed to the books and said they would be a distraction. She wanted the space to be clean.”

O’Shea couldn’t be happier with the makeover. While she continues to teach Kundalini yoga at Ma Yoga and Meditation in Mahwah, her home is her personal practice space. And she isn’t the only one who uses the yoga area. “My husband uses it and two of my four children do,” she says. “I hope my children take this with them.

“My experience in this space is, it really supports, strengthens and nurtures my practice. I feel like I’m going into a different world. I can move into that meditative mind effortlessly because of this space,” she says. “It really enriches my experience.”

LIGHTEN UP

Mare Insabella admits she was in a dark place—so dark that the bedroom she shares with partner Denise Petrizzo in their Holmdel home had full-length blackout drapes covering every window, the furniture was hefty and masculine, and everything in the room was dark brown. “I was definitely not going through a bright period,” Insabella laughs now. “It was a cocoon for me.”

It was Petrizzo who had the idea of creating a meditation room in an unused space adjacent to the bedroom, to help Insabella get out of her funk. Fortunately for the pair, Insabella’s cousin is interior designer Beth Insabella Walsh, who immediately knew what to do. “The space was so cave-like and everything was so massive,” says Walsh. “I wanted it to be more feminine and to lighten it up.”

To transform the space into a light-filled bedroom and meditation room, Walsh focused on an all-white palette with a mix of textures. At first glance it may seem monochromatic and flat; it’s actually anything but. “The space is soft and glittery and stone and cowhide, all in creams and whites,” says Walsh.

Walsh brightened the bedroom by upholstering walls in white vinyl, hanging flowing white silk draperies and adding all-white furnishings. The meditation room is a soothing mix of tones. A single wall is covered in a sparkly mother-of-pearl mosaic wallcovering. A chaise-for-two in butterscotch-colored leather sits beside a petrified-wood side table, and a cowhide rug adds warmth. The two-sided fireplace adds ambience, while a water feature is a source of tranquility. Everything sits fairly low to the ground, encouraging occupants to take a seat cross-legged on the floor atop a silk pillow facing Buddha.

Insabella now meditates in the room daily, a form of Buddhism, she explains, which is a practice of looking within. “It’s about connecting with yourself, connecting with your mind.” She tries

TUNED IN

Mare Insabella’s meditation room doubles as a place to relax while playing the guitar. The glittering mosaic wall-paper contrasts with the cowhide rug.



SOFT TOUCH

Designer Beth Insabella Walsh designed the upholstered wall, a grid of off-white faux leather that's easy to keep clean.



CALMING DOWN

A soothing environment helps her stay focused, Insabella says. She keeps the fireplace lit, along with candles and incense, while sitting on silk pillows facing Buddha.



her best to eke out about 10 minutes each morning after her habitual two cups of coffee. "Meditation is a great way to start your day," she says. "I shut out the noise. The waterfall sound is relaxing, the fireplace is lit, and I have candles and incense. It's all very soothing."

The transformation—to both the space and to herself—is working, she says. "I've let the light into my life and my room." ■

RESOURCES

O'SHEA HOME

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Rina Capodiceci-Quinn, ASID, RCQ Design, Ramsey, 201-962-7487

PAINTER: Mark Tirondola Painting, Bloomfield, 973-429-3600; marktirondolapainting.com

DECORATIVE PAINTER/GOLD LEAF: Caitlin Conlow, 347-400-3172; funkiturebrooklyn.com

WINDOW TREATMENTS/FABRIC PANELS/WINDOW SEAT PILLOWS & CUSHIONS:

Alan Schatzberg & Associates, South Hackensack, 201-440-8855; alanschatzberg.com

ELECTRICIAN: Doug Groenewal Electric, North Haledon, 973-423-9002

BENCH & ALTAR: Charlie Spademan Ironworks, Montclair, 973-744-3786; ironfireart.com

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS: Colony Florists, Franklin Lakes, 201-891-2060; colonyfloristonline.com

UPHOLSTERER: The Kings of Upholstery, Paterson, 973-684-9263; kingsofupholstery.com

INSABELLA-PETRIZZO HOME

DESIGNER: Beth Insabella Walsh, ASID, IIDA. INSABELLADESIGN, Little Silver, 732-933-4344; insabelladesign.com