

as seen in
GREENWICH
magazine



above: With exceptional views of Long Island Sound, this porch at a Riverside home designed by Charles Hilton Architects features New York gray flagstone flooring and a fireplace made of reclaimed local fieldstone that helps the homeowners extend their time outside. (Windows and doors are from Little Harbor Window Company.)

The Home Front

Luxury home upgrades that are trending now

BY MARY KATE HOGAN

Over the past year people turned their attention to their homes more than ever, putting a fresh eye on what matters most. We all needed a secure haven and respite (and still do) while also longing for a place to reconnect with family and friends. It was harder to ignore things that need

fixing and updating when you were home 24/7, but it was also a time to dream big. So, we talked to experts about how people are investing in their surroundings and learned about some of the ultimate in home upgrades now that we can finally open our doors to friends again.

WOODRUFF AND BROWN

1 OUTSIDE IN CHARLES HILTON ARCHITECTS hiltonarchitects.com

Our desire to commune with nature has reached an all-time high. Studies have found that taking in natural light and beautiful scenery reduces stress and improves well-being, even boosting our immune systems. A conservatory affords these perks year-round.

"People want to feel like they're out in nature and enjoying their yard, even if it's the middle of winter," says Charles Hilton, AIA, who says that glazed rooms have been high on homeowners' wish lists. He created a light-filled office—such a soothing spot to work—and sitting room, which looks out onto a boxwood-framed terrace with a center fountain and a pond and stream beyond.

To create a similar space, these are things to consider: You need top-quality windows and doors, ideally insulated with two or three layers of glass and a low-e (low-emission) coating that lets in sunlight but minimizes solar heat gain in the summer months. It's important for a glazed-in room to have its own HVAC zone, because it will lose and gain heat differently than other rooms in the home. Solar shades are a must for controlling sunlight and privacy. In this space, the shades are remote controlled, and the ceiling shades retract into a concealed soffit around the perimeter. Choose shades that you can see through, and then even when you want less sun, you can still soak up the view.

2

DESTRESS & DETOX SBP HOMES sbphomes.com

It's no secret that people enjoyed cocktail hour with more gusto over the past year. When you have no commute, there's more time to mix a margarita or martini. This trend has staying power as people have been adding bars into their homes, says Doron Sabag of SBP Homes, in living rooms and finished basements.

However, in our health-conscious age, Doron says, there's also an increase in home spas and infrared saunas. "As people drink more, they feel they need to detox," he says. Infrared saunas promise many benefits. "Apparently they detox, increase metabolism, keep your skin healthy, make you happy. Why not have one?" For one client he's building a family spa room with a sauna, steam unit and soaking tub with outdoor access to a porch with a heated floor. "It's the most glamorous spa we've ever done."



above: Chilling out at home has fresh appeal when you have a room like this, outfitted with a well-equipped, built-in bar and pool table.

3

LUCKY DOGS GRAND ENTRANCE grandentrance.com

Undeniably the big winners of the pandemic, our pooches have enjoyed so much extra love and attention. As things improve and you find yourself with slightly less time for three walks a day, how can you still keep Buddy happy? A functional yet decorative fence and gate can keep him safe on your property while also adding overall security.

"People have been moving up from the city and buying houses; after a few weeks they decide they're never going back. They're used to security, and that has predicated more fencing and gates," says Don Gore of Grand Entrance Gates. "Pets are driving some of the work. It's about keeping animals in and safe and predators out." (See the NextDoor app for an album's worth of bobcats, coyotes and more.)

At one Greenwich home, Grand Entrance created a special dog run that adds to the landscape, with its bronze railing on top, while also giving the pup room to roam. The company installs a wide range of classic and modern style fencing and gates as well as custom stone walls, outdoor fireplace and patios—all enhancing outdoor living. "Now that family can open the door, let the dog out and not worry about a thing." »