



Double Duty SPACES

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Take everything you were taught about formal dining rooms, garages for cars only, or dingy and dark basements - divided spaces meant for one specific activity - and throw those ideas out the window. Today homeowners are open to creative ideas that make the most of the spaces they have, or are newly creating.

Especially at the lake, homes are kept in the family for generations – whole families have grown up in a lake home and then returned with their own kids to enjoy the lake as well. Well-designed homes have the ability to age gracefully over time as the needs of the families change. Demands on a home can shift from one generation to the next, just as the

number of occupants can quickly change from one weekend to the next.

Homes must be flexible and accommodating to make the owners feel comfortable when it's just two people enjoying the home, as well as during a holiday weekend when multiple guests and families are visiting. Ideas about how we use space must also change with time.

Designing for multiple uses up front allow this ebb and flow of people to come and go with ease.

Let's start a room transformation by repurposing the formal dining room, if you have a breakfast nook or informal dining space that serves as your main eating space. Typically, main level space is a hot commodity. Especially when homeowners are hoping to incorporate areas such as a main level master suite, large kitchen and pantry, and a mudroom with laundry, finding space on the main level for all types of different activities can be a challenge.

One solution is a "flex" room. This is a room that is purposefully designed to change over time – let's take a look at how this can transform over the life of the home. This room may start out as a baby nursery then become a playroom to keep small children close by. Once no longer needed for small children, this allows the room to become a home office, hobby room or library. As the homeowners age, there may be either aging parents that need a main level bedroom, or visiting grandchildren to keep a close eye on. Instead of a "formal" dining room, think of all the ways that space could transform.



Who thought garages were only for cars? Probably most of us.

Garages at the lake have also undergone an evolution. Your typical cabin garage, if there even was one, may have been a tin storage shed with a sand floor that held tents, water toys, the extra pop fridge and a water hose connected to a counter for a makeshift fish cleaning sink.

However, the garage has evolved into a highly-developed double duty space. With the simple addition of a sink, the whole atmosphere

of a garage can change from winter storage to a summer party room. A sink added to the wall adjacent to the house allows the garage to hold a kitchenette - complete with extra refrigerator or freezer and even a vent hood for frying fish – without the worry of a frozen water line.

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Now, all of a sudden you have a serving buffet area that can host, with picnic tables, a graduation, family reunion, 4th of July celebration or any large event. Add screens to your garage doors to allow the summer breeze to flow and your space becomes a deluxe garage. The



FACING PAGE: Garage with kitchenette by BMW Homes, Dilworth, MN. LEFT: This Devil's Lake homeowner entertains from his garage window complete with poured concrete bar. ABOVE: This Nascar themed lake cabin garage is outfitted with painted cabinets, a fish cleaning sink, and a fish frying counter complete with vent hood.

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addition of a TV allows for hosting all types of sporting events without the rowdiness in your main home.

During the winter, this same garage can do double duty as an extra-large mudroom to hold the ensemble of snowmobile or ice fishing gear and equipment while it unthaws. A large garage space is unlike any other space in the home, perfect for informal entertaining during winter or summer.

Basements are a similar type of "flex" space, often times only used for overflow guests. In the summer, basements are perfect for keeping guests cool or for relaxing after a hot day out in the sun. Bunk beds, fold out couches or futons allow for both sleeping space and relaxing.

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A large basement TV room can hold a rainy day party, yet built-in bunks around the edge also allow for overflow sleeping space when needed. The popularity of sliding barn doors have done wonders to open up auxiliary basement rooms to areas that have windows – allowing more light and openness, even in the once thought of "dark" basements.

One last room that may get overlooked is the laundry room/pantry combination. In homes short on space, you may combine a laundry room and pantry together for a cost effective and functional solution.

The laundry room already contains a sink and cabinetry storage. As long as your home isn't doing the constant laundry of a household with teenagers, you may be able to combine these two spaces. The counter in the laundry/pantry can serve as both a clothes folding counter, and at other times hold crock pots and prep items for a larger kitchen function.

Repurpose a space you already have into a room that is more useful, or pay extra attention as you design a new home, to enable your home to age with grace. ~L&H