

Drool-worthy home workspaces



As Canadians continue to work from home work spaces — some former hidey-holes now repurposed into working order — we’re showcasing three designer-led home office renovations.

These valuable spaces were renovated, and completed, before emergency orders were enacted last month requiring everyone to socially distance and stay home to help fight the [COVID-19](#) pandemic. But these creative and stunning solutions may provide inspiration for your own home office space.



The Cummings' home office: In 2014, the owners of [SevernWoods Fine Homes](#) committed to bringing their work home with them — for good.

Tom and Jennifer Cumming made the professional space in their basement more official by undertaking a substantial renovation, which included digging out a stairwell to provide a separate entrance, creating space to collaborate with others and designing a dream office that was totally on brand.

“Tom and Jennifer wanted their workspace to read like an office, even though it’s in their home. And they needed room for the two of them plus at least one employee to work there every day, plus host meetings with architects, tradespeople and clients from time to time,” said Sacha Nizami, of Sacha Nizami Design, who collaborated with the couple.

Today, two stainless steel tables sit in the centre of the 360-square-foot room, serving as floating desks and a place to roll out drawings. The material is a nod to the industrial nature of their home-building and home reno work, and is easy to keep clean.

The perimeter of the office is lined with built-in cabinets and workstations with large drawers below and cubbies up top. “Jen wanted a cubby system

with no doors. It's a great concept because it keeps things light and airy and they have quick access to everything they need," said Nizami.

Perhaps the most striking part of the home office is its distinctive green accent colour that came straight from the company's logo. Even the Marmoleum floor — a hygienic material used in hospitals — features three



of the logo's colours in 26-inch bands. "It provides a polished, professional look and immerses everyone in the company's brand, which is a nice touch in a home office," said Nizami.

Work zone-turned-bar home office: What do you do when your home office is more than just a workspace?

Look for multifunctional materials and invest in great cabinetry to tuck away the work stuff when it's time to switch gears, says Andi Wheelband, co-owner of [Two Birds Design](#).

She put her design chops to the test when a client requested a renovation that would allow a home office to double as a point place for parties. "The family entertains a lot and wanted the office, which is located just off the foyer, to also serve as a bar station."

"We laminated the back wall with cork sheets and wallpapered over it with

metallic wallpaper that looks like cork so they can put up bar menus. It serves as a funky party station at night and a stylish place to work any other time.”



The larger-than-average desk was designed through [Style Garage](#) so it can also be used as an ample bar surface in the off-hours. Sleek navy cabinetry provides generous file storage and hides a bulky printer. Restoration Hardware [picture light sconces](#) under the cabinets offers task lighting for work and mood lighting for play.

“The navy cabinetry from H&Z All Custom Woodworking is warmer and cosier than a traditional oak. It gives it an edge and makes the room feel more current,” said Wheelband.

Soft finishings, like a custom rug from Kravet and a Black Rooster accent chair, layer in an elegant touch while also acting as sound absorption for conference calls.

Day or night, this home office/party palace is ready to serve.

Bedroom awakes as a home office: When a couple converts a bedroom to a shared home office, optimizing every square inch is critical.



Gabriele Pizzale, principal designer and CEO of [Pizzale Design Inc.](#), was brought in to create a harmonious work space for a Georgetown husband and wife team who own three martial arts studios together and have bustling side hustles of their own.



“They needed an orderly, clean, functional place to work. It was important to have two desks and lots of storage because they have a ton of books,” said Pizzale.

She converted the closet into a hideaway for a printer, filing cabinets and shelving for books. This cleared the room for two workspaces, including custom desks in a laminate material. “It’s extremely durable so you can write on it and you’re not going to get marks or wear on the top.”

Pizzale also chose hard-wearing and timeless materials for cabinetry and shelving, and warmed things up with a grass cloth on the back wall and an interesting light fixture and art to “add some pizzazz to the room, so they’re not just looking at blank walls. This was important because he does a lot of video calls from his office so he needs a nice, professional backdrop,” she said.

A simple valance on the window lets the light flow freely and two ergonomically correct chairs from [Frid and Russell](#) provide the finishing touches that help make everything work.

“When you spend many hours every day in your office, you want a space that’s comfortable and professional.”



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