

THE GUIDE

Dining rooms are out of fashion, orangeries are old hat and en suite bathrooms are expected as standard. The discerning buyer now wants a designated room for every activity under the sun — with even a bespoke place to bath the dog.

"Traditional 'extras', such as swimming pools, tennis courts or equestrian facilities, are considered par for the course in today's prime country market," says Rupert Sturgis at Knight Frank in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. "Buyers are now impressed with 21st-century facilities such as media rooms, spas, gyms or state-of-the-art wine cellars. They offer a lifestyle choice within the home and designers can push the boundaries; often these rooms are the most spectacular in the house."

So what are the top ten must-have rooms to impress in town and country?

Pantry or larder

The pantry or larder is back on the shopping list, says Phil Spencer, presenter of Channel 4's *Location, Location, Location*. "To be able to open a concealed door and disappear and have all your kitchen supplies and condiments in one space is really attractive," he says.

What's the difference, though?

"Essentially a pantry and a larder are the same thing, and people use either phrase when referring to a small room or cupboard in which to store food," says Michelle Hather, deputy editor of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. "However, it's likely that a larder will be cooler and therefore used to store fresh food, whereas a pantry is unlikely to be temperature-controlled."

If you have a game larder, you pick up extra country kudos — there's one at the Old Factory in Millstead, Kent (£2.4 million, Strutt & Parker).

Flower room

The domestic doyenne Martha Stewart apparently created a room in her summerhouse in Maine dedicated to flower arranging. However, the flower room is not an American invention, but a practical feature found in the grandest English country homes. "Vases are best kept in the flower room, as otherwise they get muddled with jugs," says Edward Church, Strutt & Parker's head of agency in Kent. "You don't want to pour a drink from a jug that has been used for flower arranging."

Boot room

A rural prerequisite for generations, today's boot room is a practical part of family life. "Boot rooms are essential for country houses," says Luke Morgan of Strutt & Parker's country department. "Never underestimate the size needed



The roof terrace at Beau House, Jermyn Street, London, has a kitchen (Carter Jonas)

Rise of the spa room and the man-cave

for a decent boot room. You need enough hooks for hanging up coats, welly boot racks, benches, drawers for hats, gloves and scarves and so on. The boot room is also a useful place to have the boiler, as it can operate as a drying facility. Traditional stone flooring is best as it is easy to brush down and wash."

Wine room

No longer just a musty old cellar, now you need a bespoke room to show off your precious collection.

However, says the buying agent Mark Parkinson of Middleton Advisors, developers can be wary because a wine room with a tasting area takes up at least 70 sq ft.

"Also, in a very international market not every culture drinks wine and some buyers would simply not see the value in the same way that they would appreciate a walk-in dressing room or cinema," he explains. "However, the 'wine wall', usually a glass-fronted shallow room set against a basement or interior wall, has become a lot more popular; the beauty is that it can take a multitude of shapes and sit in a dark basement corner that would otherwise be difficult to find a use for."

Spa room

"In the more substantial and prime central London homes we have seen an increasing number of properties with hair and treatment rooms," says Noel de

Keyser, director of Savills in Sloane Street. "These rooms have become an expectation over the last ten years."

Walk-in wardrobe cum dressing room
Ever since Carrie Bradshaw opened her closet in *Sex and the City*, the walk-in wardrobe has been the dream of many a girl about town. At Rathbone Square in Fitzrovia (rathbone-square.com), where the penthouse dressing rooms have "cosmetic fridges", even one-bedroom apartments have walk-in dressing rooms, says spokeswoman Emily Murphy.

Media room

It's not enough to stick a TV on the wall and bring in a couple of sofas. "The typical 'media room' is undergoing a revamp," says Lisa-Marie Mosca, interior designer at Newcourt Residential. "Today's media rooms deliver a more multifunctional experience; areas include space for live music, film projections and virtual gaming, as well as built-in bars."

Man-cave

The man of the house used to retire to his shed, but the "man-cave" retreat packed with boys' toys is gaining ground. Knight Frank is marketing Park Lodge, a £14.95 million Knightsbridge property that has the ultimate man-cave: a study with a picture window into the garage so the owner can admire his favourite supercar. "If you need to settle down and work at the desk, a flip of a switch will turn on the electronic privacy glass so the beautiful view won't be a distraction," says Alexander Millett, of Knight Frank.

Outdoor kitchen

Joe Burns, managing director of the property and design practice Oliver Burns, says: "More and more roof terraces are now incorporating state-of-the-art outdoor kitchens, luxurious seating and dining areas, as well as outdoor fireplaces and televisions."

Dog room

Jo Aldridge, regional director of Stacks Property Search in the Cotswolds, says: "More and more people are designing their accommodation around their dogs, with back doors leading into a specially designed dog area where they can be washed and dried and have their bed. And walk-in dog showers are the new must-have for house-proud dog owners." Jayne Dowle



The man-cave at Moor Green Farm, Finchampstead, Berkshire, has a bar and pool table. It's on sale with Strutt & Parker for £4.35 million. Inset: a multi-gym in a house on the Wentworth Estate, Virginia Water, on sale for £4.95 million (Barton Wyatt)