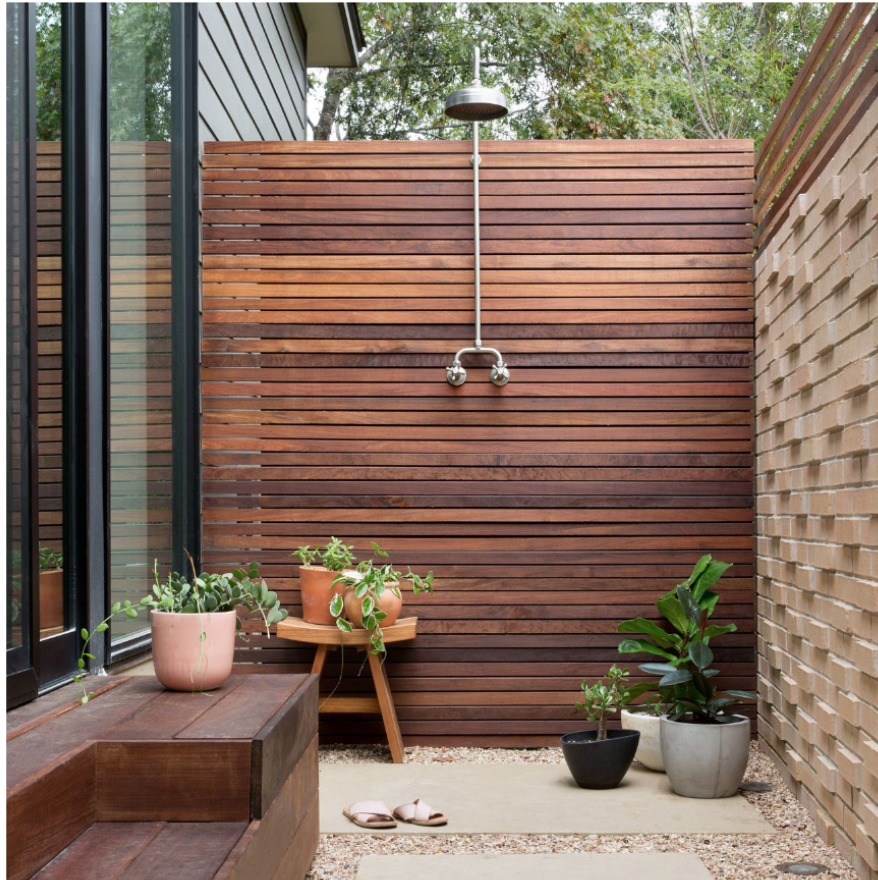


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REAL ESTATE | DESIGN

Yes, Your Home Can Have an Outdoor Shower—Even If It’s Not a Beach House

Design pros say owners of suburban and city dwellings increasingly want to enjoy the thrill of sudsing up in the fresh air. Here’s how to balance privacy and liberation.



AUSTIN CITY LATHER More than 200 miles from the sea, Texas designer Claire Zinnecker and architecture firm Alterstudio built a beach-worthy soaker.

PHOTO: MOLLY CULVER

By Allison Duncan

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LATHERING UP OUTDOORS is among life’s most wholesome kicks. Sun hits body parts that rarely see the light of day while water falls like rain beneath blue sky. Why must one wait for a stay at the beach to enjoy a fresh-air scrub?

One needn’t, says New York City designer David Frazier: “Outdoor showers enliven a daily task and are becoming increasingly popular in metropolitan locales,” he said. Outside stalls exemplify biophilic design—a trend connecting people to nature that has surged during the pandemic, said Graeme Labe, principal at hospitality design firm Luxury Frontiers in Johannesburg, South Africa. His studio recently

outfitted luxury resort Camp Sarika by Amangiri in Canyon Point, Utah, with shower cabinets that open onto a soul-soothing vista of red-sand desert mesas.



A corner setup at furniture designer Glenn Lawson's Los Angeles home.

PHOTO: YOSHIHIRO MAKINO

To a greater degree than their country cousins, outdoor “city” showers must balance privacy with delicious exposure to the elements—unless commissioned by exhibitionists. Designers rely on everything from frosted-glass cubicle walls to portable folding screens to ensure discretion without killing the view or the al fresco feel, says New York architect Philip Consalvo. Mr. Frazier walled one outdoor shower in a West Point, Ga., home with a mix of pierced brick and horizontal cedar slats.

Fresh air can squeeze through but nosy eyes can't.

In a well-secluded yard, you can just slap a faucet against a wall and plumb it. Otherwise, you need walls to block the neighbors' sightlines. In Austin, Texas, designer Claire Zinnecker and architecture firm Alterstudio were tasked with creating a plein-air shower for clients who had only side neighbors to contend with. They created a roomy but private alcove enclosed on three sides by a teak fence, a tan-brick wall and glass doors to an interior bathroom.

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Lush vegetation can help. The walled garden of furniture designer Glenn Lawson's 1920s Spanish revival home in Los Angeles is jungle-y enough that just two shower partitions sufficed. He chose inexpensive, naturally waterproof stucco to align with his architecture.

If your shower is surrounded by taller buildings, modesty requires more cover overhead. Susana Simonpietri, founder of design firm Chango & Co., topped the stall in her Brooklyn townhome's garden with a trellis and encouraged climbing vines to make it opaque.

In Sharon, Conn., textile designer John Robshaw fitted a shower rig to his suburban home's shingle siding so he could rinse off after tending to his garden. Though he shielded his setup from neighbors' eyes by planting flowering dogwood, he realized his own guest-room windows posed a problem. The shower, he said, was "tricky to use when guests are in town." Interior drapes offered a solution.