

From the publishers of SOMERSET LIFE

# TAUNTON LIFE

SUMMER 2016



## TOP THINGS *to do in* TAUNTON

»»EVENTS »»WILDLIFE »»SHOPPING  
»»HERITAGE »»GARDENING »»WALKING  
»»THEATRE »»SPORT



Cute desk storage that doubles as *objet* in your guest room. Mint marble table lamp £58. Betsy jewellery box £59, Eva jewellery Box £69. All from [oliverbonas.com](http://oliverbonas.com)

# Going SPARE

Smart design and functional living – Taunton interiors expert MEL THORNE explains how to create multi-purpose spaces that can do it all



The way we live in this century has changed vastly over the years and it now demands a more multifunctional approach to our spaces and no longer do we design houses to have a designated purpose for every room.

Plenty of homes today feature a room intended to serve as an office, but that doesn't mean they're necessarily used that way. Instead, space constraints often require homeowners to morph some spaces into multifunctional areas. The combination workspace/guest room is commonly employed to maximize square footage, particularly in smaller homes or apartments.

You probably already know how challenging it can be to get a room intended to serve two purposes and to do both things well. Thanks to some simple design tips and transformational, space-sensitive furniture, you can enjoy a fully functioning and aesthetically pleasing craft room/home office/guest room.

Just because the room is going to serve a dual purpose doesn't mean the physical space has to be evenly split, instead, the space you allocate to one function should be proportional to how often it's used. For example, if you work in your office almost every day but only have overnight guests a few times a year, most of the room should be a work area, with the remainder serving as a guest refuge. Remember, this is

all about smart design and functional living.

Friends and family who visit will need a place to store their clothes and other items. When you don't have visitors, vertical shelves are perfect for displaying office supplies, knickknacks or accessories. Then, when you're expecting guests, you can simply clear the shelves to make room for their folded garments and personal effects.

Having a multiuse room isn't about stuffing two rooms into one. The trick is to select furniture and accessories that make it easy to transform an office into a guest nook or vice versa. Think carefully about the furniture you choose, items that can be moved and rearranged easily such as a desk / console table on castors for example.

If the space is more office than guest suite, don't fill it with a 6ft bed but instead consider a day bed dressed with cushions that can also double up as seating. Use any unused alcoves by building in cupboards for storage where the

*'Having a multiuse room isn't about stuffing two rooms into one. The trick is to select furniture and accessories that make it easy to transform an office into a guest nook or vice versa.'*

Chinese cabinets have been a long-standing stunning storage solution. [living.co.uk](http://living.co.uk)



Even the most paper-free office space needs smart filing. £4,670 from [wharfside.co.uk](http://wharfside.co.uk)

doors can close when guests are in residence.

To create a feeling of separate spaces, consider employing a folding screen or room divider if the room is large enough to accommodate one. Additionally the installation of curtains to close off one area of the room is useful in larger interiors.

However, if your multiuse room is mostly used for visitors, a small desk in the same design style as the rest of the bedroom furniture can help the area feel like one fluid space.

Even if your home office is serving a dual purpose, you should still make a wholehearted attempt to let your personality shine through. Select artwork or accessories that mirror your interests but that guests will enjoy. For example, if you're a music buff, frame some vinyl record album covers, tour posters or other memorabilia that'll inspire you while you work.

Don't be afraid to play around with colour, either. Select paint or wallpaper that will complement your guest and office furniture and consider some decorative and interesting office stationary to liven up the space and compliment the interior.

By mixing and matching neutral and vibrant colours, you can easily create a space that anyone will enjoy spending time in, even if conference calls are involved! ♦

Mel Thorne is from Taunton's Country Knole Interiors [countryknoleinteriors.co.uk](http://countryknoleinteriors.co.uk)