



For the woman who's always wanted a room of her own — and who doesn't?

The she shed takes Virginia Woolf's notion and runs wild with it. The ladies' elevated answer to the man cave, a she shed is typically a small outbuilding designed as a retreat, a place for creative pursuits and hobbies or reading, relaxing, practicing yoga, or even entertaining. Modern sheds are the granddaughters of the Victorian potting shed, and though some are used for gardening, the new shelters have more flair and typically offer a comfortable place to sit and stay awhile. We caught up with two she shed owners, each of whom credit their cabins with changing their lives.



Second Natured

Designer Stefania Skrabak considers her 110-sq-ft cabin not only an extension of the beautiful landscape around it, but also an extension of herself. "It really is the whole foundation of my business and my outlook on life," she says. The structure originated in Rye, where her carpenter friend built it as a testing ground for different types of wood. He let Skrabak move the timber frame to Phoenicia, New York, where she finished the cabin with hemlock beams and massive windows, transforming it into a rustic getaway. Her furnishings are mostly thrift-store finds, such as a \$5 light fixture, and pieces like the blue midcentury modern chair she picked up for free on the side of the road. While using the cabin in spring, summer, and fall, she grew all kinds of plants and vegetables (skills passed down from her Eastern European family), grilled meals outdoors, and hosted dinner parties at her table under a tree with a lit chandelier hanging above.

During her creative-living respite, she hatched a plan for her design business called ArtHomeGarden. "It's the art of living indoors and out," says Skrabak. Her shed truly blurred the lines between the two with its French doors opening onto a deck and wisteria vines growing on the inside at one point. "It was so magical. When you had a rain or snow storm, nature was so close that you would hear all the raindrops on the metal roof," she says. "When the wind blew, you'd smell the lavender and mint."

While communing with nature, Skrabak launched her business (drawing on her degrees from Fashion Institute of Technology and the School of Visual Arts) and today owns a firm that's focused on helping clients make the most of their living spaces. "It was the cabin that pushed me into that direction, realizing it was a gift I could share with other people," she explains. "I didn't like the concept of designer or designer-y. What set me apart is the approach of living well in your space, interior and exterior, living the best life you can."