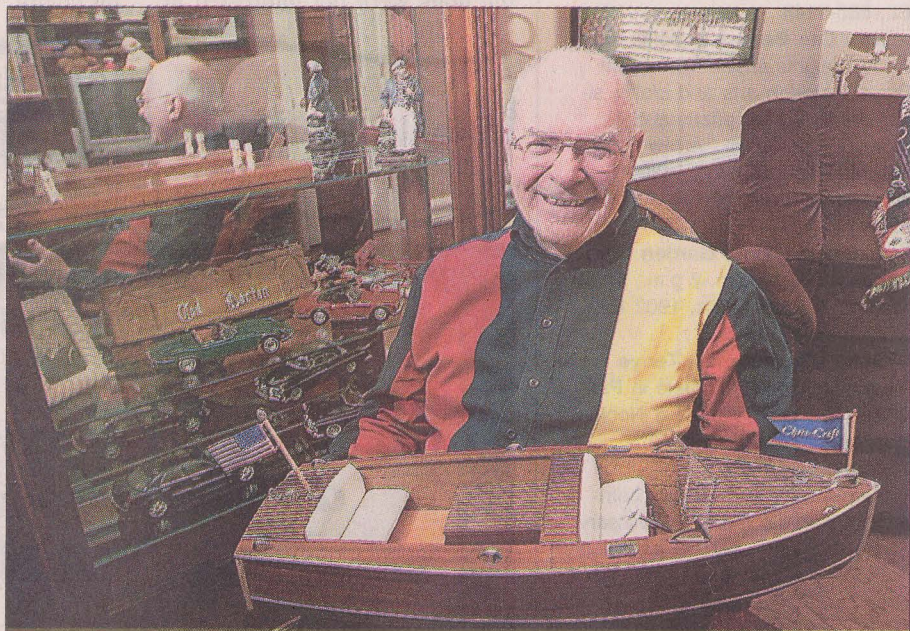


# Scene

life, arts and the pursuit of happiness

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MIKE SIMONS / Tulsa World

Ted Dorton's office has space where he can display his handmade wooden boats.

# Many retired couples are turning bedrooms and other areas into hobby rooms

By **KIM BROWN**  
World Scene Writer

Those in the baby boomer generation and beyond are trading traditional spaces for rooms that fit their lifestyles.

Extra bedrooms are no longer for guests. They are becoming media rooms, hobby rooms and areas for grandchildren to play.

Just ask Ted and Loretta Dorton. When they built their Owasso retirement home 10 years ago, they didn't even think about using their extra rooms as guest bedrooms.

Instead, they created an art and hobby room for Loretta, and another room for Ted, which he uses as an office with room to showcase the model wooden boats he makes.

Experts say that retirement-aged people and baby boomers are putting a lot of thought into the time they spend at home. People are beginning to rethink how they use their space, said Tulsa designer Richard Neel.

"Media rooms are a big thing right now. People are spending more time at home," he said from his business, Richard Neel Home, 3742 S. Peoria Ave.

Not only do they set up the room with updated TV equipment, but they also are placing more of an emphasis on the computer.

"It's not only for them, but also for their grandchildren, to help entertain them," he said.

Home and Garden Television's Web site for professional homebuilders, [www.hgtvpro.com](http://www.hgtvpro.com), said designers are call-

ing such spaces "flex space" — as an undefined multipurpose room, or "tech space" — with media and computer equipment.

It says flex spaces include sewing and hobby rooms or exercise or game rooms, and tech spaces can be his-and-her offices or a simple little nook off of another room to place computer equipment.

But downsizing is also a focus of design for this group of people, Neel said.

"People downsize because they are traveling more. We're doing more home monitoring systems with a computer system, so people can log in from out of town to check on their house," he said.

He said the big, overstuffed furniture

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## SPACE:

Many retirees devote space to visiting grandchildren.

FROM D-1

that was once popular is being replaced by smaller furniture with simpler designs. Neel also said retirees and baby boomers are dedicating space to visiting grandchildren, or what has been called the "granny room." "We've done three or four projects where people did a 'granny room,'" he said. "One we did was very girly and had a puppet stage and a place for their toys."

Lighting is another change people

are making to their homes. Instead of relying on traditional lights, Neel said many are going for recessed lighting and supplemental lighting, such as halogen lamps for reading. In the kitchen, people are installing lights under the cabinets for better visibility.

But no matter what they choose, it's all relative and all completely customized.

"It's nice to be able to go (to the art room), and Ted has his own office and he has his showcase for his boats. He makes them in the garage, and in the winter he uses my art room," Loretta Dorton said.

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MIKE SIMONS /Tulsa World

**Loretta Dorton sits in the art room of her Tulsa home.**

## Ideas for customizing spare rooms

- ▶ Use the space over the garage as a media room with big screen TV.
- ▶ Turn the loft or second story overlook into a mens' retreat, with pool table, desk and TV.
- ▶ Use the loft as a craft room, finished with easy-care flooring and furnished with built-in cabinets for supplies.
- ▶ Wall off a portion of living room or dining room for use as a study.
- ▶ Make the sun room a garden hobbyist's room, reading area or craft room.
- ▶ Use an upstairs bedroom as a TV room or scrapbooking headquarters.
- ▶ Set up a spare room as a card room for poker or bridge parties.
- ▶ Add a second computer/office room so both homeowners have private offices.

Source: [www.hgtvpro.com](http://www.hgtvpro.com)