

Home for a While

➤ Is short-term
living redefining
the meaning of
“home”?



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DESIGN HUMAN LIFE

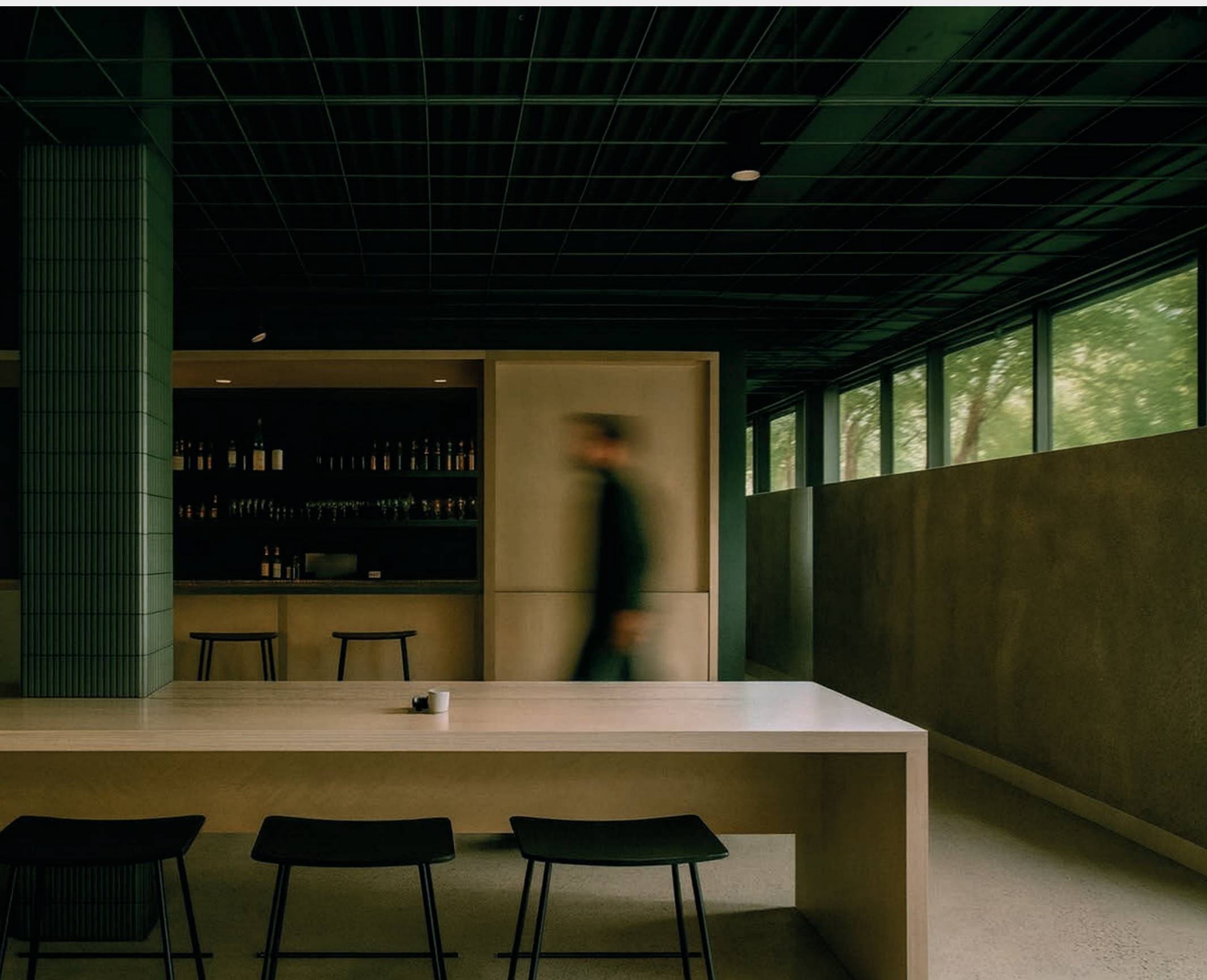
7 Introduction

In our first paper of our New Ways of Living series, we introduced the **NWL Framework**: a dynamic lens for questioning, prototyping, and continually shaping our vision for the future of residential design. Our second paper explored how shared-living models informed our proposal for the Vision for Rome competition, revealing how collective lifestyles can generate new forms of urban vitality.

In this third paper, we shift the focus to a typology that sits at the intersection of lifestyle shifts, economic conditions, and evolving patterns of mobility and travel: short-term living. This typology is expanding rapidly into new formats as global citizens adopt increasingly fluid relationships with work, travel, and place. The persistence of hybrid and remote work is one of the structural enablers of this shift: one 2025 global review counts 64 countries offering digital nomad visas and notes that 91% of tracked nomad/remote-worker visas were launched after 2020, evidencing a rapid, post-pandemic policy wave. (Global Citizen Solutions, Global Digital Nomad Report 2025).

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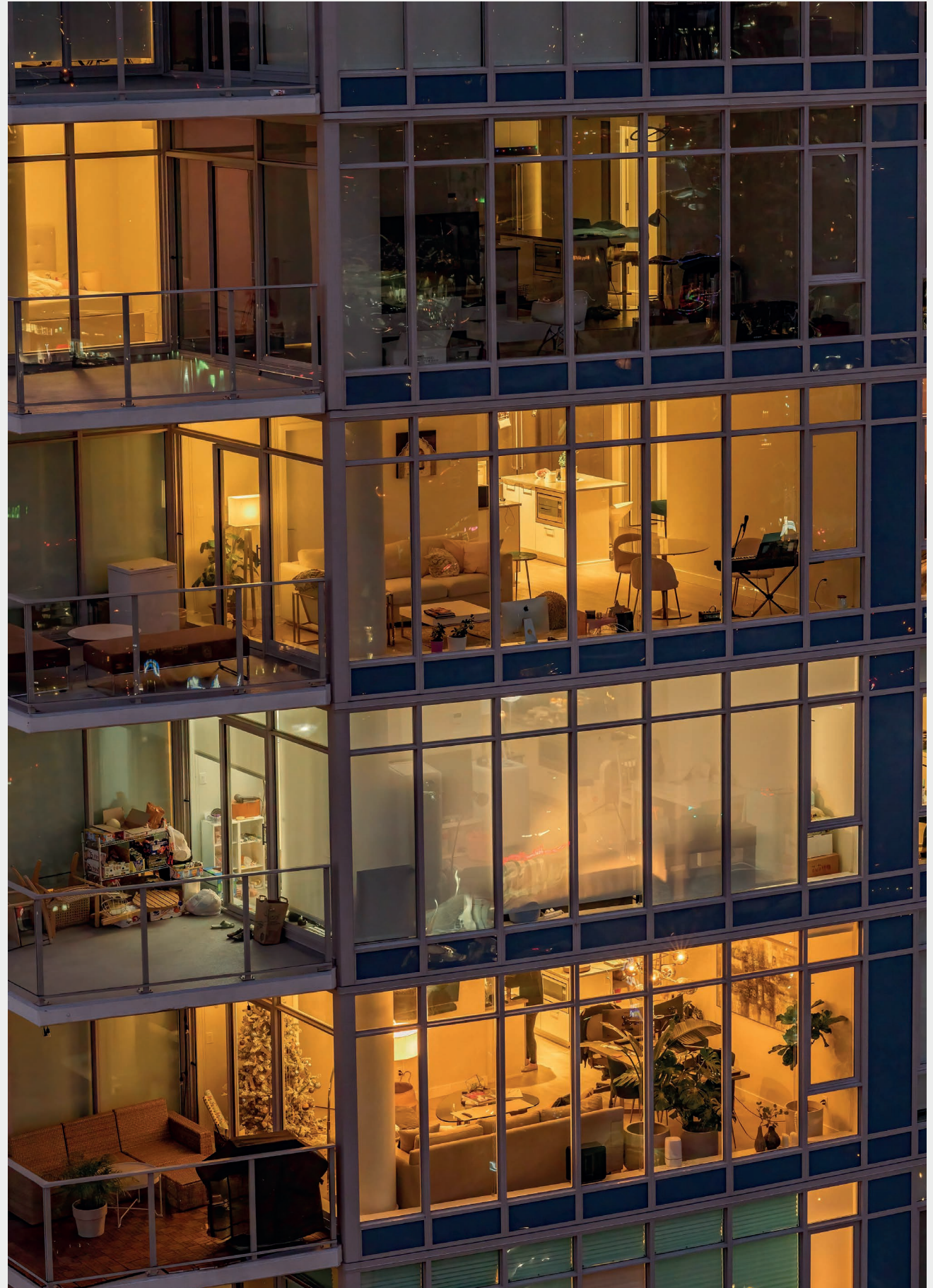


Travel, at the same time, has strongly rebounded in recent years, reinforcing demand for flexible stays between “hotel” and “home.” An estimated 1.4 billion international tourists were recorded in 2024, and international tourism reached 99% of pre-pandemic (2019) levels (UN Tourism, World Tourism Barometer, Jan 2025). As these mobility patterns normalize, **short-term living increasingly acts as a “soft infrastructure”** layer for cities, providing flexible housing capacity for temporary residents, project-based workers, students, and multi-locational households. Short-term living is **no longer a niche category**—it is becoming a **defining layer of contemporary urban life**.

In the sections that follow, we explore short-term living in detail, revealing how its different dimensions—from home-like formats to community-driven and destination-oriented stays—are **reshaping the way we design for a world in motion**.

➤ Understanding the Short-Term Living Spectrum

“Home for a While” captures the essence of the short-term living typology, expressing its core themes of **exploration and temporality**. It speaks to individuals who are constantly navigating **between cities, jobs, life phases, or travel experiences**: people who value adaptability, meaningful experiences, and environments that offer comfort and belonging, **even if only for a moment**.





Across cities, the growing presence of these users—including digital nomads, remote workers, seasonal professionals, exchange students, and frequent travelers—is driving demand for places that are welcoming, accessible, comfortable, and well connected to their surroundings. After the pandemic, remote work became more common in the Euro area; the share of employees aged 20–64 who worked from home at least sometimes nearly doubled between 2019 and 2024 (European Central Bank, 2025; Eurostat, n.d.). In response, the short-term living landscape has expanded beyond traditional hotels, hostels, or short-term rentals to include new formats such as **branded residences, thematic stays, and emerging co-living hybrids**.

Often delivered through Build-to-Rent or professionalized management models, these formats make it easier for people to relocate for study, work, or personal reasons, supporting global mobility with **ready-to-live-in homes** that don't require long-term commitments. At the same time, they can bring **meaningful benefits to cities**, like reactivating underused buildings, boosting commercial activity, and **creating a more consistent flow of residents and visitors** throughout the year.

In this context, we explore how short-term living spans a broad spectrum—from home-like formats to community-driven and destination-oriented stays—and how each dimension offers significant potential for designing more specific, lifestyle-aligned solutions that respond directly to evolving user needs.

➤ The Home Dimension of Short-Term Living: Short-Term Rentals

Multiple factors are driving the rise of short-term formats that function as temporary homes. Climate-driven mobility, even on a seasonal or short-term scale, is **reshaping relocation patterns**. Increasingly, individuals with financial means choose medium-term rentals to escape extreme temperatures in their home cities.

At the same time, affordability challenges in dense urban areas push young professionals and young families to rely on short-term rentals as **transitional homes**—stepping stones on the path to homeownership. While not new, **this dynamic is accelerating, calling for more flexible residential formats** that can adapt to shifting user profiles over time.

Cities themselves operate as hubs of temporary living. Global professionals often relocate for a few years at a time, following project cycles or hybrid work models that allow them to **split their personal and professional lives across multiple locations**. In these cases, short- to medium-term living emerges not **from economic pressure but from professional-driven mobility as a lifestyle**.





➤ The Social Dimension of Short-Term Living: Co-living Hostels

In this second spectrum, short-term living intersects with the desire for community rather than permanence. This is not the long-term co-living model designed for residents staying for years, but a shared living experience **for individuals who are “in between”**: **students, digital nomads, remote workers, and budget-conscious travelers** seeking both affordability and belonging.

Shared amenities become the gravitational center of these formats, not only supporting vibrant community life but also activating ground floors and generating public value. Lobbies become living rooms, cafés serve as co-working spaces, and social areas turn into informal hubs for networking, creativity, and everyday exchanges.

Millennials and Gen Z have been central in driving this shift. Prioritizing **mobility over permanence** and **flexible experiences over stable ownership**, they are **redefining what “home” means** in an age shaped by hyperconnectivity, lifestyle mobility, sustainability, wellness, and community-driven values.

➤ The Experience Dimension of Short-Term Living: Destination Stays

In parallel with climate, work, or lifestyle-related mobility, short-term living has long been connected to destination-driven experiences such as vacation and exploration. Today, these stays are taking on new forms, including **hybrid models** such as *Workation*, *Cool-cation* (temperate destination travel), and *Bleisure* (business + leisure) travel. These behaviors are no longer emerging trends but increasingly **recurrent patterns in contemporary lifestyles**.

Hotels are adapting accordingly. Beyond traditional hospitality, many formats now support in-between stays for relocating professionals or long-term remote workers. These spaces feel less like hotels and **more like homes supported by professional services**, offering comfort, discreet design, and intuitive amenities.





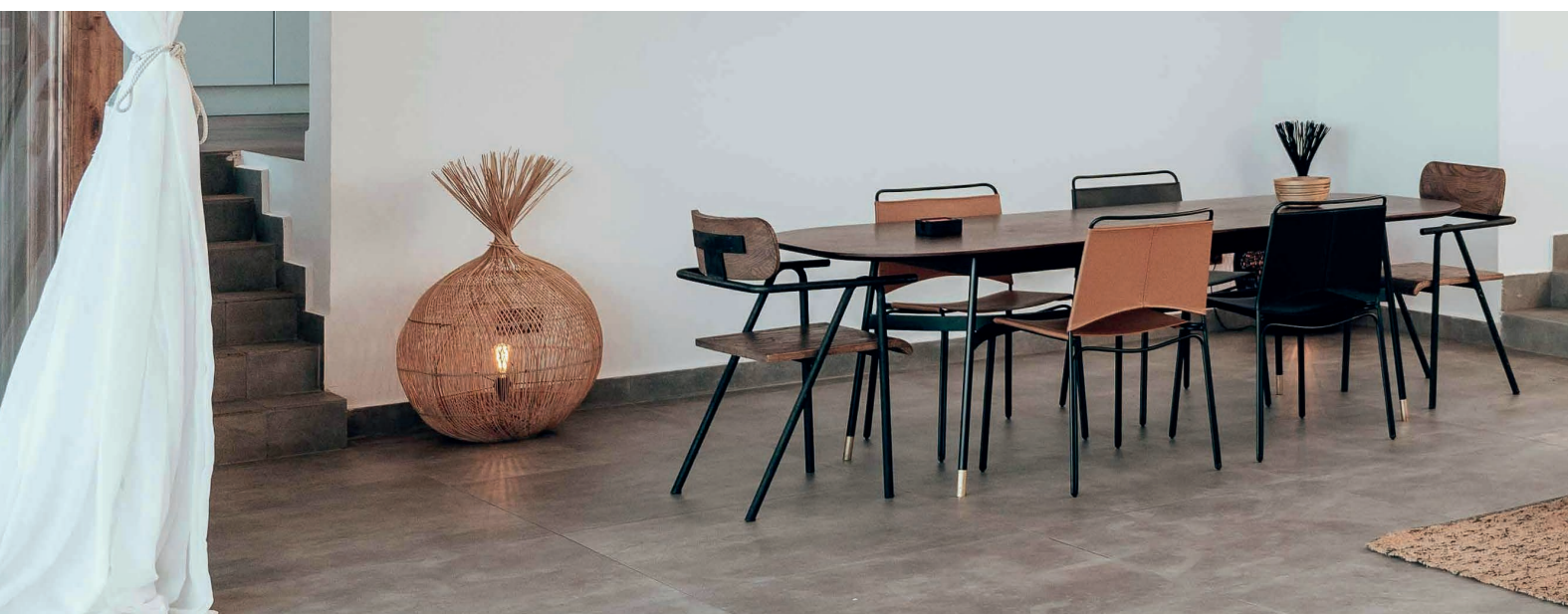
Hostels, once associated mainly with backpackers and budget travel, are transforming as well. Many formats now blend the intimacy of co-living with the convenience of hotels, attracting a broader audience—including solo travelers, young professionals, expats, and remote workers—who value community and experience as much as affordability. Premium hostels with curated amenities and strong brand identities are also on the rise, catering to guests with more exclusive expectations.

At the upper end of the spectrum, thematic stays and luxury hospitality are evolving to meet highly specialized expectations. Golf, beachfront and lakefront resorts, ski destinations, wellness retreats, and lifestyle-driven boutique hotels illustrate how the luxury segment is diversifying. The focus is shifting away from standardization toward ***deeply tailored user experiences*** that resonate authentically with niche audiences—traditional repeat visitors, elite sports travelers, next-gen luxury consumers, wellbeing seekers, and immersive lifestyle explorers.

The lesson extends **beyond luxury: designing for *specific lifestyles*, not generic profiles, creates richer, more relevant short-term living solutions.**

➤ Looking Ahead: The Evolving Spectrum of Short-Term Living

Viewed as a spectrum, short-term living's emerging formats reveal how contemporary lifestyles have become more fluid, mobile, and specific, and how design is evolving to meet shifting user expectations.



Temporary living is no longer a separate category from residential design; it has merged into the broader living landscape as lifestyle patterns blur the boundaries between *what is temporary* and *what is home*. The rise of remote work and global talent mobility has accelerated the demand for flexible living solutions that move beyond traditional notions of permanence.



Today, homes must operate along multiple **thresholds**: between affordability and premium value, privacy and shared experience, permanence and temporality. As a result, **the idea of “home” continues to evolve**: from ownership to access, from stability to adaptability, and from a static asset to a service that responds to people’s changing rhythms.

Across the short-term living spectrum—from rentals to co-living hybrids and destination stays—the design opportunity lies in creating environments that feel personal, intuitive, and connected to their context. As people move more frequently, stay for shorter cycles, and expect seamless, lifestyle-driven experiences, **the temporary home becomes a strategic frontier**. These spaces must deliver comfort, identity, and belonging, even when the stay is brief. **Designing “homes for a while” means crafting lifestyle-aligned environments that support and elevate the user experience as locations and life rhythms continue to change.**



➤ Contacts

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