

DESIGN FOR THE WELL-LIVED LIFE

HOUSE & GARDEN

SPECIAL ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 2005

THE
LUXURY
OF
QUIET

ROOMS THAT
SOOTHE,
GARDENS
THAT CALM...
SHHH...

U.S. \$3.99
CANADA/FOREIGN \$4.99



Love Learn Locate

NUTS & BOLTS PEACE AND QUIET FROM THE GROUND UP BY JESSE WILL

THE SPECIALIST Feel like your home is unfashionably loud? Call Bonnie Schnitta, a noise abatement expert based in East Hampton, NY, who has become known as a sound exorcist for architects, decorators, and homeowners wanting to shush their noisy homes. Business is booming, Schnitta says, due to the increased din in newly built houses. She notes several reasons for this, including the growing preference for hardwood floors over wall-to-wall carpet, wood building materials that are less dense than those used in earlier construction, the addition of subwoofer-driven home theaters, and the popularity of open-plan great rooms and tile-and-marble-clad kitchens, both of which work as echo chambers.

THE FIX Schnitta says it's best to address noise early in the building process. She reviews blueprints with architects and recommends they move noise hubs—baths and laundry rooms—away from bedrooms and living rooms. Existing problems may be remedied by adding soundproofing materials. When one client wanted a music-filled basement exercise room, Schnitta muffled air ducts, left, with a metal and vinyl foam wrap. Other cases require more novel fixes, such as drowning out road noise by “tuning” an outdoor fountain to match its frequency.

BEING HEARD “Because acoustics affect the way we live in a home, they need to be part of the design,” Schnitta says. “One of life’s great pleasures is to talk with a loved one in a quiet space at the end of the day. If you have to raise your voice to be heard over a machine, it kills the mood.” SoundSense, East Hampton, NY. 631-324-2266. soundsense.com.



QUIET DISHWASHERS

The quest for a quieter dishwasher has produced several high-efficiency models just louder than a whisper. A few top picks:

- **LG's** LDF7811, above, is one of the largest, quietest models that includes a disposal. \$1,099. lge.com.
- **BOSCH** says its Integra 800 is the quietest model available; it beams a light on the floor to let you know it's on. \$1,749. boschappliances.com.
- **MIELE** is known for quiet machines. Its most recent is the Platinum, with a forced-air drying system. \$1,299 to \$1,399. miele.com.

A SERENE INTERIOR

This Manhattan apartment (“Quick Change Artists,” page 140) is hushed not only in its palette; sound-resistant walls and windows were added in the renovation, making the environment so quiet that “now we can’t even hear the St. Patrick’s Day parade,” the client says. If you’re bothered by noise in your home, here are a few places to upgrade.

- **WINDOWS** To seal out street noise, look for windows with a high STC (sound transmission class) rating. Insulated double- and triple-pane windows generally have higher ratings, as do ones with laminated safety glass.
- **DOORS** Replace hollow interior doors with solid-core ones, like Jeld-Wen’s ProCore door. jeld-wen.com.
- **CEILINGS** can be treated to lessen reverberation in a room; the fabric in Owens Corning’s Solserene system absorbs sound and mimics the look of drywall. owenscorning.com. □

