The art of slow living

How home design in 2026 is shifting, according to **CF Architects**

A fundamental shift is happening in how people want to live, and it is reshaping residential architecture in profound ways. Whether designing a holiday home or renovating an existing residence, slow, meaningful living and the escape from professional pressure have become defining priorities for 2026.

The living spaces, for example, orient around family connetion and lake views rather than the television. The architecture deliberately encourages conversation, presence and togetherness. The substantial island accommodates genuine conversation and casual dining.



This isn't a rejection of contemporary life but the intentional design of more personal retreats. Deep verandas, private courtyards and truly liveable outdoor rooms become everyday sanctuaries. What we're seeing isn't a trend; it's a rethinking of how we live a more meaningful life – sanctuaries for richer, more deliberate living. The most telling change is in how families are reconceiving their homes' centres.

The kitchen has always been central, but now it is evolving into something more intentional. In our recent Midstream Estate remodel, we designed a substantial island that accommodates genuine conversation and casual dining, not merely food preparation. The generously proportioned scullery allows disorder to disappear, maintaining the kitchen's warmth and serenity. The dining area extends into expansive undercover outdoor entertaining spaces and the pool area, transforming what was once weekend-hosting territory into the family's daily sanctuary, where Sunday mornings unfold gently and unhurried conversation shapes wellbeing.

Equally significant is the emergence of what we term slow zones. Families no longer accept open-plan chaos. They request quiet reading nooks bathed in natural light, home offices with doors that close, and master suites resembling boutique-hotel retreats. These are spaces where peace becomes an architectural function. Material choices reflect this authenticity. Our double-storey Malawi holiday home embraces natural, touchable materials that improve with age, including timber, stone and off-shutter concrete.

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Midstream Estate – major remodel.



Lake Malawi – Beach House.