

THE PRIVATE HOLIDAY HOME

A calm, design-led hideaway where warm materials, soft light and considered details create a sense of quiet luxury and retreat.

LOCATION	Brandenburg, Germany
SCOPE	Interior concept · spatial planning sourcing · styling
STATUS	Completed



THE STORY

A house that had settled into “good enough.”

Some houses fail through neglect. This one had the opposite problem — it worked, on every practical level, but had gradually lost a sense of intention. Clay-plastered walls, old timber, generous windows, the quiet irregularities that only turn up in a house shaped by decades rather than a plan: none of it was missing. It had simply been buried beneath a succession of small, sensible decisions, each defensible on its own, that had stopped speaking to one another — or to the landscape outside.

The brief ran in the opposite direction from most renovations: not to repair a house that was struggling, but to quieten one that had settled too comfortably into “good enough.” Conceived as an escape from the pace of Berlin, the project became an exercise in subtraction rather than addition — removing what did not need to be there, choosing natural materials over convenient ones, and trusting that light, texture and everyday ritual would do more for the atmosphere than anything added on top.

Not a showhouse. A place to arrive, exhale and stay awhile.



THE VISION

A Brandenburg weekend house eventually asks a simple question: is this a retreat, or just a smaller version of the life you were trying to leave behind? Too many end up as the second – furnished for a return to routine rather than a departure from it.

This one was built around the opposite intention. The starting point was not a mood board of calm, but a family who needed somewhere the city could not follow – no visual noise competing with the day, no decisions carried over from an urban routine that did not belong here. Natural materials did most of the work: linen, wood and stone chosen not for how they photograph, but for how they age and how they feel in everyday use.

Everything else took its cue from the landscape rather than imposing on it – sculptural forms that echo a leaf or a plant rather than compete with one, a kitchen built around what the seasons provide rather than what is convenient to stock.

The house does not announce itself as a retreat. It simply behaves like one, every day, whether anyone is paying attention or not.





KITCHEN PALETTE

Designed as a counterpoint to the pace of city life, the kitchen centres on slower, more deliberate rituals. Smoked oak adds depth, softened by warm timber, aged brass and tactile neutrals. Cooking, gathering and lingering become part of the same rhythm as the garden beyond – a quiet farm-to-table connection between what is grown, prepared and shared.



SLOW MORNINGS

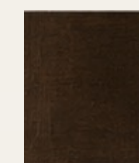


GATHER

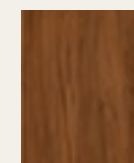


NOURISH

MATERIAL & COLOUR PALETTE



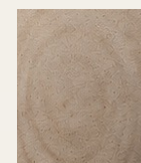
SMOKED OAK



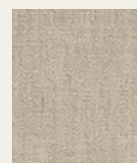
WALNUT



AGED BRASS



STONEWARE



LINEN

THE KITCHEN

A room turned towards the garden

Most kitchen renovations solve for surfaces. This one solved for a rhythm – mornings that started slower, cooking that happened together rather than around each other, produce that came from twenty metres away instead of a delivery van. The materials followed from that, not the other way around.

Smoked oak gives the room its depth, balanced by brushed brass, tactile neutrals and warmer timber tones chosen to feel used rather than staged. The old building's irregularities were never a problem to solve – they became the starting point. The original skirtings, deep and slightly uneven in the way old houses are, were incorporated into the cabinetry itself, allowing the fronts to sit flush against walls that were never quite straight and the architecture to keep its honesty rather than be corrected into someone else's idea of order.

Even the practical decisions feel considered rather than concealed: the refrigerator disappears into a continuous run of cabinetry, while an integrated bench turns what had been an awkward, unused corner into a place people naturally gather.

Nothing here performs. The kitchen does not look like a room designed to make a statement; it feels as though it was always meant to work this way.

From garden to table, the room runs on rituals rather than routines.

A bright, minimalist living room with light wood flooring. On the left, a dark wooden cabinet stands next to a white armchair with a white throw. In the center, a wooden desk holds a computer monitor, with a white swivel chair in front. A large window with sheer white curtains is behind the desk. To the right, a fireplace with a white mantel and a black surround is visible. A wicker basket sits on the floor near the fireplace. A small wooden table in the foreground holds a white bowl and a candle. The room is well-lit by natural light from the window and a wall sconce.

A diagram showing a plant growing inside a glass jar. A cloth is tied around the neck of the jar, and the plant is positioned so that its leaves are above the cloth, while its roots are submerged in water below the cloth.



CREATIVITY

A bright, minimalist living room featuring two large, dark wooden wardrobes flanking a window with sheer curtains. A white radiator is positioned below the window. A small, light-colored armchair is visible on the right side of the frame.



SOFT LINEN



THE LIVING ROOM

A softer register of the same idea

Every room in this house was working from the same principles – restraint, warmth, nothing performing for its own sake – but applied too evenly, restraint can begin to feel more like a rule than a home. The living room was where the register was allowed to soften: where the kitchen is grounded in smoked oak and charcoal, this room shifts towards creamy walls, linen and pale oak.

The original stove gave way to a more substantial fireplace, creating a stronger visual anchor and giving the room a natural point to gather around. One fragment of exposed timber above the doorway was deliberately left visible, uncovered rather than concealed – doing more for the room than a perfectly finished surface might have. A quiet reminder that a house does not need to be perfected to feel resolved.

The furniture followed the same instinct as everything left visible: an existing sofa was reworked in linen and lifted onto timber legs rather than replaced, a small oak desk was tucked into the room instead of given pride of place, and sculptural lighting replaced the flat, even glow of a conventional ceiling fixture. Nothing was introduced simply to fill space; each element was allowed to earn its place.

A room for reading, working, warming up and doing very little at all.

Comfort without excess. Character without noise.



BEDROOM PALETTE

If the house offers an escape from the pace of the city, the bedroom is its most private retreat. Soft linen, muted neutrals and deep charcoal tones create a cocooning atmosphere, balanced by natural wood and gentle light. A room designed not simply for sleep, but for slowing down completely.



REST & UNWIND

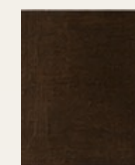


RECONNECT

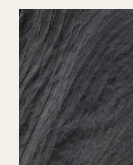


RECHARGE

MATERIAL & COLOUR PALETTE



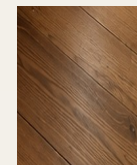
SMOKED OAK



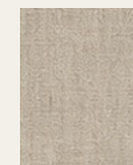
INDIGO



AGED BRASS



WOOD



LINEN

THE BEDROOM

The quietest room in the house.

Most bedrooms are decorated. This one was edited down until almost nothing was left to decorate — not from austerity, but because a room meant for rest has one job, and everything that does not serve it is, quietly, working against it.

A generous upholstered bed anchors the space, layered in linen through soft neutrals and deep charcoal — the one place in the house allowed to feel enclosed rather than open. The palette stays deliberately narrow: natural cloth, warm timber, muted walls, light that pools rather than fills. Materials were chosen for how they feel under a hand at eleven at night, not for how they read in a photograph.

Even the storage carries the house's habit of reuse rather than replacement — surplus fronts from the kitchen found a second life here, creating a quiet thread between rooms and materials already used elsewhere in the house. An adjoining, underused room became a walk-in wardrobe, allowing the bulk of everyday storage to move out of the bedroom itself and take its visual noise with it.

Nothing here is asking to be noticed. The room was designed to do the opposite — to lower whatever the day has raised.

Less stimulation. Deeper rest.

A KONMARI HOUSE

Most decluttering advice treats objects as the problem. Here, the objects were rarely the issue – the absence of a decision about them was. The house was shaped around one simple principle: keep what is genuinely useful or loved, and give everything else a deliberate place rather than a vague one.

That distinction became a design language in its own right. Surfaces stayed quiet on purpose, storage was planned generously but kept out of sight, and everyday objects were either given a proper home or removed from the room entirely – nothing left to drift. The point was never minimalism as an aesthetic. It was a calmer relationship with the things that stayed, which is a different achievement altogether.

The effect becomes visible in what can finally be noticed once the competition stops: smoked oak, linen, aged brass, old timber, the small irregularities that only an old house has. All of it reads more clearly when it is not fighting a room full of things no one has quite decided about. Fewer objects did not make the house feel bare. They made the good ones easier to notice.

What remains is not an empty home. It is a considered one – where everything visible has earned that visibility, what is needed is close enough not to think about, and the rooms are simply easier to live in.

Less to manage. More room to live.



THE GARDEN

A garden designed across the year.

Most gardens are planted for a single good month and forgiven for the other eleven. This one was designed to work in December as deliberately as in June – treated less like a garden and more like another room of the house, one that simply changes its furniture with the seasons.

Nothing here was arranged for a single photograph. Vegetables and herbs sit close enough to the kitchen to matter, flowers were chosen to be cut rather than only looked at, and planting was staggered so that something is always doing something – spring bulbs giving way to summer perennials, with colour, scent and texture carried into the quieter months rather than abandoned to them. The result sits somewhere between a Brandenburg kitchen garden and an informal cottage plot, closer to how a garden is actually lived in than how one is usually styled.

A neglected slab of concrete became a sheltered terrace just beyond the kitchen door, allowing cooking and gathering to move outside as easily as in. Elsewhere, the practical parts of a working garden were considered from the beginning rather than hidden away as an afterthought. This was never meant to be a garden looked at from a window. It was built to be cooked from, cut from, sat in and walked through.

Grown outside. Gathered around the table.





THE RESULT

A house that feels more like itself

The transformation is intentionally difficult to reduce to a single gesture.

It comes from a series of quieter decisions: removing what competed with the architecture, allowing materials to repeat from room to room, making storage recede, working with the imperfections of the building rather than erasing them, and connecting the interior more closely to the garden beyond.

The finished house feels calmer, more coherent and more generous – not because more was added, but because each element was given a clearer reason to be there.

The architecture was already there. The intervention was to make it legible.

The property was let in parallel as a holiday rental throughout, and when it was let again as such, it did so at a markedly higher rent – driven largely by the same photographs shown here.

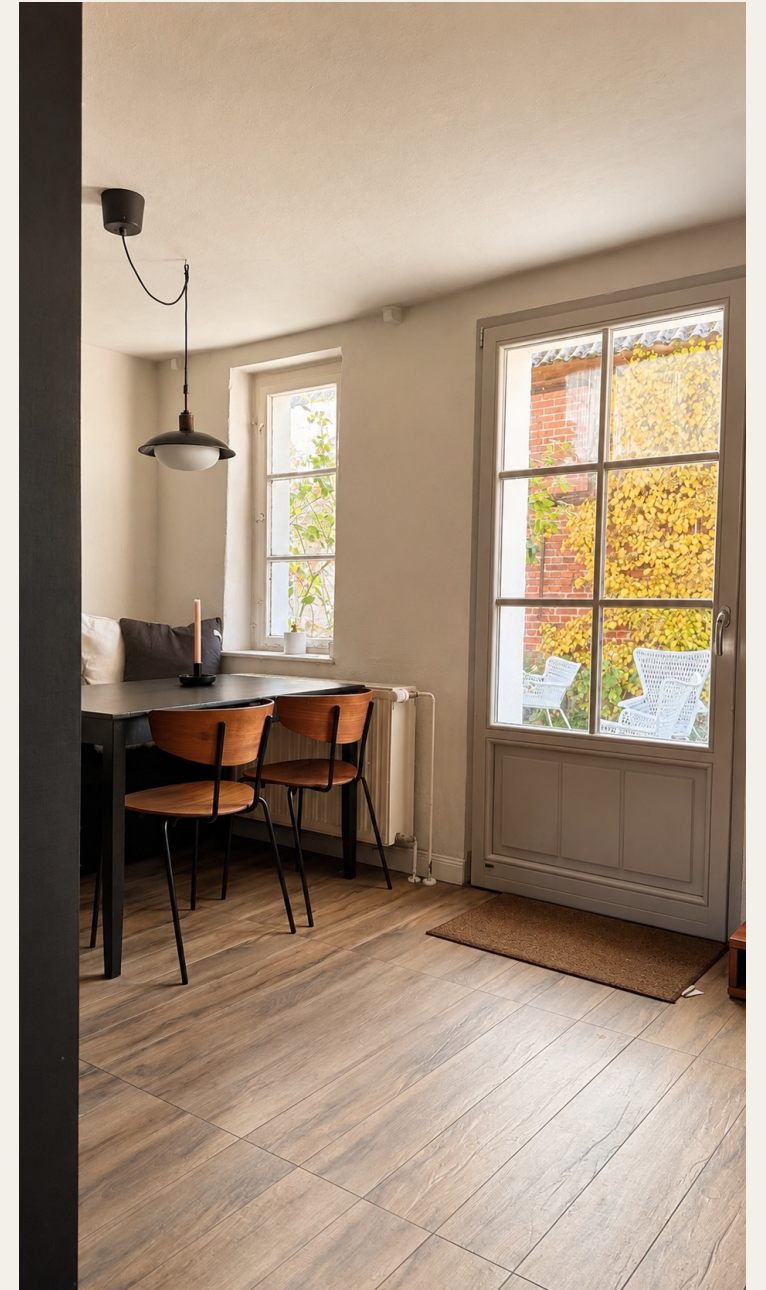
BEFORE

THE STARTING POINT



AFTER

THE TRANSFORMATION



BEFORE

THE STARTING POINT



AFTER

THE TRANSFORMATION



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