

Cocooning trend catching on in SA

The global cocooning trend is catching on in a big way in South Africa, according to Dawn Bloch, area specialist in Kirstenhof and Zwaanswyk for Lew Geffen Sotheby's International Realty, and is becoming very apparent by the types of features being included in house designs and the choice of upgrades being made in existing homes.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

“More and more people are having entertainment features installed and are converting rooms into communal spaces like home cinema’s and games rooms.

“We are also seeing many new homes, even compact units in complexes, being built with features like pizza ovens, braai rooms and snugs.

“This is largely due to two key factors; progressively convenient digital technologies which enable us to now do most things in the comfort of our own homes and have almost anything delivered to us with the click of a mouse and the increase in crime and unrest, especially in cities.”

However, it’s not just in South Africa that people are seeking respite from an increasingly uncertain world and the barrage of negative news.

Joy of missing out

After the *New York Times* ran a story titled, "Is staying in the new going out?" a blog posted on the *Huffington Post* declared that the acronym, FOMO (fear of missing out) has been replaced by JOMO, the joy of missing out and just staying home.

Coined by Faith Popcorn, futurist and founder of marketing consulting firm BrainReserve, the term “cocooning” has been adopted world-over and, fuelled by enabling technology, looks set to stay.

Statistics from around the world indicate that there has been a significant growth in home industry product sales, with today's consumers wanting to spend more time at home - and willing to spend more for products that will help enhance their home lifestyle.

Bloch says: “Technology in the form of easy-to-install home security systems and smart home integration enable us to create safe havens over which we have increasing control, especially with app-based systems that allow us to remotely access features like lights and entertainment systems.

“And, with the advent of entertainment giants like Netflix and various streaming options, people have access to all the current offerings from the comfort of their homes.”



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Post-Millennial groups embracing cocooning

“What is most notable,” says Bloch, “is that it’s not only adults who are adopting the lifestyle but also those who traditionally wanted to escape the home as much as possible, namely 16 to 21 year-olds.

“There have been a number of recent studies into the behaviour of this post-Millennial group comparing them to previous generations, with all revealing similar findings that indicate that cocooning is set to become a firmly established trend.”

One such study by Research Now, a UK market research firm, found is that almost three-quarters (73%) of this age group prefer to exchange regular nights out for evenings of home entertainment, and rather saving money for special events and occasional big nights out.

The study further found that of the general adult population surveyed, 69% have a similar preference for home entertainment, with this preference declining with age to 45% for over 65's.

“The trend is gathering momentum,” says Bloch, “and we can clearly see how home design is evolving accordingly with more multi-use and communal spaces and increased flow between indoor and outdoor living areas.

Quality time at home

“And whilst the fact that we increasingly feel the need to insulate ourselves from negative aspects of the world in which we live is concerning on one hand, the positive consequence is that we are spending far more quality time with loved ones than in many years.

She concludes: “The Danish have embraced the cocooning with their own concept called hygge, which encompasses a feeling of cosy contentment and well-being through enjoying the simple things in life.

“It’s no doubt one of the key reasons that they are often cited as one of the happiest nations in the world, ranking high in the Happiest Annual Country Index.

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