

House & Garden

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personal **passions**



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that there's no place people don't use computers," says Alladi Venkatesh, associate director of the Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations at the University of California, Irvine. "While 29 percent say they use them in a home office, 15 percent say the living room, 9 percent the dining area, 4 percent the kitchen, and 16 percent the adult bedroom." Not surprisingly, Philippe Starck was one of the first to recognize the need for stylish, multifunctional, laptop-friendly furniture. His wryly named Lazy Working Sofa for Cassina comes with optional attached side and back tables that have electrical outlets and a phone jack for surfing the Net. Ross Lovegrove, the British design whiz, has created a chair for Bernhard Contract that he hopes will be "as liberating as the advent of the compact portable computer." Called One, it's a cast-fiberglass chair covered in white leather that looks like a sophisticated, space-age version of those all-in-one desk chairs that are college-classroom staples. "I think the swing arm is a trend that we are going to see a lot more of," says Mary Douglas Drysdale, a Washington, D.C., architectural designer. "Everyone has laptops these days, so designers have to consider them." As innocuous as they are, laptops, like more cumbersome PCs, often need to be hidden. "It's getting harder to shut the door on the office when we get home," says Drysdale. "We want to create that distance that we seemingly no longer have."

THAT'S THE IDEA behind the Laptop Desk by Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers. "We didn't want to build another armoire," says Kevin Owens, product-development manager for the Maine company. "We wanted a piece that would look elegant in a traditional living room or bedroom." The solution was to update Thomas Jefferson's lap desk, which featured a hinged, slanted writing surface that had inside storage compartments; in Moser's version, those compartments can host both a fax machine and printer.



The Laptop Desk, \$4,950, from Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers (800-708-9703).

laptop tips

For E-mailing in bed, make sure your **night table** drawer is deep enough to store your laptop and wires

Don't crawl around the floor anymore. Put **telephone jacks** at chair-rail level and by the kitchen counter for ordering **groceries** on-line and looking up recipes

Instead of a conventional bed tray, buy a **Victorian** hospital table

Order a **visor** (from www.mobileofficecenterprise.com) to reduce glare—especially **in the garden**

"And all the wires," Owens adds. Wire management was a major concern for Chicago architects Peter and Corrine Madimenos, who have introduced a line of modernist armoires that look custom-built. "With mobile technology," Peter says, "you still need a place to store your printer, papers, and files. Our design represents changing lifestyles and a paradigm shift." So does the Lapdog, a padded carrying case (\$139.95; www.sjdesign.com), which unfolds to become a secure and efficient workstation. "It may be stating the obvious, but a lot of people don't want to sit at a desk," says

inventor Shaun Jackson, a professor of industrial design at the University of Michigan. "But it's tough for your adductor muscles to keep your legs together and balance the laptop," he explains. "The Lapdog lets the laptop fulfill its potential." —D.S.



The Earthstation Alpha, \$4,850 as shown, by Adinè (877-402-3463), can store a printer, fax machine, and a chair.