As long as guinea pigs are provided with a structured habitat, they can be kept indoors. They need plenty of room, so a conventional domestic cage is not a suitable home for them.

You can share your home with guinea pigs without keeping them confined in an enclosure. Where possible, you should provide your guinea pigs with a room of their own. A well-designed habitat is essential when keeping guinea pigs indoors. If you give them a large area of open space, they will simply avoid it and spend most of their time inside their shelter. The habitat you install should be structured so as to provide them with enough room to exercise, but including plenty of safe hiding places. If you have DIY skills, you can build a raised level for your guinea pigs in one part of the room. An upper level has many benefits: your guinea pigs will be able to hide underneath it or use it as a viewing platform, and climbing up and down to access it will be a good source of exercise for them.

When you are designing a habitat for your guinea pigs, think about potential hazards and do everything you can to minimise them. Some common hazards include electrical cables, poisonous plants, open doors, other animals in the home (e.g. cats and dogs), furniture treated with harmful paints or varnishes, sharp corners and objects, and visitors who may not realise that there are free-roaming guinea pigs in the home. If you want to be on the safe side, you can surround your guinea pigs’ area with a protective barrier (e.g. a low fence).

You may feel happier knowing that your little friends are safe in a vivarium. In that case, bear in mind that two to three guinea pigs require a minimum floor space of 2 square metres. Each additional guinea pig will need an extra 1 square metre. An open Plexiglas vivarium (in the shape of a bath) has many advantages over a wire enclosure, including the fact that it will give you a clearer view of the guinea pigs, while providing the guinea pigs themselves with an uninterrupted outlook.

A vivarium like this can be straightforward to build and easy to keep clean, while also being an
aesthetically pleasing addition to your living space. The vivarium should be raised off the floor (this will make the humans in the room appear less threatening to the guinea pigs) and should be positioned in a bright, well-ventilated and, above all, central location. Avoid places where it can get hot, such as near an oven or heater or in a sun room in the summer – guinea pigs are very sensitive to heat. Guinea pigs also have acute hearing, so avoid making loud noises in the room where they live. If there are other animals living in your home (e.g. cats), the vivarium should be covered over to protect it from above.

Last but not least

Guinea pigs can be successfully potty trained. This is a useful tip if you would like give your four-legged friends access to a large area of your living room, but you don’t want to find droppings all over the place. Potty training need not take long and it can deepen the bond between guinea pigs and humans.

Oben: Guinea pigs are family animals.
Mitte: An open Plexiglas vivarium will give you a clearer view.
Unten: Training can deepen the bond between guinea pigs and humans.