

Small Space, BIG DREAMS

Turn your Alice-in-Wonderland-proportioned interior into a full-function home.

By TIFFANY JANSEN

When you're limited by your home's square footage, let that inspire your creativity.

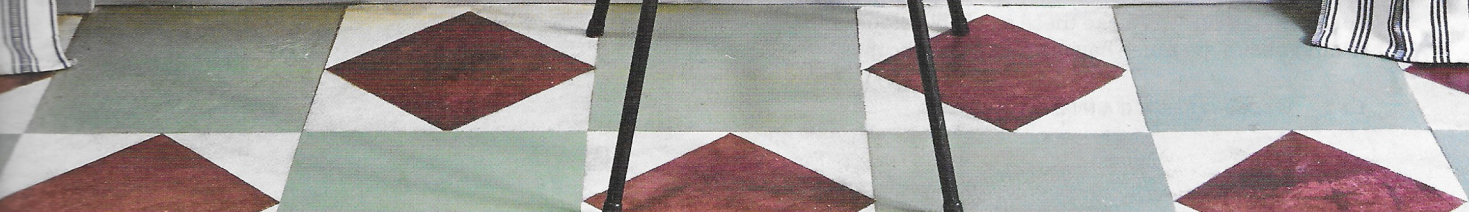
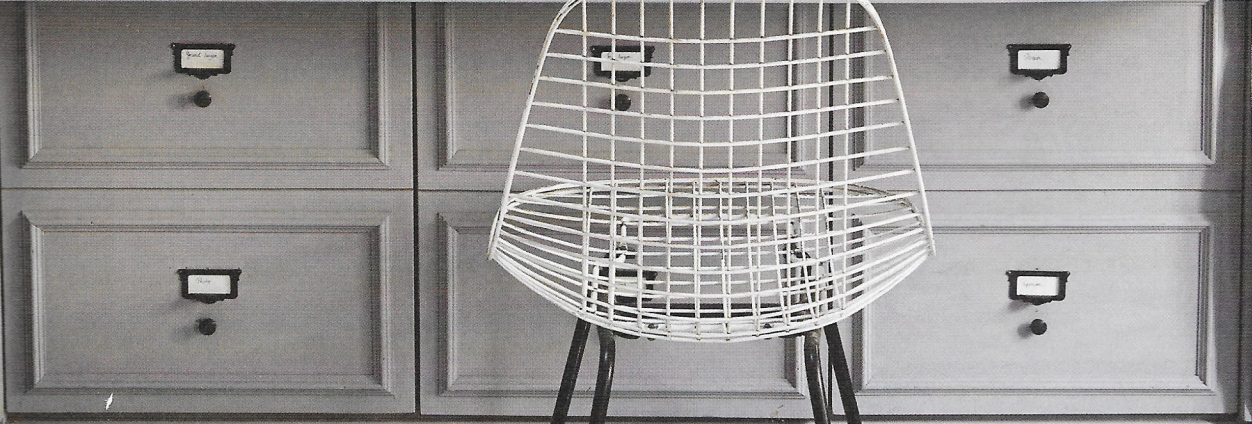
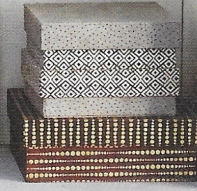
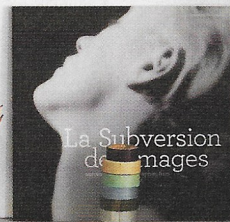
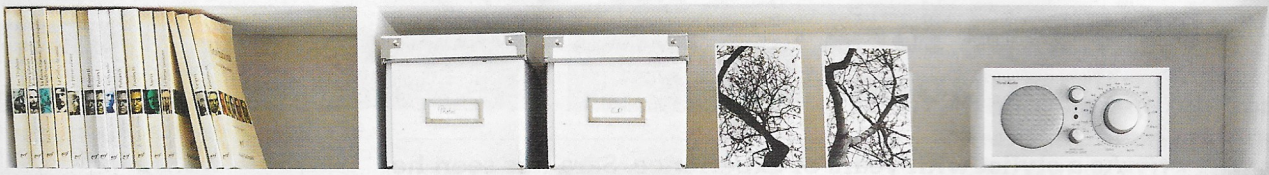
Small homes require an efficient design, meticulous spatial planning and a wealth of ingenious styling ideas. In her book *Beautifully Small: Clever Ideas for Compact Spaces*, London-based interior stylist Sara Emslie shares her secrets to squeezing the most space out of even the tiniest abode.

"My own home became a testing ground for many of my favourite design and styling ideas, which made the most of its limited proportions," Sara writes. "And the experience of decorating and living in my own beautifully small interior is the inspiration behind this book."

Here are some of Sara's top tips for small spaces that work.



A shelving unit above the desk offers a practical solution to storing office clutter. Photos and other curios add variety and personality.



“Shelve any preconceived ideas you may have of what a home should contain,” Sara writes. “Instead try to enjoy the process and the challenge of creating a living space that balances practicality with style regardless of how tiny it might be.”

4 Tips for a Compact and Functional Home

As a stylist with years of experience, Sara has seen her fair share of diminutive interiors. Here are her tips for maximizing yours.

- **UNDERSTAND:** It's important that you understand how your small space works as a whole. Your building structure and location, for instance, can have an effect on your interior. While some of these factors can be modified, others, “while unchangeable, can be used in a positive way to enhance the overall sense of space.” Start by identifying your home's unique attributes and work from there.
- **PLAN:** Will you be working from home? Do you plan on entertaining a lot? Consider how you want to inhabit your space so it can be used most effectively.
- **DESIGN:** Think about how you can design your space to get the most out of every square inch. Be creative, but keep it practical.
- **STYLE:** Choose a decorative style that reflects your personality but also works within the space. For example, some colors and patterns can give the illusion of space, while others can make your home appear even smaller.



Credit: Saša Antić, Interior stylist, set and props



Simple cabinetry painted in a surprising blue hue gives it more prominence in the space.



Credit: The family home of architect Arash Nourinejad and artist Kristina Lykke Tønnesen in Copenhagen

Space-saving furniture like these stackable stools and folding chairs are must-haves for compact homes.

Mix everyday objects in to your wall shelves for a more personal touch.



Credit: Armando Elias, Hugo Denjoy, Craft Design

In a small space, whites and soft blues are ideal because they can create the illusion of openness.



Two long benches replace multiple stools or chairs for a light, sleek look.

Stow It Away

These storage solutions translate to an enormous amount of extra space in even the smallest of interiors.

- **ON THE SHELF.** Whether built-in or added-on, standard cut or made-to-measure, custom-built or DIY, shelving units are the ultimate space-savers and can accommodate just about everything.
- **TAKE UP SPACE.** Squeeze storage into every last nook and cranny. "Cleverly designed storage units can be custom-built to any size or configuration," Sara advises.
- **THINK INSIDE-THE-BOX.** Baskets, boxes and containers work wonders in keeping a home organized and tidy. Stow them away on shelves, inside cabinets or under furniture.
- **PRIVATE SCREENING.** Some fabric suspended from a shower rod is great for hiding clutter.
- **TWO-IN-ONE.** Wherever you can, opt for furniture that also doubles as storage (or vice versa), like a desk with built-in filing drawers or a bench with storage inside.
- **FOLD IT UP.** Furniture that can be stacked, folded or collapsed will space when not in use.
- **GET THE HOOK-UP.** Don't forget the power of hooks. They're versatile, don't take up much space and are more decorative than other storage options.



Book credit: *Beautifully Small*, by Sara Emslie
 Ryland Peters and Small, \$29.95;
www.rylandpeters.com

Cover photo credit: Photography by Rachel Whiting