

SMALL-SPACE LIVING:

# diminutive & divine

THE TRICK TO ENJOYING LIFE IN A PETITE  
PIED-À-TERRE IS CLEVER DESIGN, SAVVY  
STORAGE AND AN OUT-OF-THE-BOX  
APPROACH TO DECORATING

STORY SHELLEY TUSTIN STYLING LISA HILTON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BRIGID ARNOTT



**SMALL-SPACE TIP** “Our motto with furniture is to fill up the room with a few substantial pieces rather than lots of little items,” interior designer Adam Scougall says. “Here, for example, a trio of pendants add the wow factor.” For similar lights, try the ‘Ormond’ from Arteriors.

**A**S THE LAST of their children flew the coop, Jack and Julie decided it was time to trade in their memory-suffused Californian bungalow for a fresh start. “We were there for 33 years,” Julie recalls. “It was gorgeous, but it had a massive garden.” So the couple bought a three-bedroom apartment in a harbourside suburb of Sydney’s inner-west, skipping joyfully into their new low-maintenance lifestyle. “We had a lot of antique and older-style furniture, so we got rid of most of it before we moved,” Julie says. “We came here with very little.”

This enthusiastic culling was the perfect way to transition into a smaller and more modern home, yet it left their new apartment looking somewhat bare. “The whole place was very dull,” Julie recalls. “We moved here with just a couple of leather lounges and our old kitchen table, thinking that we’d start afresh. But the walls were cream and

the carpet was cream and really old.”

Puzzling over how to fill the space, they called in Adam Scougall of As You See It who had worked wonders on the unit of an acquaintance nearby. Julie got out her magazine clippings, which revealed a penchant for classic interiors with a colourful twist. “I don’t like, say, straight Hamptons style,” she explains. “I like things a bit more interesting, a bit eclectic.” Adam took this ‘twisted traditional’ idea and ran with it, creating what he describes as a “Moroccan-meets-Hamptons sort of feel”.

Furnishings that had survived the initial cull were reinvented, while new furniture and art were custom-designed to suit the space. “Adam and his team have done such a beautiful job,” Julie says. “Everything is just gorgeous.”

It’s the perfect place – and space – for this couple to make some new memories.



*dining room* The limed-timber dining table (above & opposite) was designed and built by Ben Napier, a contractor for interior design company As You See It. The table comfortably seats eight, or compacts into a cosy table for four. Julie’s favourite colour, blue, appears in dining chairs upholstered in Sanderson ‘Fitzroy’ fabric in Indigo Blue, and dark timber Wegner chairs that were revamped in ‘Husk’ fabric in Ocean from Warwick. A dark timber ‘Tivoli’ console from Pottery Barn was brought in to add drama to the expanse of cream wall; a combination of Jack and Julie’s own artworks dot the space above.

“I TOLD ADAM THAT I HAD TO *have blue in* SOME WAY, SHAPE OR FORM IN THE LIVING AREAS” ~ JULIE

*living room* From its beige beginnings, the living room (left) is now awash with cheerful colour. A custom-made armless sofa and ottoman – in the same Warwick linen-blend fabric as the dining chairs – are a bold match for the couple’s original King Living leather lounges. The sofas are enlivened by cushions in Jonathan Adler ‘Ikat’ and ‘Limitless’ fabric and Trina Turk ‘Blue Sea Floral’. Interior designer Adam created the striking floral artwork for his clients. “Painting it was a real joy because they just let me do it, no questions asked,” he says. >

ARTWORKS (FAR RIGHT) TURKISH MOSAIC PRINTS, VIVIDSHOP, ‘FLOWER GIRL’, © PATRICK DEMARCHELIER, 1992. ALL OTHER WORKS, ARTISTS UNKNOWN

**SMALL-SPACE TIP** “The blank wall in the kitchen felt really claustrophobic,” Adam says. “Adding a mirror was a really cost-effective solution. Although it only reflects the rest of the kitchen, it makes the room feel twice the size.”

*kitchen* With timber cabinets, Caesarstone benchtops and plenty of storage, the original kitchen was more than adequate, except for a big blank wall above the sink. The addition of a mirror, which lines up neatly with the existing open shelves, was an instant success. “The shelves lighten up the wall and they do look quite nice with our bits and pieces on them,” Julie says.



“FILLING THE HALLWAY RECESS WITH SHELVING AND CREATING A GALLERY GAVE THE *area definition*” ~ ADAM, INTERIOR DESIGNER

*hall shelves* While Jack and Julie culled the majority of their furniture, they kept many of their objects d’art, including travel mementos and gifts, along with treasured books. An unused recess in the hall provided the ideal opportunity for display space, with glass-and-timber shelves custom-made to fill the gap. “There’s strip lighting underneath each shelf, so it looks gorgeous at night,” Julie says.



*breakfast nook* Furniture that did survive the couple’s move was cleverly tweaked, allowing it to fit beautifully into the more modern space. A prized cabinet (left & opposite), which once belonged to Julie’s maternal grandmother, was given a genius refurb. “The timber shelves were taken out and replaced with glass, and then the back of it was wallpapered to match the wall, so it looks like it’s backed in glass,” Julie says. Two antique timber chairs – inherited from Julie’s paternal grandmother – were reupholstered in Jonathan Adler ‘Electrify’ fabric in Tulip and Azure to create a textural contrast with the Greg Natale for Porter’s Paints ‘Chevron’ wallpaper in Roman Silver. >



**SMALL-SPACE TIP** “We used wide lime-washed boards, which make the room look bigger,” Adam says. “Also, how you lay the boards makes a difference, potentially elongating the space.”

**SMALL-SPACE TIP** “In a smaller room, a wallpaper with a denser pattern is most suitable, as you may lose the ‘story’ of a larger pattern repeat with less wall space,” Adam suggests. “I always advise to take the biggest risks in the smallest areas – think how terrific highly patterned wallpaper looks in tiny powder rooms!”

*main bedroom* Julie’s scrapbook of images gave Adam the idea of carrying a Moroccan motif throughout the home; this appears in the bedroom in a custom-printed wallpaper designed especially for the space. Jack and Julie’s original ensemble bed was finished with a new linen bedhead and coral bedding from West Elm (for a similar quilt cover, try the ‘Kenai’ from Linen House), and is flanked by West Elm ‘Wood Tiled’ bedside tables. The original window treatments were kept: large panels of fabric that stack like vertical blinds, they are virtually invisible when pulled back, appearing to be part of the wall.



*guest bedroom* The spare room is a serene space for guests. The bedhead and cushions – in Sanderson ‘Fitzroy’ fabric in Apple Green – and a blue Freedom throw pop against walls in Porter’s Paints Donkey Grey. For a similar throw, try the ‘Hanami’ in Indigo from Bianca Lorenne. All the bedrooms feature ‘Natural Formations’ carpet in Koojaman from Carpet Court.

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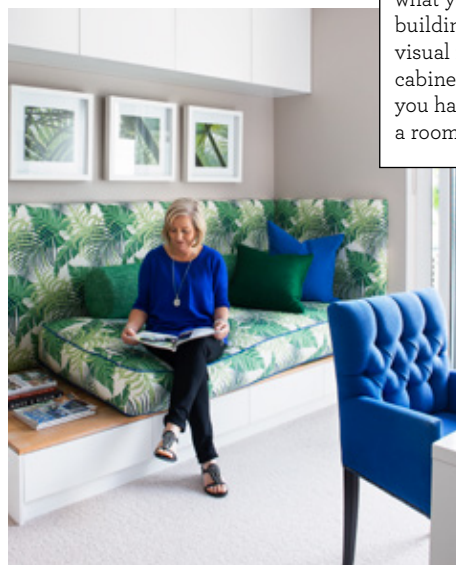
“WHEN DECORATING *small bathrooms*, STICK WITH THE ONE COLOUR, THEN LAYER WITH *different textures* IN THE SAME COLOUR AND TONE” ~ ADAM, INTERIOR DESIGNER

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*enuite* Jack and Julie were happy to keep the two bathrooms as they were, enjoying the modern design and ample storage. “The cupboards underneath the vanity are all half empty!” says Julie. Travertine tiles – in a muted olive taupe – add a luxe feel. For similar, try the ‘Regal’ range at Stone Wholesalers.



**SMALL-SPACE TIP** “It’s amazing what you can do with little tricks such as building up to the ceiling and creating visual interest with different depths of cabinetry,” Adam says. “It’s a myth that you have to take things out and make a room sparse for it to feel more spacious.”



*study* This room has been transformed from a cramped workspace into a gorgeous study for Jack and Julie (pictured left). Adam and his team went storage crazy here, designing custom cabinetry to the ceiling and a cosy daybed with drawers underneath. The daybed was upholstered in lively Sanderson ‘Manila’ fabric. “We still need it to be a bedroom at times,” Julie says. “Our grandson sleeps in there when he’s over, and at Christmas it’s always a full house.” A Casa Mia armchair is an attractive alternative to a standard office chair. For similar, try the ‘Julian’ chair from Oz Design Furniture.