



Great living in a small space.

By Ellinor Ellefson

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I am writing this from my little summer cottage, where I have spent almost every summer since I was newborn. As many of you know, I usually go to Sweden for a few weeks every summer. This is where I grew up, and this is where my parents, brother and his family lives.

My little summer cottage in the Stockholm archipelago has two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom (well, a wash up area), all together on 330 sqft! Two adults and two children live surprisingly well here for a few weeks (even if it rains!). Coming here always reminds me, that good design has nothing to do with square footage. If you plan your space wisely, and use the elements of design, you can live beautifully, comfortably, and functionally, in any space, small or large!

Earlier this year, I participated in a design competition at the Maricopa Home and Landscape Show, for which my room won first place. The room was a great example of living comfortably on a smaller footprint. The floor space that each contestant was given was 10' x 20', the actual square footage became 190. Where my competitors had created either a bedroom or a dining room, my room showcased a small "entry", a dining space, a sitting area, as well as a "beach access". Yet, the space did not feel crowded.



*190 square feet of well planned space
Winning room at the Maricopa Home and Landscape Show*



The fact is, that no matter how small or large your home is, many people think they do not have enough space. We are always looking for ways to make our homes feel more spacious, and we dream of more storage. A lesson learned from living small for a few weeks every year, is that what matters is what you make with the square footage that you have. Interior design is a great tool that can make every home live to its fullest potential. No matter if your home is small or large, follow these five simple tips to make your space live and feel larger!

1. De-clutter

Once a month, go over your home and de-clutter it. Keep all general household items out of sight, clear countertops, tables, and all visible surfaces. If your home is small, it is a good idea to invest in furniture pieces that can double as storage. An ottoman can store photo albums as well as provide extra seating, and a chest can double as a coffee table and toy storage. When your home is small, it is also a good idea to minimize the amount of accessories you have on display. Only keep what you really like, in a style that really speaks to you.

2. Leave empty space

When your house is small, it is even more important than in a larger home, to leave empty space. We need empty space around us to be able to breathe and feel comfortable. Resist the urge to place furniture and “things” everywhere. Opposite to what many people believe, you can have larger pieces in a small space. But if you do, minimize the amount of pieces, or the room will feel crowded.

3. Consider the impact of color

Choosing the right colors for the walls, floor, as well as furniture and accessories, is crucial when decorating a smaller house. Generally a lighter monochromatic color scheme will make a small home feel larger.

4. Use a variety of different lighting options

By making good lighting decisions, a small home can feel larger than it is. All rooms should have a variety of lighting options; general, task, and ambiance. Use lighting as a tool to set the mood and enhance certain areas of a room.

5. Make sure there is a flow from room to room

When moving between the rooms, a house feels larger and more “pulled together” if the rooms have similar style, similar colors, and similar floors. A rule of thumb is to limit the amount of floor coverings to not more than three. The wall colors does not have to be the same, but should be of similar intensity.



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*Ellinor Ellefson, allied member ASID, of Elle Interiors, specializes in residential interior design and small commercial spaces. She believes that great spaces are for everyone and that you do not have to sacrifice style and good looks in order to stick to a budget. She offers a **free first time consultation** to all new clients; call her today at **602-751-1178** or visit her website at www.elleinteriorsaz.com. You can also schedule a “Home Decorating Party” at you house with Ellinor Ellefson as your speaker. Have your friends bring a picture of a room, and Ellinor will help everyone find their style!*

Beauty – Comfort – Function
Always Together!

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