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Lifestyles

RENTALS [CLASSIFIEDS]

Small rooms can be little gems and look larger with a few design tricks

By Jill Sell

The idea that "good things come in small boxes" applies to small rooms, according to Connie Turski, owner of Connie Turski Interiors in Cleveland. Small doesn't mean boring or ordinary.

In some ways, designing a small room presents advantages. You need less furniture so the pieces you do buy can be higher quality if you have a budget. Also splurge on one or two great pieces of art or accents instead of a number of less impressive pieces. Reduce the amount of clutter and keep it simple, said Turski.

Whether you live in a studio apartment or a rental space with small rooms, "don't let a small room limit your imagination or creativity," the designer emphasized.

"If a room is more rectangular than square, emphasize the longest length with furnishings and finishes and save the short dimension for a great piece of art or a focal point. Imagine the one-point perspective

theory in art. This captures the focus on a destination place in the room rather than the size of the room," said Turski. "Think of a small bathroom. The tub/shower will be located on the short end of the room, so make the tub/shower a place worth looking at."

Turski encouraged people not to be afraid of using dark colors in a small room, even though the colors make a room seem "more closed in." Dark colors can create the exact mood some tenants want. Also limit the amount of furnishings that connect to the floor, especially "legless boxes" which can interrupt the flow of a room. The designer believes that small rooms benefit from "well-balanced lighting throughout the room and a variety of light sources."

"There are oodles of light fixtures that are available today that don't look like a traditional lamp with a shade. They allow creativity within the room for the theme or style

being suggested," said Turski.

Other designers suggest that the tiniest of rooms can be made to appear a bit larger with the use of mirrors. A free-standing large oval mirror in a stand can do the trick, as can a few peel-and-stick mirror tiles on walls, door-mounted mirrors, or a cluster of well-framed smaller mirrors on a table or mantel.

Designers debate whether or not to use smaller or larger scale furniture in a small room. Some say a few carefully-selected larger pieces are easier on the eyes and move a person's attention across the room. Others say smaller chairs and tables in a small room provide better visual balance. If you don't mind moving furniture and you have some cooperative friends or neighbors, borrow pieces in both scales to see what works best in your particular space before you buy anything.

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A small room decorated by Connie Turski Interiors in Cleveland. | Connie Turski