



SIT WITH YOUR FRIENDS COMFORTABLY, AND SEE HOW MUCH SPACE YOU LIKE TO HAVE BETWEEN YOU. THIS NOOK HAS A 6-FOOT DIAMETER.

the other) can make a room seem taller, and allows you to treat the lower, touched portion with a durable washable finish. But first ask yourself, why are you trying to make a room seem taller or wider? Is its size not right?



THICK WALLS ALLOW FOR A "COOL BOX" INSIDE THEM.

Choose colors you like, and love your home.

**Wall thickness.** Thick walls provide the possibility to live literally inside them. Alcoves, niches, and storage areas can be carved into a thick wall, and will hold dishes, benches, and shrines. Even a standard 2-by-6-inch wood-framed wall can be made to hold books. Thin walls, framed, or, more simply, screens used to partition areas maximize floor space. Furniture can be placed to create separate rooms, eliminating the need for walls at all.

**Kitchen.** The kitchen may be where the guests congregate, but if you actually cook, consider designing it as super-efficient work space. Expensive cabinetry, especially if it's deep (with items hidden behind others), is not as

effective as shelves, hooks, pegboards, and crocks. As Julia Child said, "Tools should be out where you can see them." Why move them twice—from dish drainer to drawer? Build shelves that are dish drainers, and cut that work, and space, in half.

Plan your kitchen like you plan the whole house. Arrange the things you use every day around you, and imagine how you could best use them. Sitting or standing? Alone or with a partner or two? With visitors at a table near you, at a bar, or kept at a distance, in a separate room? Will the kitchen also be a hallway, that can be crossed to reach another area or will it be an "end-space" kitchen, used only for cooking, with no passage, a place of focus, and not of multitasking.

Determine how much counter space you really need, and consider an old-fashioned pull-out cutting board. Will you store all your food within easy reach, or away in a pantry? The “three-step” kitchen, where no cooking action takes more than three steps, is a common goal. Consider also the two-step, one-step, and no-step, pivot kitchen. Consider whether the steps you take should be up a stool to high storage, in cabinets, or hung from baskets, as Laurel does in her kitchen (see Chapter 11). Why do people like their very small kitchens? “Nothing is far from the stove,” “No room to be messy,” and “I like to cook alone. It’s my time to be focused.”

**Storage.** Efficient interior storage complements the design.

*Indianapolis socialites Shannon and Michael Brown-Callahan weren’t sure how their new house, which has no single large room, would work for parties. The small rooms turned out to have the effect of drawing people together. To their surprise, the most popular spot is the loft above the living room. The ceiling height allows only sitting and lounging, and guests like to crowd together to enjoy the close company.*

Closets maximize corner space that would otherwise be wasted, and storage is nestled under beds, floors, alcoves, eaves, and coffee tables. Storage hangs from the ceiling, or emerges magically from inside a wall, or it might be exposed: a pegboard with hooks

or a dozen Shaker dowels on the wall. A simple shelf all around and a foot below the ceiling provides long-term book storage, and may make the ceiling appear higher, or slightly domed. Look around any room, and you may notice spaces that could be



SHANNON AND MICHAEL'S SMALL ROOMS HAVE THE EFFECT OF DRAWING PEOPLE TOGETHER.