

# KITCHENS BEDROOMS & BATHROOMS

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MAGAZINE

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Designing small kitchens



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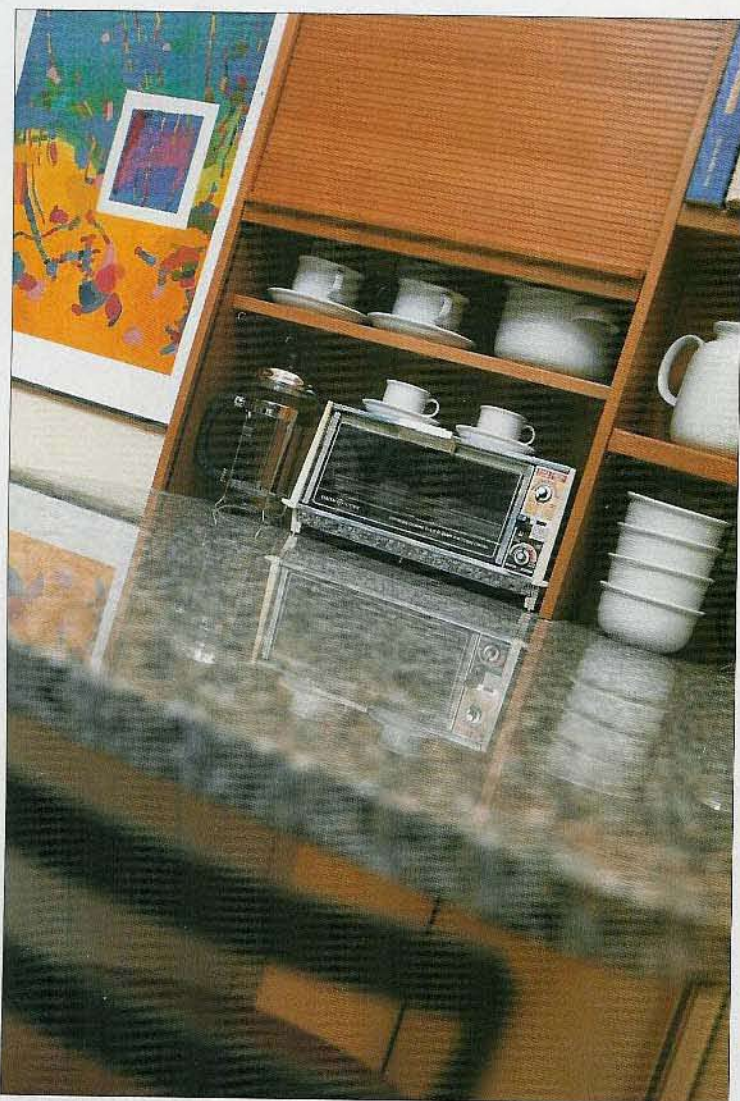


Drawers fitted into one side of the table provide extra storage without spoiling the clean lines of the kitchen

# Small holdings

Architect Lee Luxford reveals how to make the most of a tiny kitchen

Feature: Sarah Blake Photography: Ray Main Styling: Odile Vassallo



The table has a granite surface and doubles as an extra work top



Lee removed a false ceiling, giving the room an instant airy atmosphere

It's the cooking room, laundry room, entertainment centre and dining room all in one. Lee Luxford, a Canadian architect and designer living in London, is talking about her kitchen. Its list of functions is even more impressive when she reveals that the room measures a compact 2.5 x 3.5m. "We've managed to pack a lot into it," Lee acknowledges. "My husband Bob and I are both so busy that we tend to get together only at mealtimes, so the kitchen needed to be somewhere we could meet up. It's a room to play in as well as eat in."

Lee has managed to combine all her different requirements by reinventing the space, making the most of every inch. The fact that she is a professional designer does help, but Lee's ideas can be translated into any small space.

The room is oblong in shape, with a high ceiling. "Originally there was a false ceiling in here," says Lee. "I took it out as lofty proportions help make the room seem bigger, even if the actual space is limited. There's also an enormous arched window above the sink, which fills the room with natural light." These points are worth bearing in mind if you have a small

kitchen. If you live in a converted flat, check to see if there has been a false ceiling fitted which can be removed to open up the overhead space. Lee is lucky enough to have a large window already in place, but if you haven't got that luxury, it may be worth investing in one to make the most of the natural light. A kitchen may be small, but that doesn't mean that it can't also be airy.

As work space in Lee's kitchen is limited, she has created an extra counter by running a length of granite along the window sill. "You have to make the most of what you've got in a small room," she confirms. "The window sill is above the sink, so it was easy to continue the granite worktop right into it. As the sill is very deep, it gives me that vital extra space."

Utilising your window sills is a simple, but extremely effective idea. If you're having a new kitchen fitted and the room is on the compact side, a standard package may not be right for you. "You're going to be the one using the kitchen every day, so think about what you want to include. It's easy for a small kitchen to become a closeted work centre - you don't want to be shut up on your own," says Lee.

Lee opted for an L-shaped run of furniture, instead of the more common U-shape, often found in oblong kitchens. "I used an L-shaped design, so that I could keep one wall free for a table," she explains. "I wanted there to be somewhere for people to sit down and have a glass of wine while I was preparing the dinner!"

The table juts out at right angles from the wall and has a granite top which doubles as a work surface. A run of drawers fitted underneath provides extra storage. "Drawers break up the lines of the kitchen," says Lee. "You should try to keep everything simple, otherwise the room can look cluttered. I wanted the kitchen to look clean and open, which is why I haven't got any wall cupboards. I don't like them because they look like they're falling into the room."

Instead, Lee has open shelving, creating a lighter look. One set of shelves has a tambour shutter, which can be pulled down to cover up the shelving and keep the kitchen looking tidy. The only large cupboards in the room are two full length floor-standing cabinets. One is used for food storage and the other for a washer and dryer. By thinking around the problem of

By making the most of a small space, Lee has made room for cooking, eating and doing the laundry in her compact London kitchen





A tambour shutter fixed to the front of this shelving unit can be pulled down to keep the kitchen tidy



Stainless steel appliances give the kitchen a sharp metropolitan edge



Open glass shelving looks lighter than heavy wall cabinets and can be used to display glassware



Granite has been used for the window sill, transforming it into an extra work surface

storing laundry appliances, Lee has managed to come up with a solution that allows her to keep the kitchen looking neat and sophisticated when she's entertaining, but by swinging out the cabinet doors, Lee can transform the room into a laundry on wash day.

"You have to clear your mind and get back to basics," says Lee. "Don't assume that you have to include something because that's the way it's always been done. Think about what you want to use your kitchen for and what you need to store. Remember - you can double the storage capacity of an ordinary kitchen cupboard just by adding an extra shelf."

Far from being a hindrance, Lee is in no doubt that a small kitchen can be a bonus, if it is well planned. "I've designed a lot of kitchens in Canada, where the rooms tend to be more spacious," she says. "I've always had a big kitchen at home - this is definitely the smallest one I've ever had, but it's also my absolute favourite. I hardly have to move an inch when I'm cooking because everything is so close to hand. It's my cooking cockpit!"

**BARE ESSENTIALS**

**ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN** Lee E Luxford,  
51 Cadogan Square, London SW1X 0HY  
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**FURNITURE & FLOORING** Barget Kitchens &  
Interiors, 347-349 Kings Road, London SW3 5ES  
(0171 376 3484)

**APPLIANCES:** Microwave, fridge freezer & oven,  
Neff, Grand Union House, Old Wolverton Road,  
Wolverton, Milton Keynes MK12 5PT (01908  
328328) Extractor fan & hob, Atag, 19 Hither  
Green, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 6XU (01275  
877301) Washer & dryer, Siemens, Grand  
Union House, Old Wolverton Road, Wolverton,  
Milton Keynes MK12 5PT (01908 328400)