

SQUARErooms

\$\$5.50 / RM10 / HK\$40 / A\$8.95 / US\$4.00

Kitchen + Bathroom Special

HOTTEST styles and storage ideas
for small spaces

Win!
\$5,000
worth of kitchen
appliances +
kitchenware sets!



Wish list:
**Top 20
appliances!**

MUST-READ!

**Space planning
for every
bathroom size**

**AMAZING
HOME SYSTEMS**

86
pages of
stylish makeovers



bright spark

This tiny apartment unit gets a big flavour update with funky wallpaper, intense colour usage and a brand new open configuration

Text **Deborah Jane Goon** Photography **Mikko Ala-Peijari**





The problem with most apartments these days is the small size and in some unfortunate cases, the deficiency in proper planning. However, in some instances, this lack thereof can sometimes be turned into a positive outcome given the right amount of creative ingenuity and the perfect partnership. In this particular case, the apartment had both things going for it. Homeowner Juhana Torkki could have chosen to use a local designer in Finland but he instead went with Rome-based architect, Maurizio Giovannoni, because he trusted his work.

Ordinarily, this would mean that Giovannoni would have to be based in Finland itself or go back and forth to manage the project. However, either of these options was not possible at the time. As such, most of the initial brief and communication took place during Torkki's three-day trip to Rome to see the architect. Armed with only the original floor plan and some pictures, Giovannoni obviously had his work cut out for him.

The most important elements that the homeowner specified included allowing maximum light dispersion within the apartment. This was especially important

At A Glance



SPACE One bedroom apartment unit
SIZE 699 square feet
LOCATION Turku, Southern Finland
HOME TO Finnish writer, Juhana Torkki
DESIGNER Architect, Maurizio Giovannoni
BUDGET S\$53,900 (€35,000)

KEY IDEAS

- 1** Bring the outdoors inside with a large, vivid scene from nature as seen in the wallpaper in the living room.
- 2** Inject a sense of warmth with strategically placed woody elements in small doses so that the space stays light and fuss free.
- 3** To add more character to a space, mix and match modern and vintage pieces for a funky, uncomplicated feel.
- 4** Light coloured wood flooring helps give this home its distinctive Scandinavian image and allows the space to stay open and fresh.

DINING AREA (top left)

View of the dining area in close proximity to the kitchen which is finished in Ikea's 2012 kitchen range in high gloss laminate. The dining table was crafted in stained birch wood and is accompanied by four colourful chairs by Finnish young designer, Kuisma Hurtig.

CORRIDOR (top right)

Two birch wood shelves were incorporated into the central structure opposite the dining space. The clever cut out design works to disguise the bulk of the structure that hosts the refrigerator on the other side.



since Finland experiences long, dark winter days. Unaffected by the long-distance job, Giovannoni went to work from across the miles to reconfigure the space and to give it a more open-concept feel. Over 400 emails exchanged between the pair ensured open communication and discussion about the design and allowed the fine tuning of the home itself. All the contractors and craftsmen were supplied by the homeowner who managed to assemble a power-packed Finnish team for the project.

Giovannoni on his end would check the design and progress of the work with Torkki's constant photographs to the architect. Four months later however, a new and improved apartment was born and from what we see – it is nothing like its predecessor.

In order to make better use of the space, the original bedroom and living room were swapped. The apartment also had too many walls and doors diminishing the space and didn't allow much natural light in. To counteract this, Giovannoni knocked down the boundary walls in the kitchen and newly apportioned living area. This not only created a much roomier open concept but more light is now able to stream through to most areas of the new configuration. The old double galley kitchen was removed and a new single galley dressed in high gloss laminate (from Ikea's 2012 collection) was put into place.

Since one of the kitchen boundary walls was removed, this allowed for a cosy dining space to be incorporated. Woody elements were introduced into the mix at strategic locations in order to provide

WALL ART (left)

Large moody artwork painted on wood by Finnish artist Elina Sipila adorns one large wall in the home.

LIVING AREA (opposite page)

A wasabi green Esprit sofa by Sope from the 60's sits against wallpaper by Conceptuwall while a vintage red floor lamp and an arc Twiggy lamp by Foscarini complete the space.







warmth and continue the Scandinavian design tradition. In particular, the dining table was crafted in stained birch wood and integrates itself with the structural column so it exists as an L-shaped form. Accompanying this are four colourful chairs by Finnish young designer, Kuisma Hurtig.

Just opposite this space, the refrigerator is incorporated into a multi-functional central column. The side facing the dining area hosts the refrigerator and storage shelves for party mixes. The opposite side hosts two birch wood shelves that provide display space and detract some attention from the otherwise large central structure.

The new and improved living room however is the true highlight within this lovely arena. Vibrant and riveting wallpaper by Conceptuwall was applied in the living room and sets the tone for the rest of the home which has an amazingly calm yet lively atmosphere. Modern and vintage pieces are juxtaposed against the wallpaper with a wasabi green Esprit sofa by Sope and a grandmother's armchair from the sixties creates a hip vibe. A vintage red floor lamp and an arc Twiggy lamp by Foscarini add to the practicality of the space.

The knocking down of walls in the public spaces also allowed for an individual reading spot within the living room. Demarcated by a wall of wood strips, the area is fashioned with wall shelves for the writer's reading matter and a Le Corbusier chaise lounge. Not much fuss is added in order to keep it neutral and calm – a clever design decision since the rest of the home is already full of spirit and flavour. ■

KITCHEN

For a more seamless take, the refrigerator is incorporated into the white multi-functional central column, which also hosts storage shelves for party mixes.