

SMALL SPACES

Living the Lush Life

Schuyler Samperton's 650-square-foot Miami Beach getaway is her "mood elevator"—a tropical cool retreat packed with a riot of candy colors, fabulous florals, and boho flair.

In the dining area of her Miami Beach apartment, designer Schuyler Samperton added an indoor landscape using removable wallpaper from Anthropologie. "It brings such joy and a gazillion compliments," she says. "Color and pattern give a small space life." The 1956 Drexel Heritage dining set, purchased on the auction site Everything but the House, doubles as a work space; the dining chairs and a slipper chair are covered in a Lisa Fine Textiles fabric. Pendant, Currey & Company.

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This Art Deco apartment in Miami Beach is 650 square feet. How do you make the most of a small space?

SCHUYLER SAMPERTON: This one-bedroom rental is a getaway for me, my boyfriend, and his daughter, so it had to be functional, comfortable, and relaxed, but also colorful and bright to reflect the setting and my bohemian aesthetic. I live in 900 square feet in Los Angeles and often stay in New York, where my boyfriend, Marc Lazard, is a filmmaker. We bounce around to our places in Miami Beach and Maine. I prefer having a few small homes to one huge place.

DAVID A. KEEPS: What was the appeal of this one?

It had character—tall ceilings, large windows, and textured white plaster walls that I didn't have to paint. White is a good balancing element in small spaces: It gives breathing room to saturated color and detailed patterns.

You really know how to make an entrance.

The foyer is not only the first thing you see when you enter, it's also a helpful spot where we keep everything from keys to shoes to beach towels. That Chinese console is a vibrant blast of green in such a tiny zone, but the slim shape makes it work. I hung a large painting above it to add impact.

Speaking of impact, what made you go with a massive floral mural in the dining area?

That might seem like a giant commitment, but actually it's just removable wallpaper panels from Anthropologie that cost around \$220. A mural was a good solution for a small space that needed something major—it acts as a focal point and eliminates the need to hang art. Plus, from our window we have a view of palm trees and wild parrots, so it feels like an extension of the outside.

What was the plan for the living room?

We needed a sleeper sofa for guests. I chose a white one to reduce visual bulk. The coffee table had to be movable for the sofa bed to open, and this one has a relatively lightweight open-frame metal base. Throughout the apartment, I tried to minimize the bulk of the solid pieces to make the rooms look larger. The dining room's cage-style pendant is see-through, so it doesn't block the mural.

Does that explain the understated window treatments?

There was enough going on with the patterned rugs and pillows. Matchstick blinds let in the light and are easy to open, which is great because I love fresh air. Organic, woven things, like those blinds and the rope hammock chair in the bedroom, never feel like they're taking up too much room.

You are clearly a rug aficionado.

They are perfect for making spaces feel more defined. I had quite a few from the Georgetown flea market in Washington, D.C.; I used them to delineate distinct zones. In the bedroom, I layered several rugs on the floor and hung one on the wall over the bed. It looks wonderful and is practical, since a real headboard would have projected too far into the room.

What's your philosophy on space planning?

It's crucial in a small home. I fell in love with a large wooden armoire and shipped it across the country to put it in the bedroom. But I forgot that the bedroom ceiling drops, so that piece now lives in the living room. It actually blocks a closet, so I set the armoire on plastic furniture sliders. It can easily be moved when we need access to the closet.

Was there a jumping-off point for your home's groovy vibe?

The decorating began with the accessories—tropical paintings and ethnic pillows and rugs I've collected for years. Then I added affordable contemporary furniture, an Anglo-Indian dresser, antiques, and a vintage dining set. In a small apartment, I like to give people a lot to look at—a mix of periods and styles and quirky touches like hanging shell necklaces on the living room's mirror. All of these elements are distinct yet compatible. This isn't a one-note Golden Girls or Miami Vice apartment.

But it is a seaside home. Where is all the blue?

I avoided it. I aimed for a color scheme that didn't scream beach. I wanted something more electric and alive: pinks, oranges, and greens. Close quarters doesn't mean shying away from bright colors, but they do need to remain consistent from room to room. The palette is a mood elevator, cheerful and energizing. It's like walking into a candy store.



Samperton transformed a petite foyer into an eye-catching vestibule with ample storage: A vintage console is a catchall for keys and dog leashes, while a West Elm basket holds beach towels. OPPOSITE: Samperton, who is based in Los Angeles, and her boyfriend, filmmaker Marc Lazard.

"I surrounded the mirror with botanical prints to emphasize the ceiling height," Samperton says. A Restoration Hardware sleeper sofa is covered in an indoor/outdoor fabric from Perennials; the coffee table easily moves for sleepovers. "There's nothing too serious or precious here," she says—her dog, Tricky, is welcome in every room. "It's all about kicking off your flip-flops and relaxing."



Samperton personalized the apartment with artwork by family members, including this oil painting by Lazard's stepmother. The frame's cutouts complement the vintage dining chair designed by John Van Koert for Drexel. "Furniture you can see through makes a small space feel larger," she says.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Samperton's vibrant beach wardrobe is housed in a 19th-century English armoire. To save space in the bedroom, the designer hung a vintage rug in place of a bulkier headboard; striped pillows, Heather Taylor Home; lamp, West Elm. An Anglo-Indian campaign chest contrasts with a round CB2 mirror. Samperton's debut collection of linen fabrics is available through Hollywood at Home in Los Angeles.



"We walk in with sand on our feet, so flat-weaves are great," Samperton says of the bedroom's layered rugs. "You don't see any stains, and you can sweep them." To camouflage an awkward corner, she added a tropical touch with a rope chair from Hangloose Hammock Company. "It's an ideal place to read or take a nap," the designer says. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES