

A Tiny House Blog Publication

# TINY HOUSE

FOR MICRO, TINY, SMALL, AND UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS

[www.tinyhousemagazine.co](http://www.tinyhousemagazine.co)



VOLUME 9 :: ISSUE 101

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## TINY LIVING THROWDOWN

Join the Tiny Living NC group in Efland, NC for a two-day hands-on workshop to benefit a very special family in the modern tiny house movement.

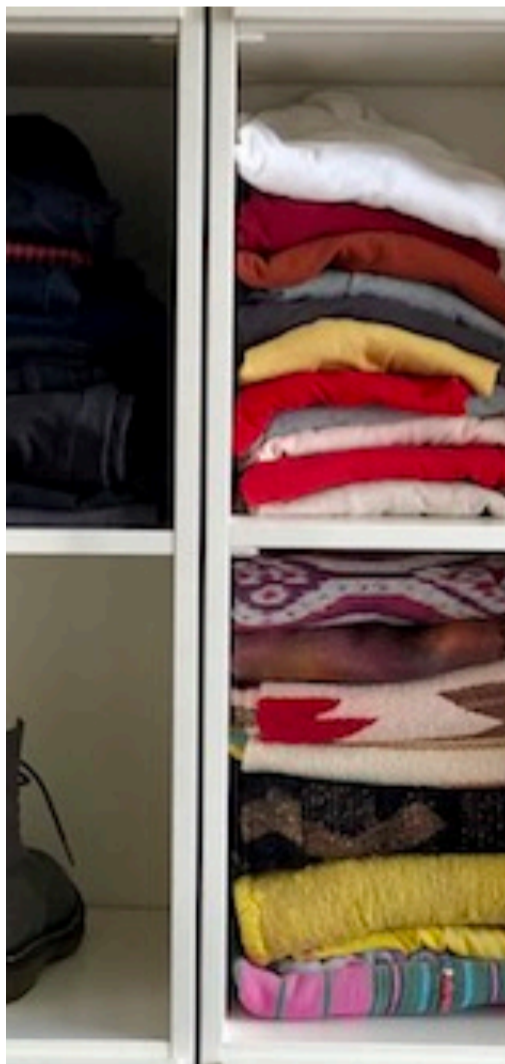
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## CURATING OR UNCLUTTERING

Author Susan Schaefer unravels the mystery of downsizing. Do you control your clutter or does it control you? Learn more about consumer clutter and finding joy in your junk.

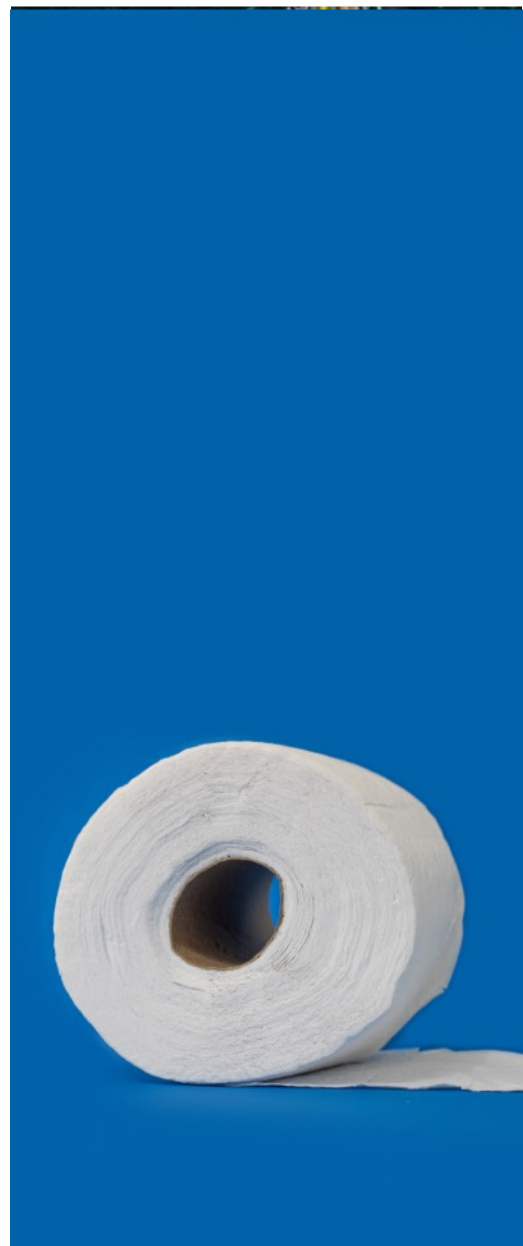
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## TOILET TIME

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# FEATURED CONTRIBUTORS



Starting in 2015 **PETER CHACHAJ** started the process to go tiny and has been full-time tiny living with his wife Nacole for over three years. Along with founding a non-profit (**Tiny Living NC**) he is doing all he can to help others begin their own tiny house adventure!



**SUSAN SCHAEFER** is a widely published independent journalist, creative writer, and poet. Born and raised in Philadelphia, she was co-publisher and editor of its edgy downtown biweekly, the *South Street Star*. Having lived on four continents in the countries of India, Colombia and the Netherlands, Susan knows how to pack up and thrive in small spaces.



**ANITA BRENZIA**'s BA in English led to a lifelong communications career, and more recently, to a creative writing passion. She lives in Maryland in a shameful amount of square footage for one person.

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

*Kent Griswold* | *Editor-In-Chief*



## Legalizing Tiny. The Challenge Continues!

In this month's issue, Jilan Wise of Far Out Tiny Homes discusses the problems that still persist for tiny home owners wanting to be legal in our country.

For years, the legalization of tiny homes within county and city jurisdictions has been heavily debated. How many times have you called your local permitting office or zoning and planning department inquiring about tiny homes?

Why is this such a difficult task? How can purchasing a 3,000 square foot home be so easy, but quite the opposite experience for a much smaller space?

Find out the reason and what steps are being taken to remedy the issue in Jilan's article, "Can Appendix Q Change the Real Estate Market?"

Do you want to go off-grid? Find out how it works for Macy Miller in a snowy climate and for skoolie adventurers Ryan and Ashley in this month's issue of Tiny House Magazine.

Your Friend,

Your Friend,

*Kent*

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**Christina Nellesmann  
Joshua Becker  
Laura M. LaVoie  
Brenda Mason Parmelee**

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

*Kent Griswold* | *Editor-In-Chief*

## Tiny House Diversity

One big draw to me when I first became interested in tiny houses 14 years ago was the diversity of construction options. I was drawn to them all: yurts, floating houses, log cabins, vans, RVs, sheep wagon, and even overlanding trucks.

In this month's issue Christina interviews a medical worker who transformed an ambulance into a Montana adventure rig. I'm inspired by several things in this story. Paul MacMillan, the builder, was looking for a tough rig that could both handle rough roads and was easy to maintain.

He chose a retired 1989 International Harvester medium duty truck that was decommissioned as an ambulance. One advantage of an ambulance is that it is built to some of the highest standards of quality and care.



With that as a base he converted it into a tiny house that he can take just about anywhere. He continues to fine-tune the home to fit his needs.

Think about the many types of vehicles out there. Does a certain type inspire you? Could you see converting it into a tiny home for yourself?

One of MacMillan's biggest takeaways is to do the work yourself. It will give you a real feeling of accomplishment and teach you practical (and nearly forgotten) skills.

Your Friend,

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# Voxel Cabin Grows Food, Reuses Water, Makes Energy From Waste



With the goal of building a cabin without relying on materials from the outside world, those at Valldaura Labs accessed their backyard forest and personal milling equipment (both traditional and CNC), as well as their knowledge of biogas energy and water capture systems.

With just 40 white pine trees selectively harvested from the surrounding Collserola forest, students, researchers and a few experts at IAAC built their “Voxel” cabin during a period of quarantine in the mountains above Barcelona.

After selecting the trees to cut to improve the health of the forest, the team used chainsaws to fell them and cut them in situ. They were then sent to carpentry to be planed and finally compressed into cross-laminated timber (CLT) which served as both structure and interior cladding. Offcuts of wood were shaped using parametric design tools to provide exterior cladding that maximizes shading and cooling.

These offcuts were burnt using the traditional Japanese method of Shou Sugi Ban, or Yakisugi, to preserve and protect the wood. The home was built without the use of metal screws, in an effort to remain as local as possible, and instead by using a classic doweling technique to press the boards together with these wooden nails.

A voxel is a “pixel with volume”. This applies to the building itself with its stacked interlocking boxes that begin with a rooftop garden that filters and purifies rainwater (with plants that remove contaminants via phytofiltration) to be used inside the home. The tessellated construction continues inside the home with a stepped ceiling and stepped furniture ladder that leads up to the lofted bed.

Even the furniture is modular and changeable; wooden dowels allow one to interchange furniture pieces and build up and interchange tables, chairs, clothes racks and shelving.

*Coming soon!*

# ***ReBuilding Butte***



This documentary follows Alyssa Nolan-Cain and her efforts leading a tiny home building project for survivors of the devastating Camp Fire of 2018 that destroyed Paradise and surrounding communities.



*The filmmaker, Amanda Lipp from Sacramento, CA.*



Stay tuned for details on the upcoming virtual debut of this film and our journey on the 2021 film festival circuit!

***Learn more***

# TINY LIVING THROWDOWN

Treehouse Workshop  
and  
Off-Grid Camping Weekend



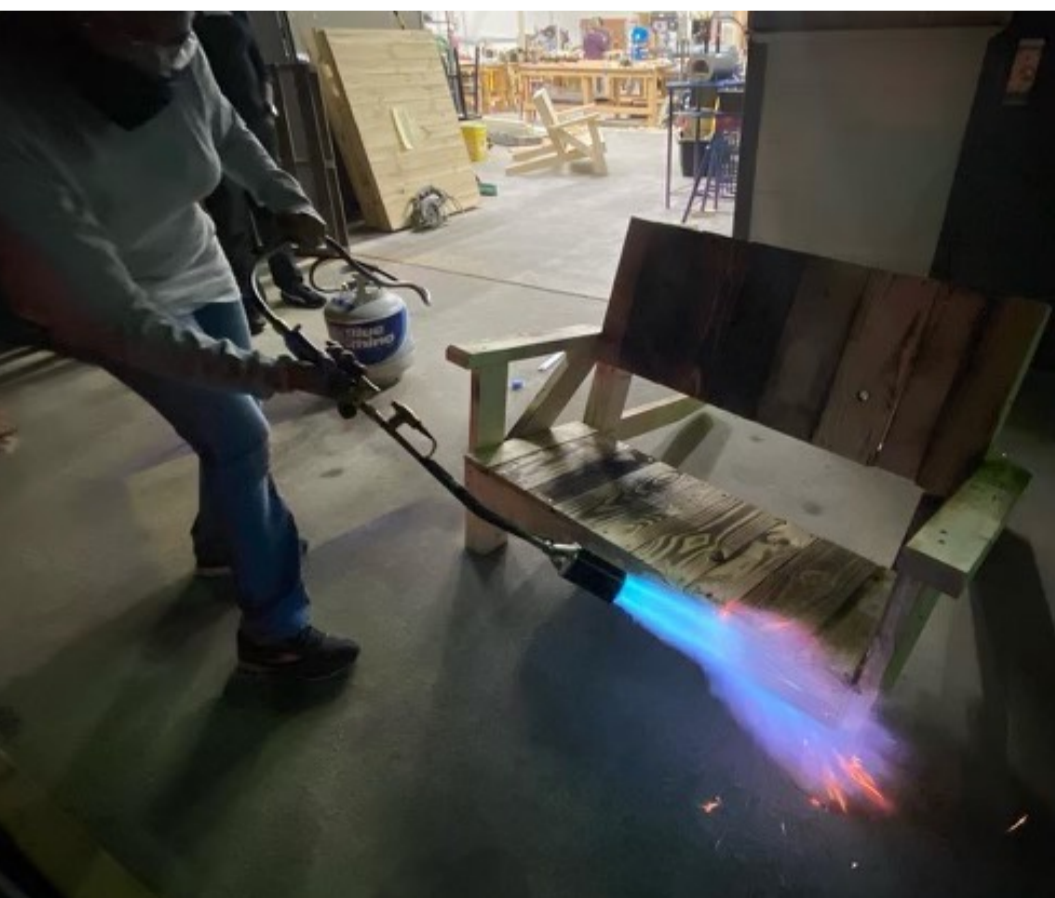


Great things can come from tragedy. Ask poet and playwright Oscar Wilde. He once famously wrote, “Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic.”

In October of 2020, Tiny Living NC suffered one of those tragedies. Member and friend Marco Aponte was killed in a traffic incident. However, this Memorial Day weekend there is an opportunity for the TLNC community to create something exquisite in his memory and in the name of friendship that roots itself in our group.



Shortly before Marco's passing he and his wife Heather purchased 10 acres of untouched land in Efland, NC. Just Northwest of Raleigh-Durham, Efland is a beautiful mixed-use area that allows one to create their own personal slice of heaven. That is just what Marco, Heather, and their children were planning to do. The goal of the Tiny Living Throwdown is to foster that idea and help Heather realize her dream of an off-grid retreat of tiny eco-cabins where people can come together to build alternative structures and unplug from the outside world.



Led in a workshop setting by Master Carpenter Chris Strathy (**the Capable Carpenter**) TLNC has accepted the honor of building the very first structure on the land. We'll be building a 6x8 foot micro-shelter treehouse to honor and celebrate the life of our friend Marco. The workshop is a ticketed event and is reserved for just 12 participants.

The hands-on event will teach about treehouse attachment points, shingling technique, basic framing, window installation, and flooring basics.



*A sketch of the workshop treehouse*



Demos and discussions will center around:

- Shou Sugi ban (wood torching)
- Intro to cob
- Wilderness survival
- Compost toilets
- Salvage/Restoration
- Cast-iron cooking

Similar to popular workshops by the likes of TinyHouseNC founder Andrew Odom and Relaxshacks salvage expert Derek Diedricksen, the Tiny Living NC event (co-founded by Mary Gillogly and Peter Chachaj) will be a two-day celebration of construction, camping, laughter, eating, and, more than anything, a celebration of a life well lived but cut too short.

We will be building and camping on private land that offers only primitive camping.

The host land/camp area will have several outhouses with composting toilets, multiple hand-washing stations, a fire pit, and a common area with food prep and serving tables. A few easy-up tents will be available for use and a solar shower will be accessible.

The Tiny Living Throwdown is more than just a building workshop. In fact, it is more than just a memorial event to help a family move forward. It is an embodiment of what the modern tiny house movement has long encompassed. It is a gathering of like-minded people with a common goal. It is a philosophical and practical deep dive into an expression of less is more.

From Friday, May 28 through Sunday, May 30, you can take part in this living and learning opportunity. [Reserve your spot now](#) and become part of this remarkable weekend.





# BUILD YOUR OWN



# TINY HOUSE

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# ON • ANOTHER • LEVEL

Well here we are again. Two months ago in Issue #99 I introduced you to Becca who I had met at a Tiny House Meetup group in early 2020. She took the plunge and collaborated with RVIA Tiny House Builder **Perch and Nest** to build her dream tiny house on wheels. She chose the name **Rooted Tiny House** which some would say is an oxymoron because her home has four wheels and can be moved rather easily. I might disagree though as you are "rooted" to your home and not as much to the dirt under it. It's your sanctuary or your familiar place even if the view outside may or may not change. If you live in a climate with four seasons your view changes all the time anyway. Home is, in fact, where you park it.

Most—if not all—tiny house trailers come with stabilizer jacks. However, those can only hold a

certain weight. From what I'm told by these different trailer manufacturers they are for temporary use. So if you have to level a tiny house on uneven ground, these jacks are put under odd and uneven stress. If this is a very temporary setup then some plastic leveling ramps, wood blocks, wheel chocks, and a 4-foot level should get you to a satisfactory level. If you, like Becca and me both, are going to be in a semi-permanent parking spot then you should build something more stable.

Every parking spot is different with different soil and irregularity in the land so seek local help from professionals about your specific location. This is not a How-To but a How-We-Did-It.

I refer to methods that are used by manufactured and mobile home setup companies and modify them for a smaller structure. These tiny house piers consist of a 20x20 inch ABS plastic pier pad, 8x16 inch rectangular cinder blocks of different sizes (all solid block except the typical 8x8x16 blocks) capped with 1/2-3/4 inch thick wooden blocks (8x16 inch) and fine-tuned if needed with cedar wood shims. The ABS pier pads, wood blocks, and wood shims come from mobile home supply stores and the cinder blocks are easily found at the big box hardware stores.

I first start with the tiny house being close to level with leveling jacks and equipped wheels. I check this with a four-foot level on metal tubing of the trailer. Next, I measure the distance between the ground and the metal part of the trailer that will be supported and plan out what height cinder blocks I need. It never goes exactly as planned but I get close enough to have the right amount of blocks to not go back to the store other than to return the excess blocks. My goal is to take most if not all

strain and weight off the tires/wheels to extend their life as well as stop the wiggle inside the house. On a 22 foot long tiny house I put in six piers total (average 7.33 feet apart) and on my 30 foot long plus seven foot gooseneck trailer I used 10 piers, five per side spread across the 30 foot part of the trailer (averaging six feet apart).

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*...you are "rooted"  
to your home and  
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dirt under it.  
It's your sanctuary  
or your familiar  
place...*

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Starting on the lowest corner of the lowest side, with the smaller one-foot level I make sure the plastic pier pad is level with a gravel base. Next I add the biggest cinderblock that will fit and keep adding the same or smaller size as I work my way up till I have little to no room for the cap (wood block). I raise the trailer a little bit to fit it and then bring the trailer down on that first pier. If there is a jack there I will get it up two inches so it doesn't interfere as I raise and lower the tiny. I continue to finish that low side and move on to the opposite side of the house using the same steps, regularly using the four-foot level. The "Pier Sandwich" is: pier pad as the footing, cinder blocks as the pier, and wood as the cap with wood shims fine tuning the level if needed. If a pier seems high a double interlocking block pier would be my adjustment on that pier.

If planned out well I don't have to go back and fix any of the previous piers. In the case of Becca's home that was the result. There was no need to go back, even with the uneven ground I was working with. The tires/wheels on the door side are off the

ground and the opposite side are lightly touching the ground because of the terrain I was working with. For aesthetic and other reasons I don't like the trailer too high off the ground so I do my best to keep it low.

The next step would be to install large mobile home anchors at the correct angle and increment with metal straps to tie down the house. For the sake of speed I will be calling a local mobile home setup company to get it done with little effort. Now that I have a level house I can make a simple deck or staircase and remove or cover the tires to extend their life by keeping them off the ground and protect them from UV rays. Putting in a skirt around the whole house is the icing on the cake for a semi-permanent tiny house on wheels.

Thanks to Becca for letting me mess with her house for this article. You can see her beautiful tiny house on wheels and follow her story on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).





# Cabin, Cottage & Tiny House Plans



# THE DAY JACK NICHOLSON CAME TO VISIT.

There's a scene in the movie *As Good as It Gets* that reminds me of some of the tiny houses I've seen online. In it, Melvin Udall (Jack Nicholson) is an obsessive-compulsive writer, and when he sees the contents of a suitcase efficiently filled by his artist neighbor Simon (Greg Kinnear), he nods approvingly and says, "Good packin'."

Tiny houses excel at "good packin'," often loading so many features into their compact spaces they're like Mary Poppins' bottomless carpet bag, serving up surprise after surprise.

I'm intrigued by tiny living, but so far, I'm merely a virtual tiny house tourist. I don't miss a chance to click through to see the interior when an article about one pops up on my newsfeed. And I love watching shows about them, especially when they feature people who downsize from a 2,000 square foot space like mine to an unthinkable 400 (or less!).

My first house was small—about 800 square feet, but it still had three floors: two bedrooms, two full baths, a finished basement and a decent-sized living room. After a few years there by myself, I felt cramped, and moved to the larger dwelling I have now. But I'm pretty sure I'm still only using the same space that felt too small in my starter home.

I'm not sure I could live in a tiny house. I like my space. Or maybe it's that I like knowing I have my space if I choose to use it. If I did ever feel it was time to make a change to something microscopic, there are some features I've seen that I'd want in my perfect tiny house.

**Lots and lots of windows.** French doors or sliders, European tilt or double-hung, pivot or louvre, and a fixed arch or two. Give me all the glass! Give me all the Windex, too, because I'm going to need it. I'll also need remote-control

shades, because all that glass can get mighty hot in direct sun. I'll probably want to close them off a lot because truthfully, I won't use the Windex as much as I should, and who wants to look at their cleaning failures?

**Stairs.** Don't even start with me about bookcases that turn into ladders, or shelving that transforms into a ladder. And let's not forget the rungs mounted on a wall. (They don't fool me one bit, because I can see they're a ladder just putting on airs.) I need honest-to-goodness stairs to go up to a loft bedroom, so whoever designs my tiny house will have to wedge a set of stairs in there; maybe the kind that fit into the wall when they're not in use. We'll need to eke out enough space so I can hide a ladder behind them, too.



# “I’M MERELY A VIRTUAL TINY HOUSE TOURIST.”

Because this *is* a tiny house after all, and it's probably a law that they have to have at least one ladder somewhere.

**Spin me a fireplace.** I definitely want one of those fireplaces that spins so when I go behind the partition where it's mounted, I can turn it around to access it from there. So clever! Who cares if someone wants to warm themselves on the other side? My tiny house, my rules.

**An actual sofa.** You might think I can't tell the difference between some rectangular foam cushions covered in plain gray or navy or brown fabric and an authentic sofa, but I can—I'm perceptive like that.

“MY COUCH WILL  
HAVE THE ABILITY TO  
TRAP CHANGE AND  
SAFETY PINS AND  
CRUMBS IN ITS COZY  
DEPTH.”

If and when I outfit a tiny house, it will have a real couch, with good upholstery and attractive wood legs and Modern English arms, and the ability to trap change and safety pins and crumbs in its cozy depth.

**Motorized popouts.** If I'm going to live in a box, let's make it a box where I can press a button and the sides extend to make a bigger box. Preferably while I'm warming myself by my spinning fireplace.

**A real table.** Those cutting boards that pull up from a secret place in the countertop and swivel and unfold, and then unfold again to make a tabletop where none existed before are undoubtably cool. It's even more amazing when someone magically pulls four tall, skinny stools out from an overhead compartment. Then you know what's really incredible? When four regular-sized adults perch gingerly on those stools around that unfolded masterpiece and they pretend they're enjoying a multi-course meal, and you know that the first person who has too much wine will fall off their stool and roll into the miniature bathroom or injure themselves on the

combination washer-dryer behind them that's doubling as a buffet.

**A rooftop terrace.** If I could have this, I would even climb up a ladder to get there.

I've seen some interesting things in my virtual tiny house visits, like a copper bathtub that fits under a dining table when not in use. I had so many questions, like "Is that sanitary?" and "What if you have a guest who doesn't like their dinner—is it rude for them to drop it into the tub?"

I also saw one show where a well-to-do 27-year-old still living in her mom's spacious home built a tiny house in the backyard. She kept a room in the family home (let's call it a suite, not a room, since it was at least the same size as her entire new houselet). If I could have a tiny house and have a regular house a few steps away for my extra clothes and shoes and such, I, too, could be part of the tiny house nation. Because that way I could keep all my junk out of my tiny house, and if Jack Nicholson ever came to visit me and I unfolded my countertop table and pulled down a stool for him to sit on while I poured him a glass of wine, he could look around and smile and say, "Good packin."





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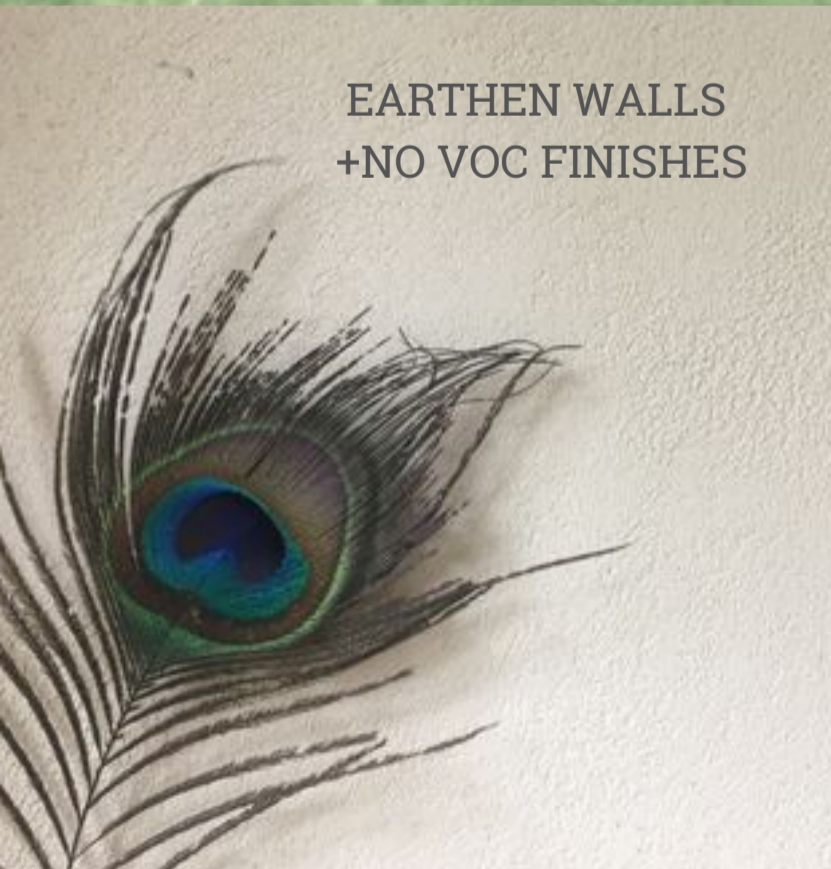
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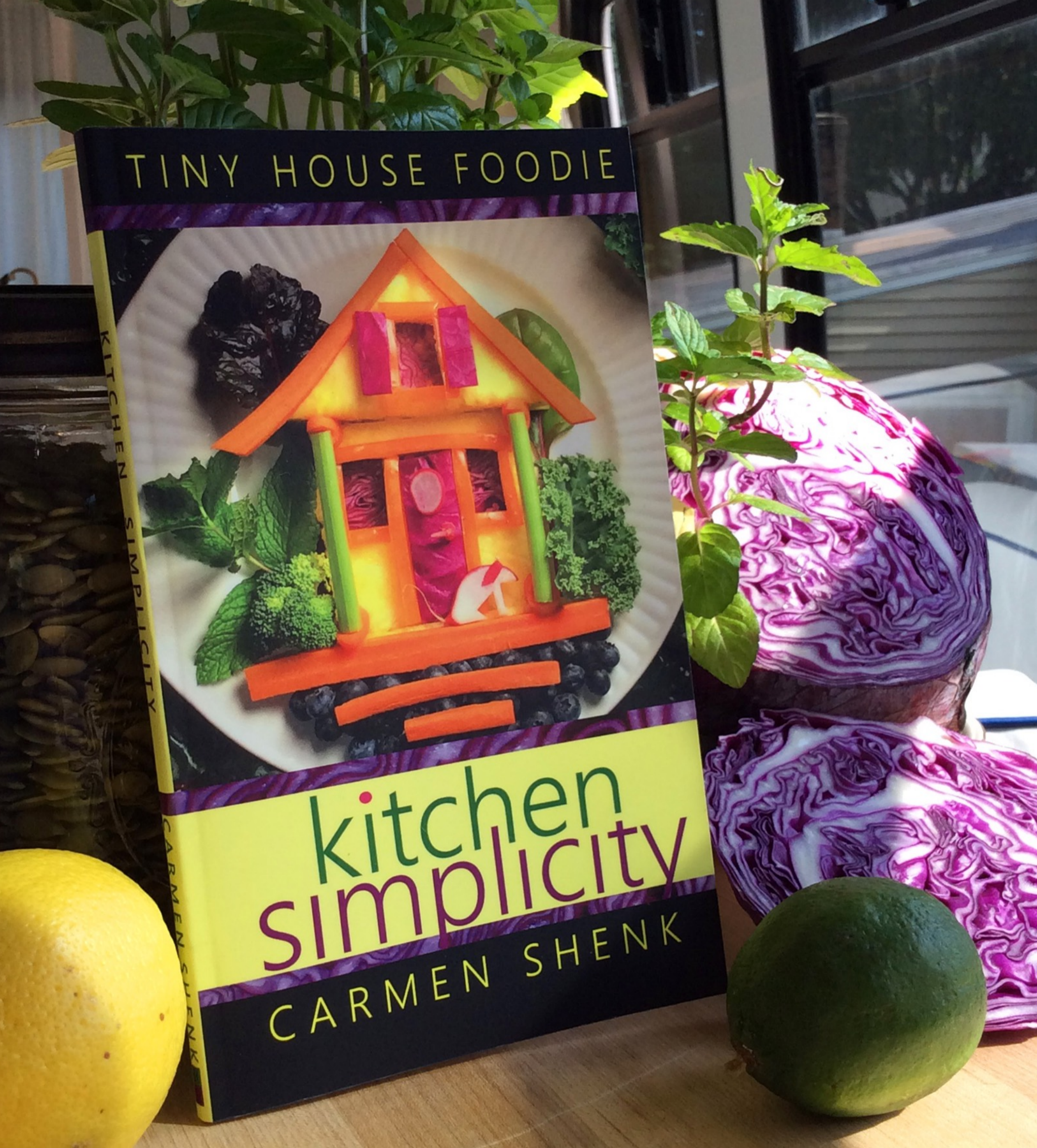
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# ON THE COVER

I told my friends I was "done" with tiny houses. I promised I wouldn't buy or remodel any more. However, when I saw this 120 square foot tiny house shell for sale in Medford Ore., one sunny mid-pandemic day I knew I'd have to break that promise.

The seller wasn't quite sure what to make of me. I called her, went to the bank, got some cash, and headed her way. I asked for references which she thought was rude. It took over four hours to get there but almost six hours to get home. I drove only 45 mph the whole way home, with my flashers on. It was the first time I'd towed my own home and it was stressful; but worth it!

I love the simple "Wedgie" architecture. The build quality was pretty good, and most of the features were solid. But My Tiny Vagabond would need a lot of work before I could offer it as a rental option.

With the help of contractors, we ripped out the bench seat, and the bathroom wall (which held no door) and the under-trailer plumbing and flush toilet that had been installed incorrectly.







We added a much-needed work space/ countertop area with a refrigerator underneath. The flushing toilet was replaced with a cedar loo and the bathroom is now a tad larger, the shower actually functions, and has a door. We also added some additional outlets, an evacuation fan, and moved some fixtures. Even the garbage can found a perfect, out of the way spot, to hang out.

The floors aren't great but I love the color and it inspired the rest of the palette. The entry now features an area for hanging clothes and a basket for shoes. The cabinets needed a bit of tweaking

and some graphic design, for sure. So, I called my favorite graphic artist Jake and asked him to give the house his magic touch!

The best part of this house is the queen-sized bed! It's amazingly comfy and the air flow and light make it a really great space just to be. Flanked with windows and countertops, it's great for sleeping or lounging or cuddling the day away with a good book and even better company.

For something a little different, there is no propane in this tiny house. Instead, I added an







electric cooktop. It works really well for the rare guest who cooks while they stay, and stows away when not in use.

When I bought the Vagabond I had no idea where I would put it when I was done but figured that an amazing opportunity would present itself eventually. I met with almost a dozen different land hosts but they didn't appreciate the work they would have to put into developing a spot to put it so nothing panned out—until something did...

Watching my frustration mount the neighbors approached me to ask if I could use a small section on the edge of their property. We decided to try it and if it didn't work out, they would have a great spot for their friends to visit and park their RVs.

My Tiny House Village now has five houses, even if one of them isn't quite *IN* the village. I'm so proud, so humble, and so thankful!

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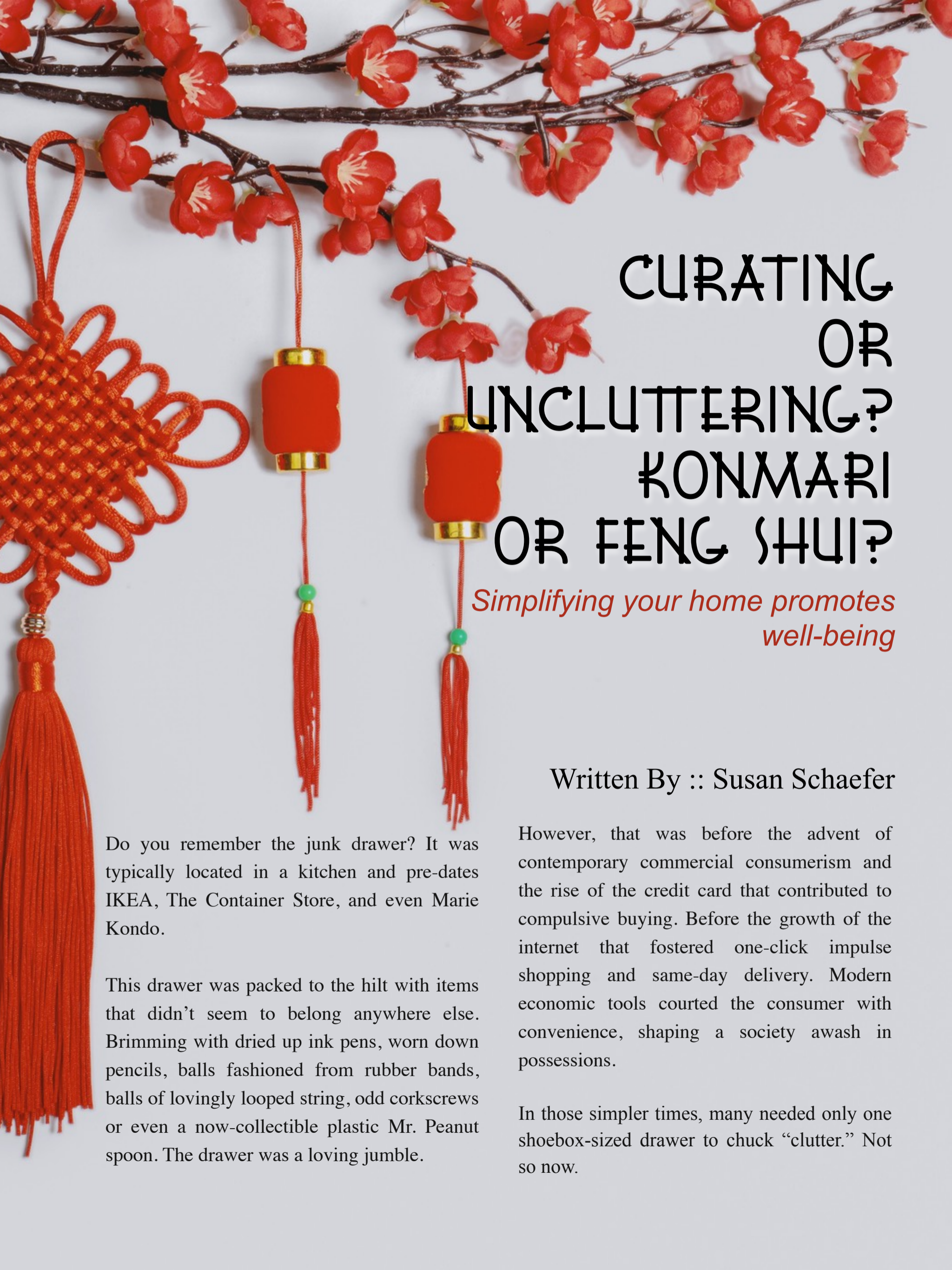
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# CURATING OR UNCLUTTERING? KONMARI OR FENG SHUI?

*Simplifying your home promotes  
well-being*

Written By :: Susan Schaefer

Do you remember the junk drawer? It was typically located in a kitchen and pre-dates IKEA, The Container Store, and even Marie Kondo.

This drawer was packed to the hilt with items that didn't seem to belong anywhere else. Brimming with dried up ink pens, worn down pencils, balls fashioned from rubber bands, balls of lovingly looped string, odd corkscrews or even a now-collectible plastic Mr. Peanut spoon. The drawer was a loving jumble.

However, that was before the advent of contemporary commercial consumerism and the rise of the credit card that contributed to compulsive buying. Before the growth of the internet that fostered one-click impulse shopping and same-day delivery. Modern economic tools courted the consumer with convenience, shaping a society awash in possessions.

In those simpler times, many needed only one shoebox-sized drawer to chuck "clutter." Not so now.

Many consumers are drowning in belongings. Not merely drawers, but closets, rooms, garages and homes are now swamped with stuff.

Enter the litter liberator, Marie Kondo, a gracious icon of good taste. Now, everyone seems to be in a frenzy over conquering their clutter after watching her series “Tidying Up with Marie Kondo”, inspired by her bestselling book “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up”.

Now you can “KonMari” your life, amending your wicked ways. You may dutifully visit the organizer section of Target to nestle your whisk properly next to your latte frother in a color-coded Valhalla of storage! You can obediently toss those trinkets that don’t spark joy!

Though Kondo’s approach seems as if it has sprung *sui generis* from this fresh-faced, soft-spoken naïf, the truth is that both accumulating and easing excess dates back to the dawn of civilization.

## A history of clutter

The Western history of word clutter traces back to the 1400s and is related to the word “clot,” loosely meaning “collected in heaps, crowded together in disorder, to litter or to crowd a place by a disorderly mass of things.” Yuck!

Improbably, the word signifying the correction of this condition, the verb “decluttering” (which spellcheck doesn’t even acknowledge as a word) didn’t exist until 1950, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary. Nearly 70 years later, experts about how, why and when to clear your untidiness

abound, complete with articles in “juried” scientific publications proving that if you have mess you may need a shrink (or simply the KonMari Method) to unshackle yourself from the despondency it creates.

Hold on to your hats (or toss the ones you don’t wear)! Predating medieval cluttered hovels, or 1950s modernist architecture streamlined homes, was the Chinese practice of feng shui. This ancient art is possibly the first system developed to create joy and promote well-being by tending to your surroundings.

*Collage By :: Susan Schaefer*



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*The word feng shui itself translates as “wind-water,” signifying its earliest practice as a means to site a safe place for dwellings with a main purpose to create abodes where families could flourish.*



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Dating back approximately 3,500 years, feng shui developed as early societies moved from hunting and gathering to farming and domesticating animals. In other words, no longer nomads, these folks settled down, built permanent homes, cities and societies and began accumulating stuff.

## **Qi, yin and yang**

The word feng shui itself translates as “wind-water,” signifying its earliest practice as a means to site a safe place for dwellings with a main purpose to create abodes where families could flourish. Sound familiar? As time progressed, the movement morphed into a tradition to help locate important buildings, palaces and monuments,

focusing on elements in both natural and man-made environments.

Feng shui consists of three different concepts: qi (pronounced chee), yin and yang, and the five elements.

Qi refers to “a complex natural force generated by a combination of both real and abstract sources including sunlight, cosmic influences, color vibrations, the movement and quality of the air around us, the flow of water, the nature of our thoughts and emotions, the form of objects, and more.” Most critically, and completely in line with Kondo’s concepts, qi influences how a place feels, how you feel in it and if you can circulate in the space harmoniously.

The term yin and yang, more familiar to Western ears, means to create a balance, such as between light and shade or movement and stillness. Too much of one or the other causes disruption and therefore lack of harmony or joy.

The five elements are a bit more complex, but to simplify greatly, the presence of each in your home and surroundings, placed according to ancient precepts, will also greatly contribute to serenity, energy, productiveness and overall health and well-being.

Feng shui has been applied to businesses, gardens, public spaces, and homes. Practitioners work with concepts and objects such as natural light, views, colors, plants, images, water, fire, wood, steel, stone, and more.

Homeowners who employ feng shui, like those turning to KonMari, create spaces devoid of untidiness. However, objects are curated according to ancient natural principals. Unlike merely decluttering, there is an aura of magic and the mystical in this practice.



*The IKEA Kallax shelf system.*

## Six principles

I have worked with the principles of feng shui since the late '70s, when I lived abroad for two years: one traveling in India and one teaching in Bogotá, Colombia. During my foreign travels I'd picked up more than a few interesting artifacts and transitioned from an apartment-dwell-ing student to a home-owning professional.

I enjoyed the simplicity of my student days, so when I took possession of a modest two-story, three-bedroom, side-by-side brick duplex, I sought a way to display my growing collection of art objects, textiles, books and housewares with the same attention to openness, flow and harmony that my student days had fostered.

Still in my 20s, in order to supplement my role as director of bilingual English at a local college, I worked weekends at my friend Nancy's organic health food counter where two charming coworkers, a Hawaiian named Leo and a Hindi named Vivekananda, turned me on to feng shui.

I was hooked and have incorporated its basic principles into every home I've since owned. My own design principles follow feng shui and KonMari, with the emphasis on curating. Here they are:

1. Continuously pare down belongings to those that have both meaning and value.
2. Buy or commission furniture that is affordable, beautiful and functional, with both open and hidden storage.
3. Display possessions that are visually pleasing and meaningful to you.
4. For everything else, find a place that is organized by how you use it, keeping frequently used items within easy reach.
5. Keep open space both to navigate within your home and between objects so they can be lovingly beheld.
6. Seek help if you're overwhelmed!

## The road to well-being

A recent *Psychology Today* article lists five big reasons to pare down your “disorderly masses,” citing scientific documentation about how and why this will put you on the road to well-being. Living in clutter creates or contributes to:

1. Low subjective well-being
2. Unhealthier eating
3. Poorer mental health
4. Less efficient visual processing
5. Less efficient thinking

The conclusions seem irrefutable: the advantages of streamlining outweigh simple housekeeping by elevating your happiness at home and work while also

benefiting your physical health and cognitive abilities. As with the ancient Chinese beliefs, uncluttering allows you to flourish.

This doesn't mean creating totally sterile environments, overly Zen, and devoid of personal



*Ikea dividers separate kitchen utensils for ready access.*

touches. Thoughtfully curated collections can also define and please you and your guests. Learn how to arrange things together for a pleasing and artistic effect. Don't let your surroundings turn into a jumble like that old junk drawer.

## 5 FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF ≡ FENG SHUI ≡



**WOOD**  
creativity  
&  
growth



**FIRE**  
leadership  
&  
boldness



**EARTH**  
strength  
&  
stability



**METAL**  
focus  
&  
order



**WATER**  
emotion  
&  
inspiration



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# GOING *International*

Medical worker transforms an ambulance  
into a Montana adventure rig



By Christina Nellemann



*“The experience of “building your own house” gives a person a real feeling of accomplishment. It seems like there are getting to be less endeavors that a person can embark upon that involve hands-on building, using tools and skills, forethought and design, but with a project like this it covers everything.”*

*Paul MacMillan*

The beauty of overlanding vehicles is not only what they can accomplish on demanding, off-road trips, but also the massive potential that people can see in a basic machine. While building out an overland is a big job, vision is half the work.

What makes this story so fun is that someone in the medical field had the vision to create his overlander out of a vintage ambulance.

Based in southern Montana, Paul MacMillan is a physician's assistant at a local hospital. To escape from the stress of the job, he likes to go camping WAY out in the backcountry of Big Sky

Country. The vehicle for this type of job is a 1989 International Harvester medium duty truck. The truck was actually in great shape since it was kept in a temperature controlled building until MacMillan purchased it several years ago.

The vehicle was actually decommissioned as an ambulance because it had a stick shift. Many ambulance drivers at the time didn't know how to drive a manual—even when it was an emergency.

MacMillan not only knows how to drive a stick, but just about everything else to turn this truck into a rugged house on wheels.



### **Tell us about your overlander vehicle.**

The vehicle started its life as a heavy duty ambulance. It sits on an International truck chassis; this is similar to wildland firefighting vehicles and school bus chassis. International is known for its long lineage of heavy duty vehicles as well as farm equipment for over 100 years. Many of the current military medium and heavy duty vehicles are Internationals.

The advantage of an ambulance is it is built to some of the highest standards of quality and care, and is well maintained. I was also looking for a vehicle I could take into the backcountry and deep woods, something that would hold up on rugged dirt roads and not rattle to pieces. I had a four-season trailer years ago and it literally started coming apart at the seams. So, I decided something with a box that is completely metal would tolerate the abuse better. This vehicle's

coach is all aluminum, lightweight, and won't rust. The shorter wheelbase also makes it easier on the back roads. It has a 6-cylinder turbodiesel engine and two 50-gallon fuel tanks.

Ambulances already have 12 volt to 120 volt inverters, tied into the engine-chassis batteries, but I added two additional 100 aH deep cycle batteries, independent of the main chassis and another 2,000 watt AC inverter. I know this might be overkill but I don't mind having redundancy in a system, the original one worked, so I just left it in. A DC to DC charger also gives me a reliable way to keep the batteries charged if I'm using them a lot. I also have solar panels I put out for recharging if needed.

While the original coach heating and air conditioning comes from the engine, I added an aftermarket diesel forced air heater. Performance has been great even in minus 20 degree weather.



A small catalytic heater works well to take the chill off for milder weather as well as another backup heat source. I like to be able to get out in the winter, and here in Montana that means weeks at a time never above freezing.

I gutted a lot of the original interior while only keeping some of the welded cabinets. I reinsulated the walls and ceiling with newer Rockwool insulation, added wiring for LED lights, and a few more 120 volt outlets. For the kitchen I bought an IKEA bathroom cabinet that had perfect dimensions for a sink base, I added a stainless steel sink and wood counter. I have some Corian for the countertop but have been using it with a wood one until I make sure everything is where I want it.

Cooking comes from a small induction cooktop that is stored on the counter in a nook below the cabinet. For cooking I have a counter that slides out where I set the cooktop on and it gives me extra space for preparing meals. A 12-volt pump supplies water.

I opted not to have a full-time bed as they take up so much space, so I sleep on the bench seat. I have a bedroll type sleeping setup I can plunk down, and if I need more sleeping space the bench seat pulls out into a full-size bed. I sewed covers for the cushions, and the original oxblood red vinyl padded panels above the doors I painted to match with vinyl paint. I am pleased with how well these turned out and have held up.



## What inspired you to convert an overland vehicle?

I have always spent a lot of time outdoors. Doing wilderness search and rescue, equestrian endurance riding, hiking, and military service. As time went by, I found I didn't like sleeping on the ground as much as I used to. I tried the conventional set ups and found them lacking for what I wanted. Then I happened upon the **Overland Expo** when I was working near Flagstaff, Ariz. It embodied the philosophies I was looking for: self-sufficient camping in mostly off-grid situations and self-reliance when getting from place A to place Z.

While I was blown away by some of the vehicles at the expo, not to mention the unbelievable costs of some of the vehicle and equipment, I couldn't help but be drawn towards the idea of being able to camp anywhere, anytime, without tying into power, needing reservations, and setting up camp 10 feet away from the next camper. So, the hunt was on for a vehicle.

I have had the overlander for two years now, and while it is comfortable and reliable, I continue to make changes all the time, upgrading or improving. Every time I take it out I think of some way to improve it. I have a long list of things to do this summer.





## What features did you know you wanted in the vehicle?

Heavy duty construction on a more industrial type chassis. These types of vehicles are known for going 500,000 miles, reliably, and standing up to abuse by drivers who use these vehicles really hard. Since they are often overbuilt a lot of the components last longer, and when they do wear out are made to be replaced.

Certainly, something fairly easy to work on was high on the list, and also could be repaired with conventional mechanic's tools. I also didn't want walls made of paper-thin aluminum and wood, and something that had a watertight roof. Leaky roofs are the bane of RVs.



## Tell us about the most difficult part of the build?

It was the beginning process of tearing everything out and realizing that this was not going to be a quick weekend project. I wanted to take it out camping (I did sneak it out in rough form a few times) but ended up camping in it in my backyard as I worked on it to see how functional my ideas were turning out to be. I was making sure that everything I did was safe and "up to code" instead of doing a cob job, so at times it was frustratingly slow.

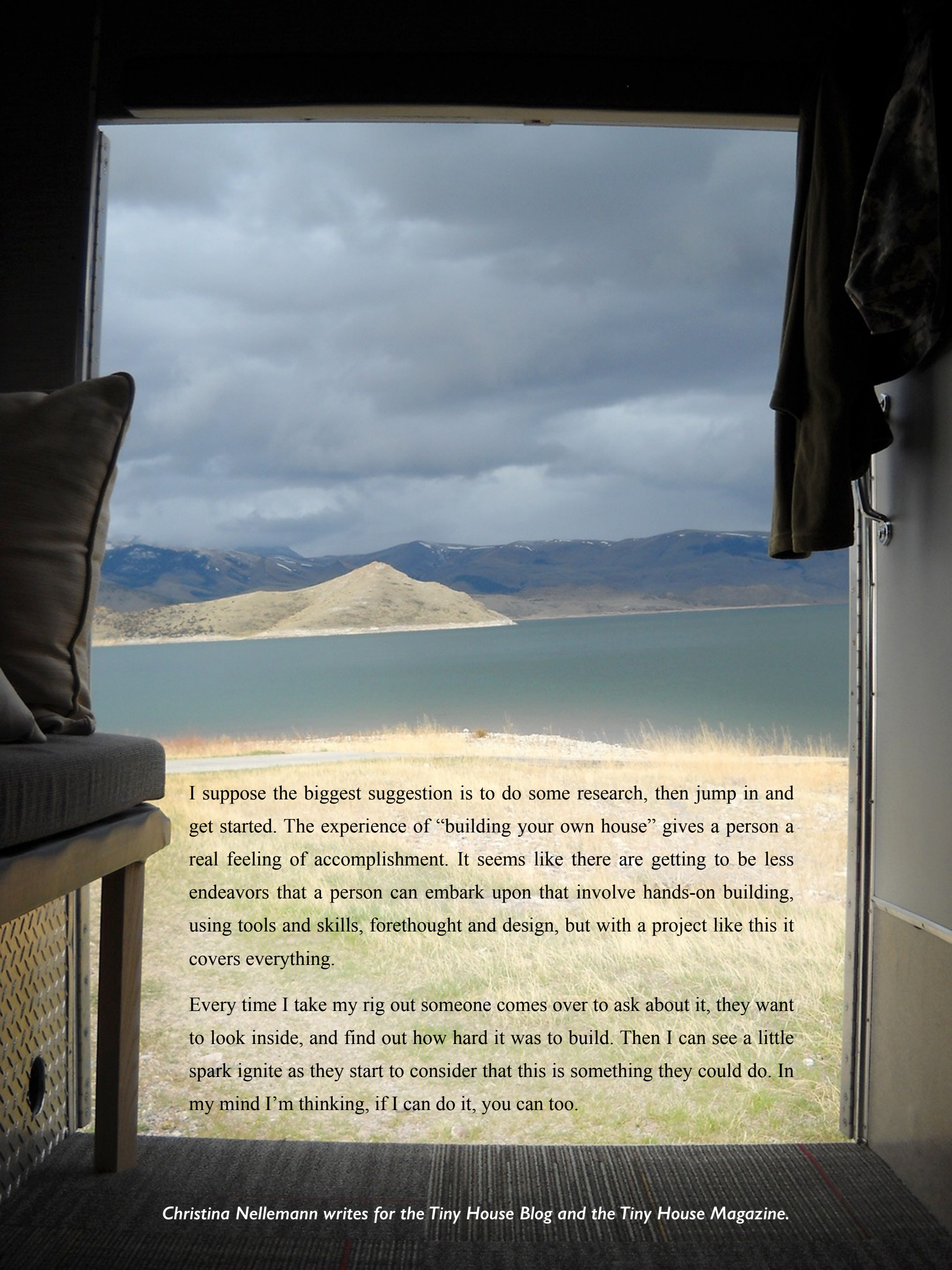


## What do you recommend for anyone who wants to trick out a vehicle for overlanding?

First, think about the type of overlanding or camping you do. Is it mostly highway travel and then staying in developed campsites or do you always go miles off the trail? You have to make tradeoffs for ride comfort, handling, two-wheel drive versus four-wheel drive, and even load carrying capacity. There are some overlander vehicles whose top speed is 60 mile per hour due to low gearing, huge tires, etc. That is great in the backcountry but it may take a week to get where you want to go.

Think about how much time and effort you are willing to spend on a home-built overlander as well as your skill level, or at least your willingness to learn. While a new turnkey vehicle is dreamy, the tradeoff is usually having to rely on very technical maintainability and repair issues, higher costs, and reliance on authorized mechanics/dealers. One of the great things about doing your own conversion is the feeling of accomplishment, and the knowledge gained about how these things work.

Spend a good amount of time looking at different designs and vehicles. There are some amazing examples of overlanders, from Subarus to Unimogs, and some so straightforward and simple and cleverly designed that I feel surpass some of the commercially produced vehicles. Realize that as you build your own vehicle it is a dynamic process. Almost all of the rigs have had several iterations and improvements as they go. That is part of the process so don't get frustrated when you have to rip out a cabinet or redo a wall.

A photograph taken from the interior of a tiny house, looking out through an open door. On the left, a portion of a grey cushioned bench is visible. On the right, a dark jacket hangs on a metal latch. The view outside shows a vast, calm lake in the middle ground, with a small, grassy island in the center. In the background, a range of mountains with patches of snow is visible under a heavy, grey, overcast sky. The foreground consists of dry, yellowish grass.

I suppose the biggest suggestion is to do some research, then jump in and get started. The experience of “building your own house” gives a person a real feeling of accomplishment. It seems like there are getting to be less endeavors that a person can embark upon that involve hands-on building, using tools and skills, forethought and design, but with a project like this it covers everything.

Every time I take my rig out someone comes over to ask about it, they want to look inside, and find out how hard it was to build. Then I can see a little spark ignite as they start to consider that this is something they could do. In my mind I’m thinking, if I can do it, you can too.

*Christina Nellemann writes for the Tiny House Blog and the Tiny House Magazine.*

# Find Your Perfect RV Rental

SEARCH RVs

Outdoorsy



Outdoorsy

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## Designed to Part You from Your Money

When I was younger, I worked at a small department store in North Dakota. It was my first job actually. I remember, specifically, my first day stocking soda in the fridge.

At the time, I didn't think much of it. I headed over to the refrigerated case and started loading cans into the empty rows.

Before I got too far in the job, the manager who hired me walked up and gave me more detailed instructions, "When you stock shelves, always put the label facing out. It looks nicer and neater, and customers are more likely to buy if they can see the name of the product."

It was a simple selling technique. So simple, that even a first-day, minimum-wage, high school student could figure it out. And yet, it was designed for one reason: to make a sale.

*Joshua Becker and his young family were introduced to minimalism during a short conversation with their neighbor. Since then, Joshua's story and writing have inspired millions around the world to find more life by owning fewer possessions. Today, based on his thoughtful and intentional approach to minimalism, he is one of the leading voices in the modern simplicity movement reaching over 1 million readers every month.*



Earlier this week, I happened to walk past a large clothing store. On the window of the store, in as large a print as possible, the store was advertising their semi-annual clearance sale (60% off every item in the store).

When I entered another store down the street, I was immediately met with soft music and shelves upon shelves of color-matched items with smaller signs announcing the sale price on each of them.

And I was reminded, in that moment, almost everything in this world is designed to sell you something. From the smallest detail to the highest executive decision, stores are designed to part you with your money.

No detail is overlooked.

The signage on the outside and the inside of the building—designed to get you to buy.

The original price, the sale price, the limited time offer—designed to get you to buy.

The smells, the sounds, the colors, the free samples—designed to get you to buy.

The items placed at eye level, the items displayed on mannequins, the items placed at the very back of the grocery store—all designed intentionally to get you to buy. **Even the exact layout of your local mall.**

**Even the refund policy is designed to get you to spend more.**

The brand credit card, the rewards card, the loyalty punch card—designed to get you to buy.

The payment options, the financing, the warranty—designed to get you to buy.

And the list continues.

Even worse, these strategies are utilized by far more than retail brick-and mortar stores. Restaurants use them. Grocery stores use them. Gas stations, service technicians, your favorite sports team, podcasts, streaming services, even your favorite free-to-download app.

As do websites of every size. Just yesterday I received several emails inviting me to attend a webinar on “Amazing One-Hour Webinar on the Small Tweaks your Website Needs to Become a Money-Making Machine.” Something tells me even that webinar intended to sell me something. Everywhere we go, it seems, is designed to sell us something and get us to part with our money.

I fear, however, we don’t even need to enter these stores to be bombarded with their strategies anymore.

Billboards, junk mail, and email newsletters contribute volume to the already noisy world of ads we see every day. Each designed to encourage your purchase... or get you in their store where their other sales techniques can further the work and persuasion.

There are some practical steps we can take to be sold to less, such as not walk into these stores unless necessary I suppose.

But we're never going to avoid it altogether—and we're probably not going to change society to the point where this no longer exists.

However, we can become more aware of it. We can get better at recognizing when it is happening. And we can learn the tactics retailers employ to sell us something so we don't fall so easily into the temptation.

In so doing, we can keep some of that money around for more important pursuits than buying stuff we don't need.



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WHY PAY THOSE HIGH PREMIUMS?

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TINY HOUSE MAGAZINE

# FLASHBACK

*Article*

After celebrating our 100th Issue the Tiny House Magazine staff realized that there had been so many amazing articles through the years that more of them should be revisited. Each month this year we will present a Flashback Article that will help you realize just how special each issue of Tiny House Magazine is. From visionaries to educators, draftsmen to builders, the modern tiny house movement is a diverse group of people working in tandem to change the very landscape of the world's housing culture.

If you want to see more articles from the past as well as have a first look at new release issues.

# Subscribe Now



# Where We'll Be Living

written by :: kristin hanes

I moved into a tiny home a year-and-a-half ago. Partly, it was to save money on ridiculous rent in San Francisco, which tops \$3,300 for a one-bedroom apartment. And partly it was to downsize, get rid of stuff, and live a life that feels more authentic and close to nature. Whatever the reason, it's something I don't regret, and each and every day I live in my tiny home, I get further away from the American ideal of consumerism, debt and mortgages.

But I don't live in your typical tiny home. I don't have a home on wheels, or a van, or an RV. I live in a 41' sailboat that's just 12' wide, and most likely

under 175 square feet of living space. My boyfriend and I live here, in a sailboat reminiscent of a little cabin, with teak walls, doors, floors and detailing. We love that our tiny home is moveable, and that one day, we will sail it around the world. Our backyard will be ever-changing, but we'll have the comfort of home, the familiarity of our galley, salon, stateroom, v-berth and cockpit, wherever we go.

My boyfriend first bought the old two-masted boat, built in Taiwan in 1972, up on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and restoring it has been a labor of passion. He bought it for \$30,000, and has put in an



Originally seen in Issue 60 - Dec. 2017

Flashback



additional \$70,000 in new boat parts, plus hours and hours of labor. Sometimes, when he wonders if it's worth it, I remind him that this sailboat will bring us years of joy, freedom and adventure, and it's so much cheaper than paying rent in the San Francisco Bay area.

When we first moved aboard after I lost my full-time job as a news reporter in San Francisco in 2016, the boat barely had anything on it. It was a beautiful shell with loads of potential, with no stove, no toilet, no heating, no running water. I cooked by balancing a frying pan on top of a Jetboil camping stove, and we had to use the marina or gym bathroom. I won't say it was easy; I had to adjust to living with less, a life of glorified camping. But as the months rolled by, the sailboat gained amenities. Now, I will never take the simple things in life for granted again, things like a propane stove and a marine toilet, the rumble of our kerosene heater.

My boyfriend and I thrive in a tiny space. We each have our "jobs". He is in charge of boat maintenance, and I'm in charge of maintaining him. I love doing the grocery shopping and cooking him dinner, making sure a wonderful smell wafts through the boat where he's working so hard. After dinner we lounge in bed, watching DVDs from the library on my laptop. It's amazing we get along so well, and think living in a tiny space has enhanced our relationship rather than detracted from it.

I love the sailboat tiny home because we are so close to nature. I know what temperature it is outside, whether it's raining or not, the strength of the wind that rattles the rigging. Now, when I stay in a regular home, I am painfully aware of the artificial nature of it. The forced air, the temperature regulation, the thick walls and insulation that keep me from breathing fresh air. The air in a house can be five times worse than the air outside, and I'm happy our



Flashback

many open hatches on the sailboat keep our air so fresh and clean.

Now that I've lived on a sailboat for 18 months, I can't imagine going back to a "normal" house. A tiny cabin in the woods, maybe, or a converted van to roam around national parks. But I love that we are free. If we get tired of the marina, we can go anchor the boat somewhere else. It would be hard for me to give up that sort of freedom and adventure.

Our plan is to soon cut the ties from the marina and sail the world, starting in Mexico this winter and the Pacific Northwest next summer. From there, who knows where we'll end up. My plan is to work while we sail, freelance writing and blogging. Our costs will be minimal and we hope to survive on just \$15,000 per year.

While I know where in the world we'll be, I know where we'll be living. At home.



# Building YOUR Tiny House DREAM

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Award-winning tiny home builder Chris Schapdick ("Best Tiny House Award", New Jersey Tiny House Festival, 2017) provides inspiring and detailed chapters that cover the fundamentals and everything you'll need to know before you begin building.

**Available on amazon.com**

An aerial photograph of a forest clearing. In the center, there is a white van and a blue car parked on a dirt path. To the left of the van, there is a small fire pit with a fire burning. The surrounding area is filled with dense green trees and foliage.

written by :: **brenda mason parmelee**

# TRANSFORMATION

If you have spent any time on my website [SmallerLivingHugeLife](#) you'll know that I downsized from a five-bedroom, three-bath, two-car garage home (fully stuffed with this and that, of course) to a 310 square foot 40 foot Silver Eagle Converted Motor Coach, and that I did it in just 31 days back in May 2015.

At the time it was a big deal for me. I had spent most of my married adult life attempting to declutter, always going to a bigger home, and always desiring simplification. My thinking was that if I had more space I could get more organized. I would finally have room for everything and everything would have a place.

For 54 years that simply never worked for me, until May of 2015. This year is my sixth year of decluttered, downsized, mostly off-grid living. I've enjoyed six years of living intentionally, simply, and mindfully!

As with many members of the greater tiny house community I have been afforded a number of speaking opportunities throughout the six years. From festivals and workshops, to women's groups, town events, and podcasts. Many people have asked me to share a few of the questions I am regularly asked. One would think that by now I would be able to respond in my sleep. The truth is that my answers—while inherently consistent—evolve over time as I learn new things about myself and my desires.



However, the question I'm asked the most is really just a warm up:

***Where do you keep your bus?***

I own 15 acres of beautiful land that I park full-time on.

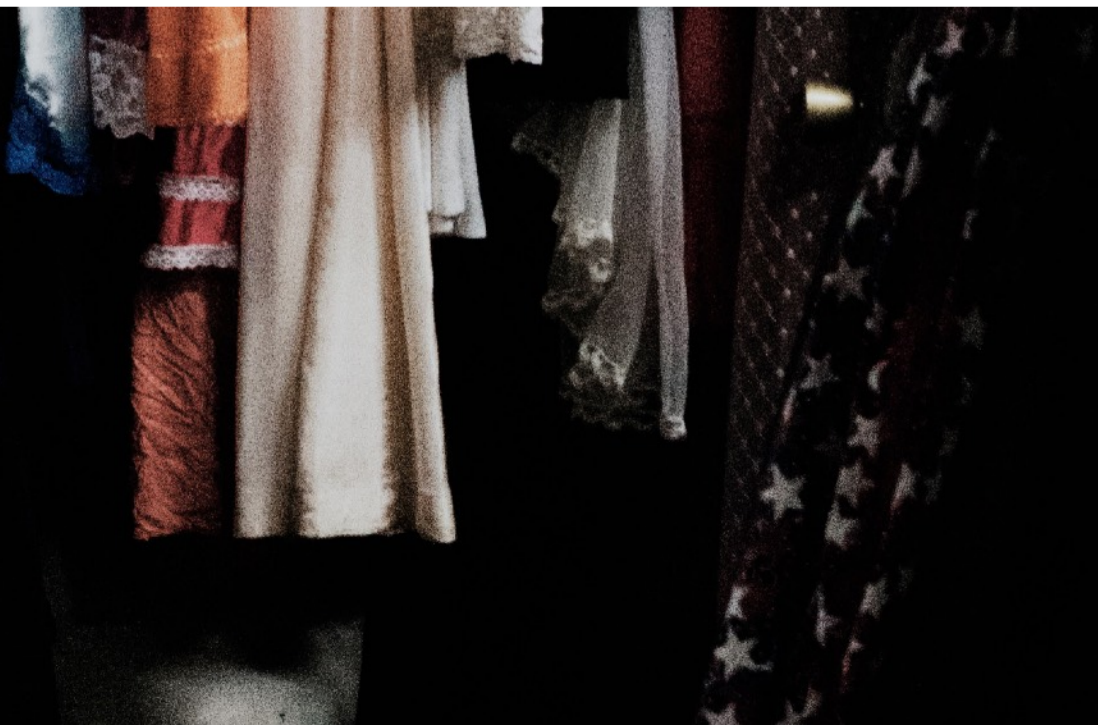
The questions then typically get a bit more serious as I am confronted with my decision to permanently bring a wheeled home to a screeching halt:

***Why did you decide to park the bus and not travel around the United States in it? Does it run? Can you actually drive it?***

Yes! I can drive the bus and I have driven the bus even if just a short distance. One of the main reasons I made the decision to live smaller and without a mortgage payment or rent was to be debt free and not be financially obligated. If I were to travel with the bus there would be associated expenses such as maintenance, insurance, diesel fuel for two 100-gallon tanks, and more. Heck! The fuel alone would run just north of \$600. Even though I still wanted to travel and have those experiences, I also wanted a home base. Being frugal and adventurous can still go hand in hand and that is the choice I made.

***What do you regret getting rid of in your downsizing/decluttering in 31 days process?***

Because I actually knew how I wanted my new home sanctuary to feel and look and because I knew I was going to be living in a considerably smaller space, I had to be very



intentional, discerning, and mindful. I actually went through everything I owned and made decisions that spoke to my life and my desires. And because I looked at each and every thing I owned, I honestly did not regret letting anything go. Through the process I re-homed, sold, gave, donated, and trashed. It was cathartic and liberating. I was regularly amazed at how much I had acquired in life.

I was recently married and have since undergone another lifestyle adjustment, but I still don't regret anything I let go of back in 2015. In fact, there are now a few items I would like to have again. The beauty in this lifestyle is that there are new items on store shelves daily. I could find just the item that could serve more than one purpose. In fact, I have recently purchased three items for my kitchen: a Breville Smart Oven Air, a Breville Sous Chef Food Processor and a place setting for four that is fun, colorful, and non-breakable. Going from just being concerned with myself to now being concerned with two people and a 12-year old black lab has brought a number of changes to my lifestyle.

### ***What do you do for water?***

While our bus is fully loaded with a fresh water, a grey, and a black water holding tank, I would still have to take the bus somewhere to dump water and get fresh. Furthermore, I would have to think about winter water pipe freezing concerns. So I do not use the ones on board. Before marriage I easily brought in my own water and managed on just 10-15 gallons a month. Now with two people and a dog, water usage has gone up a little, mainly just in drinking though. My husband Mark has adapted to the glamping style, mostly off-grid life. We catch rain water to boil, filter for washing dishes, and for taking showers. The best part? It was his idea. I love it! We have become quite water conscious. I know I can take a full shower with just over two gallons of water. In my old days of traditional home ownership I would use all the hot water in a 40-gallon hot water tank just standing in the shower.



But since we boil our water now we aren't letting all the water drain through the sink waiting for the hot water to come in.

***What about temperature control? What do you do for heat?***

I insulate the windows in the wintertime with space blankets, thermal curtains across the entry way, and a set of curtains across the opening for the kitchen hallway to the back of the bus. Mark was amazed at how toasty the front living area was just from using one oil radiator style stand up heater. We have heavy blankets on our bed insuring a toasty warm night's sleep. However, I like to be prepared for those moments when the electricity does go out. For that purpose we have a Mr. Buddy Propane heater that works really well. Once the propane runs out though, no heat. As a nation we are used to having things always available to us. As we saw this past year with the toilet paper situation, things won't always be readily available. I want another source of heat for our home and have always been a supporter of a really good wood burning stoves. I live on 15-wooded acres. Heat is imperative. Even now we are planning to purchase and install one for the upcoming fall/winter season.

***Would you do it all again?***

Absolutely.

This tiny house lifestyle is all about creating a home, a life, and a lifestyle that works for you. The one I created in this bus was perfect for me. I had never thought about adding another person in the bus and I already knew I wasn't going to add a pet for a while. Sometimes we don't always know what God's plans for our life will reveal. Even with my personal resolve I added another person and a dog to the bus and to my life. Life. It all works out. The brief moments

that it doesn't seem to be working well we dig deep and work it out for ourselves.

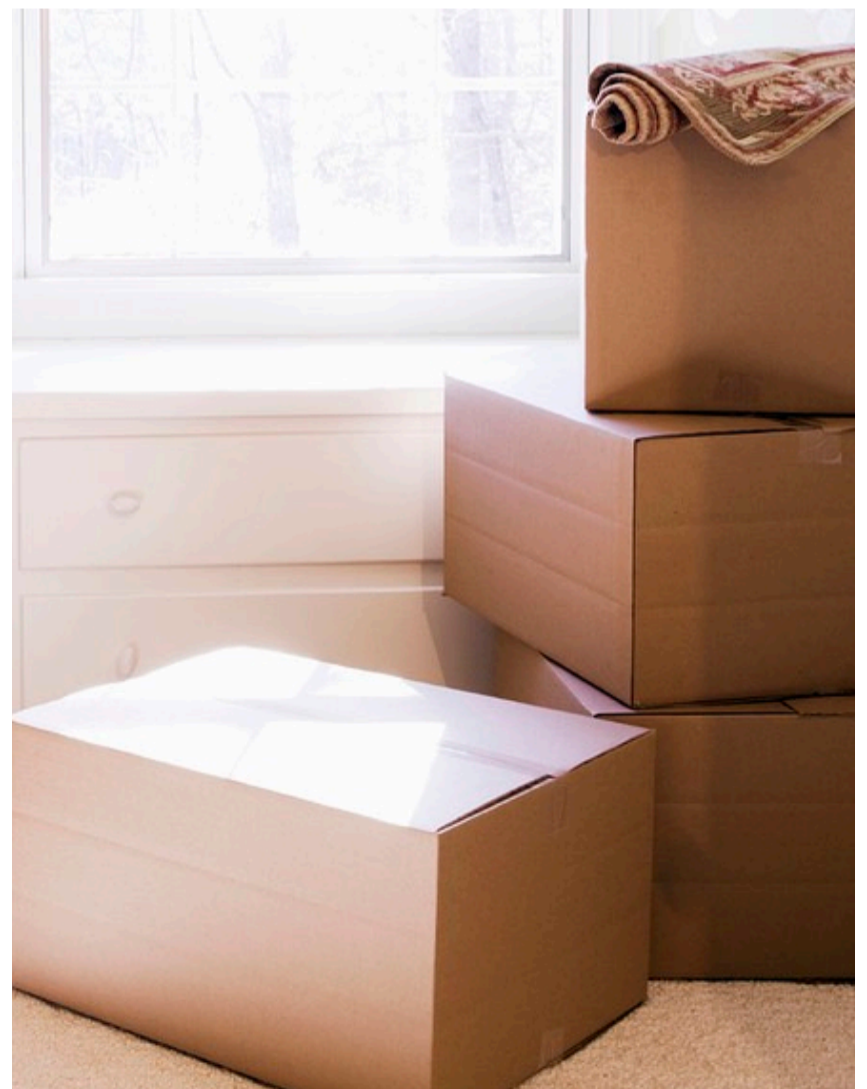
***What now?***

*(That is the million dollar question.)*

Make your plans. Have direction. Hold on to them loosely and as life changes, it is easier to flow with everything. Many times it all unfolds even better than we had originally imagined.

***Do I recommend the smaller lifestyle?***

Absolutely! Be true to yourself. Be mindful. Be intentional. Be bold. You must create your home oasis. It then creates your life oasis. Regardless of the size of your home I highly recommend decluttering! Once you begin to declutter your stuff the mental and spiritual stuff get decluttered too! Life is a joyful walk. Keep what you honestly need, really use, and truly love. Everything else is empty clutter and is to be rehomed at once.



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# HELLO HOUSE

The Future  
of Design is  
Community.

The  
Cottages  
on  
Vaughan.

Written by  
Laura LaVoie

The small town of Clarkston, Georgia, sits about 11 miles to the east of Atlanta. It's a community known for inclusion, diversity, and, now, tiny homes. The Cottages on Vaughan is a first-of-its-kind development in the city made up of eight small and tiny houses in a pocket neighborhood centered around a common green space.



The community was the vision of Will Johnston, the Executive Director, Founder, and CEO of Microlife Institute, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. It's an organization founded in Atlanta to promote the use of small and tiny homes. The mission is to educate individuals, groups, and cities about the positive impacts of micro living. They are putting their money where their mouth is by building The Cottages on Vaughan community.

I had a chance to visit the community on a gorgeous Georgia spring day. I met with Will, who will also be living in the cottages, and my friend Rachel who was excited to show me her tiny house under construction. I also spoke with Rich Pasenow whose home is the smallest in the community at only 250 square feet.



The community is steps away from Refugee Coffee, and we met up with Rachel over coffee and chai before heading to the cottages. I could immediately see how the community was situated ideally in the city.

I asked both Rachel and Rich about why they choose to buy a home in the community.

“It was the middle of the summer during the pandemic,” Rachel told me. “I was sitting on my couch basically feeling sorry for myself. Then I saw Will Johnston posting on Facebook that the tiny house community he had been working on for years was finally going to be constructed. It suddenly occurred to me that I could actually do this.”

Previously, Rachel and Will had lived in the same cohousing community together, so she already knew he would make a great neighbor.

For Rich, the idea started to germinate years before. “In early 2018, I saw a show about tiny houses. I was going through a divorce at the time, and since I didn’t own a lot of stuff and I wanted to own a home again, I figured that going with a tiny house would be perfect for me.” But his search for tiny homes in Atlanta didn’t return a lot of results. But he was able to connect with Microlife Institute. “I wanted a home on a permanent foundation, and I didn’t have the time or inclination to deal with permitting and zoning issues involved with placing a tiny house on wheels in most locations.”







The Cottages on Vaughan is a pocket neighborhood of eight homes, all under 500 square feet. Seven of the eight homes are about 492 square feet, with just one, Rich's house, at 250. "The basic layouts of the homes are all the same. Mine is just smaller."

After Rachel decided to buy a home in the community, she began to take trips to the building site. She admits it was pretty underwhelming at first. The site was cleared, mostly dirt, so the entire concept was hard to envision. "But I took pictures,

went home, and started staring at the floor plans and imagining myself living there. Over the rest of the summer, every few weeks, I would get up early enough before it was crazy hot and bike over to visit the site."

"This will, by far, be the smallest house I've ever lived in," Rich said. "But I don't think going tiny will be a huge change in my lifestyle. I actually like the idea of knowing that I will have to consider the fact that anything I buy from this point forward will





need a place to go. When you only have 250 square feet, that will generally mean not buying anything you don't need. It will not just be cost saving for me, but I will produce less waste."

Rachel is also anticipating her expenses going down. "I'm a little tempted to buy a Tesla Model 3 after I sell my townhouse, but my Chevy Volt just got paid off, and it's a great car, so I'll hold on to that idea for a while."

In Rachel's tiny home, where she could pick details like the countertops and flooring material, I saw how it would be a cozy but roomy place to live when construction was complete. There are no stairs to the loft, yet it will add plenty of room for storage or maybe even a home office. Even with a small 24-inch vanity, the bathroom is notably larger than the bathroom in my own 700 square foot bungalow. The vaulted ceilings in the main living space are lined with windows allowing for incredible natural light. The porch, without stairs at the moment, would be a great spot to add a table and chairs for al fresco dining or hanging out with neighbors over coffee.

More than anything, I was struck by the excitement all three new homeowners felt when they talked about living in the community. Will told me that was a big part of the concept. "It's crucial as we move forward to retrofit and connect urban, suburban, and rural areas together. We are experiencing a loneliness epidemic. So many Americans are facing complete isolation, and it's literally killing us. We need to and should interact more with our neighbors."

"I'm really looking forward to being part of both the CoV community and the Clarkston Community. Since the start of COVID, the owners have been doing weekly Zoom meetings, which have been a great opportunity to get to know my future neighbors, and I'm really looking forward to being able to interact with people on a more face-to-face

level once we all move into the community," said Rich.

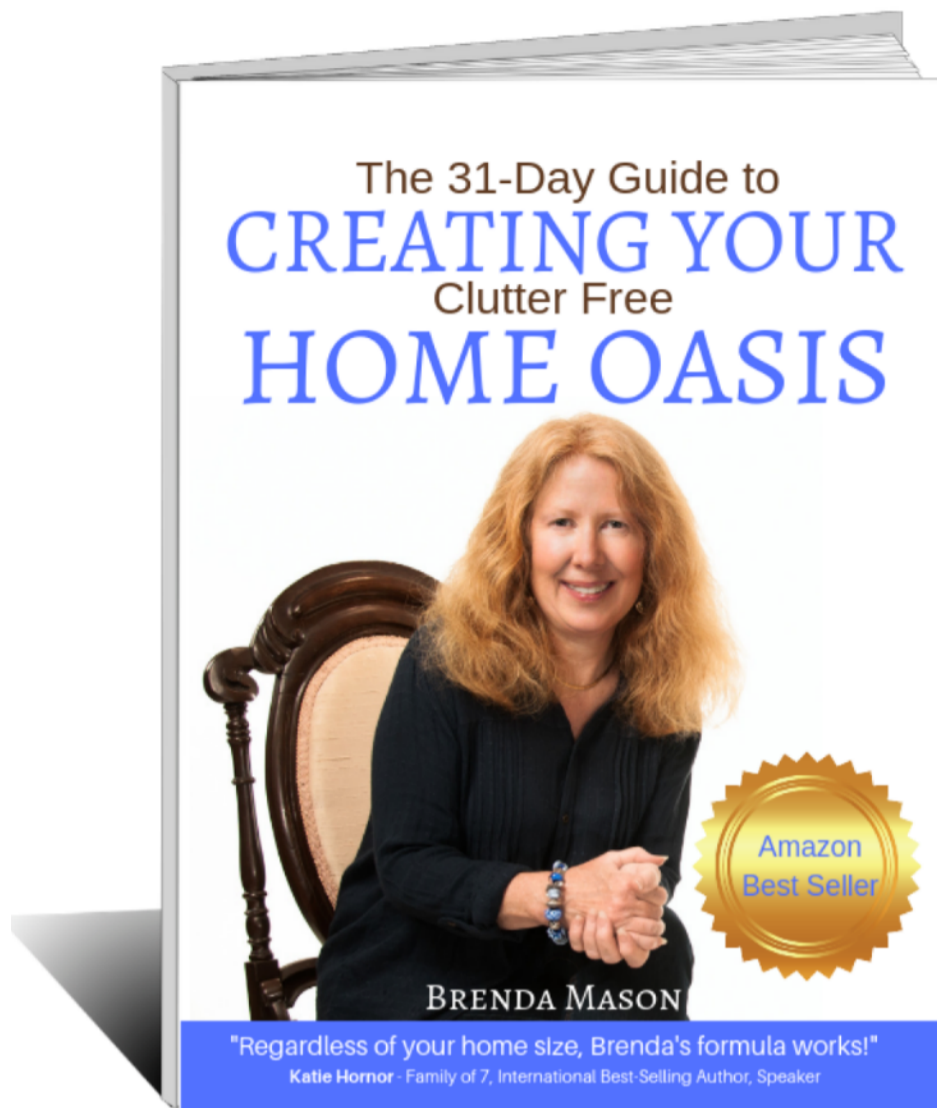
Rachel agreed. "I'm so excited to go live in a tiny community with great people in a space I helped design and only bring the things I consciously decide to have in the house. After living in a very large co-housing community, I think it's going to be a nice change to have a small group of eight people who all want to live in this neighborhood."

Construction is still happening fast and furiously, but the homes aren't quite done, and as we stood in the central courtyard, now just clay and construction debris, I had to imagine what the cottages would look like when complete. But once they are, Will told me, they will be hosting monthly tours set up like small tiny house festivals. [You can sign up for more information here.](#)

"The future of design is community," Will reiterated. "We are just one of many examples of how you can utilize space, layout, and structures to drive a better-connected community. It's up to us to direct the narrative."



*Rich Pasenow stands in the window of his house under construction.*



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# TOILET TIME

building out a bathroom in the tiny house

written by :: danelle campos

While dragging my sons to RV, mobile, modular, and manufactured home dealerships, bathrooms were one of the key spaces I would study. The boys were genuinely befuddled as to why I would take so much time in the bathrooms and

would even make jokes about it. Now that they have their own tiny homes they completely understand why I took so much time measuring and studying bathroom floor plans in each of these dwellings.



One thing I could never figure out is why standard manufactured homes waste so much of their typically 399 square feet on the bathroom. I mean, really. When moving into a tiny space we need functionality, not wasted space to dust, vacuum, spray down, and keep clean. When I studied RVs I learned very quickly that it was those floor plans I need to pay special attention to. RVs taught me about wet baths and 1/2 size tubs, and the like. I noticed that smaller, yet effective and efficient, bathroom sinks do exist. Eureka! In fact, while studying recreation vehicles I was reminded of my younger days when I was into boating and idea of liveaboards. I had the cheapest, smallest, cuddy cabin on my boat. All I truly cared about was a toilet and a bed in the space. Later on, when we had multiple vessels and when they were all tied up in a row, I would explore the bigger and nicer ones. That was when I first realized the entire bathroom could be the shower stall as well. Remembering this gave me complete confidence that no matter what size I built the tiny homes for the boys, I would be just fine planning the bathrooms.

Living in Costa Rica and Mexico also provided tremendous insight into life in smaller spaces. The homes had noticeably smaller kitchens and bathrooms than their western counterparts. Granted I was spoiled in my first apartment in Costa Rica. It was small and efficient but also had hot water. I actually thought all showers in foreign countries had hot water. It wasn't until our second apartment that I learned hot water is a luxury, and one that apartment didn't include. By the time we moved into our third apartment, we learned to ask about and check for hot water. All three apartments had custom sized showers though. There was no standard size. Each bathroom was made to fit in the overall apartment space. It wasn't until the homes we lived in that I saw "standard" size bathtubs and showers. I realize

now—after the boys' tiny homes have been built—that I had subconsciously picked up a number of ideas from those days in South America.

As I recently began building out my two sons' tiny houses I, of course, had my ideas for the drawings and plans of how the insides would be. These would be their homes so they needed to design them how they wanted them to be. What is the best way to do that?

It turns out that painter's tape and a tape measure can be perfect for creating an imaginable space. We went into each of their homes and I let them tell me their ideas of how and where they wanted the shower, toilet, and sink.

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*When moving into a  
tiny space we need  
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and keep clean.*

---

I let them tell me if they needed separate stations or if they wanted to combine all the components into a single room like I remembered from the boats. Funny enough, both picked the same exact floor plan for the bathroom. It was the one I had designed but chose not to tell them about.





Both boys have opted for a small 18-inch sink, either from IKEA or the local hardware store. Our research has taught us to construct their own custom RV vanity that will be functional in the specific space. Both boys also decided to wait until the shower was installed before making the final decision for their bathroom sink. This is one luxury in building your own tiny home. Building it yourself allows you to adapt your desires to the space and adjust manually without employing architects, engineers, etc. and paying them every time there is a change order.

Once all of this is in place, a door is definitely in order. If one isn't careful, the details of living tiny can easily become too grandiose. In a regular home the only discussion about a bathroom door usually revolves around what size is wanted. There are a variety of bathroom door sizes. When living tiny the question turns to "what kind of bathroom door do you want?" There are pocket doors, sliding doors, regular doors, accordion doors, or even just shower or window curtains that can be separators acting as doors. If you decide to make the entire bathroom the actual shower stall

I planned to buy a shower pan large enough to put in and remove the portable toilet as desired. Both the pan and commode would be in the shower stall. After more thought and spending time in the space I decided that we would be able to get the most out of the tiny bathrooms if we took a more South American approach and custom built the shower pan to the most effective size for the actual space available.

then the type of door selected is very important in order to keep the water from flooding the rest of the tiny home. All of these choices impact the door price, design, and functionality. If you choose to keep the shower separate the door choices become even more agonizing. When studying what door to select it is important to analyze the space a door takes to open outward and inward if a swing door is being considered. If a sliding door is

being considered the wall space needs to be analyzed both inside and outside of the bathroom to decide which is more effective. If a pocket door is being considered there must be enough wall cavity for the pocket door frame to be able to fit within the wall where the pocket door will actually open into. See how a simple bathroom door in a tiny house can become a discussion of considerable time?

The simple choice of bathroom door has become our current stopping point. Neither my sons nor I can make a decision. Now we are exploring a bookshelf door with shelves on both the inside and the outside so that it is functional and allows for additional storage space in and out of the bathroom.

Sometimes something as simple as a door can become the biggest architectural aspect of the entire build. That is what has happened to us. Either way though, we will have a backup

plan. In fact, our backup plan is to have a sliding barn style door so that we can have a bookshelf on at least the outside of the door.

Above all, what we have learned is to have fun in whatever we do. Whether planning or executing it is all about the experience and the memories being made. Those memories will live in the walls of my sons' tiny houses forever. Why not make them joyful ones? If at any point you aren't having fun or it becomes overwhelming or even stressful, stop and take a break. I cannot tell you how many times before beginning to build, that I have sat in sheds at shed businesses to measure and then go home to tape them out. I re-watch and search for new YouTube videos all of the time just to see if anyone has thought of something new and inspiring. For now, we rest. We regroup. We rethink. We imagine. We have all three learned that it is always okay to take a little "door break" every now and again.



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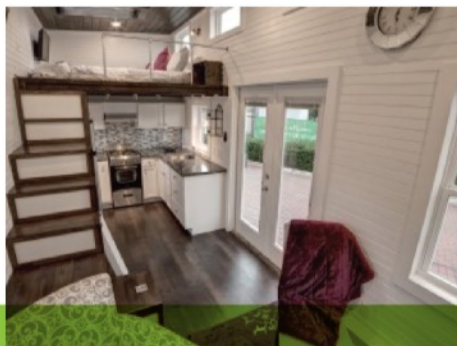
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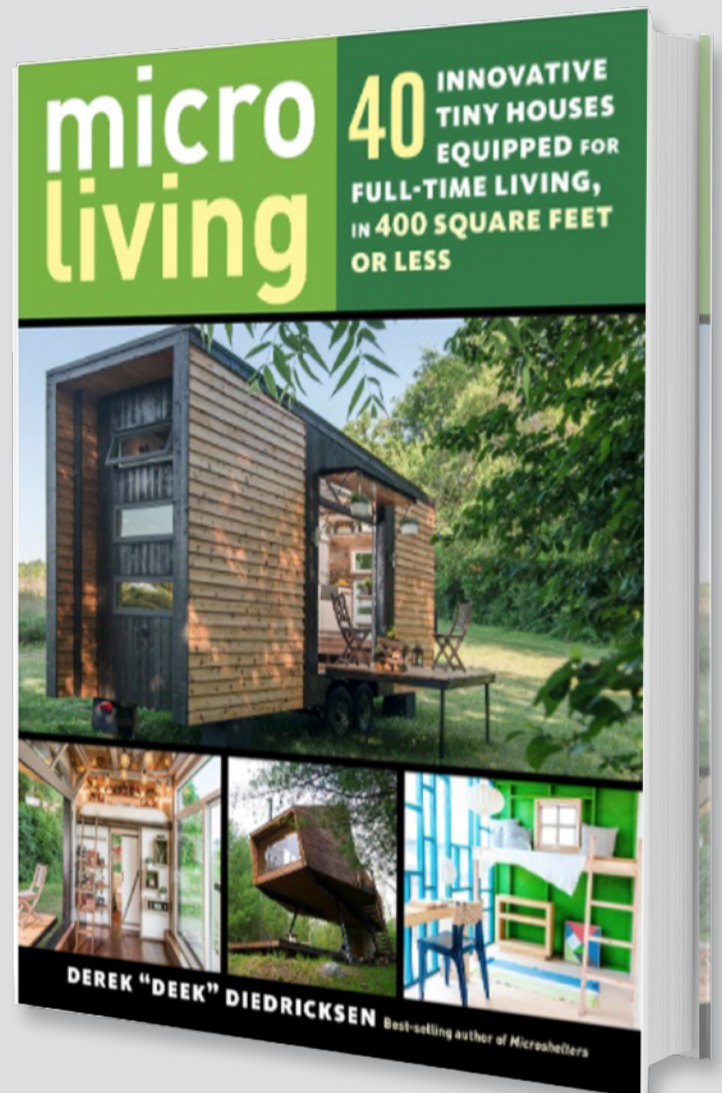
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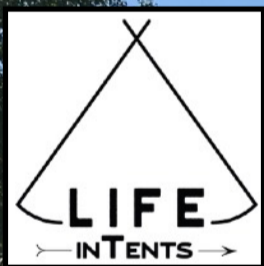


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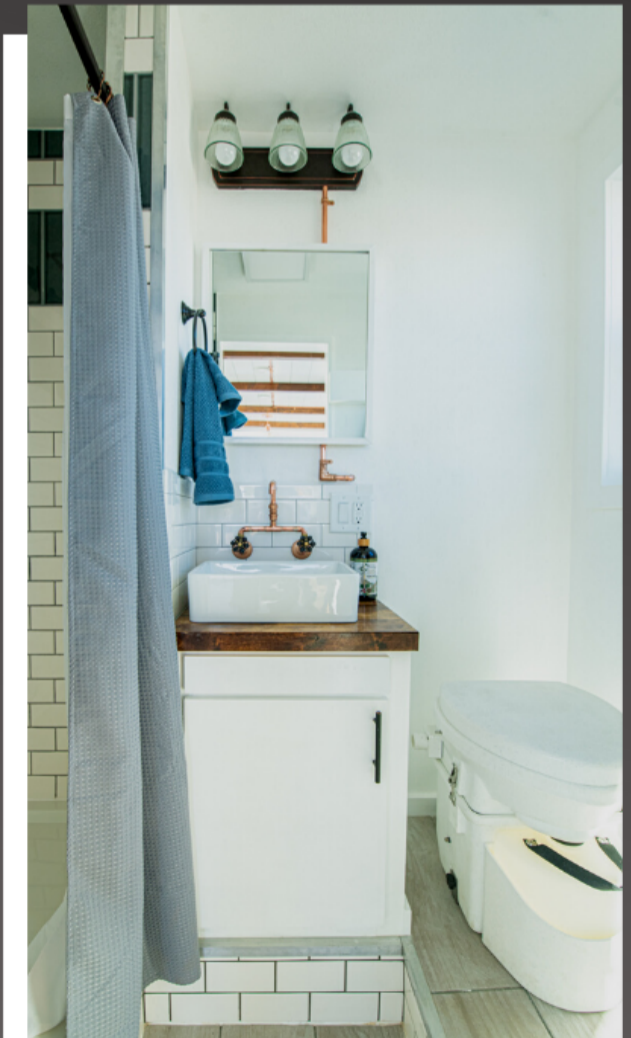


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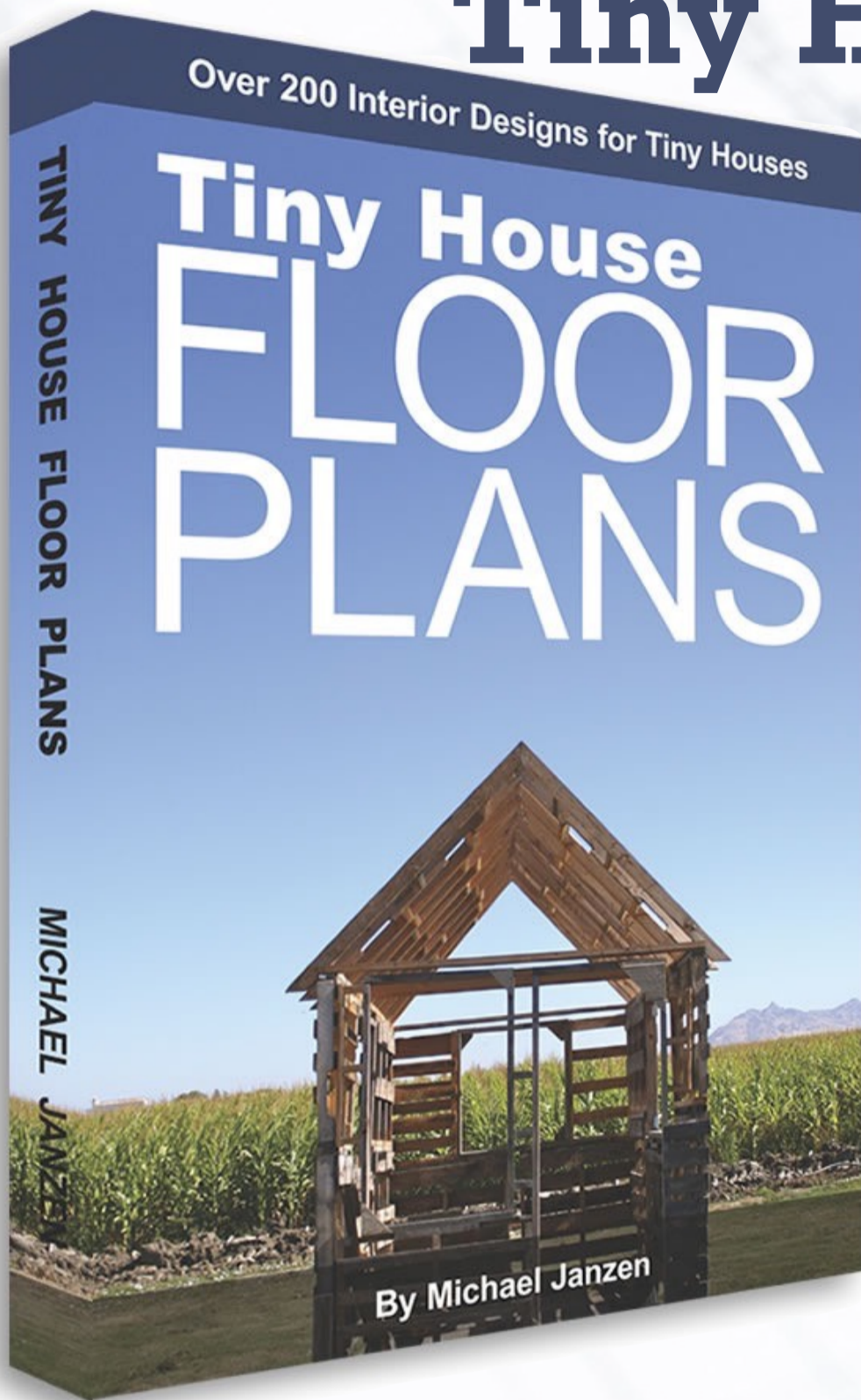
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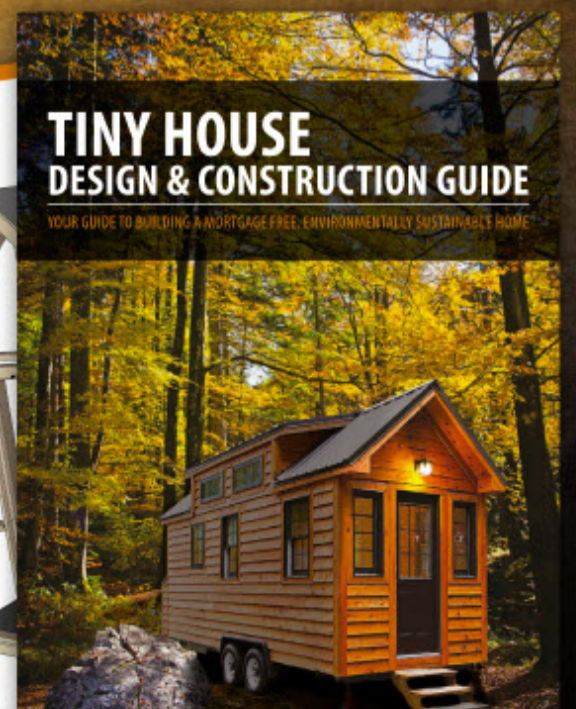
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