

big on Style

MAKING AN ENTRANCE In this narrow hallway, Janet Lee bypassed the traditional bench, which often is too deep, and instead turned an IKEA bookshelf on its side, added feet underneath and had extra-firm foam cut to size and covered with a rose print in honor of her client's grandmother, Rose.



A narrow apartment gets packed with great-looking storage, courtesy of *Living in a Nutshell* author Janet Lee.



Cubbies provide ideal storage in a busy entry that needs grab-and-go convenience

Dress up basic wood shelving with molding, personalized baskets with stencils

"I approached this place with my mission of posh and portable style."





550-SQUARE-FOOT APARTMENT

► **MY STYLE** Blend of Francophile downstairs and Hollywood Regency upstairs

► **RENOVATIONS** Installed bookshelves as wine racks and a curtain divider as a dressing area; all other changes were strictly cosmetic

► **BIGGEST DESIGN CHALLENGES**

Clearance in the loft bedroom; very little natural light

► **BEST SOLUTIONS** Raising bed a few inches on a platform to make it look and live like a regular bed with headboard; lots of bright colors and reflective surfaces

► **FAVORITE ELEMENT** Wallpaper behind bed that encases the area in luxury and makes wall look taller

► **PROUDEST DIY** Stock shot of Joan Crawford selecting shoes made into wall mural using printed vinyl adhesive

► **GREAT SOURCES** IKEA, West Elm, overstock.com, eBay and the local hardware store

It's good to have friends in small places. That's what a "client" (actually a friend's sister) learned when she was approached by TV producer Janet Lee, who had quietly launched a blog about style in small spaces and was "dipping her toe in the water as a decorator," as she explains it. Not a paying job, the project was to be a laboratory and testing ground for great ideas, and the formerly drab space sorely needed some. Among the apartment's pluses were a loft area for a separate bedroom and a fun pedigree: The building once housed a location of clothing and accessories retailer Best & Co., and "her floor used to be the shoe department," Lee reports. "She had so much style, and I knew she aspired for more in her space." But it had a dark side, literally: There was only one window. "That upstairs bedroom loft area was dark and dingy," says Lee. Her client "slept there, but that was it until it got decorated. It was cavelike. It sets the tone for a space."

Inspired Evolution

The metamorphosis took place over a year, with Lee as the mostly sole rainmaker. It all started with the living area, originally the only room to be remade, which was brightened with a hot pink feature wall; the color shows

AWAY WE GO Although designed for books, these zigzag shelves were installed after Lee tested the fit for wine bottles. In the living area, Ralph Lauren silver paint covers plain pine shelving dressed up with molding.