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# House Beautiful

## SMALL SPACES

The coziest places to curl up this year

Bunk Rooms,  
Reading Nooks,  
Cool Cabins,  
*and more!*

▲  
A sweet bunk room with  
Swiss chalet vibes from  
Texas designer Amity Worrel  
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# HOW TO BUILD A BUNK ROOM

They currently top the list of “most in-demand spaces,” according to designers. But before you tuck in, there’s a lot to consider.

BY YELENA MOROZ ALPERT



In a handsome bunk room by Amber Interiors, bed curtains offer privacy, muffle snores, and match the drapes.

Photograph by SHADE DEGGS

## So you want to host a gaggle of friends but only have one “guest room”?

Bunks are the obvious answer. The key is creating a place that is comfortable for kids and grown-ups alike. Here’s how to turn any under-utilized area into an on-demand, pajama party hub.

### Keep in Mind

#### SPACING

A room should have 8- to 10-foot-high ceilings so no one’s banging their heads. Also “leave at least 40 inches of space between beds so everyone’s comfortable,” says Barrett Cooke of Arterberry Cooke Architecture.

#### BED SIZE

For maximum versatility (and unexpected growth spurts), choose mattresses that are XL twin (for single bunks) or queen (for bottom beds).

#### PRIVACY

When multiple folks are sleeping in the same room,

create a compartment for each. Designer Elena Frampton uses textiles like extra pillows to dull noise. For ultimate hushing, consider adding curtains for each bed.

#### STORAGE

Plan ahead and you can build in nooks, shelves, or drawers to marry function and aesthetics.

#### BUDGET

A ready-made bunk bed can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Custom ones can cost up to \$20,000 and take up to a month to complete, says Holt Williamson, cofounder of Cedar & Oak.



IT’S EASIER TO MAKE UP A BUNK WITH JUST A FITTED SHEET AND A DUVET.

An ideal bunk space looks cheery and stands up well to traffic. Designer Ashley Avrea Cathey chose a Stark Antelope carpet to camouflage wear.



This custom setup by Becca Casey of Becca Interiors is perfect for a family—parents below, kiddos up top.

### LEVEL UP AN AWKWARD SPACE

Designers call them “mezzanine bedrooms”: Sleeping quarters carved out of attics, lofts, barns, and other odd spaces. If you’ve got such an area you’d like to bunk up, “make sure you have adequate structural support and subflooring,” says Williamson of Cedar & Oak. Then the fun starts. “Any time you have a funky space,” he says, “textural design elements such as tongue-and-groove, beadboard, or shiplap will accentuate the change in ceiling slope or angle, adding visual interest.”

AVREA AND COMPANY; NATHAN SCHRODER; BECCA INTERIORS; RIKKI SNYDER.



**ROPE IT IN**  
In an airy room by Laura Freeman of Merits Design Group, a coastal-cool rope ladder stays secure thanks to six metal brackets.



**Light Up Their Night**  
When zeroing in on how fixtures should live on a bunk wall, consider the cozy quarters. Amity Worrel designed these linen half-shades to protrude as little as possible.

MERITS DESIGN GROUP: DAVID CANNON, SANDRA LUCAS; JULIE SOEFER, MICHELLE MORGAN; HARRISON: LAURA MOSS; AMITY WORREL; ANDREA CALO.

**A Step in the Right Direction**

Deciding how guests get to the “penthouse” bunk is half the fun. Think about who’ll be using the beds (and who’ll be making them in between) and **aim to bridge safety and style**. Custom stairs allow for storage and make adults feel more comfortable. Ladders are fun for kids if they’re secure, but they should offer—not obstruct—access.



**ROLL WITH IT**

Designer Sandra Lucas of Lucas/Eilers Design Associates chose a **Putnam rolling ladder** for this tight space. “It can slide back and forth between the two upper bunks and be lifted off the rail at the beds, and placed on the rail above the seat cushions to access the storage cabinet above,” she explains.



**STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN**

For these bunks over queen beds, designer Michelle Morgan Harrison used steps to give parents trip-free access. The solid sides with guardrails at the top provide shelving and peace of mind that kids won’t tumble down—and they make sheet changes less of a Cirque du Soleil performance.

**GLOWING PRAISE**  
Our favorite reading lights for sleepy guests.



**Milk 1-Light Sconce** in satin brass, \$54. [maximlighting.com](http://maximlighting.com)



**Scout Small Single Light Sconce** in dark matte gray, \$149. [hinkley.com](http://hinkley.com)



**Paola Wall Sconce** \$198. [mitzi.com](http://mitzi.com)



**Anders Small Articulating Wall Light** in antique brass and black, \$579. [visualcomfort.com](http://visualcomfort.com)



◀ See the rest of this alpine-inspired guesthouse in Austin.

## BUNK ROOMS

### ON GUARD

Bunk beds should be sturdy with secure, easy-to-climb entry points. You can find guidelines for guardrails and spacing at cpsc.gov, and remember, no one under age six on a top bunk.



Adjustable bars on designer Ken Fulk's cabin-like bunks can be lowered to climb into bed and raised to keep sleepers from rolling out.

### SURPRISE SLEEPERS

Clever bunks are there when you need them, disguised when you don't. Designer Margaret Donaldson snuck custom quarters for four into this media room, installing doors on a recessed track that allows them to pivot, fold, and stack flat against each of the side walls when guests are over. Designer Marea Clark suggests barn doors for a similar effect.



### BOTTOM DRAWERS

When adding underbed storage, check proportions to be sure sleepers have enough headroom and both bunks look balanced, Williamson advises.



### Smart Storage

When every inch matters, built-in drawers can hold linens and act as dressers. Add a niche in lieu of a nightstand for convenience.



### CLOSET SPACE

Recessing the wardrobe from the beds and painting them all the same color keeps the room from being claustrophobic, says designer Hilary Matt.



### STEP-UPS

Samantha Struck, principal designer of StruckSured Interiors, turned stairs into drawers finished with rounded handles that won't snag pj's as guests climb up.