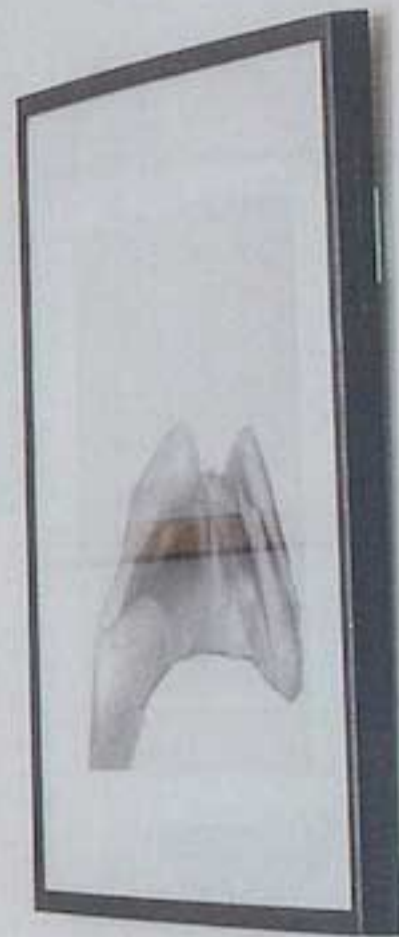




SMALL SPACES

# 'WHEN A HOME IS SMALLER, IT'S

*This homely pied-à-terre in Brussels, by interior designer Joris Van Apers, demonstrates how the contrast of*



# ON A MORE HUMAN SCALE'

*light and dark can add character to compact spaces* Words CHARLOTTE BROOK Photography MICHAEL PAUL/LIVING INSIDE

**R**eceived wisdom warns us against dark colours in small spaces. But, when one Ardennes-living Belgian couple tasked Flemish interior designer and craftsman Joris Van Apers with transforming this 90-square-metre flat at the top of a 1950s apartment block in Brussels into a serene, one-bedroom pied-à-terre, he threw that myth out of the window. After calling on what he calls 'the old trick' of knocking down dividing walls to make an open-plan space, he painted the living area, bathroom, main bedroom and a guest room a luminous off-white, produced using six layers of chalky limewash. But the central hallway? Darkest matt green, almost black. It's a dusky foil to the rooms that lead off from it on all sides. 'The use of an intense colour emphasises the spaciousness and levity of the rooms directly next to it,' Joris says. 'It's all about creating contrast.'

Continuity is maintained by the upcycled pine floorboards that run throughout. Joris' interior design studio grew out of his parents' reclaimed materials company, so the fittings and a lot of the furniture were handmade in his specialist salvage workshops. 'We like to make,' says Joris. And there are many charming one-off additions in this home, from the bespoke-built, green marble-topped cupboard that invisibly houses a new radiator to the re-worked French beams that have been transformed into kitchen units, topped with black slate. It's very clear from the attention to detail in this apartment that Joris enjoys working on small homes. 'I think that the idea of "the bigger the better" is just a bit too American for me,' he says. [vanapers.be](http://vanapers.be)

**Living room (previous spread)** A slate coffee table designed by Joris Van Apers faces white Eames chairs  
**Kitchen** The table and galley-style cabinets are crafted by Joris Van Apers, while the chairs are from the Axel Vervoordt 'Home' range **Stockist details on p185 >**





**Hallway** The rhombus-patterned parquet flooring is made from patinated pine and the door leading into the spare room is clad in mirror – 'I love playful surprises that create intrigue,' says interior designer Joris Stockist details on p185



HOW TO CREATE SPACE  
USING LIGHT AND SHADE

*Interior designer Joris Van Apers' tricks for adding drama to smaller homes*

**COLOUR** 'Darker or more intense colours make the mind imagine things,' Joris says. 'They make a space more mysterious.' A room can seem to swell or have more potential when you can't immediately see its dimensions.

**WINDOWS** If there is no natural light, don't try and artificially lighten a room. Embrace its darkness and turn it into a USP by painting it a statement, atmospheric shade.

**MIRRORS** Particularly in a shady room, mirrors can further distort a person's sense of space and can trick the eye into thinking that a room is almost double its size.

**FLOORING** If you paint a small room dark, be sure to keep the flooring pale to prevent it from feeling too cavernous.

**LIGHTING** Don't ruin the atmosphere of a sultry small room with spotlights. Stick to vintage sconce lights or table lamps. ►



**Bathroom** The mirror on the wall, with its industrial metal frame, was designed by Joris to match the door frame

**Bedroom** Designed by Joris, the storage in this space is all bespoke, from the built-in wardrobes to the headboard that's also a bookshelf

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