

The Very Small Home: Japanese Ideas for Living Well in Limited Space

Azby Brown, Kengo Kuma

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The Very Small Home: Japanese Ideas for Living Well in Limited Space Azby Brown, Kengo Kuma *The Very Small Home* is an inspiring new book that surveys the creative design innovations of small houses in Japan. Eighteen recently built and unusual houses, from ultramodern to Japanese rustic, are presented in depth. Particular emphasis is given to what the author calls the "big idea" for each house-the thing that does the most to make the home feel more spacious than it actually is. Big ideas include ingenious sources of natural light, well thought-out loft spaces, snug but functional kitchens, unobtrusive partitions, and unobstructed circulation paths.

An introduction puts the houses in the context of lifestyle trends and highlights their shared characteristics. The Houses section details each project the intentions of the designers and occupants are explained. The result is a very human sensibility that runs through the book, a glimpse of the dreams and aspirations that these unique homes represent and that belies their apparent modesty. The second half of the book is devoted to illustrating the special features in the homes, from storage and kitchen designs to revolutionary skylights and partitions.

Building small can be a sign of higher ambitions, and those who read this book will undoubtedly grow to appreciate that building a small home can be an amazingly positive and creative act, one which can enhance one's life in surprising ways. In *The Very Small Home*, Brown has given home owners, designers, and architects a fascinating new collection of ideas.



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