

# DESIGN IDEAS FOR SMALL SPACE LIVING

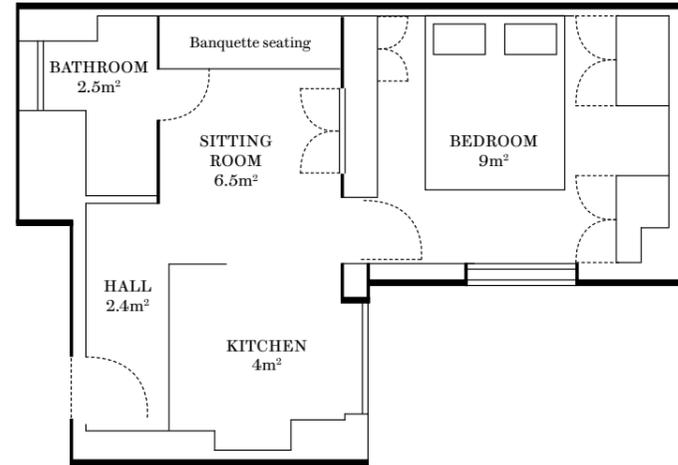
Take inspiration from Marianne Evennou's creative use of colour and choice of flexible furniture to enhance the proportions and maximise space in this Paris apartment

TEXT **IAN PHILLIPS** | PHOTOGRAPHS **STEPHAN JULLIARD**

Paris-based interior designer Marianne Evennou has made a name for herself as an expert in reconfiguring small spaces, the tiniest of which was an 11-square-metre studio flat. In comparison, this pied-à-terre in the heart of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, which belongs to a couple whose main residence is in Barcelona, is quite capacious, covering 25 square metres. Here, Marianne shares some of her decorating secrets for making the most of a diminutive apartment. ▷



FLOORPLAN (*total floor space 25m<sup>2</sup>*)



PAINTBOX OF TRICKS

'Paint is my best friend because, for very little money, you can make a strong impact,' says Marianne. 'A lot of people believe using just one colour creates a sense of space, but I always think a room ends up looking like a box when you do that.' Instead, she prefers to mix different hues, and often uses horizontal bands and stripes to add 'a bit of character'. She generally favours what she calls Nordic tones – deep, dark, moody colours. In this sitting room (previous page and top left), she used three colours from French paint manufacturer Ressource: 'Mid Medici Blue' on the top part of the wall; a thin stripe in 'Dark Stone' in the middle; and the sandy-toned 'Maya' on the lower area. She then reversed the order in the adjacent bedroom (overleaf). 'This helps to both distinguish and link the two spaces,' she explains. One thing Marianne is particularly averse to is a white ceiling: 'I think they're quite brutal. Plus, there's nothing more boring than a white sky and the ceiling is the sky of your home.' [ressource-peintures.com](http://ressource-peintures.com)

FLEXIBLE FURNITURE

'You often need to move things around in small spaces,' observes Marianne. 'So it's best to stick to furniture that is mobile and flexible.' For the kitchen (bottom left and opposite), she prescribed a pair of foldable 'Pliante' chairs from Maison Gatti, which flank a French bistro-style dining table from the same company. For the sitting room, she chose a 'Domino' steel coffee table from Caravane and a pair of ash and straw stools from Atmosphère d'Ailleurs to accompany a built-in banquette. [maison-gatti.com](http://maison-gatti.com) | [caravane.co.uk](http://caravane.co.uk) | [atmospheredailleurs.com](http://atmospheredailleurs.com)

HIDDEN DEPTHS

Almost everywhere you look in this apartment, there are clever storage solutions. The hot-water tank is concealed in a cupboard in the bedroom and, elsewhere, cupboards have been integrated under windows. One of Marianne's most ingenious ideas, however, is the way that she has incorporated the washing machine into the corner cupboard of the L-shaped kitchen. In most kitchens, this area would be more or less a dead space, but she was able to fit the machine here and create novel access to it by placing its door at the rear in the tiny entrance hall. ▷



## GLAZE INTO SPACE

Marianne often installs atelier-style windows between rooms: 'For me, they are just as important as the windows to the outside; I don't think they are used often enough.' Not only do they allow light to circulate more easily, they also allow the eye and the mind to travel. 'That way, you don't feel imprisoned in a room. And there is something poetic about them,' she adds. 'Your imagination can move from one world to another.' She likes to fit these internal windows with linen blinds that can be lowered to offer more intimacy when required. ▷





## NEAT HEAT

Marianne advocates underfloor heating as a way to avoid having to install cumbersome radiators. For this apartment, she opted for a solid oak parquet in a chevron pattern from Parquet Retina. 'It has narrow planks and isn't very thick, so it conducts heat well and doesn't warp,' she explains. [laparqueterienouvelle.fr](http://laparqueterienouvelle.fr)

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

'We thought Marianne would knock everything down and there would be no walls,' says one of the owners. 'In fact, she did quite the opposite: she compartmentalised everything.' Marianne says she is a great believer in creating a number of distinct zones, 'I find you have a much greater sensation of space that way. You have the impression of moving around, rather than being stuck in a box. Plus, it's more cosy.' There is one area she always tries to reduce to a minimum – the bathroom – and another that she always tries to integrate, even in the tiniest apartment – an entrance hall. 'A hall creates a transition between the outside world and your private sphere,' she explains. 'And it gives you somewhere to place your belongings out of sight, so they don't overwhelm you.'

## WORK AROUND

A striped blanket and decorative 'Raana' cushions in rooibos from Caravane give a graphic flair to the bedroom. This room also features an element Marianne integrates into many of the small flats she decorates: a built-in desk. 'They take up less space and are also practical. Plus, they create a separate workspace, which enriches even the smallest apartment with another distinct zone.' *Marianne Evennou: marianne-evennou.com* □