

Tailored tricks upsize room

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Tiny breakfast nook 083009



Summer can last all year in a tiny breakfast nook wrapped in a wall-to-wall painted mural.

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Q: We have the smallest-ever breakfast area opening off our kitchen. My husband built a banquette and hung a light over the table, but it still makes us claustrophobic! I'm thinking of wallpapering. Would stripes be a good idea, just to relieve the squeezed look?

A: It's a fail-safe optical illusion — especially if you run the stripes horizontally around the walls. Horizontal lines seem to push the walls further apart, immediately creating a room that at least looks larger.

Professional interior designers have any number of such illusory tricks up their sleeves.

You have to love what Valerie Onor (www.valerieonor.com) has conjured in the tiny breakfast nook pictured. Thanks to the charming wall-to-wall mural, it's summertime all year long for this beach-loving family. Of course, much of the success of a mural depends on the quality of the artwork itself. Doubtless, the designer brought in a professional artist. You can, too, without spending the family fortune. Check out local art studios and schools to meet artists.

You can also buy scenic murals on wall coverings that go up easily, sheet by sheet (one top wall-covering manufacturer to check out is York, www.yorkwall.com).

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