

TREND

This small dining room with bentwood chairs by Andrew Waller is the perfect small apartment solution (right).

A banquette and chair combination by designer Karen Akers has become the owner's favourite spot to dine (bottom).

Micro dining spaces

Little tables for two or three could soon become the best seat in the house, writes Robyn Willis

The formal dining room might not be on many must-have lists for builders or renovators anymore but we still enjoy having somewhere nice to eat.

But with floorplans growing tighter, the available dining space is not what it once was, nor does it need to be.

A micro dining space, typically with just two or three diners, is the perfect location for everything from a quick cup of coffee through to dining with friends. Easy to set up and easy to clean away, it's an obvious solution for smaller households who have no use for six- or eight-seater dining suites.

MY USUAL TABLE

Interior designer Andrew Waller says small dining spaces make sense for apartment dwellers but even those in larger houses are often keen to have dining spaces that are a little more intimate.

"For many, they don't want to be sitting at a big dining table all the time — they want something more casual," Andrew says.

That doesn't mean that they are less considered than other living areas.

"People in apartments still want to entertain, but they can't do that at a breakfast bar," Andrew says.

These days, designers are taking their cues from cafe spaces where small tables — and small groups — are standard.

"Quite often, we're creating a custom banquette in the corner with room for two or three people and then a single chair," Andrew says. "It's more of a cafe setting."

"Tables with a pedestal base or



central column often work best because they can sit over the banquette without the legs getting in the way and then you can tuck the chair in when you're not using it."

The key to a successful micro dining space is keeping everything light, from open backed chairs, or even stools, to having access to natural light. Although traditionally small dining spaces have often included a table pushed up against the wall, round tables are a more stylish solution.

If it is part of a larger living area, Andrew says you can create a separate zone by placing a pendant light above it or a floor rug beneath it.

"It's a great way to define an area and create a sense of intimacy," he says.

More: mrwaller.com; karenakers.com.au; ironbarkarchitecture.com.au



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Unused corners make great micro dining spaces, especially if they're positioned near a window. A simple rug will anchor the space.

A round table less than 1m diameter with a pedestal base is ideal as a table for two. Opt for lightweight, open-backed chairs to visually lighten the space.

If space is really tight, consider stools or even a bench to provide maximum seating options without taking up too much space.



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