

SMALL SPACES, BIG DESIGN



We talked to Hayley Francis, the trend and design manager at The Mine — a Kirkland-based online design marketplace — about how to make the most of tiny spaces.

Q: You work with fabulous office products all day. How does that inspire your own home office?

A: Working at The Mine inspires me every day to try different interior design projects in my home using the products I'm always drooling over. And, that's not to mention my dire need for a home office — it was the perfect excuse for a completely updated design.

Q: What kind of space are you working with?

A: I turned my storage room into an office and dressing room.

Q: So you're essentially cutting your space in half by allotting half the room to a dressing area; what can you do to make this room feel bigger?

A: Working within small spaces, I often suggest considering white paint, as it allows the room to feel much more open, bright, and therefore larger.

Q: Speaking of bright spaces, does natural light play a role?

A: Similar to white paint, natural light (as well as

mirrors) is always a nice way to make a space feel larger. For my office redesign, which also functions as a closet/changing room, I used fogged window film on all the windows to allow me to always have the blinds up, even when changing, as when they are down the room feels half the size. Plus, this allows enough light to feed the plants in the room and keep them lively.

Q: How can you have a productive space while still maintaining a homey feel?

A: I paired a hanging chair I've wanted from The Mine for years with a vintage pillow, draping sheepskin along with a simple white desk I already had. The hanging chair serves as a great focal piece and makes the workspace feel more like home, which gives me a calming feeling.

Q: What other little accents can you add?

A: I topped it all off with greenery to make the space feel fresh, and a sculpture of a pointing finger that inspires me to have more a-ha moments, and to do my best work while I'm in the space.

Q: Any other thoughts about working with small spaces?

A: Even though you may be working with a small space, you can still take risks. Everyone told me the space was too small to have a hanging chair, but I did my research and scaled the room, and as long as my desk wasn't too long, the hanging chair fit comfortably. Now it's my favorite piece in the room, so I'm glad I did my homework and didn't listen to everyone. Sometimes you just have to go with your gut.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Windows in a workspace provide breeze on a warm day and natural light to reduce eye strain.

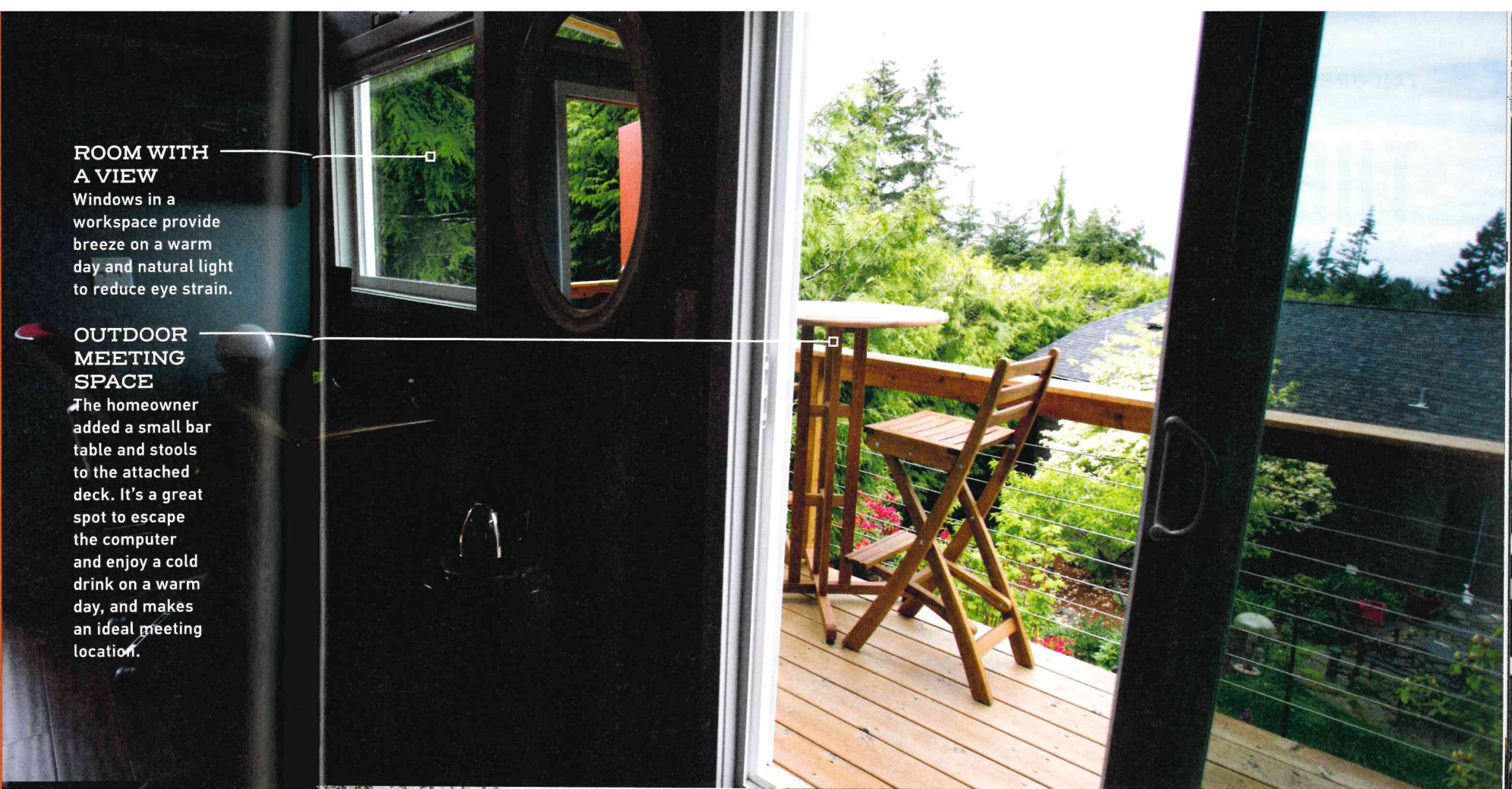
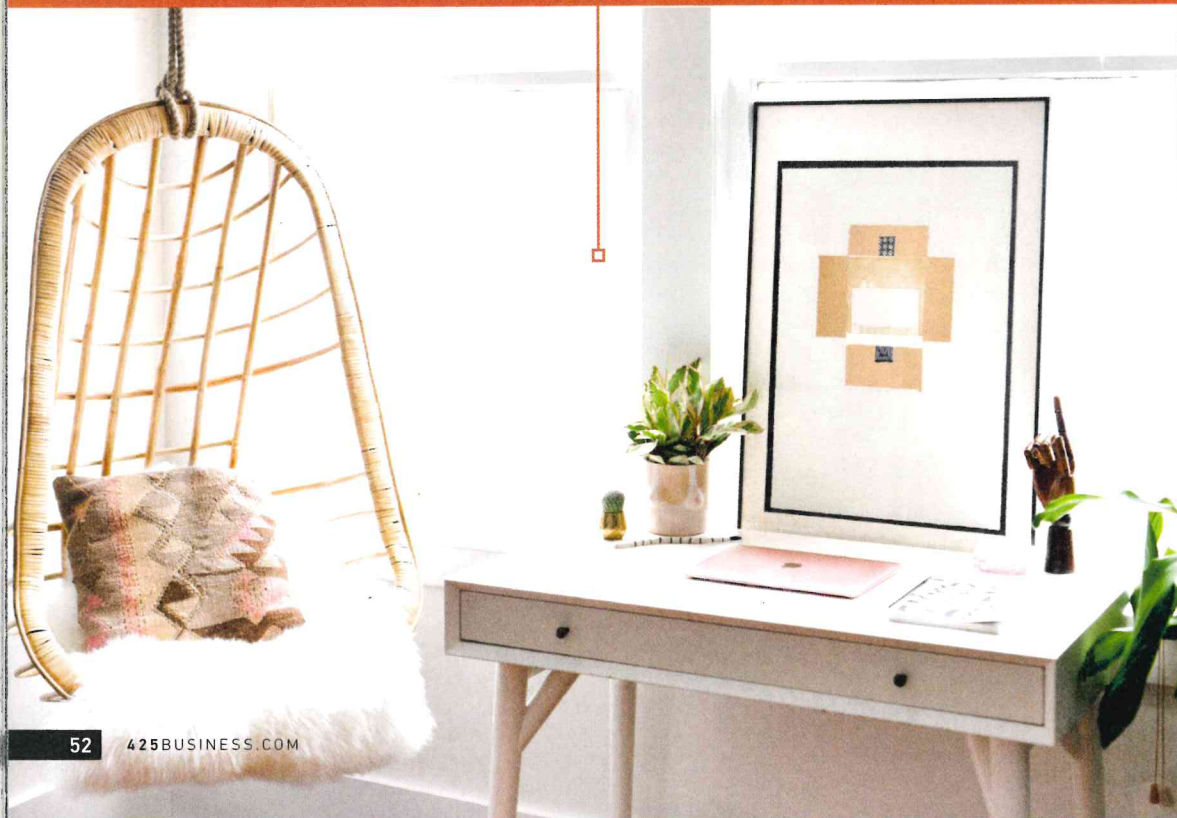
OUTDOOR MEETING SPACE

The homeowner added a small bar table and stools to the attached deck. It's a great spot to escape the computer and enjoy a cold drink on a warm day, and makes an ideal meeting location.

CLOSE, YET SO FAR

This prefabricated structure by local company Modern-Shed is detached from the main home structure, yet close to the amenities of home for breaks. Surrounding trees produce fresh oxygen, which reduces stress and increases productivity.

LEFT PHOTOS COURTESY, THE MINE



Instead, Grand found Modern-Shed, cut back a few trees on the hill, and built his own private oasis with a stunning view of downtown Bellevue.

"I love it," Grand said of the seclusion his Modern-Shed provides. "Taking a glance outside or taking a few steps on the deck helps to recharge and break the work routine ... it is wonderful for creative assignments and problem solving."

In placing his Modern-Shed among the trees, Grand has inadvertently stumbled upon one of the first tenets of interior design for the home office. As it happens, many interior designers, such as trend analyst Carly Gonia from The Mine, a Kirkland-based online design marketplace formerly known as ATG Stores, strongly suggests filling a home office with plants.

"In our busy — especially tech-obsessed — lives, there has been a big climb in wanting this juxtaposition of nature in our everyday routines," Gonia said. "Contact with nature is sought after, as research has proved its positive impact on health, productivity, and reconnection." ■