



Apartment Therapy Presents Real Homes, Real People, Hundreds of Real Design Solutions

Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan , Jill Slater (With) , Janel Laban (With)

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From the Web site that attracts more than 3 million unique visitors a month, this groundbreaking book features 40 homes decorated by real people. Over 400 photos show details of all sorts of abodes from a tiny rental in Brooklyn to a condo in San Diego to a ranch-style in Miami. Each home profile includes floor plans, detailed resource lists, and "how I did it" explanations from the renters and owners who created fresh and entirely original interiors. Edited and written by Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan, Apartment Therapy founder and frequent makeover expert on HGTV, this bible of accessible design ideas is the ultimate home decor book for the DIY-savvy.

Apartment Therapy Presents Real Homes, Real People, Hundreds of Real Design Solutions Details

Date : Published March 5th 2008 by Chronicle Books

ISBN : 9780811859820

Author : Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan , Jill Slater (With) , Janel Laban (With)

Format : Hardcover 264 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Design

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From Reader Review Apartment Therapy Presents Real Homes, Real People, Hundreds of Real Design Solutions for online ebook

Sarah says

Despite the claim at the beginning that the book was not all about high-budget "Capital D" design, there were way too many Eames chairs, etc. for my liking. It would have been nice to have more NON-mid-century modern places.

I really enjoyed reading the owner/renter interviews.

A design book should have no blurry or exceedingly grainy photos. I also didn't understand why duplicate images were used in some of the spreads.

Megan says

This book is eye candy at its best. I love looking at other peoples' houses and how they design them. This book features the interiors of houses (and extremely small NY apartments) of handfuls of artists, designers, and funky folks. I have looked through it several times already and always find something new. It's refreshing to see some really unique decors.

AClairification says

This is a nice coffee table book but doesn't offer much in the way of practical advice. Rather, it displays that only people who are more clever than the average reader have managed to reach that elusive domestic zen.

jenna says

I really enjoyed this book and found it dense with inspiration, so much so that I purchased the book to keep after first checking it out from the library. The design concepts are completely accessible and practical. Every home showcased had something unique to offer, even if it wasn't consistent with my own personal aesthetic.

The writing was good and full of concrete, useful information. A lot of design books just describe the picture you're looking at, but AT used the text well by including information that either increased appreciation for what you're viewing or offered useful design ideas. I also liked the home-owner profiles, especially how they included "biggest embarrassments", it kept the book grounded and approachable.

Lastly, it included a good variety of apartments with regards to style and size. That they are "apartments" shouldn't deter any homeowners from checking out this inspiring collection.

Laurie says

I am a big fan of the original book Apartment Therapy, which changed the way I think about my belongings and what I want/need to own. (Seriously--Matthew and I both found it a life-changing book, and highly recommend it, esp. if you live in a small space.) I was excited to see this big, colorful book, because I thought it would depict some of the "makeovers" that Gillingham-Ryan described, ordinary people who he had helped as an apartment therapist. Instead, almost everyone whose home appears in this book is an artist or designer of some sort, and the homes, while beautiful, are super-quirky and artistic. (If my home were to be featured in this book, I would have to have my grandparents' vintage refrigerator in the corner of my living room displaying my collection of 1960s eyeglass frames, or something like that. That's the sort of homes you'll see in this book.) It's a fun and attractive book, but "regular" people like me won't find much in the way of design solutions.

Phoebe says

I tried the original Apartment Therapy book, but couldn't get through it. So I tried again with this version.

Pros: A large collection of interesting people, interesting apartments, folks who rent (like me)!, single men (kind of unusual there), gay and straight couples, folks who own the tiniest homes, an interesting structure (homeowners/renters were asked to identify their styles, inspirations, and sources), inspiring

Cons: Not a single Black person, Hispanic person, or Native in the book, kind of hipster/middle class/professional, most people were childless, featured homes mostly in cities like NYC and San Fran, a lot more homes were owned than were rented, most of the people had lived in their homes for a very short time (with the impressive exception of the author)

Jess says

I know of but don't religiously read the blog MGR based his book on, but I love the idea of it all. Design magazines are fun, but seeing what people do in real life is better.

Of course, nearly everyone featured in this book is a designer, artist, architect, or other artsy career worker. They should be awesome at layout, ideas, and building things for themselves. I don't mind, but don't fool yourself into thinking you won't need help.

Gripes and/or Nitpicking

- Font should have been larger. My eyesight is fine and it was hard to read. I never have to hold books that close to my face.
- People renting apartments can paint, install new hardware, flooring, & appliances, and make other permanent renovations? I can't even put nails in my walls, so yeah. Kind of wished there was more temporary/working within common apartment limits.
- Does no one have photos in their homes? How about cords, what do you do with cords?
- Interviewees fetishize Eames furniture. They're great, but this is not a book about Charles and Ray. I don't need to only see apartments with their furniture.

That said, still really liked it. It was great fun flipping through, seeing ideas for small spaces, and reading about how people came to make the decisions they made. Moreover, it made me take a serious look around my apartment.

Thoughts that stand out include:

Edit, edit, edit!

Buy less. Buy Better. Buy only what you love.

White is a color!

Jen says

Good for ideas, but I didn't love most of these apartments. I find it hard to separate my own design aesthetic from others and just appreciate what people come up with it. I lean towards modern meet vintage - simple, not very cluttered, yet not too clean and hard looking. There were some great concepts and things that inspired me though!

Shelah says

A friend recommended that I read this book and I loved it! There are so many good ideas for decorating, especially decorating small spaces with small budgets. In fact, since I'm not someone who lives with a family of three in 380 square feet and is trying to make a single room serve eight purposes, my only criticism of the book is that it doesn't apply as well to people living in, well, actual houses. I guess that's what you get when you buy a book called Apartment Therapy, though. Regardless of the appropriateness of the spaces features in the book, I loved that each space featured the exact colors of paint and the places to purchase many of the furnishings in the spaces (at least half of which came from Ikea-- in fact, I think only one or two spaces in the entire book were Ikea-free zones). I'd recommend it to anyone who needs to decorate a space, even if that space isn't small. Lots of great ideas and stylish spaces!

Text Addict says

The big takeaway from this book, I think, is that it's a great idea to actually pay attention and try to make your home an attractive, pleasant place. It's not easy to do on a limited time and money budget, the editors try to say, but it **can** be done, with a little patience and persistence. That's the inspiring part.

On the other hand, since my style preferences stopped being popular at around 1950, this book - with its prevalence of post-1950s "retro" and "vintage" stuff, or actual current modern stuff - is not all that helpful. So many of the places are small apartments with open plans, also, that many of the furniture-arranging ideas are not helpful for an actual house that can't be made open-plan.

Still, I enjoyed reading it and looking at the pictures (including pictures of rooms that made me go, OMG, how can anyone **live** in that?). Fun, and has helped motivate me to take an active hand in trying to make myself happier with my own house. That's a win.

Sandy says

I was looking forward to this book after enjoying the original Apartment Therapy book, and I was hoping for more of the same from this AT sequel. However, to my disappointment, I found that this book instead offers a fairly simple collection of house tours, and doesn't really transcend those offerings in any meaningful way.

If you follow the Apartment Therapy website with any regularity, some of the houses and apartments will already be familiar to you, and there isn't much extra content here anyway - the accompanying text for each tour is often disappointingly vague background information or advice. There was also a lot in the book that felt inapplicable to my sense of style, budget, and the way I live.

While there were a few gems hidden throughout the book, and certainly some very beautiful photographs, it didn't do enough to draw me in or repay my time in any meaningful way. My advice? Get the original Apartment Therapy book (which is full of practical and inspirational thoughts on why home is important and how to create a space to live in) and then browse the AT website for additional inspiration instead of looking here.

Two stars.

Melissa says

3.5 stars

This book reminded me one of the best things about libraries-- they can buy these somewhat pricey coffee-table-ish books with nice pictures that are sorta like magazines...you want to flip thru it once or twice and be done with it. That is what this was...a very good magazine. The apartment therapy websites are fantastic (they have regional sites) and this book highlights some great apartments featured on aforementioned site...

Lobstergirl says

Young hipsters, both owners and renters, decorate small and extremely small spaces on a budget. Projects tend to be a mix of DIY and professionally-assisted. I like the website more than this book.

Pros:

floorplan and square footage is indicated

There's little here that is truly grotesque and tacky in the Trading Spaces or Extreme Home Makeover mode; the people featured tend to be creative types, so even if they don't have the best taste, at least they know what taste is.

Cons:

Some of the photography is very poor quality.

An overabundance of Ikea and Eames. I sometimes like Eames, but in moderation. I don't want to see it in

every single photo. Far too much fetishization of mid-century modern.

I'm always amazed when people sink so much money and effort into a rental, but I guess that's not a bad thing, if you want to. After all, it is your home.

Worst project: #11, Dixie's Vintage Carnival. Horrific. I also hate the mirrored, brushed metal, and birch wall panelling of #35. The worst single design feature could be the plastic sliding bathroom door on p. 138.

The best project is #15, the the very sparsely decorated white vintage apartment of a woodworker. I would never aim for this myself, but I admire someone who can live like this. It's a nice contrast to a lot of the kitsch that fills up the book. I also admire the creativity and repurposing going on in #36, traditional mixed with industrial.

I like the blue ceramic penny tiled backsplash on p. 112; the bear painting and the bedspread on p. 118, the Turkish woven fish rug on p. 119, and the "nonsofa" on p. 191.

Melanie says

Loved it. Inspiring ideas from real apartments. It was perfect for me who lives in a small apartment and is on a budget.

Maggie says

If I had a limited budget, lived in a teeny apartment in a big city, and liked mid-century modern, this book would have been 5 stars for me. However, I live in suburbia and like antiques. The limited budget part I can relate to, though. So I guess I am not really the target audience for this book. My rating is not the book's fault, in other words. I checked this book out from the library because Apartment Therapy is how I feel I'm "supposed" to want to decorate my home. All my creative and artsy friends love it. It's what I see in decorating magazines. But I just can't bring myself to embrace this look on a large scale. I will have to settle for living vicariously through others, and enjoy being a guest in homes like these.

Despite numerous inspirational ideas for DIY projects, creative storage solutions, and multi-tasking rooms, the majority of these homes are the same: furnished with Ikea, Crate & Barrel, Urban Outfitters and Design Within Reach. Supplemented with lots of eBay, Craigslist, and flea market finds. Every home pulled stuff from the same places. Lots of orange and white and shelving units. Everyone has a Danish modern dining room table and chairs. You could almost create a drinking game for it. After a while, it got old. I love Eames and Bertoia, too, but a little variety in these featured abodes would have been preferred. There are styles other than mid-century modern, you know, Mr. Gillingham-Ryan. They just aren't featured in this book, unfortunately. Aside from 3 that come to mind (the NYC apartment owned by Charles & Julie, Shauna & Fred's art deco apartment in LA and Turquoise's glamorous bungalow also in LA), these places were kind of all the same. I think the part that bothered me the most was how almost none of these people had a proper bed -- they all looked like they sleep on sloppy futons. Are headboards and pillow shams really that terrible? I was also consistently surprised at the lack of rugs in most of these homes.

Anyway, what's very good about Apartment Therapy is it does inspire you to make your home your own, and

shows you some creative ways to do it. I also loved all the colors in the homes -- so many gorgeous paint colors on the walls! I really want to lacquer a table in fuchsia or white now. Despite their style not really being my style, I couldn't stop myself once I'd started. I don't regret looking at this book, but aside from the paint colors, I probably won't be taking any design cues from it.
