



# My new micro home

REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR DR REESE HALTER HAS LEFT SMOG-FILLED LOS ANGELES BEHIND FOR A HEAVENLY MICRO HOME AND GARDEN IN THE COUNTRY.

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**H**ow often have you said, “When I achieve... this that or the other then all my dreams will come true?” I was guilty of just that until one morning, when I realised that my health was being compromised by the putrid Los Angeles smog.

The night before I was visiting with my friend, mentor and natural therapist, Deborah Vidal, seeking treatment for a nagging urinary infection and cough. Deborah asked me about my joy and I went off on the majesty of the redwood forests. She listened and then sagaciously advised me to seek my dreams of living in the forests of northern California. Aha moment!

So two weeks later, my brother Jason and I packed up my modest belongings and set forth on the adventure of a lifetime. The 1200km journey northwards was very pleasant as we followed the Golden State’s rugged

shoreline – a whale highway. About halfway, just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, we over-nighted in the hidden away coastal community of Bolinas, supping at a delicious bohemian vegan eatery.

The next morning, thanks to the internet and Deborah’s tip-off, I answered a Craigslist advertisement in Humboldt County for a micro lodge with a sublime outdoor shower, an orchard and raised beds.

A few hours later, and after a grand saunter through a 110m tall ancient redwood forest, I met the landlord and signed a lease. It was heaven on a stick with no muss nor fuss.

## Settling in

Salubrious air, enchanting sounds of nature and a morning choice of a walk along a secluded North

## TINY HOMES



**T**iny homes are generally considered to be less than 36 square metres. Some of the more diminutive renditions are on wheels. They are built to industry code and range in price between \$25,000 and \$75,000.

A house like this is part of a lifestyle that eschews consumerism and embraces the notion of “who needs stuff!” These living arrangements are a gateway to a more sustainable existence that includes: growing food; harvesting rainwater; making soil via composting and compost loos; harnessing the sun and storing solar energy in battery packs. It’s among the lowest carbon footprint options that’s awaiting the ideal village.

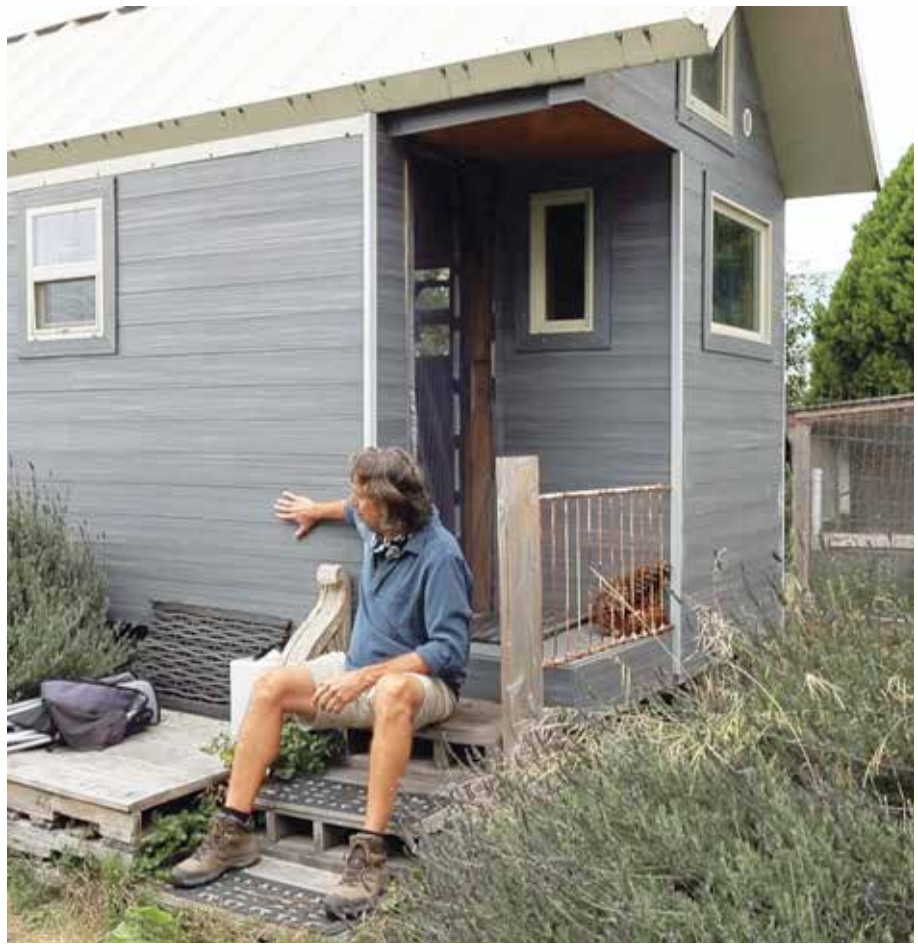
Generation Z (under 25s) and millennials cannot afford to own their homes or apartments in today’s cities. They are too expensive. Developers around the globe recognise this demand and are beginning to supply communities with tiny homes. They are coming onto the US housing market like gangbusters from Richmond, California, to Sarasota, Florida.

Things are also moving in Australia, the South Australian government has entered into the planning stage for regulations surrounding tiny home development. There’s already an Australian Tiny Home Association ([australiantinyhouseassociation.org.au](http://australiantinyhouseassociation.org.au)), which sets guidelines for affordable and safe regulated houses. Change is in the air. Tiny houses are affordable and they are the future, coming soon from coast to coast.

• Have a look at micro apartment video channel Never Too Small, dedicated to small-footprint design: [youtube.com/channel/UC\\_zQ77U6YTyatP3P1wi3xw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_zQ77U6YTyatP3P1wi3xw)



Above left and below: Macy Miller designed this funky tiny house. Visit her website: [minimotives.com](http://minimotives.com)



Clockwise from top left: The Nigerian Dwarf goats, Finley and Handley, are great neighbours; my new home is powered by photovoltaic panels; thanks to the surrounding orchard I have plenty of fruit.

Pacific beach or an amble through a nearby stand of young redwoods. A terrific beginning.

As for adjusting to my new tiny dwelling lifestyle, it was as sumptuous as a piece of fluffy vegan cake. The only added small expenditure was a wee storage locker for my books, which I sell at talks and on the web.

My diminutive digs amount to 10 square metres. Photovoltaic panels, located on a nearby cottage on the acreage, power my tiny home. The toilet is a compost loo with the ingredients (once matured), recycled onto non-food garden areas. The pine and Douglas fir interior with cork-oak flooring is just perfect for setting the ambiance for writing my new book (*GenZ Emergency*). It's also a snug space, ideal for recording segments for *The Science Show* on ABC Radio National or live monthly sessions with Trevor Chappell on *Overnights*.

This summer the prolific orchard produced about 300 kilos of apples, pears, plums and, my favourite, Black Mission figs. I procured a dehydrator and have dried enough apples, plums and figs to tide me over until next year's glorious tree bounty season. I also perfected my recipe of apple, raisin, lemon rind and cinnamon sauce. It is jarred for the winter months ahead. Incidentally, it blends wonderfully with my neighbour's homegrown oats.

My bumblebee-friendly garden with plenty of cherry tomatoes, peppers, butternut squashes and carrots is divine. A couple of beds of rocket have replaced the



summer crops heading into the much cooler and wetter (we hope) winter. Next spring, I intend to grow nitrogen-fixing hemp. I'm very fond of these nutritious seeds sprinkled generously on my daily salads.

My closest neighbours are two Nigerian dwarf goats, Finley and Hadley. Much of the garden residue is composted, along with a rich supply of coarse-ground organic light-roasted, fair trade, Guatemalan coffee beans. Finley and Hadley have warmed their way into my heart and their morning bleats have become a carrot-a-day feeding ritual. They are splendid neighbours and planetary brethren to share my garden bounty with.

All in all, the move to the country was the best and most overdue adventure of my life. Less is better!

