

EVERYONE LOVES A BUNK BED!



Whether you are five or fifty-five, a cozy sleeping nook excites the imagination and provides a practical space-saving solution. *The Bunk Bed Book* is your comprehensive guide to whimsical sleeping spaces, with useful tips and advice on bunks and nooks for every type of home.

LAURA FENTON

THE BUNK BED BOOK

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GIBBS SMITH

115 BUNKS, LOFTS, AND COZY NOOKS

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF BUNK BEDS

Before they were a feature in shared kids' rooms, bunks were more commonly the realm of sailors at sea. To fit more men into a vessel, beds would be built stacked one on top of another (and still are today). Illustrations and drawings of the belowdecks quarters of large ships show bunks dating back centuries. Bunked berths remain the bed of choice on trains, ships, and even submarines today.

In the seventeenth century in Europe, beds were often enclosed in cabinetry (either freestanding or built into the home). These so-called "box beds" offered many advantages: They gave some privacy to the sleeper in a one-room house; they helped hold heat in at night, keeping the bed warm; and occasionally they even separated sleepers from domesticated animals that might be inside a house during times of extreme cold. Some box beds were built with a second bed stacked on top of the main bed as a place for children to sleep: These were a very early type of bunk.

Clever carpenters surely built lofted beds into all manner of homes throughout history, but bunk beds proliferated with the dawn of the Industrial Age when they could be mass produced in factories. By the early 1900s mass production of furniture was well established in North America and Europe, and bunk beds were being produced by the thousands. Manufactured bunks can be seen in photos of turn-of-the-century hospitals, dormitories, barracks, and prisons. Space-saving bunks became the bed of choice for these types of institutional settings.

However, it seems it wasn't until the middle of the twentieth century that bunks became popular for families to purchase just for the fun and convenience. Boomers were the first generation for whom a bunk bed was a common fixture of childhood bedrooms. Over the intervening decades, furniture manufacturers have explored all the possibilities of bunk bed living, from stacked triple bunks to queen-over-queen mega bunks. Today, the possibilities are endless.

EXPERT ADVICE: **WHY CHOOSE A BUNK?**

If the question is not what bunk to buy or build, but whether you want a bunk at all, let me persuade you of a bunk bed's many charms. Stacked and loft beds are both practical and playful—and, best of all, they can be both at the same time. Here are seven reasons to opt for bunk beds.

1 BUNKS SAVE SPACE. With a bunk bed you can fit two beds (and sometimes even three) in the floor space of one. If you opt for a loft bed, you open up the space below for studying or playtime.

2 BUNK BEDS GIVE KIDS ROOM TO PLAY. Even in shared rooms where space is not limited, a bunk bed can be a smart choice because it frees up more of the room for playtime.

3 BUNKS ARE COZY. There's something about being enclosed that just feels comforting. Again and again when I interviewed families for this book, parents would tell me that their children used their bunks as a place to retreat.

4 BUNK BEDS GIVE A ROOM A FOCAL POINT. From a design perspective, a bunk bed automatically gives a room more architectural interest and a focus for the design.

5 BUNKS ARE FOR EVERYONE. They're a favorite for kids' rooms, but bunks are for all ages. In my research, I turned up an apartment with a loft bed that belongs to a seasoned design editor and a gorgeous guest room outfitted with bunks for visiting grandparents.

6 BUNKS SAY VACATION. If you're outfitting a holiday home, bunk beds are an allusion to camp and lazy summer days. (And a bunk room is a fantastic way to pack in the cousins.)

7 BUNK BEDS ARE FUN. Almost every kid loves a bunk bed because they are a world unto themselves. With the help of a child's imagination, a bunk quickly becomes a house, a fort, a sailing ship, and more.





Interior designer Natalie Myers of Veneer Designs modified a low loft bed from IKEA by removing the melamine panels for a more streamlined look. Although not marketed as a double bunk, the lower part of the bed tidily fits a twin mattress, so her daughter has room for a friend to sleep over or to play. A mix of textiles in tan, rust, and blush gives the room a boho feel, while the large, beige dhurrie grounds the space and keeps the pink notes from feeling too saccharine.

When Angie Wilson, the blogger behind *House Becoming Home*, set out to design bunk beds for her son and daughter, **she had two goals in mind: to pack in more storage and to free up more space for play.** By building the beds in an offset design, she was able to contain them to one wall of the room. Placing storage drawers and cabinets below eliminated the need for dressers, so the kids have the rest of the room free for activities. And that trippy pattern on the wall? It's fabric! Wilson added it for a playful punch of pattern.





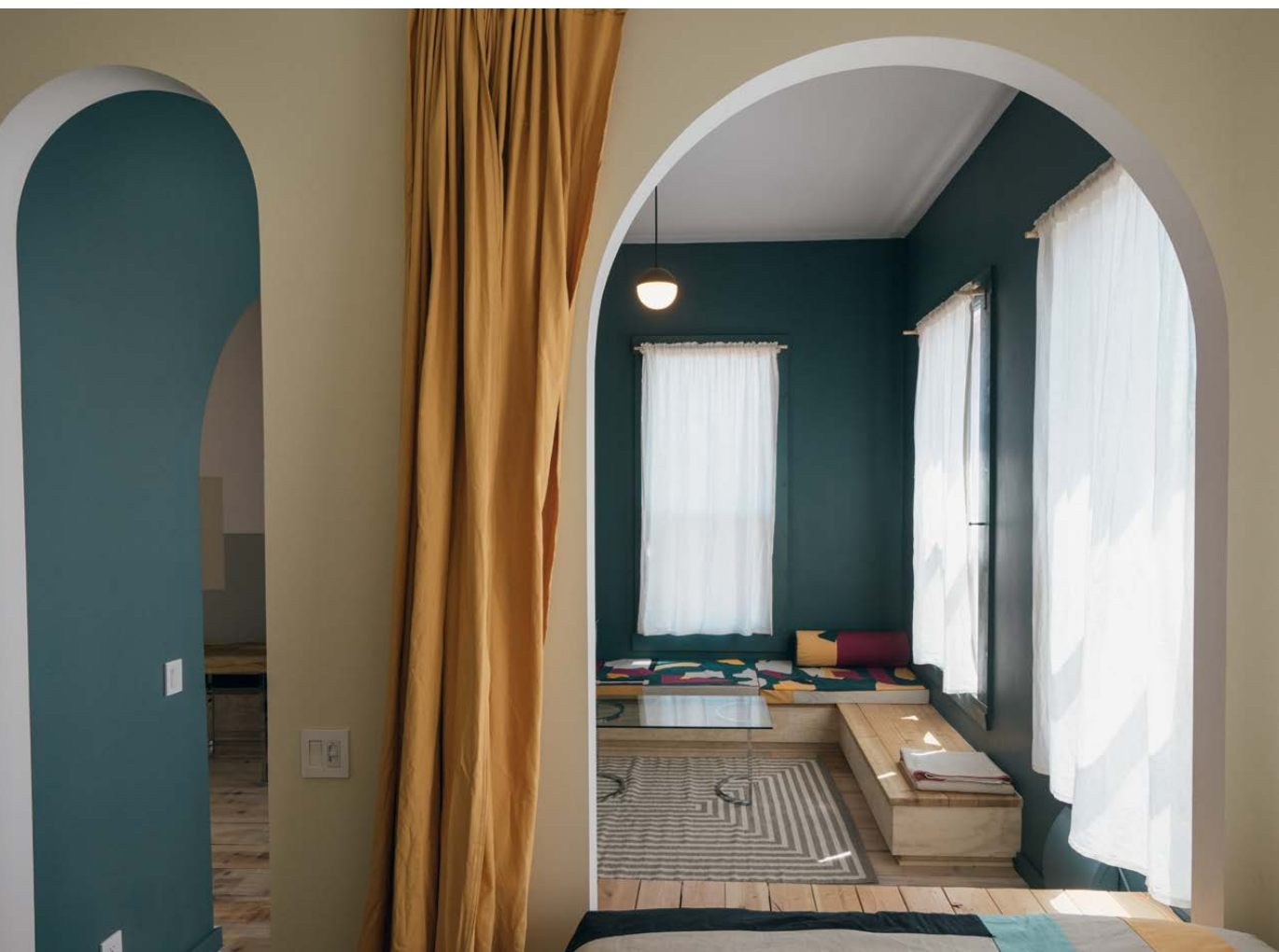
ROOM TOUR:
**GRANDPARENT
BUNKS**

BEFORE A TOP-TO-BOTTOM MAKEOVER, Los Angeles designer Dee Murphy's only spare room was a self-described "catchall of crap." A queen-size bed filled the narrow room. When Murphy decided to renovate, she explored many ways to make the space work better. Her designer's mind turned to bunk beds, but Murphy's most frequent guests are her own parents—and bunk beds are not a conventional choice for senior citizens. Murphy asked if they'd be game to sleep in bunks and with their blessing, she moved forward with her plan to create the ultimate granny suite.

CONTINUE THE TOUR →

To keep black and white from looking too cold, bring in natural elements like wood, seagrass, or living plants to take away the cold feeling, like designer Jean Liu did in this hip take on a beach-themed bedroom.





The Jennings is not your average hotel. Self-described as “equal parts accommodation and art project,” the Jennings’s owner Greg Hennes invited his creative friends to design the rooms. So instead of room after room of the same furnishings, each space has its own personality. **Shelter Collective, an Asheville-based firm, divided this studio into sleeping and living spaces with a wall with an arched opening.** Almost all of the room’s furnishings are built-in for a feeling of simplicity.

The simple platform makes the sleeping area visually connected but physically separated from the rest of the room. The raised platform also eliminates the need for a bed frame or side table and doubles as a chair to sit on and tie your shoes.

Deep teal paint and a mustard-hued curtain lend the room depth.





In this ski house by Workshop/APD, **an epic three-bed bunk is more like a part of the architecture than a piece of furniture.** Built from white oak, Workshop/APD's design gets gradually smaller on each level: The base beds are queens, the second level is a full, and the top is a single.

Right: There are integrated drawers with leather loop pulls across the bottom for storage.

Opposite: Ample landing space and slanted stairs with handholds make climbing easier and more comfortable.



cabin-inspired quarters



C LB Architects prove that an all-wood interior need not be rustic or country. For this mountain retreat, they used rift-sawn white oak to create a sleek bunk room. A minimalist ladder and railing made of metal complete the streamlined design.

Wood and bunks go together like peanut butter and jelly, so it's no surprise that designers often turn to wood paneling for bunk rooms. **In this fresh take on a cabin interior, natural wood paneling covers the walls, ceiling, and even the door.** Fresh prints and bright colors give a lift to the design.





tent tactics

For his television show *Build Me Up*, Orlando Soria redesigns rooms in a hurry and on a budget. This child's bedroom shows off his resourcefulness. Here a standard IKEA loft bed is reimagined as a camping-inspired tent. Soria had a carpenter build an A-frame structure right onto the store-bought bunk and then stitched and stapled a canvas cover on top. The simple but bold wall graphics and hanging swing seat give the room a further sense of play without breaking the budget.

