

What it's really like to live in a tiny house

July 22, 2015 | By [Megan McCrea](#) | [Comments \(20\)](#)



Photo Courtesy Alek Lisefski

Recently, writer [Lauren Modery](#) took to the Internet with an open letter: “[Dear People Who Live in Fancy Tiny Houses](#).” She asked tiny homeowners irreverent (and hilarious) questions about small space living—the kind of questions that we larger-space dwellers may have had, but were too afraid to ask.

Here at [Sunset](#), we know a thing or two about [tiny houses](#). So we sat down with two of our favorite tiny homeowners—[Alek Lisefski](#) and [Vina Lustado](#)—to learn the answers to Lauren’s burning questions. Alek, a web designer, lives in a 240-square-foot house in Sebastopol, CA with his Shiba Inu. Vina, a designer, lives in a 220-square-foot house in Ojai, CA. Her husband lives in another small cabin on their property.

Q: Did you have any doubts or hesitations about living in a tiny house, before you moved in? Do you love living there?

AL: I knew that some of the happiest times in my life had been while camping, so psychologically, I was happy to live more simply. But certainly, the whole process was crazy. I wondered, ‘wow, what am I doing? Is this really going to make me happy?’ ... But I’m happier living in a tiny house than I was in the other places that I’ve lived in the past.

VL: My house was also tailored to me, so I knew that whatever I designed and built, I would have to be happy with. The thought of designing something that was so super small was scary, definitely. Now it’s my forever home.

Q: What about farting, in a tiny house? Especially, Alek, you have a dog!

AL: My dog doesn’t really fart much. Maybe it’s a breed thing. I have an exhaust fan, and if I need to, I open a window. It’s not really any different than in a big house.

VL: I have a lot of windows and a ceiling fan. Cross-ventilation is really important in a tiny house. For condensation and mold...and farts.

Q: Where do you store all of your stuff?

AL: All my day-to-day items are in the house. It has closet spaces and shelves for books and things. I have a small storage unit for camping gear. But other than that, it was just a matter of getting rid of half my clothes [before I moved in].

VL: I don’t have all my stuff in my tiny house. I have my office, which has everything related to my business. And I have art supplies and things in storage in Ventura. I’m not a super-minimalist; I don’t have like five things.

Q: Is your house really *that* clean all the time? How do you keep it tidy?

AL: I am naturally organized, but it takes effort. A tiny house gets dirty quicker, but you can clean it up in minutes.

VL: Having a separate office where there can be clutter also helps. And when you design your space according to how you live, with the storage that you need, you become less messy. I was shocked at myself. Because when I go to a hotel room, I become so much more messy.

Q: Do you have privacy in your tiny house?

VL: There's this *Portlandia* skit where this guy sits at the toilet working on his computer to write a novel. It's really not that crazy. If my husband sleeps over, he'll sometimes be sleeping in the loft and I'll be, believe it or not, sitting in my bathroom on top of my composting toilet working on my laptop. The bathroom is tiny—30 inches wide by 7 feet long—but it totally works! I can close off the room, and it's private.

Q: What about guests? Can people come visit and stay with you?

AL: Not really. We have a sofa, but it's not really long enough for a normal-sized person to sleep on. We had one kind of shorter person sleep there, and it was okay. But that is one of the sacrifices. We're not gonna be hosting big Thanksgiving dinners here.

VL: My brother invited his family to stay overnight here. I didn't stay here, but the three of them slept comfortably in the tiny house. The husband and wife upstairs, and their daughter on the sofa bed. They had a great time.