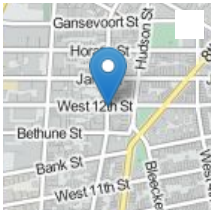




Tour a Totally Livable 242-Square-Foot West Village Apartment

Wednesday, September 3, 2014, by [Hana R. Alberts](#)



[All photos by [Max Touhey](#) <<http://touheyphotography.com/>> .]

Jourdan Lawlor bought her tiny apartment on West 12th Street, in a quaint **former dormitory** for Hudson River dockworkers, in 2011—three weeks before she met Tobin Ludwig. The director of sales development at [The Daily Meal](#) <<http://www.thedailymeal.com>> , she was tired of renting and decided to buy, scouring the city for a downtown apartment **under \$300,000** before settling on this prewar option, a high-ceilinged **ground-floor studio** that clocks in at a diminutive **242 square feet**. That *includes* closets, cabinets, and a 29-square-foot storage nook above the bathroom door.

Of the 425-square-foot Upper West Side apartment <http://ny.curbed.com/archives/2014/07/08/tour_an_impressively_roomy_425squarefoot_nyc_apartment.php> Curbed toured earlier this year, Lawlor said, "That's huge!"

Having eyed a [snazzy Murphy bed](#) <http://ny.curbed.com/archives/2013/08/14/liveblogging_24_hours_in_a_325squarefoot_apartment.php> from Resource Furniture for about five years, she said, "buying the bed was almost an excuse to buy the apartment." Lawlor and Ludwig, who heads up a bitters purveyor called [Hella Bitter](#) <<http://hellabitters.com/>> , had been dating nine months before they decided to move in together. "We agreed to **renovate and maximize the space**," Lawlor said. "If one of us said the safe word, I would put the apartment on the market the next day. But no one said it. We forget what the word was." Added Ludwig: "I had not envisioned living here with Jourdan. **I thought it would ruin my relationship with her.**" (Spoiler alert: it did not.)

WEST VILLAGE

CURBED INSIDE

JOURDAN LAWLOR

MAX TOUHEY

MICROWELLINGS

RENOVATIONS

TOBIN LUDWIG

TOP



The entrance to the building is about as West Village-y as you can get.



Most of the building is made up of pied-a-terres because the apartments are so small, Lawlor says. Many are owned by long-time residents.



Meet Jourdan Lawlor and Tobin Ludwig! Lawlor and Ludwig are getting married on New Year's Eve. Now, onto the teeny-tiny space in which they live.



The living area with the bed folded up...



...and folded down.



Ludwig's closets, to the left, were added as part of the renovation. One major thing he couldn't bring along because of space was a big maple butcher block, but that found a home at his office.



We "maximize vertically," Ludwig said. "Everything is a nook or a cranny, and sometimes you forget where you put things." Above the bed is a small projector that they use to watch Apple TV. Adds Lawlor, "When you have such a small space, everything has to mean something."



The image is projected on the wall above the big piece of art in the gold-colored frame.



The bar between the two windows contains glassware that the two collect.



About giving things up to live here, Ludwig said: "We both culled things we accumulated that we had been hauling from place to place because we could. I don't feel like I lost anything, but I gained a lot."



The plant below the artwork is a Christmas cactus cut from Lawlor's great-grandmother's.



The art is by one of their favorite Brooklyn artists, from [Leroy's Place](http://leroysplace.com/) <http://leroysplace.com/> .



Before the pocket table is unfolded...



... and after the pocket table is unfolded.



In total, renovations to the apartment cost about \$20,000. Choosing to make the apartment livable for two has helped reduce their costs overall.



Based on what a Scottish bargoer said to them one time, Lawlor and Ludwig call it the Wee Cottage.



Ludwig and Lawlor love to shop for antiques, and they pick up the little treasures and knick-knacks scattered throughout their apartment from as near as the Hudson Valley to as far as Edinburgh, where they found this photograph of tug-of-war participants.



That little island, by the way, can fold down to be 5.5 inches wide and fit in Lawlor's closet for when they want more floor space for entertaining. They can easily host dinner parties for four. "We happy we turned it into a space we can cook in," Lawlor said, "and hosting is something I love to do."



The renovation included all new appliances, such as the range, and kitchen cabinets. Ludwig is an active chef, so that was a crucial element. They didn't hire an architect, only a contractor, and everything was complete in the summer of 2013.



To the left is the fridge, and down that short hall is Lawlor's closet, which is

double-height. They both keep extra clothes and other large items in a storage facility on 17th Street and Eleventh Avenue, engaging in a "quarterly storage swap." (Lawlor said it's not uncommon for her to stop by the storage unit, throw on a cocktail dress, and go straight to a work function.) Down that tiny hallway is also a bathroom, with the doorway to the right, and a crawl space for storage they built in above it. The bathroom has two showerheads.



In the backyard is a garden shared by residents of three adjacent buildings. Lawlor is on the gardening committee, and says it's a peaceful retreat right outside their window.



They also grow herbs right outside, which Ludwig uses in cocktail creations.



Want to keep up with the future of their small-apartment sagas? Follow Lawlor and Ludwig on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/tobinludwig) <<https://twitter.com/tobinludwig>> and [Instagram](http://instagram.com/jourdanlawlor) <<http://instagram.com/jourdanlawlor>> ; they post photos of their home regularly.

- [Tour an Impressively Roomy 425-Square-Foot NYC Apartment](http://ny.curbed.com/archives/2014/07/08/tour_an_impressively_roomy_425s_squarefoot_nyc_apartment.php) <http://ny.curbed.com/archives/2014/07/08/tour_an_impressively_roomy_425s_squarefoot_nyc_apartment.php> [Curbed]
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