

How to Join the Fold

A sleeper sofa can make a space into an extra bedroom. Just make sure guests can shimmy by it when it's open.

Ron Marvin didn't set out to become an authority on small spaces. But then his handsome 300-square-foot Chelsea apartment was featured in Metropolitan Home and on Apartment Therapy. And before long, Mr. Marvin, a New York interior designer, found he had a string of clients with space-challenged homes, and was making regular appearances as an expert on the HGTV show "Small Space, Big Style."

"I just became known for small spaces," he said, sounding slightly ambivalent. "The one issue with doing small apartments is that it generally translates to small budgets."

So recently, Mr. Marvin, 50, has been designing larger homes and has moved into a more spacious apartment in Harlem.

But his experience with space-saving, multifunctional furniture still comes in handy, he said, because his clients want to make the most of the space they have, no matter how much there is. And certain pieces of furniture are especially helpful in that regard.

Take the sleeper sofa: Why not add what amounts to an extra bedroom in your living room to accommodate the occasional overnight guest?

Though you should first ask yourself, he was quick to add, "Where is it going to open to?" Because if there is unwieldy furniture in front of the sofa that needs to be moved, he said, "You'll never get it out."

You should also make sure that once the bed is open, there is a little room left over. "You have to be able to at least shimmy around it," he said.

Provided there is enough wiggle room, there are numerous styles to choose from.

At Carlyle Custom Convertibles in Chelsea, Mr. Marvin liked the Tub, with its semicircular ends. "You would never, ever guess that was a sleeper sofa," he said. "It's such an unusual shape."

And the bonus: the ends of the sofa function as integrated end tables when the bed is pulled out.

At Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams in SoHo, Mr. Marvin opened the Gabriel II Super Luxe sleeper and discovered to his surprise that the mattress had a pillow top. "I would be very comfortable sleeping on this," he said, climbing on to try it out.

He also liked the company's Reese Super Luxe sleeper. "A lot of sleeper sofas are thick and chunky," he said. "This one isn't. It's tailored and slimmed down."

And at CB2, he admired the ingenuity of Lubi, a daybed formed by two stacked mattresses that unfolded to create an oversize queen bed on the floor.

"If you're one person," he said, "you don't even need to open it up."

TIM McKEOUGH



SUZANNE DeCHILLO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

OVERNIGHTER Ron Marvin inspects the Gabriel II Super Luxe sleeper sofa, \$2,895, at Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams in SoHo. He was pleased to find it had a pillow top, and climbed on for a test.

The New York Times

SHOPPING WITH RON MARVIN



Davis twin sleeper armchair; \$1,104.15 at Crate & Barrel, (800) 967-6696, crateandbarrel.com.



Ava tufted sleeper sofa; \$749 at Urban Outfitters, (800) 282-2200, urbanoutfitters.com.



Lubi graphite sleeper daybed; \$899 at CB2, (800) 606-6252, cb2.com



Reese 79-inch Super Luxe sleeper; \$2,995 at Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams, (212) 431-2575, mgbwhome.com.



Eden convertible sofa; \$999 at Room and Board, (800) 301-9720, roomandboard.com.



Nomade-Express sofa; from \$3,945 (throw pillows extra) at Ligne Roset, (212) 253-5629, ligne-roset-usa.com.



Tub sofa bed; \$5,770 at Carlyle Custom Convertibles, (212) 675-3212, carlylesofa.com.

