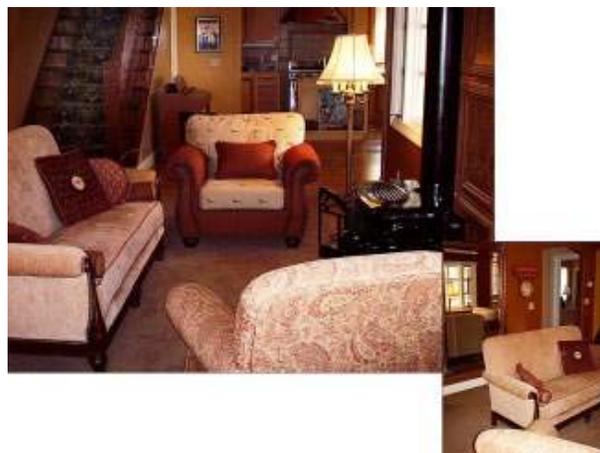


**S.A. "Sam" Jernigan  
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## **S.A. "Sam" Jernigan: Right-sizing your furnishings**



As illustrated in this client's Broad Street, Nevada City Victorian, the proportion of furnishings was a key consideration in selecting items for their small-scale living room; and this seating arrangement also creates the ideal "arc of conversation" for visitors gathered around the scaled-down wood stove. The over-sized mirror visually anchors the room, adding height as well as drama, plus its light reflective properties also maximize the sense of space in this cozy and inviting room with walls painted the color of milk chocolate and furnished in rich tones of ivory, wheat and deep berry.

(Part I of this article was published on Nov. 7, 2015.)

The topic of scale relates to the size of our furnishings and accessories — sometimes made especially tricky by the evolution of ever-higher

ceilings.

Sometimes scale in furnishings is made especially tricky by the evolution of these now-higher ceilings.

In fact, newly built smaller homes have typically sacrificed square footage while adding the illusion of space via higher ceilings.

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The good news for those homeowners is they need less furnishings accordingly.

However, I have repeatedly noticed that homeowners are not readily achieving a sense of balance in rooms with these higher ceilings.

The key is better use of proportion or, once again, scale.

When the ceiling height was eight feet, we all knew how to furnish a living room or bedroom accordingly.

But what about 10 feet, 14 feet or a living room ceiling that hovers a whopping 20-feet-plus from ground level?

One trick I've used over the years is creating a "false ceiling line."

Select a height of nine feet from the floor and install molding that matches your home's architectural style around the perimeter of the room at that height.

You can now paint or add a wall treatment below this line, thus anchoring the space with color and treating the neutral walls above as simply more "ceiling."

To achieve balance and proportion in any high-ceiling room, it's also imperative to add strong linear elements to the room.

Furniture should have taller backs along with the introduction of torchères, tall bookcases, indoor trees, coat racks, folding screens, etc. — anything that helps add visual height.

Because if all your furniture visually "ends" at four feet, the living space will seem further dwarfed in relation to the height of the surrounding walls.

Also remember to add more dramatic proportions to your accessories and artwork.

A wee flower arrangement on a diminutive coffee table will look oddly out of place in a room with these taller dimensions.

Instead, use larger items and fewer of them in order to bring the room into overall balance.

When in doubt, supersize it.

While a stately room can almost appear comical when populated with undersized furnishings, conversely a smaller space can be given a grander appearance if a slightly oversized scale is used.

Think of a smallish foyer containing a seven-foot mirror, hefty pedestal, or tall urn.

Barring any functional interruptions (obviously you don’t want anyone bumping their hips or elbows), a well-staged space can appear altogether more sumptuous and potentially fool the eye into thinking more physical space exists.

It’s akin to a reverse optical illusion — e.g., the ultimate power of well-proportioned design.

(Ms.) S.A. “Sam” Jernigan, Interior Designer, IFDA, of Renaissance Design Consultations ([www.RdesignConsultations.com](http://www.RdesignConsultations.com)) has 20-plus year of experience providing design consultation/space planning on an hourly basis and she has been quoted as a design expert in articles for AOL [FoxNews.com](http://FoxNews.com), [BobVila.com](http://BobVila.com), the National Home Furnishings Assoc., et al. Visit her website to learn more or phone 530.362.1339.