

# Jess Lloyd-Mostyn

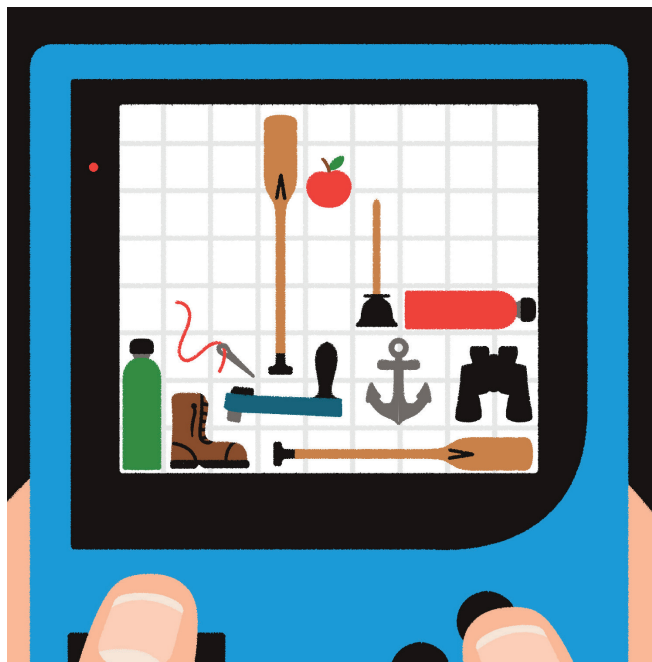
Imagine choosing to live in a shipping container for a decade. There are certain comparisons to be made between that and living on a boat - but they are dwarfed by the benefits

This month is our anniversary, ten years since we loosed the docklines from the UK. And though a sailing yacht that has taken us three quarters of the way round the globe is a far cry from a 40ft corrugated metal box, the volume is comparable. Yet, far from feeling boxed-in or cramped, this undeniably small space has seemed ample for our needs, both when there were just two of us and even now when there are five aboard.

Why is that? Don't get me wrong, I find it just as baffling as any of you reading this will. How have we not gone stir-crazy? Why is it that we're not desperately longing to expand out into a five bedroom, three bathroom home on terra firma? What marriage could put up with this amount of togetherness? And surely, to throw three kids or babies into the mix means that we live in a tiny house of perpetual chaos?

Well yes and no. Firstly, I attribute the sheer sense of spaciousness and volume entirely to good design. A successful yacht layout is all about the fittings and furniture working really hard. The sofa is comfortable but it also safely stows several jerry cans of fresh water underneath the seat cushions, along with an additional CQR anchor, the pump for our inflatable kayak, a basket containing onions and potatoes and a box full of sail mending equipment. In fact there are hidden storage cupboards squirreled away everywhere, which you simply don't have in a house. Under beds, tables, floors are all manner of important boat bits or stored things, so that the remaining space looks deceptively simple, and clutter-free.

A great advantage to living small is that everything is only an arm's reach away. Underway you need to be able to quickly grab for a winch handle, or be only a few steps from the main sheet but the same goes for your living space. You never have to trudge up and down several flights of stairs to get a pair of binoculars, or a sewing kit or sink plunger. The cabin life is so holistic that you can have a precise awareness of the physical space that everyone is in and what they're doing all at once. We have three cabins down below, two used as



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bedrooms, one used for tools, projects and storage, but each member of the family could be in a different room and you'd still have a sense of where they are. There's something comforting and secure about that, probably harking back to our ancient days as cave-dwellers.

Yet at the same time the space is massive. We're not penned-in by surrounding buildings or structures, even in the tightest-packed Caribbean anchorage or berthed in a vibrant city marina there is still a surrounding bubble of our 'own space' around us. At times there is nothing but endless horizon on all sides and an infinity pool that justifies the name. Wherever the boat is there is a feeling of the huge expanse above and outwards that this home actively engages with in a way that you don't with the average house.

Plus, the fact that the setting changes so much and so often adds movement and diversity, like changing all the pictures on your walls.

And whilst the volume of the cabins doesn't feel constrained or restricted on the other hand it does limit our amassing of additional 'stuff'. Things really need to earn their place to be considered worthy of being kept on board day after day, year after year, and it's an ongoing constant assessment. We regularly edit down our number of possessions, be it clothes, toys, or other superfluous extras. There are no hidden drawers of broken, redundant electrical chargers or cupboards hiding little-used kitchen appliances. Everything needs to be needed, and wanted and used. And living this way certainly heightens your appreciation of just how much you consume and question whether you need to.

All the while I think it's important to make clear that I've never been what you would class as a minimalist and moving aboard wasn't part of us trying to join the tiny house movement and make a conscious choice to live small. In fact, it never has once felt as though we've compromised on the things we own or the space we have. And each night, as we lounge back on our aft deck, watching the sun steadily dip lower, we feel lucky and our small home feels abundant.

Is less truly more? For us it is.



**JESS LLOYD-MOSTYN**

Jess and James left the UK in 2011 in their Crossbow 42 and have sailed halfway round the world, growing their crew en route. Follow their journey at [water-log.com](http://water-log.com)

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