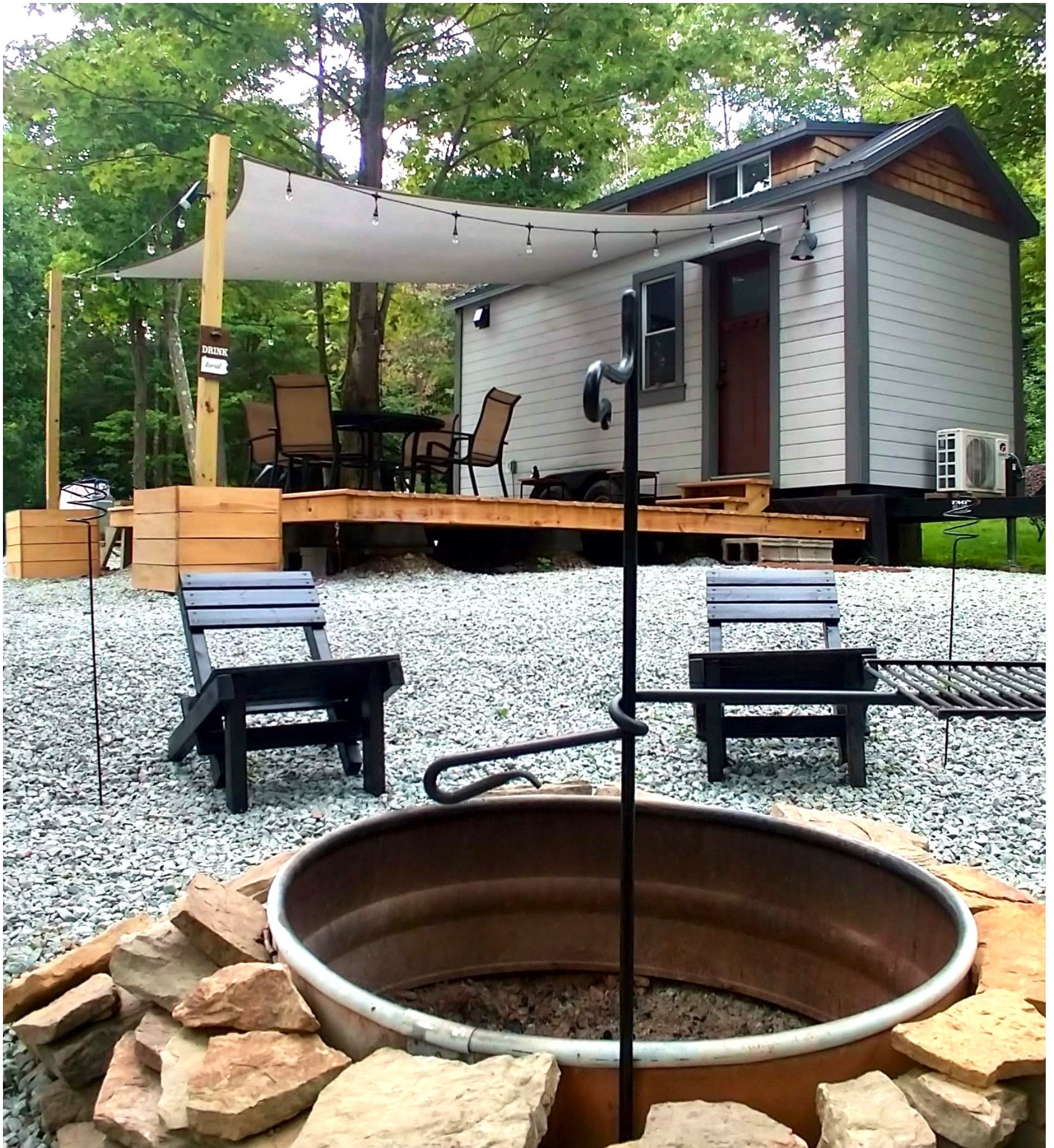


A Tiny House Blog Publication

TINY HOUSE

FOR MICRO, TINY, SMALL, AND UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSE ENTHUSIASTS

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ask a designer

with Johanna Elsner of Perch & Nest

Q: I can't wait to be in my own tiny house with my two cats and dog but as I downsize my belongings and prepare for this move, I can't help but wonder if the maintenance that comes with my fur babies will be my undoing in a tiny house. Do any of your clients have pets? How do they deal with things like litter box smells and pet hair that already seems like constant upkeep in a traditional house?

A: Ah! Tiny living with pets! Believe it or not, it is more common than tiny living without pets. (Surprise! Tiny house people often tend to also be animal people.) But your concerns are absolutely valid. The good news is there are fewer places for that fur and those smells to hide but there are some tricks that make living in a smaller space with pets more manageable. Here are a few of my faves!

Hidden Litter Boxes

Having a space that your cat(s) can access that is out of (human) site is a must for feline friends living in a small space. We often tackle this in design by creating a (cat sized) hole within a hinged door on a cabinet with the litter box inside. (Stair storage is a great place to do this but any cabinet will do.) The cat(s) can then enter that space at will while keeping debris and odors

behind the closed door until you are ready to clean up behind them. Bonus! These hidden areas can also be upgraded to include vent fans inside.



Disclaimer: Due to the nature of a letters advice column, any advice given can only be general in nature and as such no liability is taken or implied by the advice given here or the use or misuse of any techniques described. It is strongly recommended that you seek advice through contract before you build or repair any tiny house on wheels. Submission of a problem to 'Ask A Designer' indicates acceptance of this disclaimer.

Elevated Dog Bowls w/ Splash Guards

If you have never seen one of these, have a quick Google search. These dishes are similar to the traditional elevated types of pet bowls but have a

surround

that catches

all those

drips and

drops

keeping

water and

other bits off of your floors and walls.

The [Neater Feeder](#) is the most popular and available at [Chewy.com](#)



Dustbuster

I couldn't manage my own tinys without this must-have appliance but it is even more useful with pets in tow. These small handheld vacuums can be mounted inside a cabinet or closet and ready on the fly for quick clean up of loft floors, stairs, inside cabinets, and even surfaces keeping loose hair and dirt brought in on paws to a minimum in your small space. We keep [this model from Black + Decker](#) in all of our tiny homes.

Q: I am planning to design and build my own tiny home. I hate to plan everything around my (large breed) dog but I want to be sure he can get into the loft now and when he gets older. I would be fine with almost any kind of ladder but I know that won't work for him. From my research, it seems like all the stairs in tiny homes have a big drop from the loft to the first step or are crazy narrow which doesn't seem practical for a pet either. What's the best plan for loft access for someone that doesn't mind their animals in the bed but also doesn't want them to need to be carried upstairs?

A: We actually design many aspects of client homes around animal needs. (And it doesn't hurt to plan for future pets too.) You are correct in that many tiny house staircases have a drop from the loft to the first step or are too narrow or steep for pets.

That drop from the loft is designed to prevent us humans from bumping our heads walking up and allows us to exit the loft comfortably but that large jump can be challenging for some pets especially smaller breeds. If that drop is a deal breaker for your pet, you might consider building your stairs to include a traditional "last step" to better accommodate their access but be mindful of how that will affect your own use. (Watch your step!)

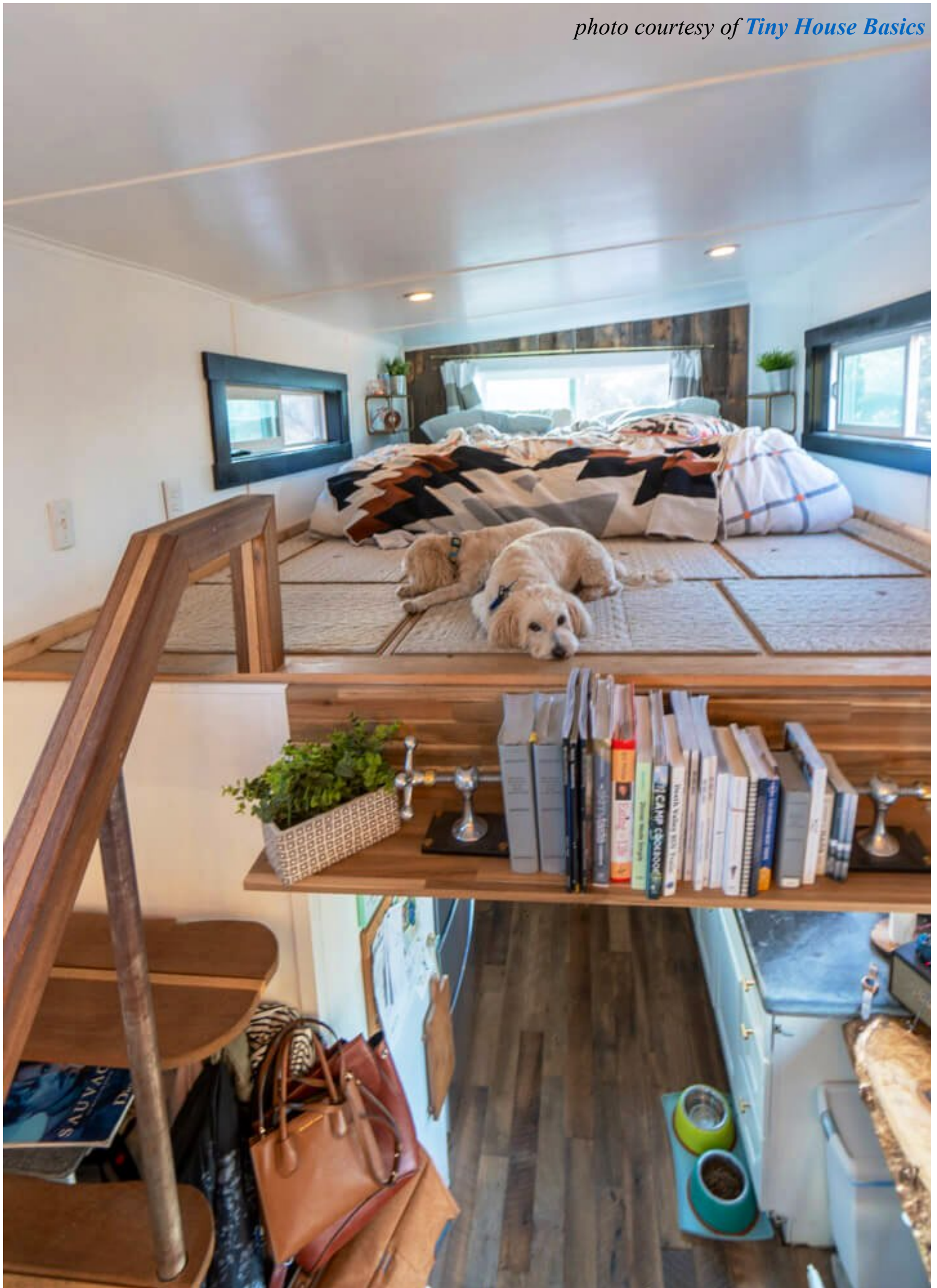
Other important aspects of stair design that are often compromised in tiny home construction are the width and rise of the steps. We recommend a minimum of at least 24" in width for any stair or ladder in a tiny home on wheels. Stairs should also be designed using traditional rise calculations to ensure your final construction is comfortable and safe for you and your pets. Check out this [easy stair calculator](#) to start designing your own tiny house stairs. (Once you have the correct rise planned out, you can design any applicable storage around this outline.)



Johanna designs, builds, and owns tiny homes on wheels along with her husband, Tom, in the Foothills of North Carolina. From winterizing stored tinys in the Fall to keeping insects at bay in the Summer, they experience all

the benefits as well as all of the challenges of tiny living throughout the year in this four season climate. See more of the Elsner's and their Southern based operation at [perchandnest.com](#).

photo courtesy of *Tiny House Basics*





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Model: Roost18

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