

BUSH'S KATRINA WOES 'SOPRANOS' LAST HIT

Newsweek

March 13, 2006

newsweek.msnbc.com

Diet Hype

Confused? From Fat to Calcium,
How the Media Collides With Science



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY AARON GOODMAN

\$3.95

11 >



01134

APARTMENTS

Celebration of Small

IN REAL ESTATE, THERE'S one variable that buyers value nearly as much as "location, location, location": square footage. The average newly built U.S. home contains 2,350 square feet, up 57 percent since 1970. But Maxwell Gillingham-Ryan, a New York interior designer, believes many people can live comfortably in drastically smaller spaces if they choose furniture and possessions sparingly and arrange them wisely. Gillingham-Ryan himself lives with his wife in a 250-square-foot Manhattan apartment, and this week his Web site, apartmenttherapy.com, will launch its second annual Smallest, Coolest Apartment Contest.

Last year's contest limited entrants, who e-mail digital photos of their abodes, to New Yorkers living in 500 square feet or less. This year, the contest has gone national and upped the cutoff to 650 square feet. Gillingham-Ryan, whose new book, "Apartment Therapy: The Eight-Step Home Cure," arrives in bookstores this month, says the key to making small spaces work is to design rooms that serve



SIZING UP THE COMPETITION: The bathroom from last year's first-place winner (top) and the kitchen and bedroom of last year's second-place winner

several functions. "That's the struggle of a small space—you just don't have all the rooms to do all that you want to do, the dining room, living room, TV room, bedroom, [so] you

have to figure out how to give rooms a multifunction feeling," he says. Among last year's entries, some featured one wall that worked as an office while the opposite wall

served as the dining room.

When last year's winner, ad-agency creative director Patrick Hamilton, first heard about the contest, his 485-square-foot apartment was such a disaster, he was embarrassed to let his building's maintenance man in. So he used the contest as an incentive to make over his space. He rented a storage unit for unneeded stuff, then set an egg timer and spent 30 minutes each day sorting, discarding and rearranging before resubmitting his entry. He says

the contest isn't for the thin-skinned since the site allows viewers to critique. "You're having total strangers say they hate your sofa," he says.

This year, entries will be accepted until March 13. Judges—including comedian Seth Herzog, who lives in a 70-square-foot space he believes to be Manhattan's smallest apartment—will pick the winners in April. The top finisher gets \$2,500 to spend at modernist mecca Design Within Reach—assuming, that is, they have someplace to fit a new piece of furniture.

—DANIEL MCGINN