Less is more in a small space but favourite items will help personalise your new home.

Put your stamp on it

Be true to your style in a retirement village, writes **Cheryl Critchley**

YOUR personal style can still shine through when you downsize to a retirement village. The first challenge is culling what you don't need.

White Pebble Interiors principal interior designer Frances Cosway recommended keeping key essentials for dining, living and sleeping, while considering the scale of the pieces and the room size.

She said personal items and artwork that were part of your life story were also important but bear in mind that less was generally more in a small place.

"For example, you may need to have a smaller dining table that seats four instead of six or eight," Ms Cosway said.

"The key is scale with furniture pieces, but decorating in terms of colour and accessorising is down to what you like and are drawn to."

Of course, functionality is important for any life stage, and Ms Cosway said older residents should consider:

- Soft flooring, which was easier on the joints;
- Good task lighting;
- Showers being more accessible than baths and accessible for wheelchairs;
- A higher toilet than standard.

None of these features mean having to compromise on style. For example, rooms could be brightened with cushions, artwork, lamps, throws and rugs.

Ms Cosway said Scandinavian and mid-century themes were popular.

"These styles also blend well with old and new, so are incredibly versatile," she said.

"The key is to be true to yourself and incorporate your personal style into a space, which is why your personal items are so important."

Note: Retirement village residents can decorate if they follow village structural alteration rules, which can vary.

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MAKING YOUR NEW SPACE A HOME

1. Be true to your own style. That means keeping the things you love, that have meaning to you and are part of your story. This is what makes your retirement home uniquely yours and feel like home to you, regardless of its compact size.
2. Declutter. Less is more, and having less will make a space feel larger. It also provides a good foundation to add items that will personalise your space.
3. Ensure furniture is the right size for the space. Proportion is important to create balance in a room. Replace large sofas and occasional chairs, which crowd a space, with smaller pieces.
4. If permissible, paint rooms in a colour you like as this affects your mood.

Source: Frances Cosway, White Pebble Interiors