

# Casual Living for the Win: This is the New Dining Room

by Cara Gibbs

Apr 2, 2017



(Image credit: [Mark Weinberg for House of Funk](#))

Formal dining is so two thousand and late. Now, it's all about the conveniently located cozy dining nook. More and more people, couples and families are turning to this alternative way of dining as their main source for all things eating and entertaining.

Here's what we love about this solution: First and foremost, its location. Dining nooks are often nestled right by (or in) the kitchen, which is the natural gathering point in most homes. The second thing we love is the design opportunities these babies present—bold textiles for the bench seating and roman shades, statement lighting and the chance to have some fun with art. And, thirdly, your dining nook can be a place you sip your coffee in your PJs or gather around for a formal dinner with friends—it has an approachability that, let's face it, most formal dining rooms don't. Small, big and everything in between, these eight designers and DIYers nailed the built-in nook look, no matter how much space they were working with.

*Above:* As if extending right off the countertops, this cozy spot from [House of Funk](#) offers ample seating and is a great place to watch the seasons change with those big picture windows.

## Jessica and Scott's East Coast Eclectic Nest

*(Image credit: [Pablo Enriquez](#))*

I've long had a crush on this little eating alcove in the New Jersey home of [Jessica and Scott Davis](#). It's an explosion of pattern, color and comfort, all done in a very approachable way. Who wouldn't want to sip tea here on a lazy Sunday afternoon?

*(Image credit: [Little House Big City](#))*

Technically, this sweet little breakfast nook is in blogger Chloe Joy's laundry room, featured on [Little House Big City](#). The unusual placement works for her family, but there are takeaways here no matter where you sip your coffee. Two tiny benches with some pillows and a bistro table is all you need to fashion your new morning hangout.

*(Image credit: [Eric Rorer for BD Home](#))*

This next dining nook by [BD Home](#) really keeps diners in the cooking action, ensuring the chef always has someone to chat with nearby. Drawers under the seating bench were designed for a bit of extra storage, and the inlaid wall shelving is the perfect spot for cook books and pretty décor.

*(Image credit: [One Kings Lane](#))*

The dining nook is a great solution to a compact space, as you can squeeze in more seating into less square footage. And when you use open benches like [Amira El-Gawly](#) did in her home shown here via [One Kings Lane](#), you can stash baskets or odds and ends in the negative space.

*(Image credit: [Courtesy Lindsey Coral Harper](#))*

Designer [Lindsey Coral Harper](#) took a seldom used window seat and turned it into an oft used dining nook.

*(Image credit: [Courtesy Summer Thornton](#))*

This Old Town Chicago apartment features a dining nook designed by [Summer Thornton](#) that perfectly

straddles both the kitchen and the adjacent living room. Whether enjoying brunch or playing a game with friends, the space is equipped for either.

*(Image credit: [Eric Zepeda for Workroom C](#))*

This final nook designed by [Workroom C](#) is all about a fresh pop of color. The L-shaped bench sports a traditional pattern displayed in a happy-hued blue to match perfectly with rich navy bentwood bistro chairs.

## For some more inspiration and how to get the look without built-ins:

- [Banquette Seating in the Kitchen](#)
- [Dining Room Ideas: Try a Banquette In Place of Chairs For More Style \(and Seating Space\)](#)
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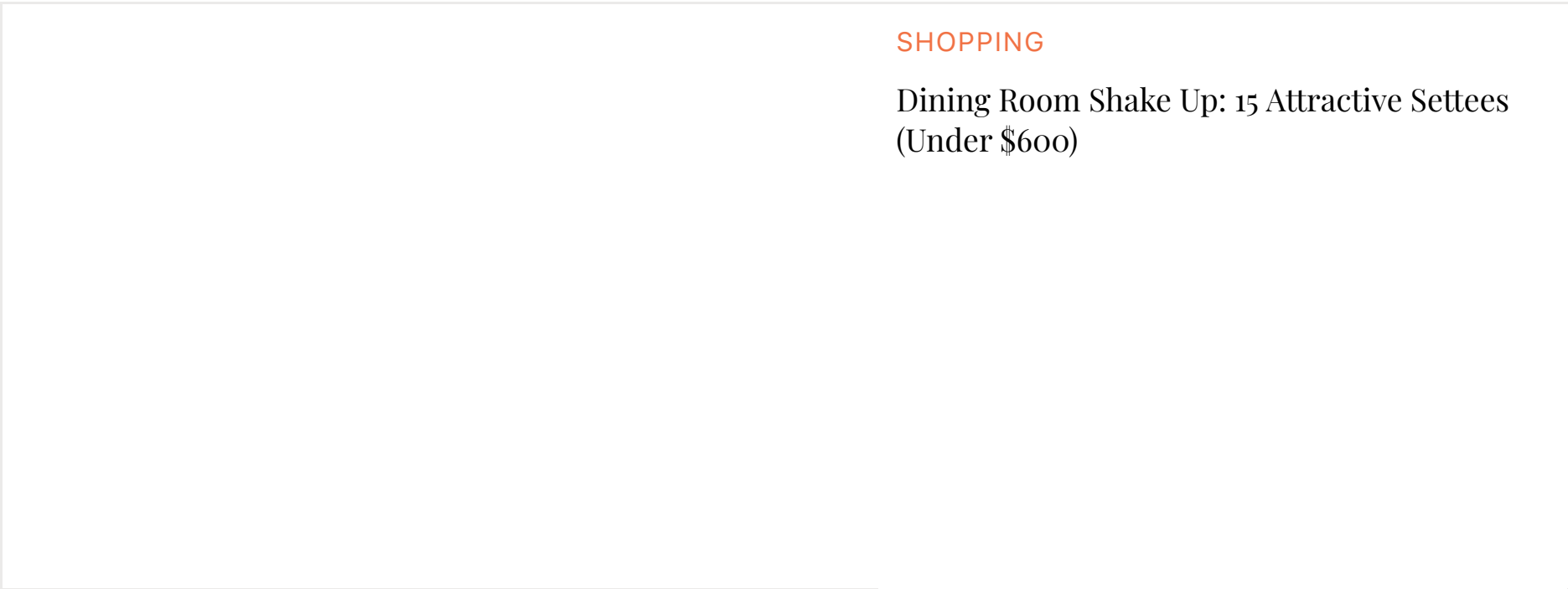
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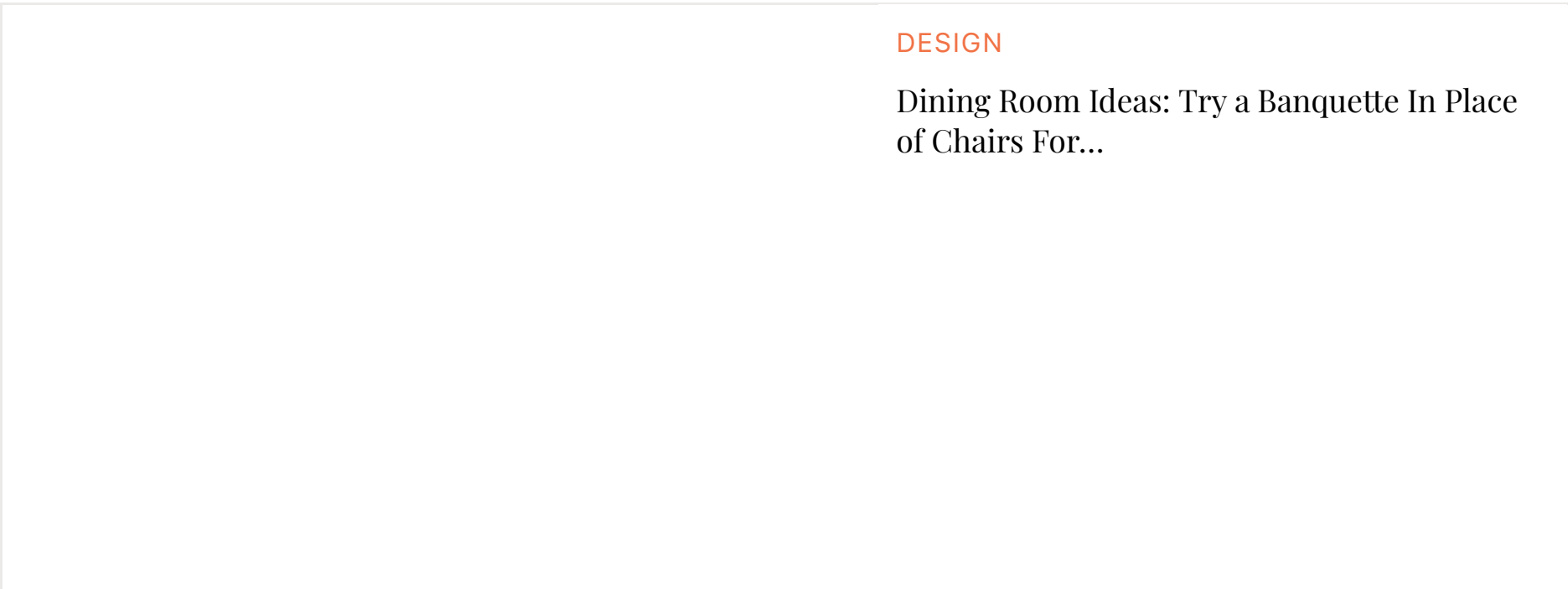
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