

### Photography: Studio by MAK / Katherine Ma

In J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" a band of heroes set out on a dangerous quest; early on, they survive a killer blizzard and monstrous pursuers only to be stopped cold when they can't open a magic door hidden in the side of a mountain.

Fortunately, magic doors in real life are much easier to open – and conceal, too. They're called pocket doors, and they may provide the perfect solution for homeowners facing spatial challenges that a normal hinged door can cause.

A pocket door hangs hidden inside a wall cavity when open and slides horizontally on a high-mounted track when closed, instead of swinging out. In lieu of using a protruding locking doorknob, these doors usually employ a recessed pull or handle with a knob inside that, when turned, triggers a privacy latch or bolt mechanism that can lock the door into place when closed.

"Pocket doors remain a popular choice among homeowners today because of their ease of use and versatility in placement," Richard Woods, owner of Albany Woodworks in Albany, La., says. "With a traditional door, you don't always have the clearance to open it up into a room or tight area. But a pocket door slides smoothly into the wall and can be made in a variety of widths."

John Nations, construction manager for New Pointe Communities, a custom residential home developer in San Diego, Calif., notes that conventional doors take up about 10 square feet of swing.

"A pocket door is less restrictive and easier to operate, especially for older owners," notes Nations, who adds that many buyers of his new homes opt for this handy feature.

Carib Daniel Martin, a Kensington, Md.-based architect, says pocket doors are ideal for closets, especially the walk-in type, "where a swing door can block clothes or force you to shut yourself inside a small room. They're also good for areas where you want to have an



Kayli Brooke Jackson and Adam James Durham



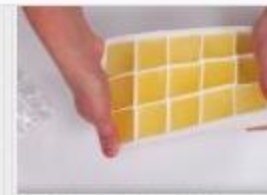
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