

SMALL SPACE, big style

Design tips on transforming a cookie-cutter condo by adding custom touches and maximum function for a family in modest square footage

BY ALEEM KASSAM & PHYLLIS LUI • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PROVOKE STUDIOS



A brand-new build comes with its pros and cons. On the plus side, developers today are creating some really stunning and efficient spaces that make the most of every inch. And with the rising price of real estate these days, that is a good thing. On the con side, new construction homes sometimes get a bad rap as “cookie cutter.” Fortunately, all a space needs to really feel like home is your own personal touch.

TIP

In a small space, opt for light colours to enhance the overall sense of space, and keep them consistent throughout to create continuity between rooms.



FUNCTION FIRST

This family of three had a lot to squeeze into this 840-sq.-ft. condo. Our clients, a couple and their newborn baby, required two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a sleek living area, dining area and what’s become the most common ask we get as professional designers: function.

Small spaces come with their challenges, but with some strategic techniques and tried-and-true design principles, we definitely make the most out of every inch.

PICTURE-PERFECT VIEW

One benefit of high-rise living is the view. The living room is wrapped in floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that open to a 346-sq.-ft. patio and views as far as the eye can see – an instant focal point. To keep attention where it belongs, we positioned the furniture in such a way that allowed the homeowners and their guests to sit, socialize and overlook the city, or watch television – if they can tear their eyes away from that view.

MODERN MEETS CHARM

This living room is decidedly contemporary, with neutral walls, simple furnishings and a modern light fixture overhead. Offsetting the coolness of the space, vibrant floral artwork and an antique coffee table bring character while telling the homeowners’ story.

NO-FUSS FORMALITY

The modern style and neutral colour palette flows into the adjoining dining room. Originally, this unit didn’t allow for a proper dining area. This is common with the popularity of open-concept spaces, where dining often takes place in the kitchen or the living area. The homeowners really wanted a formal dining area, and were open to tucking the table up to the wall when not in use. In place of traditional chairs, we used two chairs and a bench to add function and versatility to the space. To add further interest to the dining area, personal photos were framed and hung gallery-

TIP

Who doesn’t love a big TV, right? While it might be ideal for binge-watching weekends, this bulky piece of tech poses a challenge from a design perspective, and this is particularly true in small spaces. Try positioning the TV diagonally in a corner, to help minimize its physical footprint and its visual impact.



DESIGNER TOUCH

style above the table, to create a feature wall and conversation piece. Overhead, a chandelier suspended from a millwork ceiling defines the dining space. We chose a style that was mainly clear, so that it wouldn't be visually "heavy" or overwhelming.



DOUBLE DUTY & STRIKING A BALANCE

The master bedroom was large enough for a king-sized bed, but we had to sacrifice the traditional side tables to make it work. We chose slim-lined, lean and leggy nightstands from West Elm, which were slightly smaller in scale and much airier in their look and feel. The bed came from Mobital and features lift-up storage for hidden function and flexibility. The wallpapered wall is dramatic and strong, balanced with lighter bedding and furniture to give the space light and brightness.

AND BABY MAKES THREE

Last but certainly not least, the nursery was a special focus for these new parents. Even though the room itself was smaller in size, we still managed to incorporate all the essentials of a sweet and functional baby's room, including a crib, dresser/change table, glider and a bookcase. A jungle-themed wall mural from Lulu & Georgia was a fun accent for the room.

Small spaces can pose some design challenges, but with some careful thought and inspiration, even a small home can be big on style and function. ♦



SOURCES

Master Bedroom **NIGHTSTANDS**, West Elm, Bed, Mobital; Nursery **WALLPAPER**, Lulu & Georgia

Award-winning designers, Phyllis Lui & Aleem Kassam, are the principal designers for Kalu Interiors. For more than a decade, this Vancouver-based design firm has become known for creating thoughtfully curated interiors that enhance and inspire how you live. The firm provides bespoke design services for clientele throughout Canada. kaluinteriors.com

