

small spaces → 1,100 square feet

personality plus

Furnishing this tiny Toronto home was a happy collaboration between homeowner and designer, and the results are proof that one can indeed live large in a small space. Written by Kathleen Dore / Photography by Donna Griffith



small spaces — clear winners
Glass coffee tables and end tables are smart choices because they don't create a bulky feel in a tight spot.

The biggest dilemma was whether the walls should come down," recalls Catherine Caplice of the renovation of her 1,100 sq. ft. Toronto house. At the time, she followed her instincts and gave her contractor the go-ahead, and she hasn't looked back since. From the open-concept floor plan to the kitchen design, Catherine immersed herself in the decision making that a major renovation demands, and when the dust settled, there was just one problem: no furniture. She needed some advice. "I came in

post-construction," says designer Lara Neal. She and Catherine both say there was a real synergy from their first meeting. "I thought the finishes Catherine had chosen for the kitchen were beautiful and felt they should be our jumping-off point in terms of decorating," says Lara, who customized the new space to perfectly suit her client. "It was a dream finding Lara — she shared my vision," says Catherine. "I loved the process so much that when it was done I considered selling the house so I could do it all over again." Yikes! Hello, Lara?

small spaces — play with scale

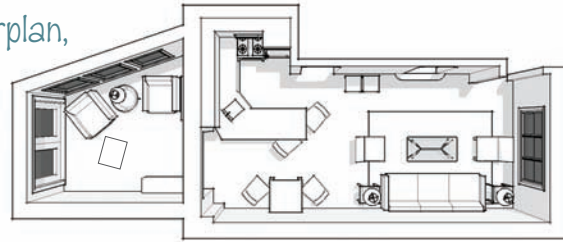
"Have fun and add something big," says designer Lara Neal, referring to the artwork over the table. "It's dynamic and can anchor a room. Otherwise, if everything is the same scale, a space becomes static and boring."



OPPOSITE Catherine Caplice has personalized her decor with artwork she loves. "Buy art for what it does to you emotionally," says designer Lara Neal. "The piece Catherine chose for the living room introduces a different element, with a vibrant shot of orange." ABOVE The entire first floor is visible when you pass through the vestibule, so Lara's priority was to create a sophisticated, cohesive palette of neutrals that expands the space visually by creating flow. But it's not all about looking pretty — the

space had to work. Every piece of furniture earns its keep, especially since Catherine loves to entertain. The living room chairs have handles on the back and are on casters, making them easy to move where needed. Also, Lara designed a three-in-one table for the dining room/walkway: it morphs from a console (no leaves) to a table for two (one leaf) to a table that seats eight (two leaves). "I've even hosted 18 people for a buffet I set up on the table and kitchen counter," says Catherine. →

for a 3-D version of the floorplan, check out styleathome.com/caplice



small spaces — accents and layers

Vary textures and add hits of colour in an open-concept main floor. Bamboo blinds, velvet chairs and paprika mohair cushions enliven the sunroom.

You don't want jarring transitions in a small space"
LARA NEAL, DESIGNER

ABOVE Though one contractor told her the three-season sunroom was a teardown, Catherine persisted and found another contractor who was willing to do the extensive construction necessary to convert it into an all-season retreat. Now it's one of Catherine's favourite and most used spaces on the main floor, with its large inviting chairs, an upholstered ottoman and bench (not seen), and room to pull in more furniture from the living area when her large family, including many nephews and

nieces, visit. **OPPOSITE** Catherine orchestrated the kitchen renovation herself, choosing chocolate brown granite countertops and dark wood cabinets for a touch of formality. "White cabinets just wouldn't have worked," she says. "I wanted a furniture feel." In keeping with the glossy backsplash tile, Lara devised a whole-home palette of muted neutrals, with hints of silvery and blue-grey accents to play off it. Catherine found a 24" wide dishwasher, range and fridge to save space. →

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT ROGERS



small spaces — choice materials

Use ribbed glass to break up the visual bulk of a solid wall of cabinetry yet keep the look uncluttered.

Before, I had not one square inch of counter space in the kitchen. Now I have tons"

CATHERINE CAPLICE, HOMEOWNER

BELOW The bedroom has an alcove just wide enough for the bed and two tiny night tables. "Catherine is an avid reader, so I chose swing-arm lamps to allow lots of space for books by the bed," says Lara. OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT A corner of the dressing room serves as Catherine's home office. "It's a place to deal with her paperwork," says Lara. "Many of us do that in the dining room, and the papers end up staying there, but Catherine can't because her dining room is visible to the entire first floor." Although the palette for the house is neutral, Lara injected some feminine fun by

upholstering the ottoman in pink. The relaxed Roman blind picks up on the colour and flirty mood with its bold pattern. OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT Like most older midtown Toronto homes, Catherine's house had hardly any closet space. But as a busy career woman, she needed a place to organize her wardrobe, especially for frequent business trips, so she opted to turn the second bedroom into a combination dressing room/home office. Built-in cabinetry from an organizing store maximizes storage; the ribbed glass lightens the bulk of the cabinetry. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT "I wanted



small spaces — maximize storage
Customize store-bought furniture. For more storage, Lara had glass shelves made to fit on existing wood rails in the night tables.

Every day, the space just works for me”
CATHERINE

it to be serene and calming," says Lara of the three-piece basement bathroom with luxurious walk-in shower. The floor tiles are long and linear to make the space look bigger, and a nifty niche above the toilet provides display and storage space. "Because of plumbing issues, the toilet is the first thing you see when you walk in, and that's never ideal," says Lara, "but by having something attractive above it, you draw attention upward." OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT Turn a negative into a positive:

Because the steps that lead to the main floor protrude into the corner of the ceiling, pot lights and sconces over the sink weren't an option. So Lara placed an attractive lamp on the vanity (a safe distance from the water source) to provide lighting and an unexpected decorative accent. The vanity is almost 5' long — smart planning in a 7½ sq. ft. room. Offsetting the sink allowed a longer stretch of countertop on one side of it, with a wide bank of drawers below. WHERE TO FIND IT, PAGE 94



small spaces — dual purposes
Catherine and Lara outfitted a corner of the small dressing room with a desk fashioned from the same built-in cabinetry.



small spaces — fool the eye
Extend the glass walls of a shower to the floor to enlarge a small bathroom. "The glass allows your gaze to move through the space," says Lara.

