

CREATING *Style Independence*

FOR YOUR HOME by Kris Brigden

Whether you live in condominium or a townhouse or a small inner-city home, it is the big city lifestyle that keeps you glued to your few thousand square feet. But is your style of life not unique? You are the same as every other homeowner, but your choice also implies that your lifestyle is vastly different from your counterpart living in the 'burbs.

The Life part seems easy; access to all the city has to offer without the burdens of keeping up a large home.

The Style part is the grey area – and I mean that literally. In keeping with the same thinking, odds are you also own a grey small-size sectional. Why? Because that's what you all do right? Maybe a pop of orange or lime green making an appearance in a cushion or two.

There are so many generalizations and myths attributed to small digs. The home furnishings and decor market continues to cater to these broad strokes. Make no mistake, creating a unique, stylish and personal space in any home can have its challenges; doing it in a small space is more difficult. Here are some helpful tips and guidelines to achieve small-space style independence:



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1 The good news? You need less stuff. The bad news? You have to get it right. Less stuff doesn't mean less effort. You don't have any miscellaneous rooms to hide the poor purchases. Start by preparing a budget on large pieces and accessories and stick to it.

2 Trade in your quest for space saving and focus on impact, size and scale. It is commonplace now to find small-size furnishings and tips for maximizing storage. Obviously this is important, but you shouldn't have to give up your style.

3 Transitional and contemporary furnishings for small spaces abound. Clean lines and texture can be predictable. Go with what you love, rather than what is expected. You will appreciate your home more if it reflects your tastes, not your neighbours'.

4 Paint it, furnish it and finish it like it's a house — not a box. Go a bit outside of your comfort zone, add patterns and colour. Bland is bland in any space.

5 Don't be afraid to use the walls. Often your advantage is high ceilings. Go ahead, put in a 16-inch deep built-in for storage, books, the TV and its related audio video components. You will save a ton of floor space, keep the linear feel and still be clutter free.

6 Use rugs to define areas. I know it usually goes kitchen, peninsula, dining table and then living room. Unlike a big house, you want to break up the space. Make those areas appear as they are separated.

7 Pull the furnishings off the wall if possible. Pull in the chairs, create conversation areas. You do not need all the space in the centre of the living room for the coffee table and one straight line for traffic flow to the balcony.

