

# CREATING STYLE INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUR CONDO

BY KRIS BRIGDEN



‘Condo Living is a lifestyle. What an interesting phrase. So if you own a condo, your style of life is not unique? You are the same as every other condo dweller, and it also implies that your lifestyle is vastly different from your counterpart living in the ‘Burb’s’.

The Life part seems easy; access to all the city has to offer, freedom from yard maintenance, the luxury of underground parking, an elevator ride to the gym or pool, all while someone ensures your security 24/7.

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 condo 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 high rise 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 condo style independence:

1. The good news- you need less ‘stuff’, 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, 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 condo 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 condo’s abound. Clean lines & 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 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.

Good luck condo people! The revolution has begun. You are different; you live different, and with any luck it will show. **CL**



Toronto and Muskoka-based designer **KRIS BRIGDEN** is principal of The Kris Brigden Design Co. & North Muskoka House Ltd. The firm is a full service residential design firm that works on small and full scale design projects throughout Northern Ontario and the GTA.

[northmuskokahouse.com](http://northmuskokahouse.com)