

* **BIG IDEAS FOR SMALL SPACES** P. 75 *

Canadian Living

**GET
YOUR
GARDEN
READY**

P. 86

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again!*

WE UPDATED
THIS CLASSIC
LEMON TART
P. 117

**COOK FOR
A CROWD**

**15
BEST
BRUNCH
RECIPES**

+

**6 NEW
WAYS TO
WEAR
A WHITE
SHIRT**

COULD A
CUDDLE **SAVE**
YOUR LIFE? P. 57



Home

SMALL SPACE, BIG STYLE

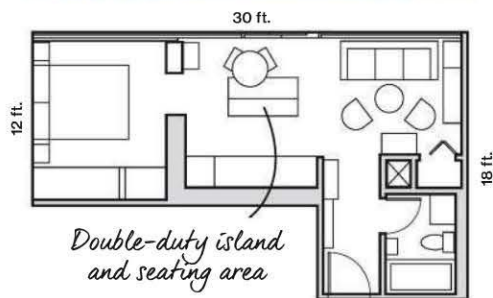
TV and radio host **Pay Chen** on living large in a tiny condo.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANI BUCHMAN

OLD SCHOOL

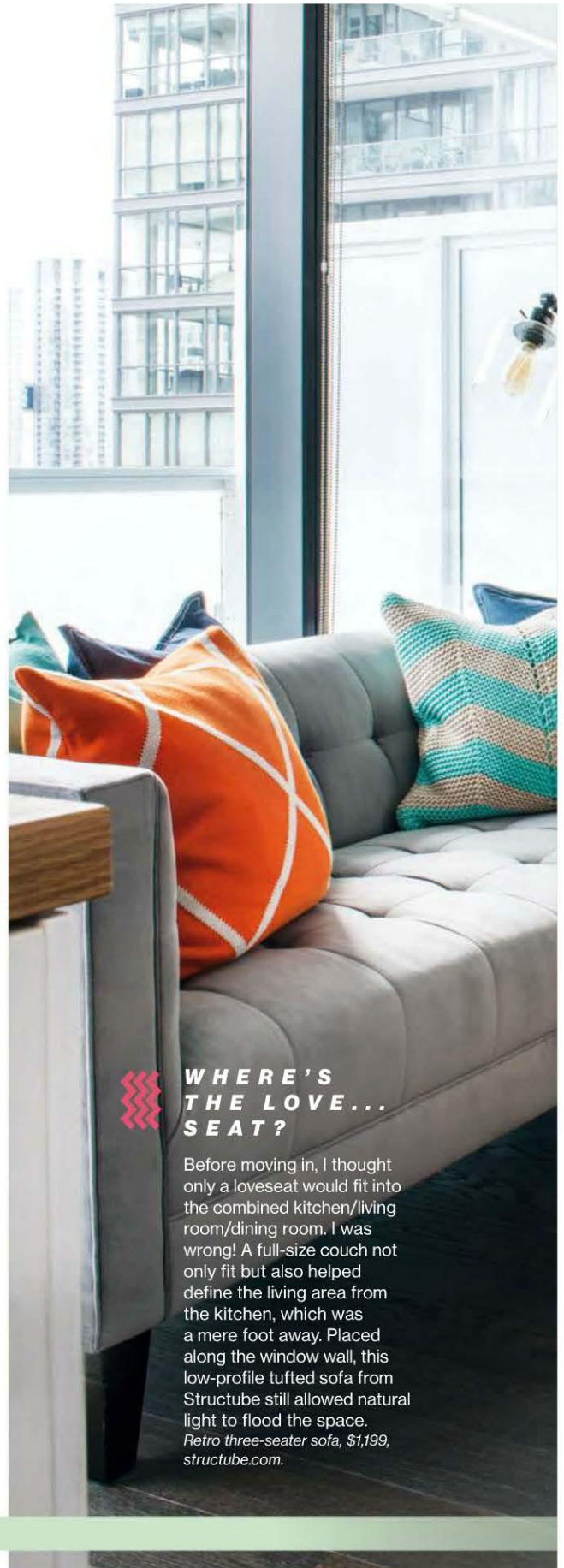
This chandelier and retro dining set add a vintage vibe.





Sometime between buying a 500-square-foot one-bedroom condo off floor plans and the four years it took to build it, I feared my new pad wouldn't have enough space to suit my work-at-home lifestyle. The condo, constructed smack in the middle of downtown Toronto, had great access to everything—except a decent closet. And there were other issues, too: Floor-to-ceiling windows let in a ton of light but left little wall space for furniture placement; the small galley kitchen was shy on storage for my essential spices, cake sprinkles and collectibles; and there wasn't enough of a counter to house a coffeemaker *and* bake cookies. I thought my life was ruined.

I knew I had to create more storage and maximize my living space, but I didn't have a clue how to do it. So I hired designer Melissa Davis, who has revamped many small homes as a designer for HGTV Canada's *Income Property*. One of the biggest challenges was that, as a food writer and a TV host, I spend a lot of time working from home. That means my little condo has to double as a test kitchen—without it looking like the storage room of a grocery store. In less than two months, my condo was transformed into a home that feels roomier and functions for every aspect of my life.



WHERE'S THE LOVE... SEAT?

Before moving in, I thought only a loveseat would fit into the combined kitchen/living room/dining room. I was wrong! A full-size couch not only fit but also helped define the living area from the kitchen, which was a mere foot away. Placed along the window wall, this low-profile tufted sofa from Structube still allowed natural light to flood the space.

Retro three-seater sofa, \$1,199, structube.com.





ISLAND DREAMS

My diminutive kitchen sorely needed storage and prep space. Melissa answered the call by designing an island made up of Ikea kitchen cabinets and topped with a butcher block. At approximately 1½ by five feet, the island more than doubled my counter space without overwhelming the room. On the other side of the island, small upper cabinets were mounted on the floor for extra seating, creating a banquette in the dining area. Strewn with pretty cushions, this spot is perfect for working or gathering with friends. *Kitchen island (Sektion cabinets, Råsdal doors and Säljan countertop), starting at \$900, ikea.ca.*



SPICE FACTOR

Even if your kitchen has only three drawers, you don't need to choose between owning spices and owning utensils. A drawer is freed up for cutlery and other culinary goodies with the addition of this sleek spice rack, installed on the narrow concrete wall.



PRIVACY, PLEASE

A sliding glass door may be an efficient use of space, but even with a semi-opaque finish, I found it too transparent for a bedroom. I wanted a rustic barn-board door, but the expense didn't fit my budget. The next best thing? Removable peel-and-stick wallpaper with a barn-board look, which fulfilled the need for privacy. This is an inexpensive way to dress up an otherwise boring door—just remember to read the instructions carefully and take your time with the application. JP London uStrip peel-and-stick barn-board wall decal, \$72, amazon.ca.



PLAYING FAVOURITES

Open shelving in the kitchen and bedroom is perfect for my collection of jars, bowls and animal-shaped decor items. If you want to prevent your keepsakes from looking like clutter, display your favourite pieces and corral the rest in cupboards and cabinets. To keep things feeling fresh, rotate your displayed tchotchkes from time to time.



LOBSTER ROLL

A boring off-white entryway got a face-lift with the loudest, most unique wallpaper I could find—a custom lobster print gifted by my designer friend Janette Ewen of Parker Barrow. Not only is it bright and fun but it also reminds me of my childhood in Nova Scotia; I can't say that we decorated with crustaceans, but we sure did eat them.



FOR MORE TIPS ON DECORATING SMALL SPACES, VISIT canadianliving.com/smallspace.



BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Adding custom cabinetry to increase bedroom storage can get pricey. Melissa's more affordable solution was to use Ikea cabinets spruced up with colourful hardware—a custom feel without the custom price. Having lots of closed storage means no one has to know that a slow cooker, baking sheets and an ice cream maker have taken up residence above my bed.

BRIGHT IDEA!

*Wall sconces
free up table
space.*