

Condo design myths debunked



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THE INCOME RENOVATOR

Of all my design clients, condos by far bring me the most diverse homeowners. These compact homes with no maintenance, excellent security and the comfort in not needing to be handy or possess a green thumb are extremely desirable.

Yet, I will also say the stereotypical millennial seen in all the condo ads has not one time been the face that actually greets me at their new door.

More often than not, it's retirees and snowbirds happily trading their large home for this city pad.

There are also a lot of singles transitioning after a breakup or making a career change, or it's the 30-something couple who are using it as a stepping stone to buy into the housing market.

What they all have in common is that they either come from a larger space or wish they were in a larger space. Here then are my top three condo design myths, debunked.

Myth 1: You'll have to stop having dinner parties. So many of my clients presume they'll have to resign themselves to only inviting one couple over at a time to huddle around a version of the tiny chrome and glass dining they saw in the model suite. It's just not true. We may need to be creative — opting for an extendable table that can shrink and grow as the guest list does or streamlining with a bench on one side — but I promise there is always a way.

Myth 2: You can only buy small furniture. Oh, if I had a quarter for every condo I've seen with 15 teeny tiny pieces of furniture in one small living room. Too many separate pieces look cluttered and only works to make the space seem smaller and busier than a few standard sized pieces would. In fact, a streamlined sectional is often the best solu-

tion as it can hug the walls, but still allow for ample seating. Keep the pieces simple and tailored, but don't be afraid to buy grownup sized!

Myth 3: Your condo is too new and generic to have character. The beauty of older homes is the built-in character. A few hundred Victorian renos later I can tell you with character comes expensive hidden problems; knob and tube, shifting foundations. If you have the patience

and budget, they will pay you back with claw foot tubs and existing mouldings. Here's the thing, all of those things can be added to your condo. Think of it as a blank slate (with straight walls and electrical to code!) Go ahead and add a lovely applied moulding in the living room. You can renovate the washroom as long as you keep the plumbing locations in their existing locations. Why not install

a reclaimed claw foot tub if that's what you love. Like an artist with a blank white canvas you truly can create whatever your imagination can dream up.

— *Celebrity designer Melissa Davis is well-known for appearances and her creative design work on several HGTV shows. For more information, visit www.melissadavis.com.*

Bring your design dilemma to Melissa Davis at the Fall Home Show at the Better Living Centre from October 1-4. Melissa will be participating in the Upcycle Challenge: Table-tastic. Visit www.fallhomeshow.com for details



Always allow for ample seating, a few nice pieces can go a long way regardless of the size of your condo living area.



Condos need not lack character. Think of it as a blank white canvas where you can truly create whatever your imagination can dream up.



Use a few good standard-size pieces. Too many separate pieces look cluttered and only work to make the space seem smaller and busier than it needs to be.