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Condo Design Myths

Debunked

By Melissa Davis

Toronto-based celebrity designer and contractor Melissa Davis, is known for her appearances, creative design and reno work produced for various HGTV shows. Her work has been profiled nationally in print publications. With almost two decades of reno & design experience her firm continues to service clientele throughout Ontario & GTA, specializing in value-adding ROI and resale consultations www.melissadavis.com @melissadavis

Of all my design clients, condos by far bring me the most diverse homeowners. Oddly, the stereotypical millennial featured in condo ads has never been my client. More often it's retirees and snowbirds happily trading their large home for a city pad. There are also single people transitioning after a breakup or making a career change, and 30-something couples using the condo as a stepping stone to buy into the housing market. What these clients have in common is that they either come from a larger space or wish they were in a larger space.

With a little help from my condo clients, I've identified – and debunked – the top three condo design myths.

MYTH 1

You'll have to stop giving dinner parties

So many of my clients think that they'll have to resign themselves to inviting one couple over at a time to huddle around a version of the tiny chrome and glass dining table they saw in the model suite. But it's just not true. The solution requires creative thinking – opting, for example, 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

If I only had a quarter for every condo I've seen with 15 tiny pieces of furniture in one small living room. Too many separate pieces look cluttered and make the space seem smaller and busier than a few standard-sized pieces would. In fact, a streamlined sectional is often the best solution because it can hug the walls while allowing ample seating. Keep the pieces simple and tailored, but don't be afraid to buy grown-up sizes!



MYTH 3

Your condo is too new and generic to have character

The beauty of older homes is the built-in character. But with a few hundred Victorian renos behind me, I can tell you that with character come expensive hidden problems. You may enjoy your old-world claw-foot tub and exquisite mouldings, but here's the thing – those charming features can be added to your condo. Think of your condo as a blank slate. Go ahead and add a lovely applied moulding in the living room. And why not install a reclaimed claw-foot tub? Just be sure to keep the plumbing in its existing locations. Like an artist with a blank white canvas, let your imagination be your guide.

