

"I'm used to **challenges**, and designing for **small spaces** is a challenge that I love taking on

Over the years, I've developed a checklist that makes the process much easier," says Yanic Simard, Principle Designer and Founder of the Toronto Interior Design Group.

If you're like me and looking for ways to maximize the space in your home and to introduce that wow factor, this article may be of some help to you. I sat down with Yanic, who has over a decade of experience working with clients, many of which live in smaller spaces, to get some practical suggestions.

"Once we've gone through my checklist and re-designed the space, clients are always surprised at how functional and beautiful their space has become. The first thing to do is take everything out that you haven't used in the last six months. Only keep what you know you're going to use.

"The next step is to create reflective light. Put up a large mirror to increase the sense of space and position it across from a large-sized window so light bounces off of it, visually pushing the boundaries of the room. You can also add chrome or glossy pieces to bring bling into the room. With one glittery item reflecting off the other, the

light will travel and create a feeling of openness.

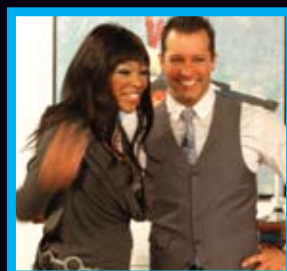
"Consider transparent furniture, such as polycarbonate or acrylic, which create unobstructed views. I love polycarbonate chairs. When they're positioned in front of a window, you can still enjoy the view and they look great. There's no limit to the amount of transparent tables and chairs you can use as long as they're functional. Select furniture with legs that are clear to give the illusion of length and bring in more light.

"I find that a common issue always seems to be a lack of storage space. This is where you can get creative and use the space under your furniture or buy an ottoman with a lift top. Also, a good closet organizer will store twice the amount of clothing. "As a designer, I often find that home owners forget to use the vertical space on their walls. Walls offer vertical layers of storage space that can look nice when used efficiently. It takes clutter off the floor and helps for better organization. Use long shelves to visually increase the horizontal span and length of the wall, but only display items that look nice and are needed on a daily basis.

"When it comes to decorating, try to unify the look by using the same paint colour in the main



Small Space SOLUTIONS



Designing a **small scale retreat** with celebrity designer **Yanic Simard**

story by **Jennifer Erxleben**

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“ I love working with chairs. I have **16 chairs** in a **640 sq. ft.** Victorian home in Bloor West and it *doesn't feel crowded*.



◀ areas of your home. Benjamin Moore's Classic Grey OC-23 (flat) is my personal favourite for creating the illusion of height, visually pushing the ceiling higher. For trim, use the same colour in semi-gloss as it breathes lighter and is more reflective. Sometimes I even paint the ceiling in a flat finish.

“Keep decor consistent, from paint to accessories, so your eyes flow nicely from one side of the room to the other. Create a pleasing space and your guests won't focus on the size, rather on the furnishings. I always tell people to pick and choose trends that make you feel good. Your home is meant to be lived in. It's not a museum. Mixing old and new, and high and low priced furnishings is what brings in personality.

“You can also add personality to a space by using interesting pieces that are multi-purpose. Vintage is a hot look right now. Chinese stools are good as side tables, but put three together and they become a coffee table or function as seating when guests are over. Make sure to never over-furnish and only bring in pieces that serve a purpose.

“I love working with chairs. I have 16 chairs in a 640 square foot Victorian home in Bloor West and it doesn't feel crowded. It's all in how you use and position them. Small, sculpted chairs are good to have on hand. When people are over, there are always enough places to sit. But when it's just me, it doesn't feel like I have 16 chairs. I find Ghost chairs by Philippe Starck are both nice to look at and to sit in. Many people forget about this and have a big sofa, which can only fit three people. I've designed my space so that I even have room for my newest addition, a Schnoodle named Mia.

“One last piece of advice is don't be afraid to spend money on custom work. Having custom furniture built will make your room more functional and beautiful because it's been specially designed for the size and shape of the space.

“Often there's a myth that when designing for a small space you'll spend less, because there's less room. The truth is you may end up spending more because you have to pay attention to every detail.” Yanic says.

Yanic Simard can be seen regularly as a design guest expert on CityLine and has been featured in many Canadian and international publications. For some inspiring ideas, visit his website at tidg.ca, and you can also follow him on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. GL

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