

# THE *best of both* WORLDS

Empty nesters trade in a little square footage for a lot of freedom and a spectacular view

BY PAUL SEMKULEY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA PETROLE



**T**he time comes for most empty nesters when they contemplate downsizing. Raising a family was amazing, but with less responsibilities and more time for retirement, a house and all the work that goes with it isn't as interesting or appealing.

That was not entirely the case with this particular client; moving from a 3,500-square-foot home to a 2,500-square-foot condo allowed them to keep the feeling of a grand house, with the luxury and amenities of a condo, in addition to providing them with amazing views of the city from their incredible 2,400-square-foot terrace.

One of the challenges with this project was to ensure flow of this large suite that had been renovated and combined with a second suite nearly 10 years ago.

As we walk through their space, I begin to get a sense of the scale and spatial positioning within. My thoughts kept going to colour flow and how it will impact the entire suite.

With most condos today being more open rather than divided by the formality of separate rooms, having the right colour flow will make the space look and feel bigger than it actually is. That doesn't mean that you can't have a different colour somewhere else, it just needs to be complementary.

The long hallway connecting these two suites was papered in a coarse and natural brick-coloured grass cloth.

It led to the less formal areas of the study, media room and guest bedrooms. Custom bookcases and a desk were also designed and installed just past this long corridor, in the second suite's dining room, which utilized this redundant dead space to the fullest. This provided the opportunity to keep two guest rooms for family members when they come to Toronto for visits, rather than taking over one of them.

Having lived in China for several years, our client had acquired a lovely collection of Asian art, furniture and antiques. Both ends of the hallway are anchored by two of these pieces of artwork. Instead of giving Asian influences to





the entire condo, we intermixed these pieces with contemporary, transitional pieces, as well as some Victorian pieces to keep their home, fresh, current and interesting.

Highlights and accents of this reddish hue have been used in the bath linens and area carpets throughout these spaces. We kept the furniture and wall colouring to warm, neutral grey, providing flexibility to introduce a third complementary colour. The ceiling in the main entrance foyer was finished in a stronger red-and-gold antiqued wallpaper and crystal flush-mount lights that bring additional luminosity and formality to the space.

The living room has both south and west exposure, allowing for magical snowfalls against the cityscape and spectacular glowing sunsets in the summer sky. In choosing the wall colour, I was moved by how light and airy the sky looked; I wanted the living room to be an extension of this soft, beautiful feeling.

With accents of blue and red found throughout their collection of artwork, we were able to allow these to become our pops of colour, bringing cohesion to the rooms. You will also notice that we used the same carpet for both living and dining rooms to give the illusion of one large area carpet.

The master bedroom took on the same tones and hues of the living room, but with more emphasis on the blues, creating a dreamy soft and sophisticated master retreat.

Over time, most of us will end up moving into smaller quarters, and purging unneeded furniture, but if you happen to come across a palace in the sky, go for it. Finding solutions to how this works for your living needs should be left to the professionals, decorators and realtors alike, so that you can enjoy the future and all that it has to offer. ♦



**SOURCES**

**ANTIQUE BRONZE SIDE TABLE**, [unionlightingandfurnishings.com](http://unionlightingandfurnishings.com); **GREY TABLE LAMP**, [elte.com](http://elte.com); **DRAPERY AND VALANCES**, **MASTER BEDROOM CUSTOM HEADBOARD**, **OFFICE CUSTOM BUILT-INS**, [resourcelifestyles.com](http://resourcelifestyles.com); **HALLWAY WALLPAPER**, Kravet (Trade Only); **BEDDING AND SHAMS**, [aulitfinelinens.com](http://aulitfinelinens.com); **EURO SHAMS AND COVERLET**, [elte.com](http://elte.com); **BEDSIDE TABLES**, [unionlightingandfurnishings.com](http://unionlightingandfurnishings.com)

Paul Semkuley, a Toronto-based interior stylist and principal of re:source lifestyles, successfully incorporates the client's existing collection of furniture and family treasures in unique and unpredictable ways. [resourcelifestyles.com](http://resourcelifestyles.com)

