

# LIVING LARGE IN A SMALL SPACE

Even the tiniest rooms can feel spacious. Our expert team shows two young condo owners how to get the most out of their limited space.

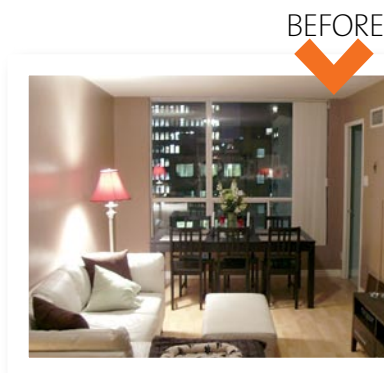
BY KAREN KIRK | DESIGNED BY JEFFREY FISHER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL CHMIELOWEIC



The contrasting dark wood floor complements the light furniture and neutral colour scheme. Attention to scale and placement of furniture is key when decorating small spaces.

It's about feeling, not size. Even a large space can feel cramped and disorganized if all the elements aren't well thought out and planned," says Jeffrey Fisher, designer and owner of Jeffrey Fisher Home. Along with his sister, Deborah Fisher, Jeffrey set out to help homeowners Robin and Jake in their quest to transform their small condo into a more visually dynamic and multifunctional space. This creative young couple spends long days in theatre rehearsals and evenings on stage, so it's important for them come home to a stylishly comfortable, organized space – but they also love to entertain. Finding new ways to make the most of the space was key to the success of this makeover.

The Fishers' challenge was to identify inherent design problems and devise creative and practical solutions that would make for a coherent home – with a feeling of space. Here's how they did it.



An unused nook in the living room is now an attractive sitting area complete with a comfy swivel chair, wine bar and colourful nesting table. An ornate mirror reflects the room's details.

## Living/Dining Room

### PROBLEMS:

The blond laminate flooring was dated, noisy underfoot and didn't complement the light-and-airy furniture style the couple wanted for their condo. The long, narrow space lacked architectural detail and a focal point. The layout of oversized furnishings was awkward and not conducive to entertaining. The large north-facing window at the end of the room provided the only source of natural light; covering it for privacy purposes was a dilemma. A single ceiling fixture was the only light source for the entire room, making it difficult to create ambience and provide light for specific areas.

### SOLUTIONS:

**1 | Design the Space**  
Replacing all the flooring throughout the condo with wide-plank engineered wood, stained dark walnut, adds continuity and sophistication to the living/dining room. Crown moulding and deep baseboards throughout the condo lend a refined look and beautifully frame the feature wall, which has been papered with a large-scale metallic print. The opposite wall, painted a light neutral grey, reflects the natural light and keeps the space bright and airy.  
**Moulding, Elite Trimworks. Flooring, Metropolitan Hardwood Floors Kentwood Collection, Carpet One Floor** ▶

and Home. Paint, Para Paints. Wallpaper, Graham and Brown. Painting, Divine Painters.

## 2 | Establish Zones

The heavy black table and chairs were too large for the dining area and were replaced with a smaller glass-and-chrome table, which easily expands from seating for two to dining for six. Less cumbersome stackable scoop-back chairs in a bright canary yellow add a fresh infusion of colour to the otherwise neutral decor. Yellow accents are repeated throughout the room in accessories and nesting tables in the small sitting area. A bar cabinet with removable tray provides much-needed additional storage. An upholstered, swivel armchair offers additional and flexible seating that's just the right size for the tiny sitting area (see page 223).

**Glass table, Casalife. Chairs, yellow nesting tables and bar cabinet, all West Elm. Swivel chair, Zilli Home Interiors. Frame for mirror, Ikea.**

## 3 | Let in the Light

A simple-yet-elegant patterned sheer, designed for the large window, softens the entire room, simultaneously providing privacy, while allowing diffused light in during the day. The addition of side tables and lamps at either end of the sofa means there are more flexible lighting options and places to set drinks or accessories (see page 222).

**Drapery fabric, Robert Allen Design. Draperies by Jeffrey Fisher Home. Silver table lamps, Zilli Home Interiors.**

## 4 | Create a Focal Point

Jeffrey achieved balance in the narrow room by creating a focal point opposite the feature wall with large leather sofa. Wall-mounted above a modern, clean-burning EcoSmart Fire fireplace is a super-thin LED TV, sound bar and DVD player that takes up no more room than a piece of art. The fireplace is flanked by two white storage cabinets with glass-front doors lined with matching wallpaper, giving the illusion of a single wall unit.

**LED TV, sound bar and DVD player, all Samsung. Fireplace, EcoSmart Fire. Cabinets, Ikea.**



This state-of-the-art TV can be switched to "art mode" when your program is over. It's the perfect complement to a cosy fireplace setting.

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Designer Jeffrey Fisher and sister Deborah Fisher of Jeffrey Fisher Home. See Jeffrey's tour of the condo on CTV's "Canada AM."

FOR SHOPPING INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 230



## Entrance Hall

### PROBLEMS:

The long, narrow entrance hall was poorly lit and failed to create a warm welcome. The mirrored closet doors that ran the length of the hall served little purpose, as there was nothing of interest on the opposite wall to reflect, which made the entrance feel lopsided. The beige ceramic tile floor didn't complement the blond laminate flooring in the living room, resulting in a rather choppy look.

### SOLUTION:

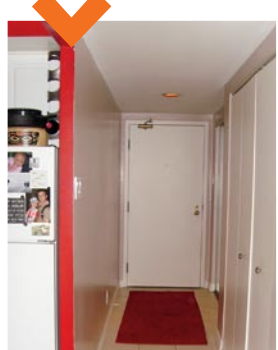
The new engineered-wood flooring that runs throughout the condo visually expands and unifies the home. The formerly plain wall opposite the closet doors is now a stunning feature wall, with moulding in a simple-yet-classic panelled design. Wood-framed frosted-glass closet doors mimic the wall design opposite and create a more sophisticated and welcoming entrance. The hall closet interiors were painted a sunny yellow and fitted with organizers to maximize storage. A new quiet Energy Star-rated stacking washer and dryer fit snugly into the laundry closet, which doubles as a pantry across from the kitchen (see page 227).

**Moulding, Elite Trimworks. Paint, Para Paints. Closet doors, shelving and Samsung washer/dryer, all Lowe's. Hoover Stick Vac, Hoover Vacuums.**



If Sophie – the official greeter could talk – she'd say that the entrance has gone from bland to grand with the addition of classic moulding details, gleaming hardwood floors and elegant wood-and-glass closet doors.

BEFORE



A glass-and-chrome dining table easily collapses or expands as needed, and stacking chairs can be stored when not in use.



Want to see more of this condo? Check out bonus photos and get some fresh small-space decor tips online.

[www.canadianliving.com/november](http://www.canadianliving.com/november)

## Kitchen

### PROBLEMS:

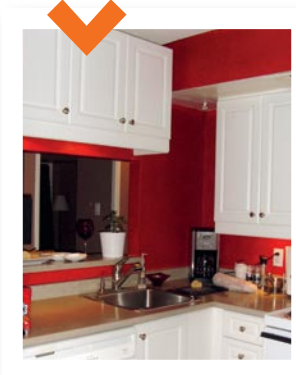
The compact five- by five-foot kitchen was painted a dark red, which exaggerated the sense of being cramped. With no backsplash, poor lighting, inefficient appliances, dull laminate countertops and a bland ceramic tile floor, the kitchen was lacklustre and dated. "Like the rest of the condo," says Jeffrey, "the kitchen didn't reflect the style, energy and sophistication of the young professional couple who live here."

### SOLUTIONS:

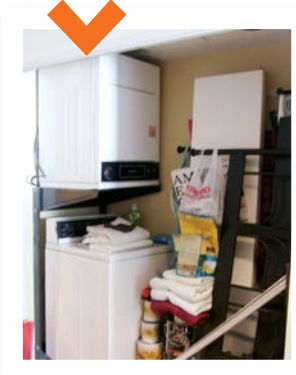
The kitchen required a bit more time-consuming structural work than the other rooms. To save time – and money – Jeffrey and Deborah took the couple on a one-stop shopping blitz at Lowe's. "This chain offers custom options that are affordable, especially in this case, as the space was small, and it was a less mind-boggling experience for the young couple because all the supplies, appliances and materials are displayed and readily available in one place," says Deborah. The wood floor was extended into the kitchen, and walls were lightened to create the illusion of a larger space. Glitz and glam were added to the kitchen with the purchase of new energy-efficient, stainless-steel appliances which also increase the functionality of the tiny kitchen. A special-order backsplash, new cabinet hardware, a deep sink and modern pull-out faucet are details that define this kitchen's fresh, modern look. As a special touch, the laminate countertop was replaced with urban-chic quartz, which is more durable and easier to maintain. **Samsung range, microwave and dishwasher; backsplash; countertop; cabinet hardware; sink; and faucet; all Lowe's. Small appliances, Hamilton Beach.**



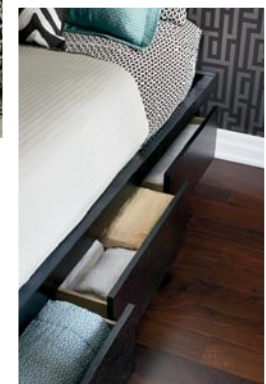
BEFORE



BEFORE



Crown moulding and deep baseboards add classic detailing and style to the room.



The platform bed with six large built-in drawers provides much-needed storage.

well against the drama created by the graphic cocoa-and-pewter patterned wallpaper on all three walls. “The use of a dark paper on all walls actually makes the room feel larger,” says Jeffrey. The wallpaper treatment also helped make the indent in the wall less noticeable and easier to decorate.

**Floors, Metropolitan Hardwood Floors Kentwood Collection, Carpet One Floor and Home. Wallpaper, Graham and Brown.**

## 2 | Define Spaces

Two areas were created in the long and narrow bedroom: a comfy sitting room and a quiet sleeping area. To maximize the space, the oversize electric fireplace and ornate iron bed were removed. A sleek and functional platform bed with six storage drawers was placed against the wall at the entrance to the room. The original dark dresser was painted a bright teal with a glossy finish and set into the recessed wall. A larger, thin flat-screen TV sits atop the dresser and is a more suitable size for the area. Across from the dresser a double lounge chair completes the cosy sitting room for two. Nightstands on either side of the bed provide additional

storage, and adjustable table lamps offer flexible lighting options. **Bed, Casalife. Table lamps, Ikea. LED TV, Samsung. Lounger cushions, Londén. Bed cushions, Jeffrey Fisher Home. Silver table, HomeSense. Paint for dresser, Para Paints.**

## 3 | Choose Fabrics that Work

Picking up on the dresser colour, window coverings in a fresh teal are lined with white black-out fabric, and the bedding and cushions are a mix of white, brown and teal to keep the room feeling warm and relaxed.

**Drapery fabric, Robert Allen Design. Draperies, Jeffrey Fisher Home.**

# Bedroom

## PROBLEMS:

The size of the room, which is generous enough for two, wasn't the problem. The issues were the scale, style and placement of the furnishings, which restricted traffic flow and didn't define a style or suit the needs of the homeowners. Dark, heavy furniture, bedding and window coverings drained the space of any energy and provided scant comfort – little did the homeowners realize there are more attractive ways to black out a room than with black curtains. A lack of convenient storage made it hard to keep the room tidy and organized.

## SOLUTIONS:

### 1 | Create a Style

Continuing the dark wood floors into the bedroom makes the room easier to maintain than a carpeted space and plays

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## Where We Got It

● **DESIGNERS:** Jeffrey Fisher, Jeffrey Fisher Home, Toronto, (416) 362-4663, [www.jeffreyfisherhome.com](http://www.jeffreyfisherhome.com), with sister Deborah Fisher. **Flooring,** Kentwood Collection engineered prefinished wide-plank American Walnut Natural Elite by Metropolitan Hardwood Floors, [www.metrofloors.com](http://www.metrofloors.com); available through Carpet One Floor and Home, [www.carpetone.com](http://www.carpetone.com). **Painting,** Divine Painters, Toronto, (416) 994-9636, [www.divinepainters.com](http://www.divinepainters.com). **Wallpaper hanging,** David's Alpha Decorating, Mississauga, Ont., (905) 820-6158. **Moulding and installation,** Elite Trimworks, [www.elitetrimworks.com](http://www.elitetrimworks.com).

● **PAGES 222 TO 224:** LED TV, home theatre sound bar, Blu-ray player, Samsung, [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com). **Fireplace,** EcoSmart Fire, [www.ecosmartfire.com](http://www.ecosmartfire.com). **Chair, silver ball table lamps and marble-top end table,** Zilli Home Interiors, [www.zillihome.com](http://www.zillihome.com). **Extendable glass table,** Casalife, [www.casalife.com](http://www.casalife.com). **Wine bar cabinet, yellow scoop-back chairs, yellow nesting tables, silver bowl on dining table, white ceramic planter, silk parrot pillow and leopard-print pillows,** West Elm, [www.westelm.com](http://www.westelm.com). **Storage cabinets, black frame (above bar cabinet with mirror) and candlesticks,** Ikea, [www.ikea.ca](http://www.ikea.ca). **Drapery sheers,** Perfect Touch in Dew, Robert Allen Design, [www.robertalldesign.com](http://www.robertalldesign.com). **Custom draperies,** Jeffrey Fisher Home, [www.jeffreyfisherhome.com](http://www.jeffreyfisherhome.com). **Wallpaper (Mystique in Slate),** Graham and Brown, [www.grahamandbrown.com](http://www.grahamandbrown.com). **Paint (Network Access, P5222-24),** Para Paints, [www.para.com](http://www.para.com).

● **PAGE 226:** Closet doors in espresso finish with frosted glass, Reliablit Asian Series from Concept SGA, [www.sga.ca](http://www.sga.ca); Lowe's, [www.lowes.ca](http://www.lowes.ca). **Glass dining table,** Casalife, [www.casalife.com](http://www.casalife.com). **Scoop-back yellow chairs,** West Elm, [www.westelm.com](http://www.westelm.com).

● **PAGE 227:** Backsplash tile, F2D Freeway in Riverbed, Elements 2 Design, [www.e2d.ca](http://www.e2d.ca); installation by PEG Corporation, [www.pegreno.com](http://www.pegreno.com). **Cabinet hardware,** Amerock; Kindred Franke EuroPro stainless-steel sink; Price Pfister Mystique pull-down faucet; DuPont



Zodiaq quartz countertop in Crema Botticino, installation by Uniform Custom Countertops, [www.uniformcustom.com](http://www.uniformcustom.com); Samsung stainless-steel electric convection range; Samsung stainless-steel microwave; and Samsung stainless-steel dishwasher; all Lowe's, [www.lowes.ca](http://www.lowes.ca). **Toaster, coffeemaker and kettle,** Hamilton Beach, [www.hamiltonbeach.com](http://www.hamiltonbeach.com). **Paint (Memory Overload, P5222-34D),** Para Paints, [www.para.com](http://www.para.com). **Washer and dryer,** Samsung, [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com). **Vacuum,** Hoover Vacuums, [www.hoover.com](http://www.hoover.com). **Shelving,** ClosetMaid Completions, Lowe's [www.lowes.ca](http://www.lowes.ca). **Paint (Sun Silk, P5054-24D),** Para Paints, [www.para.com](http://www.para.com).

● **PAGE 228:** Liberty storage bed, Casalife, [www.casalife.com](http://www.casalife.com). **Drapery fabric (Pot Holder in Tide),** Robert Allen Design, [www.robertalldesign.com](http://www.robertalldesign.com). **Custom draperies,** Jeffrey Fisher Home, [www.jeffreyfisherhome.com](http://www.jeffreyfisherhome.com). **Teal euroshams and cushions on lounge,** Nygård for Londén, [www.londeninc.com](http://www.londeninc.com). **Wallpaper (Illusion in Cocoa),** Graham and Brown, [www.grahamandbrown.com](http://www.grahamandbrown.com). **Sheets,** HomeSense, [www.homesense.com](http://www.homesense.com). **Dresser (painted in Splash Mountain semigloss, P5108-52,** Para Paints, [www.para.com](http://www.para.com)), Benjamin Furniture Refinishing, Toronto, (416) 745-2559. **Silver ceramic side table,** HomeSense, [www.homesense.com](http://www.homesense.com). **Bedside table lamp,** Ikea, [www.ikea.ca](http://www.ikea.ca). **White pierced ceramic vase,** West Elm, [www.westelm.com](http://www.westelm.com). ●