

CREATING AN URBAN PIED-À-TERRE

Designer makes the most of a small space

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“It’s a minimal style of living and a refreshing change.”

The kitchen was hemmed in by plaster walls, says designer Paul Kenning Stewart, describing some of the difficulty in the six-month-long renovation. Only a column remains, leaving a space that opens up to a room that is both a living room and a child’s part-time bedroom.

BY PHILIP FINE
PHOTOGRAPHY: BRANDON BARRÉ
STYLING: PAUL KENNING STEWART





The view from the front door is of the entire condo, including kitchen and living room. The kitchen's cabinets are from Fabritec's Urban Collection. Refrigerator: Kitchen Aide; stove: Kenmore. The maple flooring is from Laurentian.

PAUL KENNING STEWART WAS HIRED TO REDESIGN a kitchen that had, let's say, a few shortcomings. The galley kitchen's fridge, apartment-size range and pantry were all aligned against a wall; a narrow arched entrance hemmed in the already small space; and the plumbing, ventilation and an electrical panel took up prime storage area.

A designer fluent in the "art of hiding warts," Kenning Stewart was primed. "I love a challenge," he says.

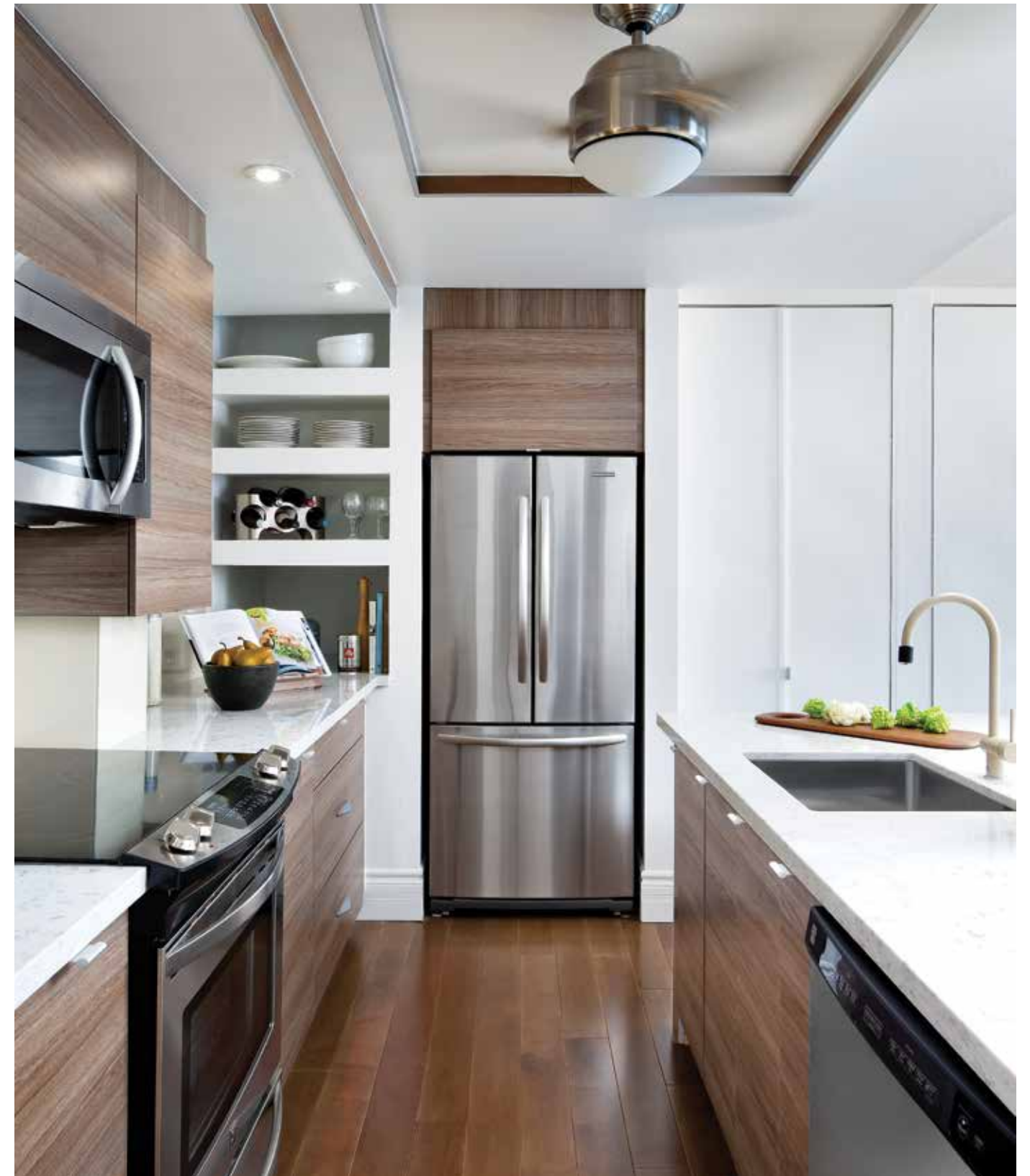
The kitchen project was part of an 800-square-foot condo renovation that would become a second residence for Giovanna Artuso and Paul Bates. The family had moved to London, Ont. with their six-year-old daughter, Sienna, but since Paul was keeping his legal practice in Toronto, the Rosedale "fixer-upper" was a necessary purchase.

It now acts as a weekday pied-à-terre for Paul, a place for the couple to occasionally entertain in, and a home in which Sienna can sleep and play when the whole family is together in the city.

Kenning Stewart met all the challenges and made the poky old kitchen functional and open. He judiciously borrowed space from other parts of the condo, used recesses and removed some unnecessary obstructions, a task that would prove challenging for builder Paul McAloon who brought down the seemingly indestructible walls.

The kitchen is a stylish melange of maple floors, polar-bear white walls, embossed laminate cabinets in a fawn tone, and a cream-coloured back-painted glass wall.

One of the decisions that proved most beneficial was having the island serve as kitchen table. It was a natural compromise, given the casual ambience in this secondary residence and the limited amount of available space. Kenning Stewart and the homeowners also decided to put a curve in the island to allow the three people sitting around it to see each other without craning their necks. ☞





“I love a challenge.”

The island was also incorporated well into the rest of the space: the three stools’ seats are covered in a shade of white leather that mimics the living room sofa, and the island’s sides are clad in the same five-inch planks as the kitchen flooring.

The kitchen sink is built into the island as is the dishwasher, which leaves

lots of room for counter space by the glass wall. Kenning Stewart also designed 30-inch-deep open shelves in an alcove next to that wall for small appliances and to prevent counter clutter.

Space-saving ideas and storage opportunities don’t stop there. Twin 36-inch-wide and 30-inch-deep, full-height closets were built at the edge of the kitchen; one is used for pantry items and the other, utilities.

A cabinet was installed on each side of the range. One covers the unit’s ventilation duct and the new electrical panel.

On the sublime side of the aesthetic work, Kenning Stewart installed a thin wood frame around the ceiling fan, the back of the entire kitchen and along the edge of the ceiling. It helps define the kitchen space and adds smart detailing.

All those decisions, from form to function, pleased the couple, with Giovanna applauding the designer for all his great decisions. “Paul is all about the details,” she says.

Giovanna, who had previously been living in a 5,500-square-foot home, says the small space works well. “I know where everything is,” she says. “It’s a minimal style of living and a refreshing change.”

Small appliances and dishes fit into a 30-inch-deep recess, one more space-saving idea from designer Paul Kenning Stewart. (Opposite) The biscuit-coloured faucet with pull-out spout is from Blanco.