

STORY **ADRIENNE BROWN**
 PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**
 STYLING **NICOLETTE VAN OYEN**

SMALL SIZE, BIG STYLE

When Darcy Chelchowski decided to downsize from a four-bedroom home with a large yard and big pool, she knew she wanted something more manageable that still had lots of room for visiting family, including grandchildren.

She found the perfect spot in downtown Cambridge, a tall townhouse-style condo with two spare bedrooms and a smaller outdoor living space. Plus, she's walking distance to the market and to her favourite shops and galleries, where she finds unique pieces for her home. **The Art of Home** and **Cornerstone Home Interiors** are both just down the street.

In fact, that's where she met designer **Nicolette van Oyen**, owner of **JUSTLIVE Interior Design**, while shopping at Cornerstone. Nicolette helped Chelchowski tackle a top-to-bottom renovation and redecorating project in her new home, starting with the front hall. "Just simple details like a pretty patterned wallpaper and painted panel detailing make a big difference and add style right on entry," says van Oyen.

Just inside the home's entrance, she also gave the powder room a facelift. Behind this is one spare bedroom, then the stairs leading up to the main living space – a challenge to decorate, but ultimately van Oyen's favourite space in the home. "I love the way the calm

contemporary grey backdrop is warmed by the hits of mustard yellow," she says. "It was a challenging space to configure furniture and seating to accommodate visiting children and grandchildren while also making it a sophisticated space to entertain friends."

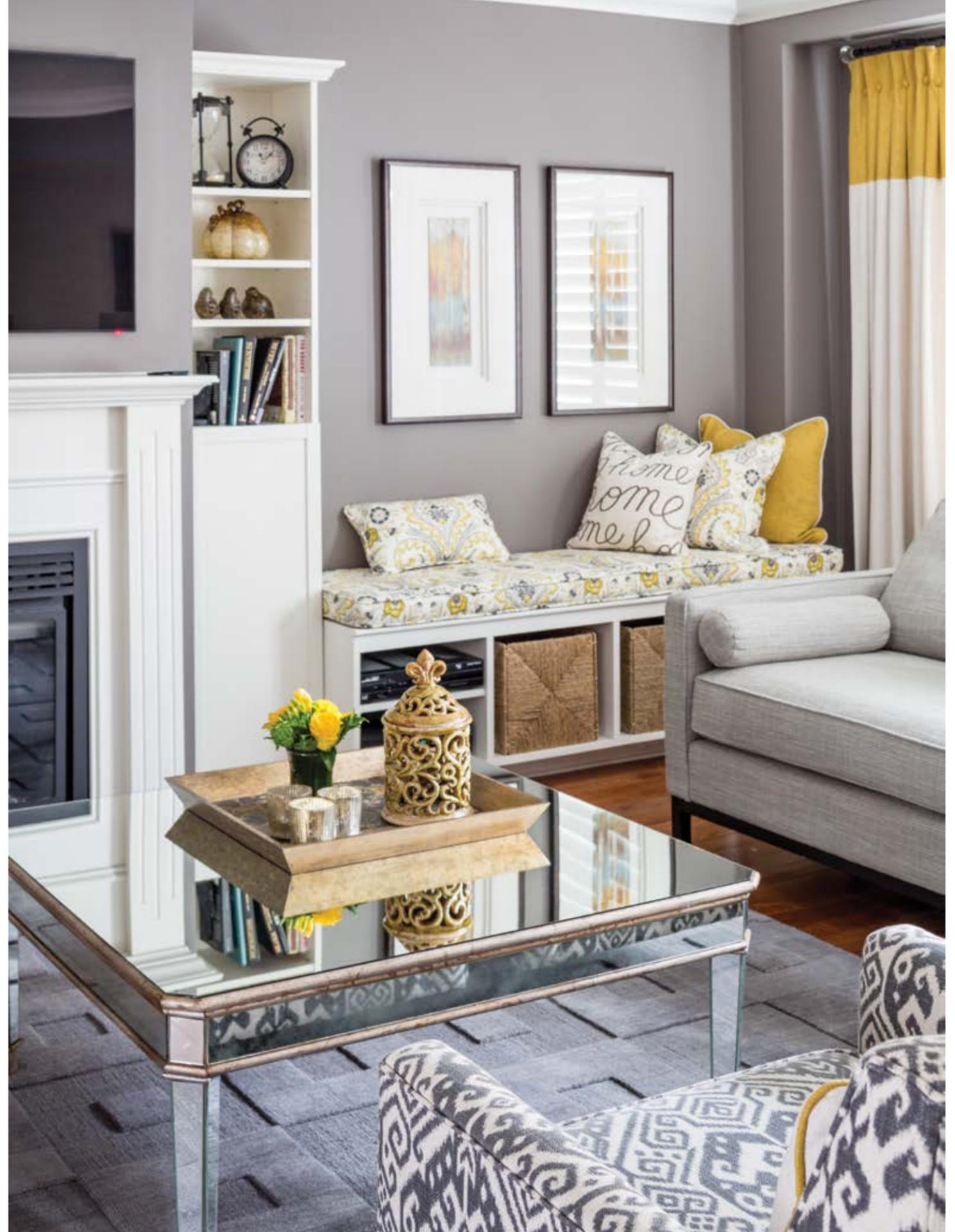
To help add extra seating and storage, van Oyen maximized the space beside the fireplace by incorporating a built-in bench. Contractor **Jeremy Hetherington of Clydestone Works** built the bench, which also serves as a focal point in the room. The fabric van Oyen selected for the cushion is repeated in other spaces in the home, including as a valance over the kitchen sink.

"Nicolette had me pick out things I liked on Houzz," says Chelchowski. "Then she brought over colour samples, fabrics and paint and we picked the colour scheme. Everything took off from there!"

The living and dining space is designed around the existing fireplace. Besides the built-in bench, a mirrored coffee table from **Willow House** and a textured grey rug are the grounding pieces for the sitting area.

To balance the space, van Oyen placed the dining table and sideboard on the other side of the fireplace. A large custom painting by **Merryn Grover Edgar of Gallery M** hangs above the dining table and is the first thing people see when they ascend the stairs from the entryway. *Continued on page 36*

TOP LEFT: Colour-blocked drapes are the perfect accent behind this tailored sofa. **LEFT:** A mirrored hall table and pretty patterned runner help brighten up the entrance to this condo. Nicolette carefully selected wallpaper for the hallway, visible in the mirror. **OPPOSITE:** Built-in shelving around the fireplace and a custom bench along the wall beside the window add pretty-yet-useful storage to this stunning living space.





TOP LEFT: The right wallpaper can make all the difference in a small space like this powder room. **TOP RIGHT:** The statement wall in the eat-in area off the kitchen was a splurge, but helps create a focal point and a cosy nook that previously had very little personality. **ABOVE:** Nicolette helped Darcy create a functional kitchen without extras she didn't use or need.



Behind this area is the kitchen, which van Oyen helped Chelchowski update. The pair decided to replace the backsplash and counters. They added moulding to the existing cupboards and updated all the trim, as well as the hardware. Chelchowski purchased stainless-steel appliances and opted to turn what was a shelf for a microwave into a wine rack.

They also amped-up the eat-in area by choosing a beautiful wallpaper for a feature wall. A glass dining table lets the whole breakfast nook shine and doesn't block any light streaming in from the porch, accessed off the kitchen.

Upstairs, Chelchowski decided on a softer palette for her master bedroom. A spa-like pale blue with lots of white; it's calming, simple

Continued on page 38

ASK A DESIGNER

OUR HOMES speaks to Nicolette van Oyen of JUSTLIVE Interior Design.

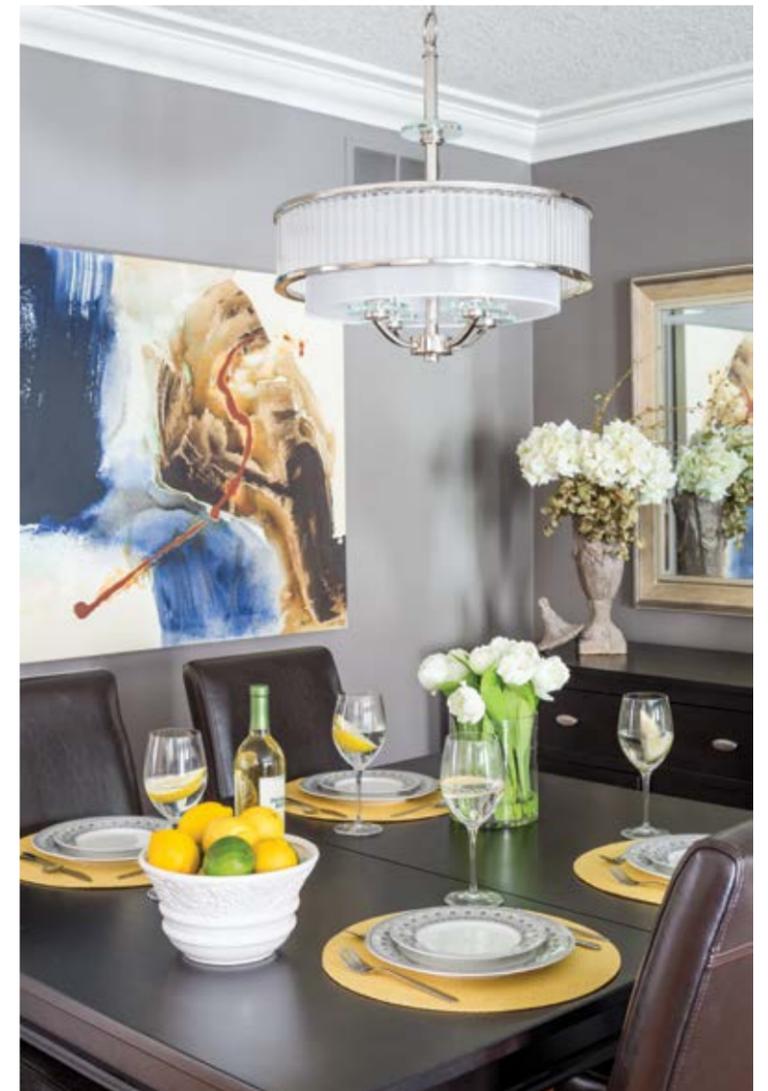
How would you describe the décor in this home? I would describe the décor as "comfortable contemporary." I wanted to give the homeowner a clean, contemporary ambience but also wanted the living spaces to be comfortable for relaxing and spending time with grown children and grandchildren.

When decorating multiple rooms, how do you choose a starting point and keep a home's style cohesive?

I start with the fabrics, finishes and style of furniture that the homeowner is drawn to and repeat elements of the colour palette and general style throughout the public spaces to create flow and consistency. Then I add the odd surprise in colour or a unique feature to create interest and add drama. For example, the addition of a great piece of original art that does not match the colour palette of the room works well to achieve this.



LEFT: The top floor in the condo was not redesigned by Nicolette, but has a cosy fireplace and space for a small sitting area, which walks out to a balcony. **BELOW:** Darcy's dining area is open to her living space, but is a distinct space. Art from Gallery M is the showstopper.





LEFT & BELOW: Soft walls and hits of robin's egg blue and white make Darcy's master bedroom a calm space. **FAR LEFT** On the other hand, Darcy's spare room is bright and bold in yellow and grey, with layers of beautiful patterns. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Simple, clean finishes and accessories make for an inviting bath space.



and straightforward. She had the carpets replaced when she moved in and selected a new vanity for her en suite.

Next door, a second spare bedroom offers another punch of colour thanks to Benjamin Moore paint from **Bayley's Decorating Centre**. It had been taupe and Chelchowski says she and van Oyen had been trying to work around a bedspread she had purchased, but nothing was fitting quite right. When van Oyen found a different spread – this one in grey and white – they knew it was a better choice and worked with it instead. A dark linen headboard, tall statement mirror and mirrored side table come together to create an elegant guest bedroom.

As an added bonus, the top level of the home is a charming loft area with a small upper-level balcony – just big enough for a Muskoka chair and a side table for a nice sunny morning coffee – as well as a fireplace, enough space for a television and some seating, and a nook for Chelchowski's grandchildren's toys. Tall windows let in lots of light.

She may have downsized her home in terms of square footage and yard space, but Chelchowski doesn't feel like she had to let anything go. Her new home is the perfect size for all her needs and thanks to van Oyen's expertise, it's also beautifully decorated. **OH**



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