



Simple subway tiles, a narrow island and stainless steel counters work well together in this galley kitchen. **OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: (1)** Wood cutting boards become art when they're arranged vertically against the backsplash. **(2)** Open shelving provides storage without making the small space feel cramped. **(3)** The homeowners have made the most of every inch of space. Their knives hang on the wall next to their gas range, so they don't need a knife block. A window over the deep kitchen sink looks out to the home's back and side yard.

An Artful Renovation

When two men built a set of terraced houses in downtown Cambridge in 1885, they intended the dwellings to be used by workmen. They weren't fancy – just functional. Over time, most units in this now historical building fell into disrepair. They're small and narrow and, for a long time, didn't seem worth pouring much money into.

But some creative people with an eye for beauty can see past all that, and the homes are now being purchased by homeowners who see their potential and who want to renovate them and make them even nicer than they were when they were brand new.

In one unit, now owned by Ted and Sharon Boyd, the main floor was originally three rooms: the living room, dining room and kitchen. First, the Boyds completely

opened the space to create one cohesive area. Luckily, high ceilings make the small home feel roomier than it is.

"I could envision it done right away," says Sharon. The Boyds were downsizing from a much larger home. Their biggest challenge was not having fewer rooms or less storage space, they say, but choosing what art they would display on their more limited wall space – the couple had collected enough

work for a small gallery. But they were determined to make it work because they loved the home.

The top must-have on their wish list for their contractor, **Denis McEwen** of **Renown Cabinet Systems Inc.**, was "tons of storage." And Denis delivered. "He looked after everything," says Sharon. In fact, his transformation was so grand that the previous owners of the home asked if they could see it after it was renovated. Similarly, some of the sub-contractors who worked on the home told the Boyds to call them if they ever decided to sell.

After five months of renovations, the Boyds were able to move into their new home, which was completely transformed. They hired **Debra Desforges** of **Debra Desforges Design** to help them with their interior design. She and the Boyds created a cohesive space, although the true beauty in the home is how functional it is. *Continued on page 22*





FAR LEFT: The home's laundry is tucked away in a corner in the upstairs bathroom. **LEFT:** A simple black and white colour scheme makes this bathroom elegant and sleek. **BELOW:** Although this home is small, its layout makes it feel large enough for a crowd!



TOP LEFT: A long rug separates the narrow stairway upstairs from the dining area. **TOP RIGHT:** Small floating shelves provide a home for favourite pottery pieces. **ABOVE:** Built-in seating and storage wraps around the corner of the dining area under windows, art and a clock.

For their dining area, the Boyds opted to create a gallery wall, hanging some of their favourite paintings by **Terry Watkinson** above a built-in bench. The bench saves space and adds storage. Clear acrylic chairs don't interrupt the flow of the space and keep the room feeling large.

In their living space, a fireplace is the main focal point of a cosy sitting area. Behind it, near the front door, are more built-ins flanked by small shelves where Sharon can keep some of her favourite pottery.

The kitchen is situated at the back of the home. Built-in cabinetry (by **Jerry Ramseyer**) along one wall provides ample storage, while the opposite wall, above the stainless steel counters, is topped with open shelving for everyday basics. An extra-narrow island, also with a stainless steel top, provides an extra workspace without compromising space or flow. Proportionate appliances from **TA Appliances & Barbecues** also help make the space work to its full potential.

Upstairs, the Boyds also edited multiple bedrooms down to fewer yet larger spaces. They have a retreat-like master suite with vaulted ceilings and the bathroom is dreamy in a palette of black and white. Sharon says since neither she nor Ted ever take baths, they opted to skip installing a bathtub and instead expanded the shower and added even more storage. Their laundry is also located in this space.

Next door is the spare bedroom where their granddaughter from Vancouver has her own space. She can crawl up into the bunk bed built just for her while her parents sleep on the pull-out bed beneath. When it's not hosting visitors, though, the spare room becomes Sharon's sewing space. She has a pull-down table that folds right out of the way when not in use. *Continued on page 24*



home & builder



This spare bedroom has space for a pull-out bed and a special bunk for the homeowners' granddaughter, who loves to climb up the ladder into her own special spot. **BELOW:** The walls in the master bedroom were anything but straight when renovations began – that's part of what adds to its charm!

The Boyds were particularly drawn to this home because it sits at the end of 10 units. They have a large outdoor space, which they put to good use. **Alonzo Froude** from **Yard Worxs Landscape Inc.** designed and constructed their large patio and gardens, which flow beautifully into the open park behind the Boyds' yard.

As for the neighbourhood, Sharon says, "We can walk everywhere. There's a beautiful park behind us. I couldn't ask for anything more." **OH**

Some décor and accent pieces courtesy Bowring Sunrise Shopping Centre, Kitchener



ASK THE EXPERT

We asked **Denis McEwen** of **Renown Cabinet Systems Inc.**, the lead contractor on this rowhome redo, about updating a rundown home and making it better than new.

OUR HOMES: What's the biggest challenge in renovating a small home?

Denis McEwen: Having the available space to work with, getting both homeowners on the same page and developing a design that's appealing but also functional.

OH: How did you incorporate sufficient storage in every room?

DM: We don't waste any usable space anywhere. We use every available area for something, no matter how small or awkward. It's important to get creative.

OH: What tips do you have for homeowners undertaking a similar project?

DM: I have three main tips: know what you want; do your research; and finally, think outside the box!

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