

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

STORY **SUSAN SYKES** | PHOTOGRAPHY **GORDON KING**

As the co-owner and principal designer of one of Ottawa’s leading residential interior design/decorating firms, **Catherine Pulcine** has helped countless clients downsize over the past 22 years.

Continued on page 56



“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WHEN IT COMES TO STORAGE IS THAT EVERYTHING MUST HAVE A PLACE.” – Catherine

Storage is the number one priority for the Pulcines, so they created it wherever there was an opportunity, including a bookcase underneath the new peninsula. **OPPOSITE:** The installation of a stretch ceiling provided the freedom to customize their lighting, as they did with this stunning light fixture.

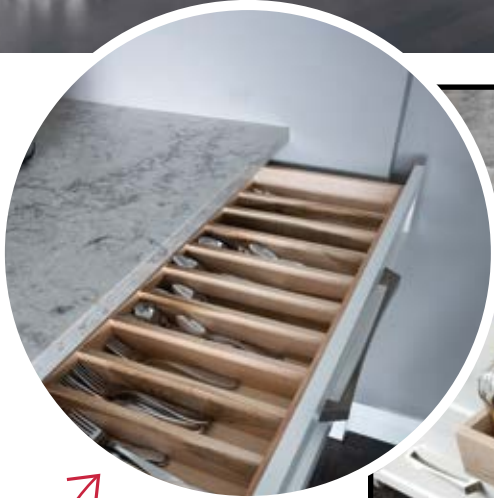


BUT WHEN IT CAME TIME for her own move from a 4,400 sq. ft. suburban home to an Ottawa riverfront condo roughly a quarter of the size, she admits she found it hard to follow her own advice.

“I really wanted to make my favourite chaise fit into the new space,” says Catherine. “But my team finally convinced me that I had to let it go!”

Downsizing can be a challenging and emotional process, fraught with hard decisions about what to keep and what to leave behind. In addition, many condo owners struggle with storage, which was the number one priority for Catherine when planning out her new space. “The most important thing when it comes to storage is that everything must have a place,” says Catherine.

Built in 1975, the unit was not entirely practical for today’s lifestyle when Catherine and husband Jerome purchased it last year. The galley kitchen felt cramped and dark, the flooring and bathrooms were showing their age, and closet space was sorely lacking. But



This custom cutlery drawer is an organizational dream.



This large custom dining table has more than enough room to seat the Pulcines’ guests comfortably. **RIGHT:** Catherine and Jerome Pulcine have customized their condo to enhance their lifestyle. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** With a reflective finish, this unique stretch ceiling amplifies the sense of space. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** The dining room comes complete with custom bar storage, perfect for entertaining.



after looking at 15 buildings over the past four years in search of the right space, they knew it was a diamond in the rough.

Catherine and Jerome founded **CPI Interiors** in 1998 and are known for their outstanding full-service design and renovations, so they were well equipped to tackle the total overhaul of their new highrise home. “It’s a common misconception

that you can’t make changes in a condo,” says Catherine. “In fact, many things can be reconfigured.” Jerome agrees and laughs, “It just takes planning – and a great designer!”

The biggest structural change the Pulcines made was to take down part of the wall between the kitchen and living room, which allowed them to create a peninsula that’s ideal for entertaining. Instead of an overhang for

stools, which would have eaten into valuable space in the living area, the couple decided to incorporate more storage underneath the peninsula in the form of a bookcase.

On the kitchen’s far wall, the cabinetry (**CJ2 Custom Cabinets & Closets**) was extended into the dining area, providing even more storage as well as a bar area for entertaining. Catherine went with a classic

Continued on page 58

feature



The Pulcines chose furniture that makes the most of the space, instead of overcrowding it. **BOTTOM, LEFT:** The guest bedroom in this condo is big enough for a king-sized bed. **BOTTOM, RIGHT:** The main bathroom features a pleasing colour palette – and of course, more smart storage.

white painted finish on the cabinets for an elegant and timeless feel, and fitted each one with custom details such as clever pullouts and drawer organizers to make efficient use of every inch of space. The soft grey Caesarstone Moorland Fog quartz counter from **TNT Tile and Marble Inc.** adds texture and warmth to the space.

When the Pulcines took possession, the condo had worn parquet flooring. They contemplated replacing the floors, but Catherine remembered a client project where

the parquet was refinished in a rich dark stain and she convinced a dubious Jerome to go that route. It turned out beautifully and was a much more economical choice.

Condo owners often find themselves stuck with light fixtures in the wrong spots for their desired furniture placement – or in the case of an older building like this, not enough overhead lighting at all. The Pulcines wanted to add pot lights and under cabinet lighting in the kitchen as well as relocate the dining room fixture (**LIVV Home Collection**) to centre

Continued on page 60



This book features award-winning home designs, including a living room by Catherine.

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Catherine loves the drama of bold colours, as shown here in the master bedroom. **BELOW:** The master en suite features a sizeable, doorless shower.



“COLOUR IS THE UNIFYING FACTOR. IT’S THE THING THAT BRINGS EVERYTHING TOGETHER.”



it above the table. As in many condos, it’s not possible to add or move wiring through the ceiling, so they had to get creative. Again drawing on her past experience, Catherine proposed a unique stretch ceiling (**Reflexio Design**) that she had successfully installed in another condo for a client. The new ceiling allowed light fixtures and pot lights to be placed wherever they were needed. An added benefit: it has a unique sheen that reflects light and gives the illusion of higher ceilings.

The couple sourced many new pieces of furniture (LIVV Home Collection) specifically for the condo. “One of the biggest reasons people think their downsized space is too small is that their furniture is not the right scale,” says Catherine. “It has to be proportionate and functional, but not necessarily smaller.” This meant choosing a sofa with narrow arms to maximize the seating surface, for example, and ensuring the coffee and end tables provided drawers and shelves for additional storage.

Continued on page 62

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The Pulcines infused new life into the existing parquet flooring with a dark stain for contrast.

Another popular myth about decorating small spaces is that you must use light paint colours to make the space feel larger. Catherine loves colour and didn't shy away from it in the condo, where she chose a deeper, bolder palette than you might expect. A rich, warm grey (**Benjamin Moore** Escarpment) on the walls in the main living space is accented with soft blues in the artwork and accessories. "Colour is the unifying factor," says Catherine. "It's the thing that brings everything together."

The renovation included updating the condo's two bathrooms as well as fitting all seven closets in the unit with custom

organization systems. In addition to a cosy master suite and guest bedroom, a third bedroom was turned into a TV room. Because noise can be an issue in condos, the Pulcines installed acoustic wall panels from **Signature Audio Video** to muffle sound from the audio system. They also upgraded all the interior doors to solid wood to help keep noise from travelling.

As they embrace their new adventure in condo living, Catherine and Jerome couldn't be happier with the comfortable, inviting space they created. "Everything is perfect," says Jerome. "We wouldn't do anything differently." **OH**

"EVERYTHING IS PERFECT, WE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY."
— Jerome



ABOVE: Creative storage solutions are plentiful in this condo, such as the extra clothing and linen storage seen here along the hallway. **LEFT:** The television room has an accent wall that does double duty. The acoustic tiles add to the décor and reduce noise from the audio system.

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