

Space: Front room
Size: 234 square feet

"Go with the lifestyle of the people living in that space," designer Yanic Simard says. The couple that owns this house enjoys entertaining guests but don't do much dining in, so Yanic moved the dining area to the back of the house, near the kitchen, to create a bigger living room for hosting.

Take a Shine TO DECORATING

Illuminate small spaces with a combination of bright ideas and sparkling décor.

By Lynnette Woo
Photography by Brandon Barré

TIP: "To prevent the space from looking too cluttered, only keep what's necessary," Yanic says. "And keep de-cluttering. It's the only way to keep control over what's happening in your space."

Space: Family room
Size: 207 square feet

Armless furniture, like the sectional and slipper chair, makes it easy to get in and out of the family room. "You're not closing every piece of furniture; everything's breathing," he says. "You don't feel restrained or restricted." A big black TV against a white wall can look harsh, so Yanic refocused the wall with the large, four-paneled map set.



TIP: Invest in cosmetic or unique pieces. "It's what you put on your coffee table, the little objects," Yanic says. "If you have a limited budget, this is where you could spend your money."

"I believe function comes before aesthetic when it comes to smaller spaces," interior designer expert Yanic Simard says. "[But], it doesn't mean you have to compromise on aesthetic."

The front room of his clients' two-story home originally housed both the living and formal dining rooms. Yanic decided to keep only one dining room, reassigning the extra real estate to create a more spacious living room for entertaining guests. Just because a builder labels it a dining room doesn't mean you have to use it for that specific function, he says.

To furnish the new, smaller 111-square-foot dining room, Yanic made sure to maximize the space. He selected the tall standing mirror, round glass table, see-through metal pendant

The Perfect Fit

Craft a unique look all your own with these designer tips for a stylish space.

- 1 Do your research.** "Take the time to look around. When something is the right size, right style, speaks to you, looks good and is functional—then you buy it," Yanic says.
- 2 Avoid big-box stores.** Instead, shop local and look for eclectic, one-of-a-kind pieces.
- 3 Go high and low.** You can save money with a generic sofa or coffee table, but spend a little more on that great side chair, vintage lamps or silk pillows. It's like that little black dress or classic suit, and then adding a nice watch, beautiful necklace or pair of Jimmy Choo heels, Yanic says. "It's what you accessorize it with."
- 4 Look for multifunctional pieces** like nesting tables or an ottoman that doubles as storage.

Space: Dining room
Size: 111 square feet

The new dining area sits next to the kitchen and opposite the family room. Round pieces, like the dining table, are easy to get around and won't define corners or close the space. Each of the pieces—the unique chandelier, sconces and table—were carefully selected for maximum impact, and clear, see-through or reflective materials keep the room feeling bright and open.

"It's okay to use big pieces of furniture in a small room."



Space: Bedroom
Size: 221 square feet

To make best use of the bedroom's limited space, Yanic went with a clean hotel style, keeping only the bed, mirrored side tables, crackled silver glass lamps and ottomans. His minimal approach to the bedroom left room for a small mango wood table and chairs in the corner, making it a multifunctional space with extra seating.



Let's Get Started

Interior designer Yanic Simard s 3 tips to know before you go.

- 1 Know what you want.** "There's so many periods and styles," Yanic says, "but once you have some knowledge, you can decide if you want to mix, say, contemporary with midcentury or traditional with modern, for a more transitional style."
- 2 Evaluate your space.** Do you have little nooks? How high is your ceiling? Do you have coffered ceilings? Angled walls? If you have an oddly shaped room, for instance, you'll want to go with something like a cowhide rug that already has an irregular shape.
- 3 Play with contrast.** "It's low-cost and super efficient," Yanic says. Start with primary colors, like blue and yellow, or purple and red. Then, use black pieces to anchor the room and white to connect your colors. You can also mix wood with metals or add a funky rug to plain furniture.



TIP: Use two different shades of the same color on a wall, with a bolder hue on the bottom and a lighter one on top, to draw the eyes up and create the illusion of more space.

and neutral-colored chairs to reflect the soft light seeping through the patio doors and give the visual effect of more space. "Each piece is well-picked and they all have personality," he adds.

In the family room, Yanic offset the residents' large television with big framed maps to create a new focal point. He went with versatile pieces like the tufted slipper chair and sectional, which can be easily divided and repositioned. This kind of "function meets beauty" is critical in tight spaces, he says. "It's nice to have nice pieces, but it needs to be functional."

MAKE IT WORK

A soft linen dresser creates contrast with the large wooden kidney-shaped desk in the office, and Yanic took attention off the desk with two-toned walls and funky wall clocks. "You have to work with what you have," he says. "It's okay to use big pieces of furniture in a small room."

"It's about your vision, the story you're trying to create," he says. "Look at what the space has to offer you and don't fight it. I always tell people, 'Don't try to make your space something it's not meant to be. Work with what the space is giving you and then find the right pieces that will complement that space.'"

Space: Office
Size: 120 square feet

A large desk in the middle of the room could make the office look cramped, but Yanic focused on adding contrasting colors and materials. "That's a quick and easy way to create wow-factor," he says. "And never forget to do the fun stuff," like the funky wall clocks, unique dresser and small decorative objects.

Yanic Simard is the founder and lead designer for the Toronto Interior Design Group. He regularly appears on Canadian talk show *Cityline* and is a frequent contributor on *houzz.com* and the *Huffington Post*. Find out more about Yanic and his home décor accessory line Yanic Simard Selected at tidg.ca.