

FROM TIRED OLD LADY TO SLEEK SOPHISTICATE

BY PHILLIPA RISPIN
PHOTOGRAPHY: KELLY HORKOFF
STYLING: CARMEN MAIER

Ravaged Victorian townhouse kitchen is transformed




Several interior walls in this Victorian townhouse were demolished to enlarge the kitchen, let in more light, and improve flow through the ground floor.



VICTORIAN TOWNHOUSES CAN BE CHARMING, grand, elegant. Not this one in the Yonge and Summerhill neighbourhood. When the new owners acquired it recently, it lacked all those attributes thanks to a 1970s renovation, and the small, dark kitchen was a designer's (and a cook's) nightmare.

"It didn't function well," says the homeowner. "Our goal was to open up the space, let natural light in, improve the overall flow and functionality. We wanted a look that was contemporary but warm and sophisticated. Clean lines are important, but we didn't want it feeling cold."

Designer Sandra Kenney of Boulevard Design Build set about transforming the room into a contemporary space that "brings in the new in concert with the old." She opened up the kitchen to the rest of the ground floor for a space that is now 23 feet by 11 feet. She also tore out a false ceiling that ate up at least half a foot of the original 10-foot height. 

"Our goal was to open up the space, let natural light in, improve the overall flow and functionality."

To get that clean but warm aesthetic, Kenney proposed neutral colours with warm undertones. She also added texture; for instance, the cabinetry has multiple finishes. The tones are similar, but some surfaces are high gloss and others have a satin finish.

The natural rift-cut oak island adds warm, pale honey hues to the room. That trend is reinforced by the flooring—long, wide planks of engineered European white oak with an oiled finish—with lots of texture in varying tones of taupe.

The island was a much-desired element that had to be carefully sized for maximum utility in a smallish footprint. “In this tight space, how do you have cabinetry and an island?” Kenney says. “A classic galley kitchen has storage on both sides. This room’s only 11 feet across. You have to have the appropriate amount of space on both sides of the island as well.” The kitchen challenge was compounded by the owners’ desire for a powder room on the main floor. ☞

“Brings in the new in concert with the old.”

Over the island, the whimsical light fixture – Dandelion by Kuzco – was intended to make a statement. A touch of bling is added to the dining area with a polished chrome and crystal chandelier by Transglobe Lighting.



Kenney ended up designing one 16-foot-long wall of cabinetry with towers at each end. The island itself is 10 feet long. The dishwasher and sink take up the near end on the kitchen side, and the kneehole for seating starts half-way down the other side.

Thanks to Simonetta Gazzea of Canaroma Bath & Tile, who advised on plumbing and supplied fixtures throughout the house, Kenney was also able to shoehorn in a tiny (5.5 feet by three feet) but functional and attractive powder room against the back wall.

“We love the design,” says the homeowner. “It’s a perfect marriage of function and form, working very well for both cooking and casual entertaining. We didn’t anticipate loving our home as much as we do.”

*“We love the design.
It’s a perfect marriage of
function and form.”*



TH
SPECIAL KITCHEN ISSUE

WINTER 2014



“One way of maximizing storage was putting in two rows of upper cabinets, with flip-up doors, and taking it right up to the 10-foot ceiling,” says Kenney. Texture was added through a dual finish for the cabinets: matte taupe on the lowers and a paler, glossier taupe on the uppers.