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BIG *Style*

Interior designer Karin Bohne brings her live-large philosophy to her own Yaletown condo

TEXT ANNA DUPAS PHOTOGRAPHY TERRY GUSCOTT



BIG + BOLD Downsized decor has no place in Bohne's 600-square-foot condo. Large furniture pieces and artwork create impact, along with a dramatic black wall.

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Rules are made to be broken. That could be the style credo of Vancouver interior designer Karin Bohne – at least when it comes to designing her own space, a 600-square-foot Yaletown condo that she shares with her partner, Brett Turner.

The daring young designer chose an unexpected esthetic for the shoebox-size space, which she and Turner have updated over the past year, gradually transforming it from uninspired to extraordinary.

Bohne began by tossing out the notion that condos, by virtue of their space limitations, necessitate downsized decor. Instead, she opted



CHEF STYLE The kitchen faucet is reminiscent of one you'd find in an industrial kitchen – a feature Bohne's chef-boyfriend appreciates! **COLOUR CONFIDENCE** Black meets brown in this sexy seat, a perfect perch for a pooch. **ARTFUL IMPACT** (left) A dramatic canvas painted by Bohne makes a strong statement in the dining area.

to install a few key pieces of full-size furniture into the 12-year-old, one-bedroom highrise hide-away. "I feel like you can only fit so much into the space anyway," Bohne explains, "so what you do fit in should make an impact."

This "think big" attitude explains the presence

of a full-size wraparound sofa, set aglow by an arched stand-up lamp, and – perhaps the most eye-grabbing element of all – a gigantic four-by-six-foot canvas, painted by Bohne herself, which occupies virtually an entire dining room wall. After all, she reasons, when your decor is

competing against a jaw-dropping cityscape, framed by a bank of floor-to-ceiling windows, it needs to make a statement or risk fading into the foreground.

Another benefit of going big is that Bohne and Turner – a local chef – have sufficient seating for

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EASY IDEAS A custom-made headboard (above) and shower curtain (below) are easy DIY projects that yield glamorous results. **GREEN SCHEME** To keep the bathroom green and low impact, a dual-flush and low-water consumption toilet was installed.

nights when they're entertaining guests, a point further ensured by a dining room table that expands to seat six.

Bohne also applied her live-large philosophy to the bedroom, where she created a massive custom headboard to adorn the couple's queen-size bed. Although seemingly daunting, it was an easy DIY project crafted from a piece of fabric-draped plywood, finished with a fancy frame. The end result is a striking and inexpensive centerpiece – one that's balanced on either side by night tables bearing big turquoise lamps. Of those weighty, almost Rubenesque light fixtures, Bohne recalls, laughing, "I took them out of the box, and I was like, 'Oh my God, these are big! Yay! I love it!'"

If this designer was adventurous when it came to decor, she was even more daring when it came to choosing a colour scheme. Eschewing the usual safe neutrals, she opted to punch up the



palette by painting the living room and hallway with Benjamin Moore's Jet Black paint. She dismisses concerns that the colour – or lack thereof – would make the space appear even smaller. "You'd think it'd have that effect, or look gloomy, but it works. It looks luxurious, which is exactly

the style I wanted to achieve." For good measure, Bohne sidestepped a goth sensibility by brightening up the living room wall with two abstract canvases – artwork she painted herself in hues of white and gray.

Bohne also rewrote the style rulebook by fearlessly mixing shades of black and brown, colours long thought to be contradictory. While design dogma dictates the use of one tone or the other – never both – Bohne challenged the matchy-matchy mindset by choosing brown Hartland Maple laminate flooring to offset the black living room wall and ebony dining table. For the kitchen, she likewise selected a glossy chocolate backsplash as the backdrop for black and stainless steel appliances. The tones all come together, though, in the island countertop, a thick slab of Sahara Gold granite.

And, unlike many residents of open-layout condos, Bohne wasn't fazed by the challenge of creating a sense of division between rooms. She achieved this by individualizing paint colours and floor treatments to give each room a distinct personality, without physically cutting off one room from the other. Indeed, the condo boasts three different types of flooring, from carpet in

LUXURY FOR LESS

Karin Bohne shares tips on bringing bargain-priced opulence home

- For a high-impact headboard without a steep price tag, custom-make one yourself, with a sheet of plywood, your favourite fabric and a staple gun.
- In small spaces, it's not *de rigueur* to choose diminutive furniture – just edit down your existing decor to the essentials and eBay the rest.
- For an understated way to amp up elegance, Bohne installed six-inch – rather than standard three-inch – baseboards throughout the space.
- Decor doesn't have to be upscale to make an impact, especially if you focus on accents. Bohne added low-cost luxury through the use of rich paint colours (all low-VOC), stylish light fixtures and vibrant throw pillows.
- Hardwood flooring is hot, but unless you plan on tiptoeing around in socks, it can soon start to look battered. This is one reason why Bohne replaced her hardwood living room floor with a durable and comparatively inexpensive laminate. □

the bedroom to laminate in the living room to Arabescato marble tiles in the bathroom, hallway and kitchen.

With so much variation in materials and wall colours, Bohne ensured she instilled a sense of flow within the space by repeating certain key elements. To effect a feel of luxury, she threaded several opulent touches throughout the condo, including the ornate headboard, custom-made damask shower curtain, vibrant throw pillows, colourful canvases and statement light fixtures.

The result of Bohne's efforts is a condo that is original, contemporary, and reflects her own rule-bending esthetic. Of course, like any good designer, she tailors a home's interior to echo its owner, which, in this case, allowed her free rein to indulge her wild side. It was a task she clearly relished – re-jigging everything except for the kitchen cupboards.

And if it begs the question as to why a seasoned designer would purchase a place that required such a complete overhaul, Bohne insists it wasn't a drawback, declaring with a chuckle, "I would have a really hard time moving into a new place without designing it myself." ■

See SOURCES on page 99 STYLIST Heather Cameron

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