

GALLERY WALL FITS ALL

Art was a challenge for the long space, but a matrix of art prints (the pink one is Scott Sueme) and “fashiony” black-and-white family photos—many taken by photographer and good friend Phil Crozier—flex to fit.



Family Matters

A once-tacky '90s townhouse was no match for interior designer Stephanie Brown, even with a baby on the way.

WRITER **JULIA DILWORTH** PHOTOGRAPHY **PHIL CROZIER**

HAPPY ACCIDENT

To make a structural post storage-friendly, Brown bridged the gap with three open shelves. “That was just one of the best things ever, because it’s our only little bit of open display,” says the designer.



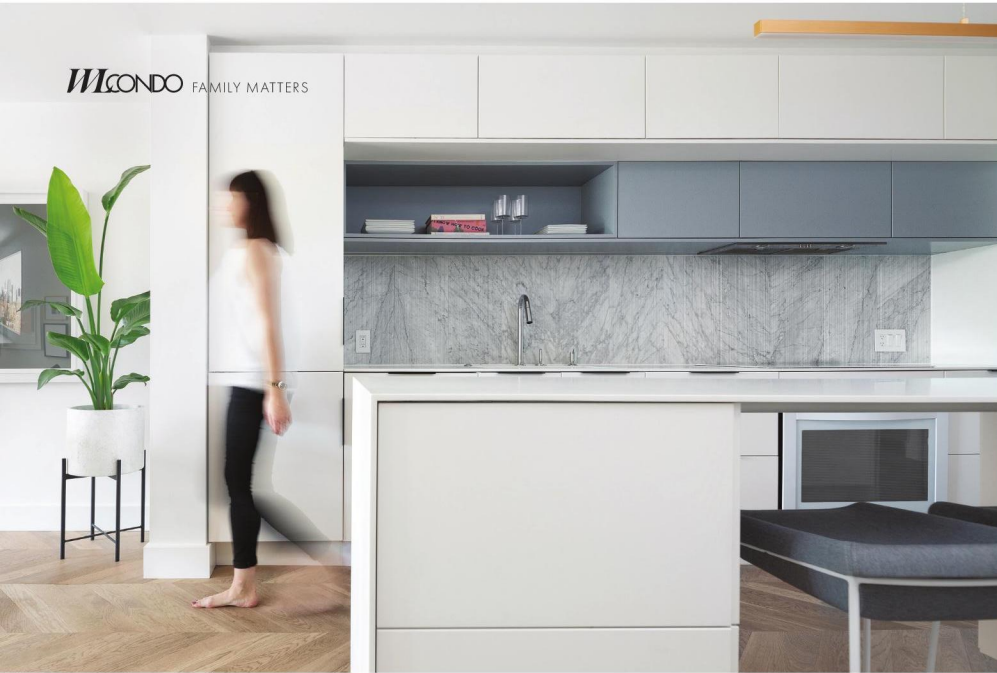
SMART MOVE

In the original floor plan, an ugly closet with a bifold door dominated the entrance. By replacing it with a modern tabletop at the end of her stairs, Brown was able to open up the space and steal some room for her powder room.



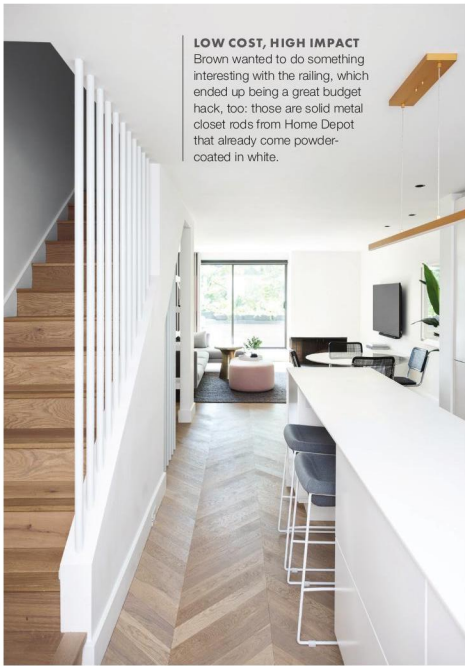
There’s nothing like the impending birth of your firstborn to put the rush on a home renovation. Interior designer Stephanie Brown and her husband got possession of their new townhouse in May 2017. Baby Claire was due in July. “The irony is not lost on me that I tell all my clients, never build or renovate with a hard deadline in mind, because you’ll *never* make it,” laughs Brown. “And yet, there we were.”

The couple found a three-bedroom, 1970s-era townhouse on the west side that had the space they needed and backed out onto a big, green park. “It was 1,800 square feet on three levels, but the interior was atrocious,” says the founder of Stephanie Brown Inc. Previous renovation attempts in the ’90s had left their mark in the form of dark woods, speckled granite countertops and faux Tuscan travertine tile. “But that didn’t sway



LOW COST, HIGH IMPACT

Brown wanted to do something interesting with the railing, which ended up being a great budget hack, too: those are solid metal closet rods from Home Depot that already come powder-coated in white.



us," says Brown. "We saw the potential."

Huge developments in the area meant it was possible their whole neighbourhood could be suddenly sold for condo high-rises, so the couple wanted to be smart about how they spent their renovation budget. The main level's chevron hardwood floors in white oak were a non-negotiable splurge. "Knowing that the space was so long and you'd see a fair bit of the floor, it would be a worthwhile place to invest in something a little bit more special," says Brown.

To offset the big-budget floors, Brown got thrifty with a customized Ikea kitchen, painting the bottom row a blue-grey. Her husband, who is a contractor and carpenter, built the open shelf for displaying cookbooks and dishes, and a fluted marble porcelain tile backsplash from Olympia Tile gives the designer that dose of marble she loves. "It's getting a more high-end touch for less," says Brown.

The kitchen's long and narrow envelope called for an equally slim kitchen island, which Brown topped with a sliver of white Corian. "In my last condo I had put in marble countertops, which is such a point of contention in the design world, because they're beautiful, but super impractical," says Brown. "So I lived with those, and here I wanted to try something totally different." Corian (which is like a man-made resin) is the polar opposite of marble in terms of durability and cost,

BRING THE DRAMA

The black-and-white dining area is anchored with one big piece of art. "According to anyone that's ever been to our house, that's me," laughs Brown about her Christopher Karklin photograph. "It's just a girl with brown hair." Black Vienna cane chairs from her husband's former townhouse look updated and new with Brown's marble tulip table.





PICTURE PERFECT

A whole wall on the top floor is reserved for the family's photos, between two sculptural gold sconces from CB2.



explains the designer. "Wine won't stain it, you can buff out scratches yourself—it's bulletproof."

Off the kitchen, a black-and-white dining area flows through to the living room, a functional locus for adults and kids at play. An oval ottoman covered in fuzzy pink wool can take abuse from toddlers (it's non-toxic and easy to clean) as well as support trays, drinks and resting feet after a long day. A gold pedestal end table is the perfect functional layer to round out the room's tabletop needs, while a dark mixed-grey rug from Salari softens things up underfoot and flip-up Ikea cabinets can stow away toys and media accessories. The open-corner fireplace is original and one of Brown's favourite things about the house. "We're total junkies for a real fire," she says. A couple coats of white paint and a hearth of charcoal tile bring it into present day.

Upstairs in the master bedroom, the white and soft grey palette continues with a velvet ribbed bed from CB2 and luxe Cloth Studio linen drapes. There was a ton of wall space, but Brown wanted to keep decor to a minimum, so her husband installed a funky and modern flat-panel detail. A baubly West Elm chandelier and



ROUND AND ROUND

The round mirror in Brown's ensuite (left) is a welcome change from the usual. "I think it's a little bit of playful relief in a bathroom where everything is always so boxy and square," says the designer. Wanting to do something different with the lighting, Brown sourced solid marble pendants (which weigh about 10 pounds each). "They're cheeky and cool and fit perfectly with our minimalist colour palette," she says. In the tiny powder room, dubbed the "airplane bathroom," a mirror wall makes the space look as large as possible. "It's small, but it does the trick," says Brown.



edgy artwork add interest without compromising the airy modern vibes. For Claire's room, Brown kept the shell white and crisp, and added a splash of awesome Scion wallpaper in a playful geometric print. A modern rocking chair from Restoration Hardware's baby line, a celadon green pouf and pink linen Roman shades pull in a bit of colour to a room that Claire won't outgrow.

The original upstairs bathroom was "stupidly huge," says Brown, with a massive jacuzzi tub, yet no shower. Splitting the bathroom into two, they were able to

create an ensuite for them and a full-sized bathroom with a tub for their daughter. Even divided, the ensuite has space for a seven-by-three-foot marbled porcelain shower. For the floor, Brown asked her husband to lay out charcoal floor tiles in a herringbone pattern. "I like to keep him on his toes," she says.

In the end, Brown and her husband renovated in phases to manage their little arrival. "As I warn all my clients, we didn't quite make the deadline, but it was okay. She didn't know the difference." CONDO