

Pure & Simple



A Vancouver couple turns a humble downtown rental into a fresh, kid-friendly abode without giving up their love of white, white and more white.

Text and photography by *Kim Christie*



LOOKING AROUND this light-filled 10th-floor condo, there's little evidence that it's home to an active two-year-old and eight-month-old. Everything is pristine, from the white walls to the white furniture. But upon closer inspection, there are a few clues: the furniture is slipcovered for easy washing, laminate floors make wiping up spills a breeze, and two pint-sized blue stools in front of an equally tiny table suggest an arts and crafts zone.

It is, in fact, the perfect setting for a modern young family: Stephanie Vogler, co-owner of the chic Yaletown decor and design mecca, *The Cross*, her husband John Pierce, assistant treasurer of Simon Fraser University, their son, Hudson, 2, and daughter, Emerson, 8 months. Here's why this couple made the decision to embrace a two-bedroom, 1,250-square-foot space rather than a sprawling house in the suburbs.

ABOVE: A large canvas in watery hues visually anchors the dining space. The table's shiny silver frame gives it glam appeal while the rough-hewn wooden top is practical and impregnable to stains. Artwork, Patricia Larsen, *The Cross*; dining chairs, *Inform Interiors*. **LEFT:** Bright Mediterranean blues punch up the all-white great room. The sturdy resin coffee table provides texture. *Oly coffee table, The Cross.*



ABOVE: Unadorned windows offer a view of the Granville Street Bridge and floods the small space with natural light, even on overcast days.

An oversized custom chaise maximizes seating without adding clutter.

TOP RIGHT: A Venetian mirror gleams atop a shabby chic credenza in the front hallway.

The mix, says Stephanie, is like wearing diamonds with your favourite worn-in jeans.

STEPHANIE, I HAVE TO ASK: WITH TWO KIDS, WHAT'S WITH ALL THE WHITE?

I've lived with white for years now and find it's an essential canvas for our ever-changing palette of toss cushions, throws, books and flowers. I love the gallery feel of white walls but I don't worry when I spot smears or fingerprints. It says to me, 'Kids live here, too!' You can't deny the reality of life.

BUT HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO KEEP THE FURNITURE SO CLEAN?

For me, a white sofa is a must. But what many people don't realize is that white's as practical as any other colour as long as you choose sturdy fabrics. The furniture is all slipcovered and once a month, I run the

slipcovers through the washing machine with some bleach. They always come out looking brand new.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE BLUE AS AN ACCENT?

Blue has always been my favourite colour and it's just so easy to live with. This condo is airy and surrounded by the sky and the water, so it just made sense.

WHAT MADE YOU AND JOHN DECIDE TO RAISE YOUR TWO CHILDREN IN A FAIRLY SMALL DOWNTOWN APARTMENT?

Well, we moved here from a huge character building when I was pregnant with Hudson, specifically so that I could walk to work. In fact, we gave up the car and love that we can walk everywhere now.



WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE LAYOUT AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

It's all one great big open space, so we always feel connected to one another. Also, there's a pool in the building and a great park right behind us. We call it our 'huge backyard.'

SO WOULD YOU SAY THE CHOICE TO LIVE DOWNTOWN IS MOSTLY ABOUT THE CONVENIENCE?

Yes, we love the energy of being right in the centre of everything, of feeling like a part of the city. And we're very spontaneous. We can do things on a whim, like pop out for breakfast or grab the Aquabus and slip over to Granville Island to shop, rather than having to bundle everyone up in the car and make a big trek. If we lived anywhere other than downtown, there'd be some



A collection of family photos and an exuberant Jani Guzy painting personalize the hallway leading to the master bedroom. Like *Bike, Inhabit*.

A serene oasis, the all-white master bedroom brings together Designer's Guild wallpaper with a button-tufted ultrasuede headboard and twin antique mirrors and tables. Mismatched lamps prevent the room from taking itself too seriously.

