

CONDO-HOTEL

Putting a modern stamp on Richmond Street

TAS DesignBuild, having just launched the quirky Giraffe condos, plans another striking addition to the city's architectural menagerie



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Every conceivable pod of downtown Toronto has spawned a condominium component that roughly fits the personality of its location.

Bay Street and Yorkville host a multitude of super-luxury, multimillion-dollar suites; the harbourfront is a good bet for those looking to slow down and enjoy the lake, and Yonge Street from King to Eglinton is designed to appeal to young professionals looking for affordability and a nearby subway stop.

Richmond Street was admitted a little late to the emerging condominium boom largely because of too tight residential zoning restrictions that were only lifted in the 1990s, when it became clear that the neighbourhood's days as Canada's seamstress were very much over. At that point, the area was in danger of turning into a cluster of derelict factories.

Only a few large-scale condominiums have appeared on Richmond Street West, and most do reflect the sensibility of the people who call it home. In keeping with the bright lights and bustle of Queen Street to the north and the theatre district to the south, the developments that have taken root have pushed the envelope of architecture and design to appeal to the creative class that feeds off the media, retail and technology economy within its radius.

They include the District Lofts a few steps east of Spadina Avenue, riffing on the in-

dustrial heritage with two concrete towers connected by steel catwalks. Two blocks west, there's the Cityscape Terrace Lofts; commanding a city block, the six-storey building was finished in 1999.

Interestingly, most of the re-development in this area has been on the commercial/retail front since then. The most notable achievement, if you really want to call it that, is the Scotiabank Theatre at John Street, a massive neon cube of cinemas, restaurants and a Chapters bookstore.

TAS DesignBuild is in the preliminary stages of putting its signature touch on Richmond Street with a planned 35-storey condominium-hotel (a rezoning application to allow it is currently pending). Like all of its high-rises, the as-yet-unnamed project is way ahead of the curve in terms of combining functionality with iconic design.

"I really see that neighbourhood at the crux of change," says Mazyar Mortazavi, principal of TAS DesignBuild. "It's a transitional area between the financial district and the arts and creative area around Queen Street."

The Festival Centre condominium and entertainment complex three blocks south on King Street is also expected to help usher in a more polished era of condominium living, he adds.

Similar to its just-launched Giraffe high-rise in Toronto's west end, the Richmond Street project will feature an asymmetric array of balconies and terraces poking out from the glass. The architect, Stephen Teeple, who is also overseeing Giraffe, is aiming for a silver certification in under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system by focusing on upgraded insulation and more



A rendering of the condo-hotel planned for Richmond Street across from the Scotiabank Theatre. TASS DESIGN/BUILD

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efficient use of windows to control temperature.

Half of the building will be condominiums while the other half will be a boutique hotel by Gansevoort Hotel Group, which has carved out a niche as a sought-after purveyor of trendy uber modernist lodgings in Manhattan and Miami Beach.

"Gansevoort represents part of an attitude that embraces change," Mr. Mortazavi says. "They went into [Manhattan's] meat-packing district when it was not a very nice place to be," he adds, noting that today it is one of the most iconic focal points of New York's social and cultural milieu.

"They have been able to create these great social environments with their rooftop pools and lounges. They are like urban resorts."

FROM PAGE 1 » DECORATING

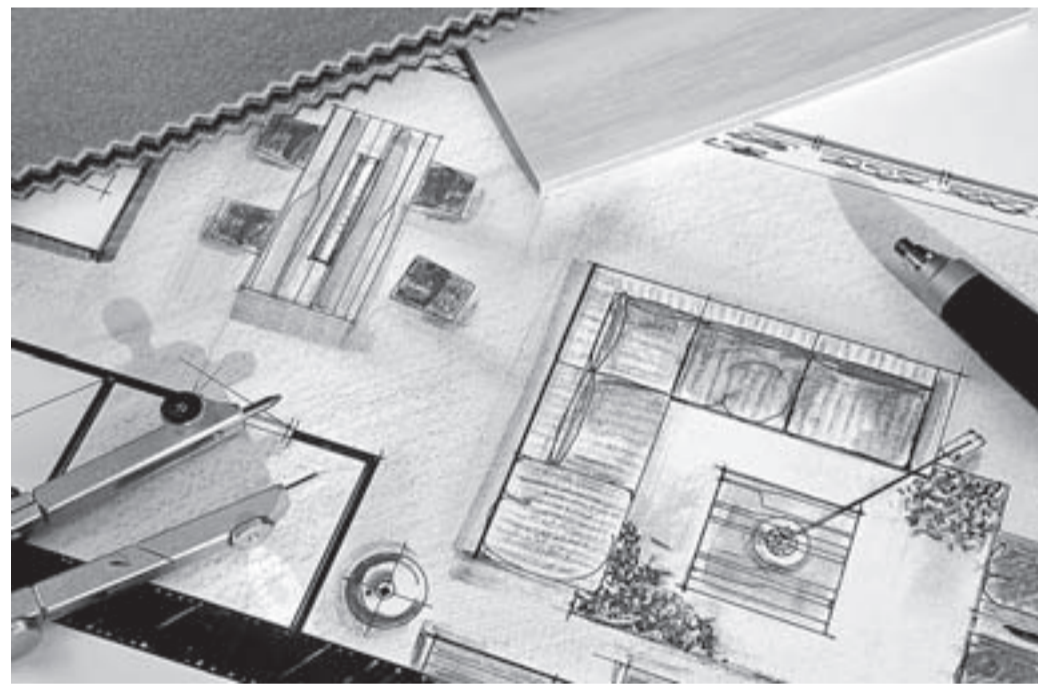
Start now, be prepared and seek the help of experts

Only the foolhardy or super-wealthy among us will glance at their space and then head out, credit card in hand, to do battle with the furniture merchants.

Leave chaos theory to the particle physicists; you want order. Measure your space, create an inventory of your needs, and develop a budget to work from. What you're doing at this stage is editing, reducing the vast sweep of possibilities down to a few realizable goals. Not a sofa, table and light fixture, but the sofa, table and light fixture.

Some people seem to think that good interior design is an artistic pursuit, that is, something arrived at instinctively, ecstatically, in a hot blast of inspiration. It's not. There's no substitute for a good eye, but 90 per cent of successful design is about being decisive and seeing your project through from conception to completion.

In your preparations, take advantage of the user-friendly online catalogues provided by every decent housewares retailer. Print off specification sheets and images, and create a binder of colours, possible



Before hitting the shops, measure your space and create an inventory of your needs. ISTOCK

furniture combinations, and prices. This kind of planning has two major benefits:

- 1) You don't have to leave your house (all the information you need is available online).
- 2) When you're finally ready to shop, you can do it U.S. Navy

SEALS-style, swooping in to hit tactical targets instead of wandering, cattle-like, through sprawling fields of floor models.

My suggestion? Take a Saturday, and dress in your comfortable clothes; there's no need

to impress salespeople with chic duds. Plan for a long day of slogging in the shops, and don't plan to buy anything until later, no matter how great a deal it seems at the time. All you need are your binder of targets, clipboard for note-taking,

measuring tape, and digital camera. Oh, and six or seven cups of coffee.

SEEK DELIVERANCE

Once you've made your purchases, the best thing you can do is take your fate, as much as possible, out of the hands of the experts. However well deliverymen do their jobs, they operate on their own schedules and, as the holidays approach, their lives are complicated by the post-Halloween surge of last-minute home decorators. Scheduling your time around the deliveries is like attempting to sculpt water: The thing resists your hopes and demands, however ardent.

Delivery drivers are perverse creatures. They take delight in coming when they say they wouldn't, in forgetting pieces of your order, and in "accidentally" damaging the parts they do bring. Take your sanity out of their hands by anticipating the worst case and then planning around it. By cashing in some overtime from work and spending a day or two at home, you can co-ordinate the deliveries and installations. Instead of feeling stressed about

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time, you can resign yourself to homemade cabbage rolls, back issues of your favourite design magazine, and mid-afternoon mulled wine. Or perhaps that's just me.

» Kelly Deck is the director of Kelly Deck Design, based in Vancouver, and the host of Take it Outside on HGTV.

FABRICS

Patterns add life to decor but choosing is a delicate balancing act

BY CONNIE OLIVER

Pattern choice and mixing is a difficult task, but adding pattern to your decor can bring an interesting new dimension to a mundane space.

Whether you choose to bring it into your space through the use of wallpaper, faux paint techniques, upholstery or window treatments, pattern can turn an adequate space into something that's quite dramatic.

Choosing the right patterns and mixing them successfully is a delicate balancing act. Bold pattern can grow tiresome very quickly as it can overstimulate the senses. On the other hand, avoiding pattern altogether out of fear of failure limits your decor options greatly and unnecessarily.

Balance is the key and there are a number of tips to remember that will help you achieve success.

Forget about spending a lot of time deliberating over your choices; instead, follow some

of these simple rules. Start small and build from there.

EASY DOES IT

The best way to get your feet wet with pattern is to use it in small doses. Items such as toss cushions (or cushion covers), lampshades and even wallpaper or paint treatments on focal walls is a good place to start.

SMART CHOICES

Graphic, large or modern patterns (or the now-popular retro patterns) can be trendy but can also go out of fashion fairly quickly.

Incorporating them into your space can be fun but should be done in small doses or at least with the knowledge that they will have to be updated in a year or two.

TIMELESS PATTERNS

The problem with following trends is that they can become outdated very quickly. Choosing to incorporate timeless patterns such as toile, harlequin, fleur-de-lis or the Greek key design will ensure that



Vertical stripes will elongate a surface while horizontal stripes will widen a surface. IPHOTO

your decor remains tasteful and timeless.

PATTERN ON FIXED ITEMS

Think twice about choosing to use a bold pattern on fixed items such as flooring or wall-to-wall carpeting. While it might be gorgeous today, you may grow tired of it fairly quickly. It's best to stay with a

neutral colour palette and subtle pattern on large areas such as flooring, upholstery and custom draperies.

On larger upholstered items, like a sofa, choose solid colours that can be dressed up with bold print accessories. If you want pattern in the space, opt to use it on a smaller item like a side chair, which is less

obtrusive and will co-ordinate visually with the solid items.

MIXING PATTERNS

The best way to stay in balance while mixing patterns is to remember a simple rule: Keep the patterns one size apart - that is, a large floral with a small check as opposed to a medium floral and a medium check.

Patterns that are too close in size will compete, while very large patterns mixed with fine patterns will complement each other.

Mixing colours can be tricky so try to stay within a three-colour palette for the main colours in your prints.

WHICH PATTERN TO USE

Keep in mind the assets and deficits of each type of pattern and use them to your advantage.

» **Stripes:** Vertical stripes will elongate a surface while horizontal stripes will widen a surface. Wide stripes are bold while fine stripes can make your eyes cross, so use stripes in small doses.

» **Florals:** Floral patterns come in many sizes, styles and patterns with tons of colour-palette opportunities. Floral patterns tend to be feminine, so keep this in mind if you have men in the house. A great floral pattern can provide a base for your entire colour palette, so if you see one that really catches your eye, get a swatch and play with the choices. Large floral patterns can look great on smaller furniture pieces while small floral patterns do well on large wall spaces.

» **Checks:** Checkered patterns can be quite bold when the design is medium to large. Tone-on-tone checks are a subtle way to bring pattern into a space without overdoing it. Small checks provide a casual, country feel, while large graphic checks suit a modern space. Placed on a diagonal, checks can visually expand a wall or floor depending upon your application.

Play with pattern in your space. It will add visual movement and life to your decor.

» The Canadian Press