

# CONDO LIVING



## TRENDS



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# Being smart with space

Interior design firm enables condo owners to increase living area

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Special to QMI Agency

Interior design firm Figure3 has hatched a new space-saving condo layout that is destined to become the new trend for Toronto's compact high-rises.

Just one look at the floor plan shows how the transformational "cube" design frees up space. The concept takes cues from New York and Europe where smaller square footage is at a premium.

The cleverly designed Quartz-Spectra model suite by Concord Adex was recognized with an award of merit at the 2012 ARDQ awards. Figure3's design for the suite

is built upon a unique floor plan where everything is arranged around an inner core or "cube." The bathroom, laundry room, and kitchen are clustered together in the centre of the space.

This transformational design offers condo owners maximum flexibility with fluid spaces for living, dining, and sleeping around the cube core element.

"The idea is that by pulling all the wet walls into the centre of the space, it allows you the flexibility to walk around it," says Suzanne Bettencourt, principal at Figure3. "We do a lot of corporate office towers and one of our concepts was taking that core of the

building, which has all of this plumbing and stairs and shafts that are combined in the centre to allow flexibility around it."

Recognized for its innovative design process, Figure3's view is that space is a strategic business asset and is well poised to bring a new way of thinking to Toronto's condo market.

For developers, the cube design also saves on construction costs by consolidating stacks, therefore requiring fewer walls. "The concept here was to allow people the flexibility to hide away their walls that tuck in, the bed can be tucked away and then suddenly your living space and your bedroom space can be

larger for entertaining purposes," says Bettencourt.

The Quartz-Spectra bedroom opens up to the living area through sliding glass panels, expanding the overall living space for spontaneous entertaining.

The cube's centralized space plan allows for wider corridors that are more functional and double as walk-in closets. "The corridor going to the bathroom has the closet in it and becomes almost like a walk-in closet. It's really also a circulation path into your bathroom and it also connects to your den as well."

According to Bettencourt, dining rooms are doing a disappearing act. "If you're

going to be purchasing a one bedroom plus den, often the space is being compromised, particularly the dining area. What people are wanting is a den that can then convert into a dining room."

Transformational furniture is an integral component of the layout — it's part of the design process. "Definitely there is a trend of looking at units and saying how can the spaces react to different purposes and different uses. And that's what we're exploring right now a lot more — it's about dual functionality of space," says Bettencourt, who worked with Resource Furniture on the Quartz-Spectra model suite.

Seamus Butterly is a sales associate and interior designer at Resource Furniture on Adelaide St. E. He says that people want to have overnight guests but the days of having a dedicated condo guest bedroom are over. "When you want to be smart with your space, you want to have a dual, maybe a triple feature or focus. If you have an extra room, you don't want it to just be a mausoleum for a bed, you want it to be the home office, the storage, as well as your guest bed." They carry a product by U.K. manufacturer Clei that's a dining room table for five, that within seconds converts into a queen-sized bed for overnight guests.