



A stunning transformation

Having lived and travelled all over the world, one jet-setting couple decided on Toronto's chic Yorkville neighbourhood as the centre of their busy lives. Theresa Casey, Principal at Casey Design Planning Group, incorporated the couple's love of art and international design into their unit at 175 Cumberland: a 70s style building which now features a highly functional French-inspired condo for the new Canadian couple.

Could you tell us a bit about your background?

I have degrees in history, art history and interior design and extensive training in fine art. I studied in the United States, Italy and at Ryerson in Toronto. This training means that I offer my clients a multi-layered point of view. Over the years I have worked with many clients to create homes that are unique, timeless, easy to live in and practical. I hire my staff at Casey Design Planning Group based on their skills and ability to offer excellent customer service. My office on Yonge Street south of St. Clair is a welcoming space with an oversized island where clients can meet to review drawings, select materials and approve wallpaper and fabric selections. Whether we are problem solving for our clients, developing a concept or running out to trouble shoot at a job site, our primary concern is our clients and the home they have trusted us to create for them. We are passionate about what we do and it shows.

IDC's Candis Green speaks with Theresa Casey of Casey Design Planning Group Inc. about her French-inspired condo design at 175 Cumberland in Yorkville



What areas was your firm responsible for designing?

We were responsible for the complete redesign of the unit. We began by gutting the suite to its bare bones in order to re-plan the space as a whole. The process included a client requirement analysis, concept imaging, selecting hard materials, furniture plans, lighting, electrical and millwork drawings. We were also involved in supervising the site and coordinating all the trades prior to conducting a final review.

How did you decide on a theme or concept for this project?

We always develop the concept for our projects based on input from the client — their lifestyle, their interests. We interpret what the client envisions the space to be and we build the concept from there.

Who is this project designed for?

This unit was designed for an international couple who have lived all over the world. They immigrated to Toronto three years ago and they wanted to create an oasis for their busy lives that would give them a sense of place and belonging in their new country. They wanted a sophisticated home that reflected the wife's fine art background. Having a functional guest area was important for when their grown children come to visit, but they also just wanted to create a beautiful space for themselves.

Can you offer us a glimpse into your design process with respect to working with clients?

There are two streams that we develop in our design process: the functional requirements and the aesthetic ones. In the case of the functional requirements, we started with an assessment of the existing layout, architectural plans, HVAC locations, electrical boxes and plumbing stacks. We advised the clients that a powder room should be added along with a storage room, a proper laundry room, a guest suite and a private hallway for the master suite. We recommended that we create architectural interest with deep archways, panelling, high doors to offset the 8' ceiling height and vertical details wherever possible.

Aesthetically, we created a concept board that explored the design direction with textures, colours and images. Hard materials were selected (flooring, tiles, countertops), fixtures, lighting and then the fabrics, wallpapers and furniture was added into the mix, always reflecting the core concept.

How does designing a single condo unit differ from designing multiple units or shared spaces within the condo?

A single condo is completely customized to the requirements of the owner. Public and shared



spaces are about the bigger picture of who the tenants are as a group and developing a concept that everyone is happy with. These spaces should reflect the majority of the owners and give value to the space and to the people who live there.

What attracted you to this project?

The clients had a distinctive vision, but the challenge was delivering on what they wanted: creating a classically styled unit in a building that is very 1970s.

Describe some of the unique features of this project.

We transformed an awkward two-bedroom condo that was built in the 1970s and brought it up to today's standards. We re-planned a non-functioning kitchen and by doing so added a much needed storage room, laundry room and powder room. Also, we made a proper separation between the guest space and the master suite. This client was very hands-on and her inspired input contributed to the project's success. She is interested in French design and because of this we created an old world style that mixed patterns within a soft colour palette. The end result was a space that has a formality to the individual rooms, but flows effortlessly from one space to the next.

What types of projects does Casey Design Planning Group Inc specialize in?

We are known for architecturally rich, timeless spaces that are individually tailored to the interesting lives of our clients. We work on contemporary as well as traditional projects.

What was the most challenging aspect of this project?

Working with the existing floor plate to carve out the functions that we thought needed to be added, the 8' ceiling height, locations of plumbing stacks and HVAC were also a challenge to overcome.

What are your primary sources of inspiration?

Travel, art, books and the wealth of inspiration available on the Internet.

What are you working on now?

We are currently working on a project at 36 Hazelton. This project is a dream for us because it is situated on a beautiful, quiet stretch of Hazelton and the building is a wonderful historic brick school that is being transformed into luxury condos. This is our

third project with this particular client and the aim is to create a clean, contemporary home. It's such a big part of the pleasure associated with our work — getting to know our clients and growing with them from home to home. **CL**



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