

# Styled Spaces

## Design Diary

Fall 2013



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Hello Anna,

Ryan and I have been dedicating our spare time to pushing ahead with our personal DIY renovation.

It continues to be an adventure, yet a very positive one for the both of us!

My respect and empathy for those of who take on this kind of renovation on their own has grown.

I know it's not easy and that's why [I'm here to help you.](#)

Please enjoy the continuing story of our personal home renovation. I'm so grateful for our home and the friends and family it welcomes.

Happy Thanksgiving,

*Vanessa*



We had two clear objectives going into our DIY home renovations. We wanted the results of the project to:

1. help us improve our home's realistic market value, and
2. give us good return on our renovation investment

This goal continues to guide us in the choices Ryan and I make regarding design and product selection.

We're pleased with our decisions so far AND we're 90% done!

I shared with you [Part 1 in my Summer issue.](#) In this issue, Anna, you'll see our progress and read about the unexpected plumbing glitch!



Before and after pictures from Styled Spaces client work appear on [my website.](#) I hope you'll stop by!



[Fresh Ideas](#) - designer advice for your DIY projects: renovate with confidence.

## Step 5 | Appliances

The dishwasher's plumbing was an unexpected surprise. We discovered that the pipe was not in the wall, but stuck out of the wall by 9". We had 2 options. The first was to leave it as is (by this point in the renovation I'm keen to be done!), but when we moved the fridge to this location, it too would stick out from the wall.



Jack-hammered floor



Smooth wall, ready for fridge

Cooler heads prevailed. We went with the second option: delay the project while we fixed the problem -- which included jack-hammering the floor done by yours truly! In the end, it delayed us by two days, added \$200 in cost, and took Ryan and I two hours of extra work.

We also repositioned the fridge which opened up the room considerably and allowed for more functional counter space. See [more photos and details](#).

## *My Life* | **DIY Fashionista**

Another in the series of functional (if not attractive) DIY dressing: aprons! Tiling means you'll be working with grout, and "hands-on" work means you're going to get messy.

## Step 6 | Cabinets

As you see below, our kitchen is much, much improved! (You can see other [Before and After pictures](#) on my website.)

I love my full-height cabinets. (They are actually 1" away from the ceiling so that the door doesn't rub when being opened).

These changes makes our whole kitchen space feel like it has high ceilings and spaciousness.



I found that the added bonus of an apron was its convenient pockets.

There is always a tool or two that needs to be kept within easy reach. Apron pockets are the answer!



It's also given us much more storage. We used drawers in as many places as possible as it's much easier to pull out a drawer than to bend down and peer into a deep cupboard.

Drawers do cost more but for Ryan and I who are both tall, we felt the extra expense was worth it. Even though this is not our 'forever' house, we will be here a few more years.



Our comfortable kitchen Island

## Step 7 | Kitchen Island

What can I say: we love it!

This area of our home is part of our main living space so it was important that what we chose looked good, fit with the traffic pattern, and not interrupt the space's focal point (the fireplace).

Large dinners with family and friends are also an important part of our life. We needed a dining area that was both functional and comfortable, and could hold up to eight people.

This kitchen island does it all, and will add to the resale value of our home when the time comes.

Since comfortable seating was a must, I spent time investigating counter-height chairs, as opposed to informal bar stools that are suitable for brief seating like breakfasts.

I looked for a chair that had a full-height back, wide seat, and well-placed foot rungs. (When finished, the island too will have a bar upon which to rest your feet.)

The chairs I chose have easy-clean upholstery, as we always love it when our niece Emmeline and nephew Reuben come to visit. The chair's open back also contributes to making the space feel more open.

Six chairs fit around the island, with space for an additional two at the open end.

I'm pleased to report that we've successfully christened the island by hosting a few dinner parties. Our guests were very comfortable, and we all chose to remain at the island long after dinner was over.



Louis approves!



## *Next up* | **The Push to the Finish**

We're in the "home" stretch! Here's what remains on the to-do list:

The hardware for the kitchen cabinets and drawers needs to be selected -- and what a wonderful assortment there is to choose from!

Over in the powder room, the sink needs to be installed.

The fireplace stone looks great. The mantel will cap it off but Ryan and I haven't yet decided whether we prefer a mantel that is plain for resale purposes, or something more "statement" like live-edge wood.

Lastly, it will be time to decorate and accessorize. I'll share these last finishing touches with you in the next issue of Design Diary.

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*Thanks for reading! Watch for the next issue of Design Diary*