

**TORONTO  
LIFE**

# Real Estate

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BUYING AND SELLING IN TORONTO

ALL  
NEW FOR  
2012

## Where to Buy Now

THE CITY'S 10 NEXT  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

*How to Ditch the  
Crushing Mortgage*

TORONTO'S  
BEST CONDOS

**PLUS** *A Ruthlessly  
Practical Guide  
to Trading Up at  
Every Stage in Life*



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### THE COLOUR SCHEME WHITE, BLACK AND GREY ALL OVER

For the reno of a family of five's narrow Victorian in Rathnelly, designer Melissa Davis of Catherine + Davis chose white for the walls, bedding, lampshades and kitchen cabinets, and black or grey for the floors, sofa and doors. Davis says the limited palette makes a space look bigger by keeping contrast to a minimum. "The eye isn't drawn to one feature over another."



### THE THING GILDING THE FAUCET

Maybe it's the opening of the Trump Tower, or maybe it's designers' fatigue with chrome—in any case, we're on the eve of an unironic resurgence of gold bathroom fixtures. Available at Taps Bath Centre, Kobler's single-lever tap in subtle brushed gold, part of the new Purist series, will never be mistaken for a desperate attempt at bathroom bling. It's as restrained as gold can be. \$624. Taps Bath Centre, 1020 Lawrence Ave. W., 416-785-0224.



### THE BACKYARD MUST-HAVE

## A HAUTE FIREPIT

Khai Foo, the designer and pyro enthusiast behind Paloform—the flame-filled showroom in Corktown—is worth seeing for the spectacle alone—turns the firepit into a sleek, patio-friendly hearth that's distinctly urban. The crisp lines of the popular Bento (the unit shown here) are set off by a brilliant open flame. It's fuelled by clean-burning natural gas or propane, and radiates up to 60,000 BTUs. The unit is available in six colours. Each one is made to order from hand-cast concrete and topped with Japanese lava rocks or basalt river rocks. It's as much a conversation piece as anything—a happier topic than how frickin' cold it's getting outside. \$3,000. Paloform, 296 King St. E., 1-888-823-8883.



### ADVICE ON DECORATING

A primer for sellers and buyers, by Colleen McGill, interior designer at McGill Design Group, whose clients span Toronto, Calgary, Montreal and Florida.

#### FOR SELLERS: HOW TO MAKE THAT HOUSE LISTING POP

Every buyer seems to be looking for an open kitchen next to a family room. And, in general, they want a space to feel fresh and updated; French doors always do that trick. They're an easy way to open up a small, dated room. They'll likely cost around \$5,000 to

\$6,000, or double that if they're being installed in a brick wall.

#### DITCH THE NAUTICAL THEME

Buyers have a hard time seeing past aesthetics, and most people's tastes aren't universal. You'll want to emphasize brightness with lots of white. The furniture and finishes

should be neutral to appeal to the masses—even if you hate that look.

#### FOR BUYERS: DEMYSTIFYING THE DECORATOR'S FEE

A consultation by an interior designer can range from an hourly rate to a flat fee of up to roughly \$2,000, depending on the size of the house and the designer's experience. The bill can be off-putting, but it will often include things like a customized floor plan, swatches of fabric, paint chips and a storyboard. You get the full

sense of what the room is going to look like, and what will and will not have an impact. It's a complete vision. Make sure when you're hiring someone that you feel in sync with their style. After you have a frank discussion about the budget and put together your wish list, pass over your trust and let the designer come up with a plan.

**AND IF YOU DON'T HAVE \$50,000 TO SPEND ON A KITCHEN RENO**  
A quick and easy fix is to paint kitchen cabinets white.