



## COVER STORY

# The new sophistication

Purchasers are moving away from one-size-fits-all boxes of the past to condos rich with design features

**DIANNE DANIEL**

Special to QMI Agency

After years of white on white, beige on beige and grey on grey, are North Americans ready to break out of the neutral zone in favour of bold colours, geometric patterns and multiple textures? II by IV Design Associates Inc. in Toronto says we are.

At RISE Condominiums, developed by Reserve Properties in Toronto's up-and-coming St. Clair West neighbourhood, the design firm is moving away from the status quo with a travel-inspired model suite more reminiscent of a four-star international hotel room than a permanent residence. The result is an edgy aesthetic that is easy to replicate, says Dan Menchions, a partner in II by IV Design.

"They're loving it — it's fresh," says Menchions, whose primary goal was to show that you don't have to be afraid of colour. "The space is very eclectic. It's a mix of various types of shapes, sizes, colours and styling to let people know that there is no wrong."

Instead, there are simple choices you can make to create a space that feels "right for your life," he says, beginning with pops of colour like the bright green ceramic tile backsplash in the kitchen. While the cabinetry and flooring remain a neutral brown, the high gloss tiles add pizzazz and can be easily swapped out in five to 10 years' time if influences change.

Additional forward-thinking design elements include the variation in the grain on the pre-finished wood flooring, the gorgeous leafy graphics in the muted living room wall covering (which Menchions considers more of an art installation than mere wall paper), and the lavishly tufted headboards in the bedrooms, one of which extends the full wall.

"It's all about layering and telling a story," says Menchions. "It's how you curate your space."

Global influences go beyond the choice of warm Bordeaux reds, mossy greens, ambers and bronze as accent colours. The two-bedroom, 865 square-foot model suite also boasts geometric patterns in the area rug, throw cushions and bedding, inspired from Menchions' travels to places like Croatia, Paris and Mexico. While at first thought the combination may seem jarring, it's meant to conjure up the notion of a world traveller who brings back unique pieces, and it works.

"Today's purchasers do travel," notes Menchions. "They are world experienced and the Internet has opened their eyes even more to what's happening in the world."

Although it may seem complicated at first, Menchions maintains anyone can achieve the new "hotel chic." One trick is to hide the mundane everyday objects behind closed doors so that your "found objects" stand out. Can't get away from the need to file important papers? Take your cue from II by IV Design and transform an old travel trunk into a filing cabinet.

Most importantly, hold onto the personal items that tell the story of your life and don't be afraid to showcase them, regardless of their size, colour and shape.

The Rise Condominium presentation centre and model suite is located at 501 St. Clair Avenue West. Hours are Monday through Thursday, noon to 6 p.m., and weekends from noon to 5 p.m. The centre is closed on Fridays. For more information, visit [www.risecondos.com](http://www.risecondos.com).



The RISE model suite combines warm muted tones with bright coloured accents, notably in the kitchen with green glass tiled backsplash and vibrant yellow light fixtures.



The living room embraces playful geometric patterns, multi-layers, eclectic accents and classic references from a previous era.



photos by Geoff Lackner

This bedroom in the RISE model suite blends a variety of textures and patterns with unique-pieces to create a multi-layered and travel-inspired look.