

# BC Home

JUNE/JULY 2010

**THE BIG CHILL**  
TOP TRENDS IN  
FRIDGES

**BACKYARD  
ESCAPE**  
STYLISH OUTDOOR  
ROOMS

**BAL ARNESON'S**  
HEALTHY  
INDIAN CUISINE

*plus*  
**MARTHA STURDY'S**  
artful passions

**kitchen  
confidence**

Small condo renos + couture kitchen makeovers

# the Italian Job

Old meets new in this renovated condo kitchen, where pale-hued imported tiles and custom cabinets blend beautifully with sleek stainless steel

TEXT JANET GYENES PHOTOS TERRY GUSCOTT

With the aroma of fennel-flecked sausages sizzling away on the stovetop and the effervescence of a recently poured flute of prosecco adding to the scene in the kitchen, one could almost drift away to Italy on the power of suggestion.

And rightly so. Rita Bellano's condo *cucina*

renovation was inspired by the high-end kitchens she has designed for clients over the years. As the interior designer and proprietor of the eponymous ceramic tile company says, "That's all I see – gourmet kitchens – and I love to cook, so I wanted one of those, too."



**CUCINA AMORE** Wall and floor tiles imported from Italy set the scene in this high-end kitchen reno. Smart touches like dish drawers and a built-in wine chiller add function to a small space while keeping the countertop uncluttered.

**“That’s all I see – gourmet kitchens – and I love to cook, so I wanted one of those, too.” – Rita Bellano**



Indeed, as Bellano chats about the renovation, she’s preparing a quick meal of pasta and spicy Italian sausage, effectively illustrating how her kitchen is pure pint-sized perfection, with all of the elements you might expect in a single-family house. Bellano admits that finding extra room in the barely eight-by-eight-foot kitchen was the biggest challenge she faced. She drew up her plans and continued to revise them until she had eventually fulfilled her list of must-haves.

“Every millimetre of this space is accounted for,” says Bellano. Her kitchen might be small when it comes to space, but it scores top marks for being hardworking. And it’s certainly no out-of-the-box kitchen: customized flourishes bring personality to the room and allow it to transcend its diminutive size. For example, the bulkhead was removed and replaced with a drop ceiling that houses a row of pot lights, adding much-needed overhead lighting and eliminating that cramped feel so many galley kitchens suffer from. By allowing the counter – crowned with brownish-grey porcelain stone tile – to edge past the original line demarking the kitchen and dining areas, Bellano managed to eke out an extra 32 inches of space. And what enthusiastic cook wouldn’t want more room around the range and sink?

**EVERYTHING IN PLACE** Bellano made sure to put in added conveniences, like an appliance garage and a fridge with water dispenser. The blast of heat: a lipstick-hued toaster, chosen by Bellano’s husband, Giovanni.

Throughout the renovated galley-style kitchen, almond-hued porcelain tile Bellano imported from Italy wraps around the walls. It’s set in a brick mosaic pattern, forming a pleasing backdrop that’s understated, rather than high-shine or reflective. “I wanted to bring together the old and new,” says Bellano. “I wanted something that wouldn’t date.” The soft-textured tile falls somewhere in between the best-selling tile choice – traditional terra cotta – and something bright white or grey, which would lean too far into the modern world. Underfoot, the same almond-toned tile has been used, this time in 18-by-18-inch squares. A barely perceptible one-millimetre grout line makes the floor look like it’s one solid surface.

As for all those pesky kitchen annoyances Bellano used to complain about, well, they were simply done away with by smart design. Pot lights have been wired on separate switches, and under-cabinet puck lights provide ample task lighting. The row of cabinets under the sink “floats” on two angled “feet,” so it looks like a piece of furniture, “and you don’t bang your feet,” Bellano



## FURNITURE

made to fit your home  
locally crafted  
eco focused & condo sized



*Canadian Furniture for  
the Canadian Home*

[www.creativehome.ca](http://www.creativehome.ca)

1100 Lansdowne Drive, Coquitlam, BC  
T. 604.941.1377



INSPIRE DESIGN INDULGE



SPACIAL EFFECTS  
DESIGN



FULL SERVICE INTERIOR  
DESIGN CENTRE

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CUSTOM  
KITCHEN & BATH

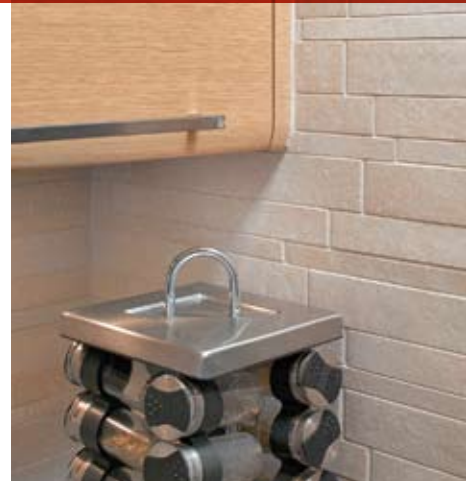
DESIGN-PRODUCT  
SHOWROOM

P 604.455.0947

23242 MAVIS AVE  
FORT LANGLEY BC

WWW.SPACIALEFFECTSDESIGN.COM

**DEFYING CONVENTION** The custom oak veneer cabinets have been stained with a hint of grey for a blend that reflects the tones of both the stainless appliances and the porcelain floor and wall tiles. Thoughtful choices, like making room for a wine chiller and building “floating” cabinets, give this customized kitchen extra personality and function.



adds. All cabinets and drawers are soft-close so there’s no annoying banging in a busy kitchen.

And why contend with harsh cabinet angles when a little extra effort and imagination can soften the look? Bellano decided to round the bottom edge of the cabinets, again tempering sharp lines with a bit of sophistication. The finishing touch: brushed stainless steel handles running horizontally – almost the width of the cabinet front – placed close to the top edges of the drawers and the bottom of the cupboards.

“It’s linear, but not overdone,” she says, describing how the kitchen’s modern elements, like the stainless steel appliances and range hood, balance beautifully with creamy tiles and custom oak cabinets, which fit the space sublimely. The easy-to-clean cooktop is sleek and modern, too.

Was Bellano able to complete her lengthy list of must-haves? Wine cooler: check. Deep double sinks: check. Microwave? Housed in the cabinet that “borrows” some overhead space in the adjacent dining area. Garburator, stacked dish

drawers, bottom-freezer refrigerator with integrated water dispenser and ice maker? They’re all in place.

Ah, but she doesn’t have one of the *de rigueur* swing-away pot fillers, perfect for filling those cumbersome pasta pots? Bellano, smiling, hasn’t missed a beat. “Yes I do!” she asserts, grabbing the pullout faucet with spray. The pot is filled in seconds and set atop the stainless slide-in range, another modern touch in a kitchen that blends the best of old world and new.

Steps away, the dinner table is being set for an impromptu meal. It may appear small at first, but true to her Italian roots, Bellano has made sure that function trumps form. This table slides open to comfortably seat 10. And with the wine cooler close at hand, no one needs to leave the action to pop open another bottle of bubbles, before tucking into a meal that’s been prepared with as much passion and care as Bellano’s *cucina*. ■

STYLIST Heather Cameron See SOURCES on page 68