

## THE STAR

# How this Mississauga family found the recipe for the right space



Christina and Paul Ceccomancini faced the classic “love it or list it” dilemma.

Their 1,300-square-foot home on a quiet street in Mississauga’s Meadowvale neighbourhood boasts a huge backyard backing onto a ravine, three bedrooms and a finished basement. It’s the perfect size for their family of four, which includes daughters Olivia, 8, and Ava, 7.

The cons? The main floor layout was chopped into a small sitting room,

(which doubled as a dumping ground for household odds and ends), a tiny kitchen with next to no storage, and a dining area that could barely accommodate a table for four.

This was a big problem for a household that entertains often. Paul's extended family nears 100 people and Christina's has upwards of 30.

"We would have to put a table in the kitchen, a table in the living room and another one in the wasted space area near the front door to seat everyone," said Christina, 41, a kindergarten ECE teacher.

She and her husband love to cook together, but the cramped kitchen had room for just one chef. And it often meant heading back and forth to the basement to retrieve big pots, serving trays and pantry items.



Christina and Paul, 42, a tractor-trailer mechanic, realized they didn't need a big renovation and more space; they needed a more efficient layout. Fortunately, professional help was only a phone call away — and it came from someone who had been seated at one of their many tables over the years.

Christina's aunt, Gabriele Pizzale, principal designer and CEO of [Pizzale Design Inc.](#), put her team on the job to offer a layout that worked for the Ceccomancinis' lifestyle.

"It's not a huge house and a full quarter of their living space was not functional," said Pizzale.

"Knowing the new layout had to come from the existing footprint, we looked for ways to maximize every square foot. By taking down one wall and removing the small room by the front entrance, we were able to triple the size of the kitchen and double the dining area."



The new, open space allows for a massive [Cambria](#) quartz island that stretches to 110 inches; that's room to comfortably seat five on one side and accommodate three shallow and four deep drawers, plus a cupboard and hideaway shelf for the microwave on the other. The island has become the Ceccomancinis' favourite feature.

"It's where we love to sit, prepare food, serve meals and just hang out. The girls spread out their playdough and we can all be together in the kitchen,

which is something we could never do before,” said Christina.

The painted MDF cabinetry includes a pantry, plenty of pullout storage, plus bells and whistles like garbage and spice pullouts. A built-in credenza with upper and lower cabinetry is tucked into a nook at the end of the kitchen, offering even more storage and serving space. Now, when they have big gatherings, they can get everyone in one room by putting a table at the end of the island — and still enjoy a nice “mingling” area.

With the “more space” box checked, Pizzale turned her attention to beautiful and practical finishes. Her firm’s full-service approach includes providing three options for everything from tiles to furniture to the art on the walls, a huge relief for Christina.

“I can never make a decision, so to go out and pick a paint colour, table or light fixture ... I can’t do it. It’s too overwhelming,” she says.



The new, dramatic features include bold lighting choices like the large-scale pendants with geometric lights that balance the size of the island. A coordinating fixture sits just behind it, above the dining area.

The table, which comfortably seats eight, comes with sturdy chairs featuring wipeable fabrics, a nod to a bustling family with children. “All



the woods we chose are slightly distressed so there is no pressure to keep everything pristine,” says Pizzale.

The family moved in with Paul’s parents for the two-month renovation in fall, 2017. Although there were a few construction hiccups, they were determined to return in time to host a Christmas party.

“Coming back was fabulous because I’m a big Christmas person. Everything was beautiful and all I had to do was decorate it for the holidays. We moved in on Friday and had all our friends over on Saturday,” said Christina.

Although Pizzale’s firm is no stranger to huge design projects, she says this small renovation that didn’t tack on even one square inch was one of their most rewarding.



“This one has been the biggest ‘OMG!’ transformation. It’s a small space, but we’ve tailored it so this family can use every last corner of it. It just proves you don’t need an 8,000-square-foot house to feel like you’ve got a spacious home,” said Pizzale.

Besides, adds Christina, “who wants to clean 8,000 square feet?”



## **THE NUMBERS**

\$353,000: Cost of house in 2008

\$120,000: Cost of renovation, including new windows and furniture

26: New kitchen drawers and cabinets

10: Years they've lived in the house



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