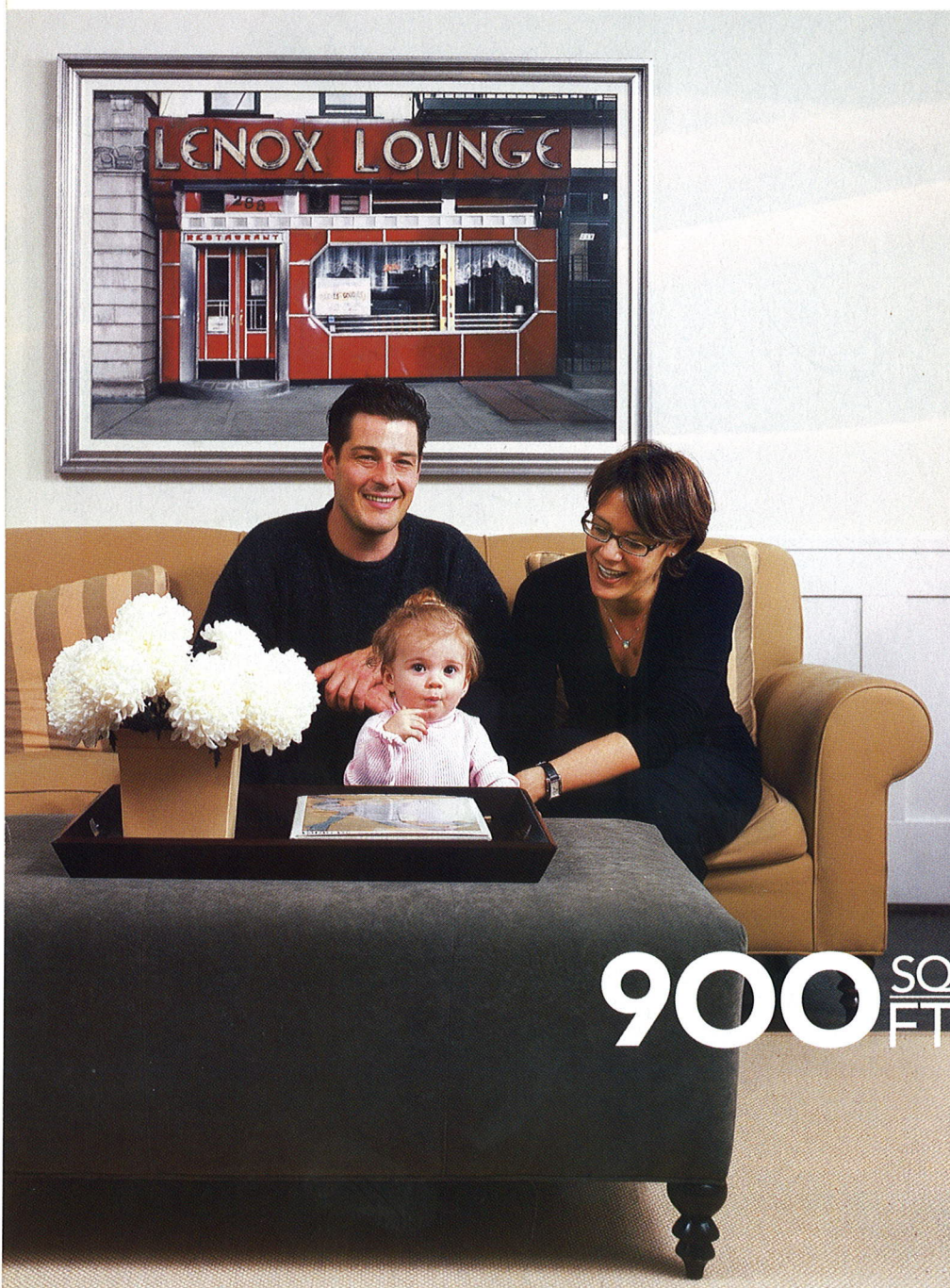
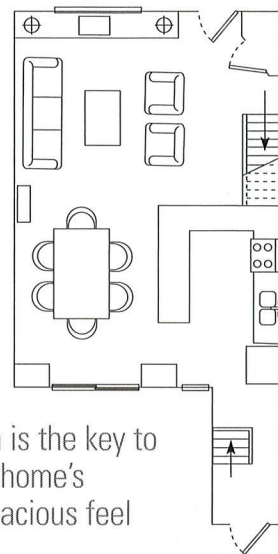


SMALL SPACES
small wonder

WRITTEN BY MARTHA UNIACKE BREEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY STACEY BRANDFORD



900 SQ **FT**



Organization is the key to this Toronto home's positively spacious feel

For a lot of people, a dream house usually includes longed-for extra space. But for Toronto couple Judy Petersiel and Scott Steele, it didn't quite work out that way: their almost-900-square-foot dream was about half the size of the loft they'd been renting. But their cosy nest – and nest it has become with the arrival of little Zoe just over a year ago – is so intelligently organized that it feels decidedly roomy.

The '40s house, in a neighbourhood Judy and Scott had been eyeing for many years, was a welcome change from their open-concept loft despite its dark, small rooms. Before moving in, the couple removed the walls on the lower floor, got rid of the faded wallpaper and

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN PUDSEY



Scott Steele and Judy Petersiel relax with daughter ZOE in the living room, which is comfortable and free from clutter thanks to smart ideas like a silver-plated vegetable serving dish (on the cabinet) that stores loose change and other front-hall items. The painting of New York's Lenox Lounge is by Scott.



Much of the transition **from loft to house** meant a

worn carpeting, and replaced a window in the dining room with a sliding glass door. Over the next two-and-a-half years, they added wainscoting around the perimeter for character and to hide the uneven walls, refinished the hardwood floors and opened up the bathroom. Their home is now filled with light and elbow room.

With such limited space, Judy and Scott had to be methodical about what to keep, what could be relocated or repainted and what had to go. "Scott is fanatical about a place for everything and everything in its place," says Judy. Some decisions were easy – the built-in cabinet along one wall of the living room was useful for storing their TV and stereo and also for display. Other pieces were freshened up with paint; for instance, the couple stripped the top of the pine dining table to reveal the natural wood, and painted the legs white. But much of the transition from loft to house meant a ruthless – and liberating – process of editing.

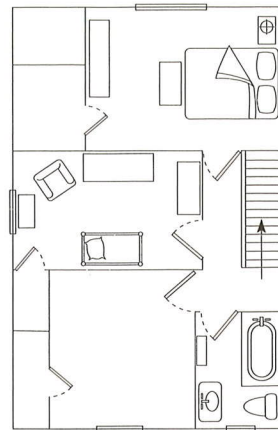
One firm rule that Judy and Scott stuck to was to keep only the pieces



ruthless – and **liberating** – process of editing



Built-ins like the bookshelves that surround the sliding glass door in the dining room provide much-needed storage and an architectural look. The couple demolished the kitchen, finished the stained maple countertop, added moulding and wainscoting, and changed the lights and fixtures. Scott, a self-confessed perfectionist, focused on details that add character, such as the Craftsman-style pattern of the wainscoting, which is repeated in the built-in cabinetry.

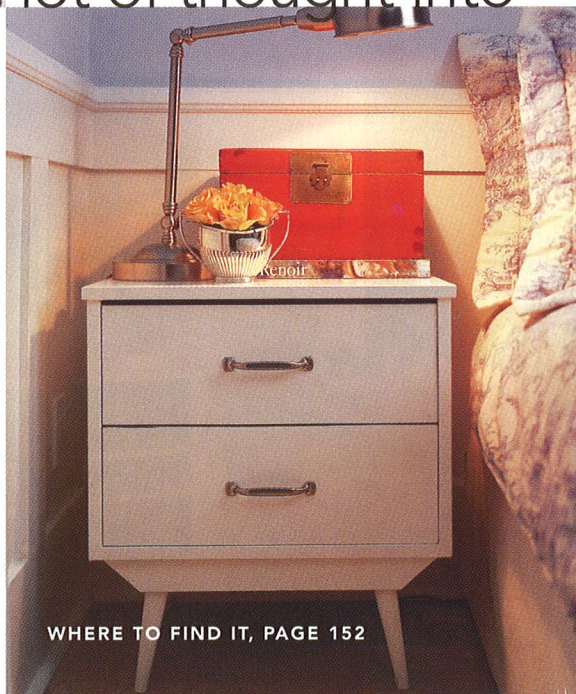


that did double duty as both accents and storage. For example, a beautiful wood-and-glass medicine cabinet, which belonged to Judy's grandfather, a doctor, was updated with a fresh coat of pearly white paint and now holds linens and toiletries in the bathroom. In the living room, a tiny, exquisite antique chest provides a toddler-scale container for storing some of Zoe's toys.

With clean greyish white walls – the perfect backdrop for Scott's large-scale paintings – and abundant light, the house is comfy without feeling small. "Despite the size, you can breathe," says Judy. "Our home is practical and very us." ■

"With so little space, we put a lot of thought into

Zoe's room will grow with her thanks to smart choices like an oriental rug (formerly in the living room of the loft) and a pretty colour scheme. The couple updated many of their existing furnishings, including a bedside table, which was treated to a coat of paint and new hardware. Formerly a '40s-era nightmare, the bathroom was widened by one foot and brightened with the addition of a tempered-glass half wall and white beadboard panelling.



WIDE OPEN

Judy and Scott offer their tips for ensuring that a small home doesn't feel cramped.

EDIT YOUR POSSESSIONS, keeping only pieces that are useful or beautiful, and preferably both.

INCORPORATE OPEN SPACE so there's plenty of elbow room around furniture and so that it's possible to enjoy extended views across an interior.

DESIGN BUILT-INS to custom-fit specific items such as small appliances in the kitchen, the stereo and TV in the living room and books in the dining room.

REPEAT ARCHITECTURAL MOTIFS such as wainscoting and flooring to pull a space together.

REMOVE INTERIOR WALLS, replacing them where necessary with half walls, to let in more light.

what we would **keep** and what we had to **get rid of"**

