

DECORATING

A Perfect 10

THE OWNERS OF A DATED
TORONTO HOME DISCOVER THAT
GIVING TIRED SPACES FRESH
APPEAL CAN BE AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3....

Text by KENDRA JACKSON | Photography by STACEY VAN BERKEL



SEE SOURCE BOOK
HOUSE & HOME

1 Inject Colour

Painting the walls an invigorating blue-green instantly brought the living room to life. The hue was pulled from the striped fabric on the armchairs, and repeated on the floral-pattern drapes. To enhance the room's dimensions, designer Meredith Heaton had the plate rail and top portion of the walls painted a buttery cream, then carried it to the fireplace mantel. A smattering of throw pillows adds comfort and colour to the neutral sofa. **Pillows:** Meredith Heaton Design; **rug:** Woven Art; **tray (on coffee table), Elic artwork (above mantel) by Steve Redman, Canvas Gallery; artwork (above piano) by Steven Neidermohr; wall colour, Boyou (24-26); mantel and upper wall colour, Sweet Pearl (27-32); Pratt & Lambert.**





2 Prioritize Function

The new breakfast area is used for casual meals. Heron had the antique chairs reupholstered in easy-to-clean ostrich-look vinyl and covered the back of the built-in banquette in a vibrant chinoiserie floral to temper the formality of the furniture. A tiny window was replaced with french doors that extend the kitchen outdoors. Privacy isn't an issue, so the ceiling-height drapes frame the doors but do not pull across, reducing fabric costs. A pale blue area rug grounds the setup. **Rug:** Elit; **banquette fabric:** Schumacher; **drapes fabric:** Maxwell Fabrics; **chandelier shades:** Shades of Light.

3 Make Storage Stylish

To maximize space, Heron added a short counter beside the fridge with cabinets above and below. Glass-door fronts flanked by open shelving for wine and cookbooks keep the corner light and airy. The counter is just large enough for a coffee bar and also serves as a landing spot for dishes on their way to and from the adjacent dining room. **Hardware:** Canmode.

After living in their more than 100-year-old house for 30 years with their two kids, the homeowners felt it was time to make a few small changes. The bathrooms were far from spa-like, and there was a forgotten space at the end of the kitchen that held promise, but little else. So, when the couple attended a community fundraiser and saw that a consultation with designer Meredith Heron was a prize in the silent auction, they eagerly placed a bid. What could they lose? As it turned out, nothing: they won. And quickly, a simple consultation bloomed into a full-scale makeover. "One thing led to another, and we decided to expand the project," says the husband.

Heron agreed to stay sympathetic to the bones of the house and not make any major structural changes. "This old house has a lot of character, and we wanted to keep that," she says. And for the most part, they were able to stick to this mandate. Gutting the principal ensuite and main baths revealed knob-and-tube wiring, so a large portion of the budget went to rewiring the entire house. They also discovered that the kitchen cabinets were rotting, so out they came. This created an opportunity to take the space back to the studs and reinsulate it for better comfort. To tie all the changes together, Heron chose a palette of blue and green and wove it throughout the house. Now the rooms add up to a sharp yet relaxed setting where the family feels more than at home.



A fixed roman shade gets this tailored look for less.



4 Decorate the Kitchen

Heron dressed up simple Shaker-style cabinets with crystal and brass hardware, then added a frieze and crown along the top of the uppers to fill the awkward space between the cabinets and the ceiling. The marble backsplash tiles have a timeless look and the colourful ikat rug gives the hard-working kitchen the cosiness of a living room. The quartzite countertops are white with grey veining and ogee edges. Marble bowl, Crate & Barrel.



Hang a chandelier 30" to 34" above the dining table.

5 Play with Textures

The dining room is layered up natural textures, from plush to silk, creating a sophisticated space that's formal yet welcoming. The homeowners kept their antique dining table and modern Parsons chairs and layered on indigo grasscloth wallpaper, green dupioni silk drapes and an ikt rug. The deep jewel tones set a moody atmosphere, while an Art Deco-inspired polished nickel chandelier ups the luxury factor. **Boat rug, Elk wallpaper, Dalia ikt rug, chandelier, Murano glass artwork by Steven Weintraub.**



HOUSE & HOME



Matte black is forgiving on less-than-perfect older doors



6 Disguise Flaws with Pattern

The original plaster walls in the foyer were uneven, but resurfacing or replacing them with drywall would have been costly, so Heron used wallpaper with a "meandering and all-over print" to hide the flaws. A glossy white console with gold-toned hardware and a gilt-framed mirror add glamour, but the classical symmetry of the vignette keeps it understated. Replacing the original ceramic floor tiles is at the top of the couple's to-do list. **Wallpaper, GP & J Baker; lamps, Barbara Cosgrove.**



7 Turn Quirks into Showpieces

A chimney breast rising up from the living room protrudes from one wall in the second-floor principal bedroom. To create "grandness and oomph" in the room, Heron painted wide horizontal tone-on-tone stripes on the awkward wall, turning it into a stunning feature. A tall linen-upholstered headboard contrasts the room's linear theme, as does the striped duvet. The existing drapes worked with the new design, but were a touch too short. Heron had valance boxes made so the drapes could be hung lower than normal and skim the floor. **Headboard, MacJob; bedding, Meredith Heron Design; valance fabric, Maxwell Fabrics.**



LEFT: Plain blue walls and a headboard-less bed felt more "dorm" than "dreamy."

8 Go Big with Tile

Heron took the principal ensuite back to the studs to give the room a luxurious wet-room look. Bluestone marble 2" x 4" subway tiles stretch from floor to ceiling, enveloping the space in a watery palette. The bluestone is repeated again as a thin border for the mosaic Calacatta marble floor tiles, connecting the two surfaces. The painted traditional vanity is outfitted with a marble counter and antique nickel knobs. Dual sinks and bridge-mount faucets — "A bit rogue for a bathroom," says Heron — are paired with twin silver-leafed mirrors and wall sconces for a pleasing symmetry. **Tiles, Sotillo Imports; faucets, Brizo; vanity, Meredith Heron Design.**



LEFT: A builder-basic vanity was functional but far from stylish.



9 Make Small Cosy

The son's room is a mere 7' x 10', so Heron painted the lower half of the walls with bands of navy and slate blue, to feel snug, and the top half a warm off-white, to create a feeling of height. Hits of orange and indigo on the duvet and side chair (a hand-me-down from his grandfather, along with the bed and dresser) complete the look.



10 Add Drama

Heron gave the heirloom sleigh bed in the daughter's bedroom a box-pleat canopy made from coral-coloured floral and solid fabrics for a whimsical feel. A crystal-drop chandelier is an elegant touch that she won't soon outgrow. Further pattern was layered in via the hand-blocked paisley sham, comforter and chair and the tapestry-feel rug. Chair fabric, Peter Dunham Textiles.

LIVING ROOM

The homeowners' striped armchairs inspired the energetic palette, including an oversized floral, tone-on-tone embossed trellis in acid green and shades of blue.



PRINCIPAL SUITE

Muted, restful and low-contrast — this scheme is perfect for a soothing grown-up retreat.



MIX MASTER

DESIGNER MEREDITH HERON'S TIPS FOR COMBINING FABRICS LIKE A PRO.

1. Contrast texture with confidence, using everything from silk to velvet to embroidered cotton.
2. Play up pattern by including both big- and small-scale prints.
3. Carry colours from room to room, varying shades slightly.

BOY'S ROOM

Preppy stripes and plaids in navy and vibrant tangerine put a fresh spin on the boy's room.

GIRL'S ROOM

A fresh peachy floral, coral geometric and soft lavender prints are pretty without being precious.

