

Mixing black and white, traditional and modern, playful and serious, two designers create a chic interior that's in perfect harmony with its fashionable homeowners.

a study in CONTRASTS



TEXT
LAURA MUIR

PHOTOGRAPHY
ASHLEY CAPP

Juxtaposing hard and soft elements, such as the velvet armchairs and chrome and glass coffee table, gives the living room dimension. A chrome ball is a playful conversation piece. "Because it's placed next to the ornate mirror, it doesn't look too space age," says designer Ashley Tracey.

OPPOSITE Pops of bold blue in the living room are in keeping with the chic contrasting look.

GOT 60 MINUTES?

Spray-paint a mirror frame to fit your colour scheme.



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orking with these super-stylish homeowners was a dream project for designers Ashley Tracey and Laura McLellan, one that allowed them to channel their love of art and fashion and incorporate their signature classic-meets-modern aesthetic. Ashley and Laura were approached by the homeowners before they made an offer on this house in downtown Toronto two years ago. "They wanted our advice, and we told them we could make it work for their family," says Laura. Here's how The Design Co. duo created a sophisticated space suitable for a busy couple and three of their grown children.

The dining area's matte black tempered glass dining table with a steel base can extend to seat 14 people. The Louis XVI-inspired chairs lend a traditional touch. "They help balance out all the modern pieces," says designer Laura McLellan.



LEFT The staircase's railings and newel posts were painted black, while the spindles were coated in white. The stair runner is a practical choice. "We chose this one because it hides dirt but sticks with the palette," says Laura.



3
GOT
HOURS?

Dress up your stairs with a runner in a style and hue that complement the rest of your decor.



BEFORE

the before

"It was very beige," says Ashley of this five-year-old 3,200-square-foot three-storey house. "It had builder-basic finishes and was too traditional looking for the homeowners." While the interior was lost in a sea of beige, it had good bones and handsome architectural features, such as chunky mouldings, wainscotting, coffered ceilings and hardwood floors. Also a plus: The open-concept main level encouraged family togetherness and accommodated any entertaining needs. "It was nice to work with because we could extend rooms without tearing down walls," says Ashley. As for the upper two floors, things weren't so easy. Slightly awkward layouts meant wasted space like an odd "bonus room" with a skylight but no windows. "Our goal was to make the entire home beautiful and functional," says Laura.

Reno by the NUMBERS

SQUARE FOOTAGE
OF THE ENTIRE HOME

3,200

ROOMS
IN THE HOUSE

16

BESPOKE
FURNITURE
PIECES

7

PEOPLE WHO
WORKED ON THE RENOVATION

12

WALK-IN
CLOSETS

4

SQUARE FEET
OF MARBLE USED

550

LENGTH
OF KITCHEN ISLAND IN FEET

11

RIGHT The flat-panelled cabinetry is framed and has a nice satin finish (as opposed to high gloss) to prevent the kitchen from looking too sleek, while the black-painted island has classic Shaker details inspired by the existing built-in hutch (shown on previous page). With its stunning veining, the Statuario marble used for the backsplash and countertops lends the space an organic opulence.



the vision

"The family lived in a fairly traditional house before, so they wanted this one to have a more contemporary look," says Ashley. But the space's elaborate architectural features kept the designers from going full-on modern. "It informed our decision to mix traditional and contemporary," says Laura. "We also felt that, for longevity's sake, the design had to have a balanced mix of styles in order for it to have legs."



the execution

During the three-month construction phase of the year-long renovation, rooms were gutted and layouts were rejigged. For example, the third floor - which formerly consisted of two bedrooms, a small bathroom and the strange "bonus room" - was transformed into two bedrooms with walk-in closets (storage was a priority in this project) and a larger Jack and Jill bathroom. The house's basic finishes were also updated to create a timeless, luxurious look: Original white oak floors were re-stained in a similar dark walnut shade, and miles of marble were added throughout the home to give it a glamorous vibe. Painting the entire yellowy-beige envelope a bright, clean white at once freshened up the space and gave the architectural elements new life. "It's the same feeling as when you put on a crisp white shirt," says Ashley.



THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE, BOTTOM The designers created a sophisticated sitting area in the family room with a combination of curvaceous and clean-lined pieces, including a contemporary coffee table - made of mirror, tempered glass, acrylic and chrome - and classic marble-topped Tulip-style side tables. A wall of framed family photos, both current and vintage, adds a personal touch.



GOT 48 HOURS?

Install wainscoting to add dimension and an air of elegance.



The intriguing juxtaposition of old and new is exemplified in the master bedroom. An antique Asian chest - a stunning family heirloom - is offset by the clean lines of the mirror framed in black back-painted glass.

OPPOSITE, TOP The floating nightstand surprisingly offers storage. "It has a drawer," says Laura. "There's a recessed spot on the bottom where you can pull it open."



GOT 3 HOURS?

Construct a simple wall-mounted nightstand.

the final product

Expanses of white afforded the designers the opportunity to incorporate large works of art (including the homeowners' own photography). In fact, a love of art plays a major role at every turn – even the marble in the kitchen, with its gorgeous veining, looks like an abstract painting. Along with the mostly monochromatic colour palette, which enhances the classic, glamorous feel, the mix of materials provides each room with depth and interest. Says Ashley: "Because, for the homeowners, the aesthetic was inspired by fashion, we used a lot of textures, similar to layering pieces in an outfit." Many of the elements (like the mod chandelier in the dining area and the black pouffes in the family room) boast a sculptural quality – a perfect fit for this sophisticated yet playful abode.



ABOVE A modern take on the classic canopy bed has a grand presence in the master bedroom. **RIGHT, MIDDLE** Removing the bathtub in the master ensuite allowed for a spacious primping station. **RIGHT** The master bedroom's 15-drawer dresser (along with a walk-in closet and separate shoe cupboard) provides ample storage.