

Great Minds DESIGN ALIKE

A neuroscientist and a designer put their heads together to make a west Toronto new build feel like home.

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STYLING STACY BEGG

In the living room of this stunning Toronto home, gold and soft peony pink accents are combined with high-contrast colours (seen in the artwork) for a dramatic impact.

DESIGN, Lark & Linen Interior Design, larkandlinen.com; American White 2112-70 WALL PAINT (throughout, except master bedroom), Chantilly Lace OC-65 TRIM PAINT (throughout), Benjamin Moore; SOFA, RUG, RH Restoration Hardware; blush ARMCHAIR, COFFEE TABLE, OTTOMAN, West Elm; SIDE TABLE, CB2; custom DRAPERY, TOSS & LUMBAR CUSHIONS, Tonic Living; PRINTS, Minted; TABLE LAMPS, Elle.

Details matter," says homeowner Ivonne Suridjan. "Whether the field is science, writing or design, what distinguishes an amateur from a professional is their attention to detail." On the same day that she and husband Alex Cui bought their first home, Ivonne contacted a designer to take care of the details. "I love home decor, but I'm trained in science, not in design," says the neuroscientist. "I wanted to experience the mind of someone who spends hundreds of hours a week focusing on making rooms beautiful." That "someone" was interior designer and blogger Jacquelyn Clark.

The pair connected immediately. "I love that Ivonne knew what she wanted, yet was open to input," says Jacquelyn. The house was less than 10 years old, with an awkward layout spread over four floors, switching from boxy rooms to open-concept spaces. "Architecturally, this was the exact opposite of Ivonne's preference for older, more traditional homes. So, our challenge was obvious: How would we transform this builder-basic home into a place of timeless elegance?"

Since an all-traditional space can come across as more formal than inviting, Jacquelyn suggested ways to soften



ABOVE To make the most of the awkward nooks flanking the fireplace, designer Jacquelyn Clark added inexpensive bead-board and custom shelves. “Switching up the display will keep the room feeling new,” she says. Her styling tips? “Work in groupings of three, five or seven. Lean artwork. Stack boxes and books. And play with texture.”

PITCHER, ORB, HomeSense.

RIGHT & OPPOSITE In the dining room, a rough-hewn farm table paired with classic chairs achieves casual elegance; a bench that can slide beneath the table makes the most of the small space. Overscaled and modern, the chandelier (a total splurge!) serves as a youthful take on tradition.

DINING TABLE, DINING CHAIRS, RH Restoration Hardware; **BENCH**, Wayfair.ca; **SIDEBOARD**, Casalife; **PRINT**, Minted; **CHANDELIER**, Elte; **TABLE LAMP**, Serena & Lily; **GLASSWARE**, IKEA.

the look. She recommended adding layers of texture, such as velvet, silk and even a fuzzy ottoman topper, in the living room. She also noted that a blush and gold palette, though breathtaking, is on-trend, so it would be best to keep it to a whisper. “For large pieces, go traditional. For accents, go trendy,” says Jacquelyn. “That way, your home never goes out of style.” The living room’s blush-coloured chair, though, was a happy exception to the rule. “I simply fell in love with it,” says Ivonne. But the piece wasn’t available in Canada. That’s where Alex came in. “Can you believe he actually drove to Buffalo, N.Y., and brought it back? Amazing!”

As the project unfolded, Ivonne expressed a desire for more contrast. To that end, she and Jacquelyn changed the kitchen island from cement grey to black and echoed it in the adjacent dining room with a black sideboard. A tonal backsplash in a bold geometric pattern amplified the contrast, while wooden shelves and stool seats bring warmth to the grey, blush and gold scheme. “The wood’s gold tones play into the palette without being





ABOVE & OPPOSITE Minor changes in the small kitchen garnered big results. The marble backsplash was a worthwhile splurge for the crisp visual interest it offers. Floating wooden shelves warm up the neutral, which originally had a boxy bank of ugly brown cabinets. A black-painted island and a pair of eye-catching globe-shaped pendant lights make the room look distinguished yet fun.

Custom **CABINETRY & SHELVES**, Flexwood Fine Cabinetry; Cement Gray 2112-60 **CABINETRY PAINT**, Benjamin Moore; **BACKSPLASH TILES**, Saltlino Imports; **STOOLS**, West Elm; custom **DRAPERY**, Tonic Living; **RUNNER**, HomeSense; **PENDANT LIGHTS**, PlaidFox; citrus **TREE**, Apricot Flowers.

RIGHT In a corner of the kitchen, a floating counter offers a place to do work and accommodates a small self-serve bar area.

Brass **TERRARIUM**, agate **BOOKEND**, HomeSense.

obvious,” says Jacquelyn. For a little sparkle, a metallic gold finish was selected for the dining room chandelier. And the whole time, Ivonne felt like a key part of the design process.

“I’d never worked with a designer before,” says Ivonne. “I thought of decor as an end point. But what I learned from Jacquelyn is that home design is a process. It constantly evolves. And even though it’s creative, you need a plan. It’s methodical, too. As a scientist, I get that!”

“Jacquelyn made me feel like a collaborator – I learned so much. Now that we’re done, Alex and I can begin to add in pieces that have a story. That’s something that’s missing, since our house is so new to us. But hey, we can’t fake time and we can’t fake life. So, we’ll just have to let it unfold – and let the design unfold with us!”



RIGHT & BELOW The entire top floor of the house serves as the master bedroom, which includes a walk-in closet that feels like a dressing room thanks to soft details, such as the tufted ottoman and linen armchair.

CABINETRY, IKEA; **ARMCHAIR**, RH Restoration Hardware; **TOSS CUSHION**, Tonic Living; **OTTO-MAN**, Elite Market; pinecone **PRINT**, Minted.

OPPOSITE In the master bedroom, a petal pink and rich grey palette is expressed in textural velvet and silk. A parade of black and white art prints accentuates the room's arched ceiling, while white woodwork keeps the space looking bright and clean.

Nightcap P5205-14 **WALL PAINT**, Para Paints; **BED FRAME**, **NIGHTSTANDS**, **TABLE LAMPS**, **BENCH**, **BEDDING**, **LUMBAR CUSHIONS**, RH Restoration Hardware; **PRINTS**, Minted; pink **TOSS CUSHIONS**, Turkish **TOWEL**, Tonic Living.

Get the
LOOK

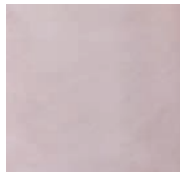
Fabrics and paints for recreating this home's pretty palette.



Cement Gray 2112-60
PAINT, Benjamin Moore,
benjaminmoore.ca.



Linen Bamboo Path **FABRIC**
in Rose, \$49 per yard, Tonic Living,
tonicliving.com.



Polyester Lux Velvet **FABRIC** in
Blush Pink, \$30 per yard, Tonic Living,
tonicliving.com.



Pretty perfume bottles
displayed on a mirrored tray
add an elegant feel.



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