

interior design

MODERN. maximalism

by MARLENE EISNER • photos DONNA GRIFFITH • styling THE PROPERTY STYLIST



Expanded spaces create an emotional *connection*

This three-bedroom, two-bathroom 1920's Edwardian-style cottage is nestled in the Beaches neighbourhood of Toronto. Despite having a narrow footprint typical for the area, the house was recently expanded through a thoughtfully planned and executed renovation that increased the living area to 2,414 sq. ft., from 1,904-sq.-ft., not including the attic. "We added 15-ft. by 17 ft., on two levels," says Yvonne Crezel, founder

and principal designer at YCC Design Interiors. "This included 255 sq. ft. for the basement plus the relocation of the stairs leading from the basement to first floor, and 255 sq. ft. to expand the kitchen and create a family room."

The vision

The homeowners were looking for a kitchen and main floor upgrade that told their story, one that was personal and reflected their tastes and lifestyle and offered an emotional connection. Although the kitchen had been

updated 15 years earlier, space was limited, and the layout was not ideal.

"The original kitchen was small, cramped and made no sense," says Crezel. "The floors were deep red Marmoleum, the lower cabinets were dark brown and the upper cabinets a few shades off from the pale mauve walls. All colours and materials were competing, and the room was distracting and cold." The redesign not only focused on improving the kitchen, but the extra square footage also allowed for the addition of a



family room that significantly changed how the family use the space and spend time together.

The makeover

When you walk into the house, you enter a small vestibule large enough

for shoes and coats. Ahead, a set of stairs leads to the second floor while on the main floor, the living room and dining room flow into each other and end at the kitchen, a separate, walled room located at the back of the house. Before the renovation, the kitchen doorway was 36-inches wide.



Before





"We expanded the width of the opening entrance to 46 inches to make it feel more connected to the dining room and the front of the home," says Crezel. "The extra 15 feet made space for the new family room adjacent to the kitchen."

For a seamless look, the flooring on the main level was replaced with white oak in a herring bone pattern. The kitchen now has a walk-in pantry, office space, a sitting nook, a bar and more storage space. To add natural lighting and a spacious feel, three new skylights were installed, and windows, with an oversized glass sliding door that opens to the backyard, occupy the entire back wall of the home. The outdoor space features a gas fire pit and is a much-used gathering place for friends and family.

Design details

To really personalize this home, the couple was open to mixing different styles, bold artwork, eclectic furnishings, vibrant hues and integrating intricate pattern play into the design. One inspiring move was to choose teal as the colour for the kitchen cabinetry. Benjamin Moore Galapagos Turquoise was used as the base colour and the jumping-off point for the final design. Keeping the size of the new kitchen and the scope of the

cabinetry in mind, two complementary finishes were used for the cabinets. Walnut offered added warmth and a grounding aspect without competing with the teal, and brass hardware and fixtures provided the sophisticated feel the homeowners were seeking.

"I deliberately chose counters that were muted and warm to bring all the elements together cohesively, but to not compete with the walnut and teal cabinetry," explains Crezel.

Aside from aesthetics, the functionality of the kitchen needed attention. The original space had been cramped with inadequate working areas – it lacked an island, and only had a small free-standing table pushed against a wall. The updated layout incorporated new appliances, and for easy function and flow, the sink was relocated to the new island.

"I wanted the stove and hood to be the focal point of this kitchen and the sink to be situated in the island for practical reasons (next to the dishwasher). I find one spends more time at a sink than a stove and I wanted the clients to be facing the children and the visitors sitting at the island while working at the sink."

A modern touch

The home's decor is now highly expressive yet sophisticated. The

style reflects the bold resurgence in modern maximalism, with an emphasis on tactility and sustainability.

"We used high quality and tactile materials like velvet for the couch and seating nook," says Crezel. "We chose hand-crafted designs and moved away from fast and trend-driven consumption. The couch and ottoman were custom builds, and the fabrics carefully considered."

Expressive colour palettes such as jewel tones and warm ochres were incorporated instead of the neutral beige and grey palettes long favoured in home decor, and as a nod to the client, who is an artist, a wall was kept blank as a gallery to exhibit her artwork.

More than a feeling

For this renovation, the homeowners and designer worked closely to make sure every choice was carefully considered and curated to achieve a balance, using layered textures and patterns, mixing wood, metal and plush fabrics. "As typical for a modern maximalism design, this space was designed for a feeling, not just its function."

The result is a home that is rich in personality, while retaining a refined and curated sensibility.