

Soft, calming neutrals were the foundation for a renovation with a judicious use of bright colour. The result is a playful interior in a Toronto home suited to a young family of four.

COLOUR

play

TEXT KATHLEEN DORE | PHOTOGRAPHY DONNA GRIFFITH



Boldly striped drapes frame the stained-glass window with colour and modern flair. Glamorous upholstered chairs in soft grey and blue surround a dark wooden table that gives the dining room a formal vibe that's still light and lively.

DESIGN, Sealy Design, sealydesigninc.com; Edgecomb Gray HC-173 **WALL PAINT**, Oxford White CC-30 **TRIM PAINT**, Seapearl OC-19 **CABINETRY PAINT**, Benjamin Moore; iron Durango **CHANDELIER** in White, Arteriors Home; Beacon Hill Palais Royale **DRAPERY FABRIC** in Multi, Robert Allen.



OPPOSITE Counter-height bar stools offer a spot for guests to perch at the new opening between the kitchen and dining room.

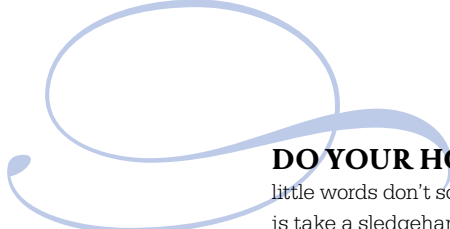
Chair Source; **ARTWORK**, Sann Sann Lam.

ABOVE Dining room built-ins keep serving pieces close at hand but away from prime real estate in the small adjoining kitchen. Woven wallpaper adds textural contrast against smooth wood and glass surfaces.

LEFT One of the homeowners asked her artist friend to create a custom piece based on the home's palette. The new corner banquette is a busy hangout spot for doing homework and building Lego – and eating, too.

BELOW A stunning marble backsplash with grey veining is a dramatic focal point in the neutral kitchen.

PENDANT LIGHT, Currey & Company; **DINING CHAIRS**,



DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Admittedly, those three little words don't sound like fun when what you really want to do is take a sledgehammer to your kitchen, but you have to admit, planning and patience pay off when renovating.

The owners of this Toronto house did their homework for seven years before hiring designer Karen Sealy of Sealy Design to transform the first two floors of their 2,200-square-foot home in the Beach neighbourhood. That meant seven years of tolerating a dysfunctional kitchen, rooms closed off from each other and a dated palette of gold and honey colours. "We didn't even paint," says one homeowner. They wanted to do it right – once – instead of making do with lots of little projects.

"The house really didn't represent the homeowners – it wasn't very family-friendly," says Karen, who describes the couple and their two young children as fun-loving and laid-back. And it looked nothing like the seven years worth of magazine clippings the homeowner presented to Karen and her colleague Renee Gammon at the outset. "Every room I liked was bright





and light, with hits of saturated colour, and every kitchen was white," says one homeowner.

While the former dark rooms were the antithesis of her vision, even worse was the kitchen's lack of functionality. Lower cabinets had no shelves or organizers, and a peninsula of cabinetry chopped the workspace and breakfast area into two claustrophobic spaces.

To solve the kitchen dilemma, Karen and Renee designed an efficient floor plan for the room, squeezing out storage from the tiniest spaces and revamping the breakfast nook with a banquette and a round table that seats five. A new opening in the wall at the sink area allows views to the freshly decorated dining room, where the home's original stained-glass windows serve as a focal point for both areas.

This new-found airiness pervades the entire space, largely due to a striking palette inspired by the stained glass. Happy brights jump off light, warm-toned grey walls, creamy white cabinetry and trim and timeless finishes, such as marble. This neutral backdrop allows the powerful palette to enliven but not overwhelm. "To have fun with colour, you don't have to commit to a lifetime of pink," says Karen, noting how easy and economical it would be to switch out toss cushions and accessories for an updated look.

For now, though, the homeowners are totally committed. The house is bright and colourful and functions for the entire family, with built-ins throughout that make stowing electronics and kids' toys as easy as one, two, three. "I love my house now," says one homeowner, which proves good things come to those who wait – and do their homework.

FOR SOURCES, SEE OUR WORKBOOK



ABOVE The antique newel post was found at a salvage shop and restored by designers Karen Sealy and Renee Gammon. Its engravings echo the curvaceous design of the stunning stained glass.

RIGHT Karen and Renee included a desk on the second-floor landing, which can be used for homework and crafts.

LEFT To bring new life to the landing, striped seafoam wallpaper plays on the blues introduced downstairs. New built-ins for books, as well as a pair of cozy chairs, have transformed the space into a destination for family reading.



“To have FUN WITH COLOUR, you don't have to commit to a lifetime of pink.”

KAREN SEALY, DESIGNER

Toss cushions on neutral big-investment upholstered pieces give the living room longevity. "I appreciate the neutrals that I have. The wall colour is so soft and calming," says one homeowner.

Demarco Road **MIRROR**, Elite; **RUG**, Weavers Art.