

Breaking the Shell

a pearl oasis just for the girls



Peter Brooks, founder and principal designer of BedfordBrooks Design transforms a small builder's condominium located on Broadview Avenue into a glamorously luxurious home. After living with the previous cookie cutter kitchen for over a year and having no time or desire to enjoy her space due to a busy schedule, Janet (the client) decided it was finally time to get the home she deserved. "I wanted an elegant space that I could enjoy and share with my daughter, something just for the girls," she explained.

When Peter first met Janet, she was dressed in an elegant blue dress with a classic white pearl necklace. Instantly, she became the inspiration for the design. "I knew exactly what she needed, elegant luxury," Peter speculated, and he was right.

Janet's condominium suite has a fantastic view and a great layout, but it lacked pizzazz internally. "We needed to inject character by softening up the space and adding architectural interest." We launched the renovation from the heart of every home, the kitchen. This kitchen embodies traditional

charm through the use of custom off-white shaker style cabinets, a six inch crown molded coffered ceiling and honed Bianco Cararra marble countertops with a double ogee edge. The addition of the coffered ceiling introduced a tone of formality and concealed the hood vent ductwork, giving it a flawless look. Having pot lights is a coveted desire amongst many but the ceilings in condominiums are concrete slabs making it mission impossible for that seamless look. Taking advantage of the hollow shell within the coffered ceiling allowed for 6 pot lights to be distributed.

Contemporary details and finishes modernize the overall look through clear glass hardware with a touch of chrome, stainless steel appliances and mosaic glass tile mimicking opal gemstones. The kitchen shimmerers as reflected light causes a remarkable play of different colour hues within the tile. "We picked up on a blue palette in the glass tile," explains Peter, which acted as an accent through accessories. The texture of honed marble countertop and glass tile provides the perfect balance against the white finishes.

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The open-concept layout is currently the hot trend especially for small spaces since it has the ability to visually expand a room. The challenge lies in making the overall space cohesive, like everything belongs with each other. Expanding the kitchen cabinetry into the living room for a built-in entertainment unit connects the two areas and makes for an easy transition. The continuation of wood flooring from the living into the kitchen diminishes any visual barriers, creating connectedness.

The overall atmosphere has an airy quality achieved through the white cotton sofa, chrome glass coffee table and cream area rug with a pale blue damask pattern. "It's all about quality, finish and scale when selecting furniture," Peter affirms. Placing the sofa parallel to the window opposite to the occasional chairs creates an inviting conversation area that doesn't revolve around the television.

Each piece of furniture has a particular style and character. Bringing in accessories is what truly personalizes the space. Accessories can introduce femininity, masculinity, playfulness and basically create a story about the person. Janet is young at heart and she has a quirky humour that can be seen in the silver pig with mini-angel wings and a horse that needs no diet!

Love for the arts is translated in the gold-leafed Venetian mirror where Janet admires her fashion look before heading out the door. A side lamp with a translucent hand-blown glass base complements the space with its blue accent colour. Finally a self-made flower arrangement is nature's most beautiful art. All the pretty for the girls to enjoy!



colourful Family home

Text Lori Steeves | Photography Jonathan Hayward



Design Tip
Build an entire room's colour scheme by pulling inspiration from a piece of art.

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As an interior design professional I can honestly say that decorating my own home was one of my greatest design challenges. I am paralyzed by the weight of expectation. After all, a designer's home should be the ultimate expression of his or her unique design style.

When seeking inspiration I considered the latest trends, leafed through my favourite magazines and searched a myriad of online sources. I found lots of great ideas but I still had no firm direction until one day I had an epiphany. While looking through the collection of objects and art that my husband and I had acquired over the years, I realized the inspiration I was searching for had been in front of me all along. Weaving this eclectic mix

of items amongst bespoke fabrics and quality furnishings would certainly add the "colour" and personality that I had been missing.

Take our vibrant oversized painting of a rooster by the Quebec based artist Gagnez: my husband saw it in a gallery window while he was on an assignment in Montreal. He phoned me immediately: "You are going to love it," he said. Within a week we were back in Montreal carefully wedging the huge painting into our station wagon and it has dominated our décor ever since. Thanks to the rooster and the rest of our lively artwork, I painted most of our walls white and accentuated the rooms with fabrics and furnishings that complement the artwork.