

CANADA'S

# styleathome

SPECIAL  
2017  
TRENDS  
ISSUE

HOT NOW!  
a sophisticated  
black accent wall

## high & low

GREAT STYLE FOR  
EVERY  
BUDGET

plus 35 FINDS THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

OUR TOP  
12  
PAINT  
COLOURS  
THIS  
SEASON

BUDGET DESIGNER  
ROOM MAKEOVER

TEXT BETHANY LYTTLE

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STYLING CHRISTINE HANLON

# forever young

## LOW

Gallery walls don't have to break the bank. Here, travel souvenirs, framed concert photos and vintage finds form a striking display.

## LOW

Reduce, reuse, recycle: These secondhand-score dining chairs have been reupholstered more than once!

Nest maker, know thyself. Here's how one designer used self-reflection and simplicity to do up her Toronto Victorian.

**"There are thousands of inspiring ideas out there,"** says designer Melanie Hay, referring to the wellspring of online home decor images, blogs and shops. "You can literally research for months. But in the end, the best design is born of self-discovery. The more you understand who you are and how you live, the better the odds that the rooms you create will be rooms that you love."

Melanie should know. When she and her husband, Andrew, an entrepreneur, purchased a tall, narrow Victorian in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood about four years ago, they were two people without a plan – but with about 3,000 square feet of empty space. Needless to say, to a designer like Melanie, this blank canvas meant instant inspiration overload. "My mind was swimming with decorating schemes," she recalls. "Deep down, though, I knew Andrew and I are nesters, and when we walked in the door, we would want to come home to a space that echoes our life stories." This is where her approach to decorating the house started.

But it was not as easy as it sounds. "From the beginning, I had to acknowledge that Andrew and I don't share the same taste," she says. Melanie loves white; Andrew prefers dark wood. Something had to give. The house already had the towering black doors and high-gloss black banister they both liked, so the couple let these details inspire the look. "Plus, we already owned a black and white rug, a round table with a dark top and a black leather Eames chair, so why not use them?" adds Melanie. Red- and peach-painted walls were redone in shades of light and shadow. Such was the start of what is now the home's signature black and white colour scheme.

And a little self-reflection went a long way when it came to deciding what to hang on the walls. "Although we appreciate fine art, personal mementoes that connect us to our families matter more," says Melanie. This realization became the inspiration for the dining room gallery wall. Gathering a few favourite prints, →



## LOW

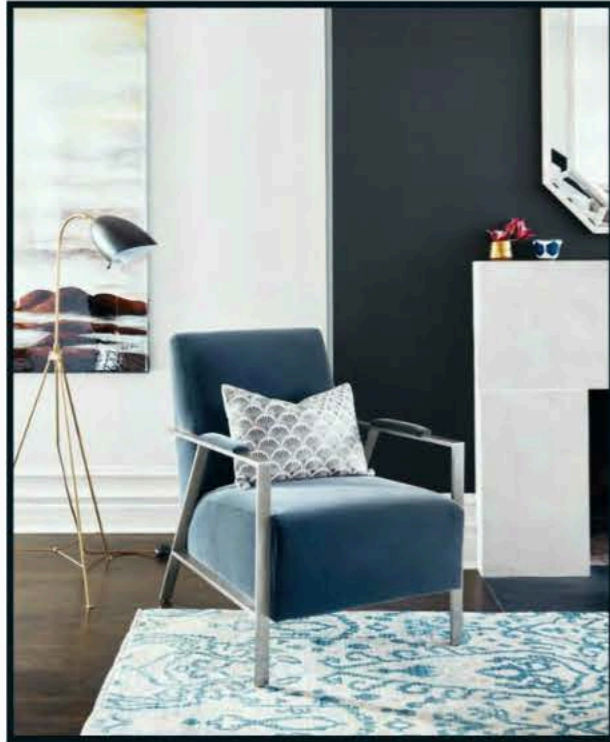
At less than \$100, this bar cart was a steal!

**OPPOSITE** Homeowner and designer Melanie Hay paired her husband's steel-topped dining table with chairs she bought on Craigslist. "I've reupholstered the seats two times already," she says. Right now, they bear a sophisticated charcoal linen that accentuates the dark walls and striped rug.

**DESIGN**, Melanie Hay Design, melaniehay.ca; Dove Wing OC-18 **WALL PAINT** (throughout), Black Panther 2125-10 **FEATURE WALL PAINT** (throughout main floor), Benjamin Moore; **DINING TABLE**, Hardware Interiors; **RUG**, IKEA.

**ABOVE** "It's been a bedside table, an end table and a catch-all," says Melanie of the bar cart she purchased years ago. "Finally, it's a bar!" The cart is low, however, and the home's ceilings are very high. To draw the eye upward, she added a painting and a wall-mounted metal stag bust above it.

**GLASSWARE, SUGAR BOWL, CREAMER**, William Ashley.



**ABOVE** Melanie scoured big-box stores for large-scale artwork to act as stand-ins for the forever pieces that will eventually accent her living room. That way, she doesn't have to live with blank walls while she searches for the perfect investments.

**ARMCHAIR, RUG, FLOOR LAMP, TOSS CUSHION, Elte; ARTWORK, HomeSense.**

**RIGHT, TOP** The house was built in the early 1900s, but its contemporary fireplace mantel and furnishings achieve an eclectic mix that feels right at home in the space. "If you can't afford to do a house all at once," advises Melanie, "then do one room at a time. That way you can afford to invest in key pieces."



**LOW**

This big-box store find is as striking as it is affordable.

**HIGH**

This custom sofa was worth the splurge.

Eames **LOUNGER & OTTOMAN, EQ3; FLOOR LAMP, CB2; ARTWORK, MIRROR, HomeSense; TABLE LAMP, TOSS CUSHIONS, gold BOWLS, Elte.**

**BOTTOM, FAR RIGHT** To create a gallery wall that looks collected, not cluttered, Melanie focused on black and white. "Some time later, I felt like I wanted more pink in the mix, so I found one more print and added it in." A striking gallery wall done on a dime, it features family heirlooms, inexpensive prints and precious gifts.

**FRAMING** (painting of people on bench), Ritchie Frame Art Gallery.





"Decorating one room completely and then carrying that look to the next allows you to really establish a cohesive aesthetic throughout the house," says Melanie, who started with the living room and finished with the master bedroom, which echoes

the rest of the home's light-meets-dark and modern-meets-traditional themes. Marilyn's Dress 2125-60 **WALL PAINT**, Anchor Gray 2126-30 **ACCENT WALL PAINT**, Benjamin Moore; **BEDDING**, HomeSense; **BENCH**, Elite; **RUG**, RugsUSA.com; **SCONCES**, Lowe's; **LUMBAR CUSHIONS**, Restoration Hardware; **BASKET**, IKEA; **THROW**, Hermès.

**LOW**

The mirror came from Melanie's mother's childhood home in Buenos Aires.

**HIGH**

An Hermès throw adds instant luxury to the space.



posters and paintings, the designer created a dynamic visual mash-up. The result is a sophisticated yet personal design element. One added bonus? It was totally budget-friendly. "I paired gold-framed heirloom pieces with newer prints in inexpensive white frames to unite the random collection," explains Melanie. And since not many are forever pieces, she adds or subtracts on a whim. "There are a lot of nail holes in that wall!" she says with a laugh.

In many ways, this ever-evolving approach is a reflection of Melanie's creativity. "Unlike the homes I design for clients, which are done in one sweep, my house changes constantly. I've become incredibly good at moving furniture, which must drive Andrew crazy. This house will never be truly finished," she says. "And if it ever is, I'll probably just start over!"

**ABOVE & LEFT, TOP** "Rooms should reflect the people who live in them," says Melanie (pictured), who decorated the master bedroom with meaningful keepsakes. Already owned - and loved - artwork was given a fresh look with a brand new frame; the contemporary lamp once belonged to the designer's mother; and the mortgage sale announcement originally appeared in an 1885 newspaper from her husband's hometown and lists one of his relatives as the property auctioneer.

**NESTING CONSOLES**, Elite; **straw BASKETS** (on console), IKEA.

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