


FIRST FLOOR
LIVING ROOM

Graphic lines, sleek stripes and architectural furniture lend contemporary appeal to this double-height space. 'We had fun here, introducing shots of blue in the chairs, as well as lighting-cum-art installations for playfulness,' says Sam.

Cloud modular **sofa**, RH. 38.11 copper **suspension light**, Bocci. Wiggle side **chairs**, Frank Gehry at Vitra. Light Elephant **wall lamp**, Imperfettolab at 1stDibs



The download

THE DESIGNER

Sam Sacks of her eponymous studio, Sam Sacks Design, renovated this period cottage in downtown Toronto for her client, a businesswoman.

THE PROPERTY

A four-storey Victorian worker's cottage. The basement houses a guest bedroom and bathroom, laundry and games room. On the ground floor there's a living room, dining room, kitchen and cloakroom. The first floor features a double-height living space, plus the main bedroom and bathroom; while there's another bedroom (currently used as an office), plus bathroom on the eaves floor.

Blue is the invisible becoming visible,' noted the artist Yves Klein of the ultramarine shade he created in 1960. It also turns out to be an apt metaphor for this Victorian worker's cottage in downtown Toronto, where once run-of-the-mill schemes have been allowed to sing again in the hands of interior designer Sam Sacks. Yes, that particular brand of International Klein Blue underscores the transformation, inspired by the vivid colours of Yves Saint Laurent's Jardin Majorelle in Morocco, but a host of other details, from meticulous woodwork to statement rugs, also play their part.

'My goal was to put the architecture back in,' says Sam, of the property, which had been renovated in the early 2000s, resulting in the formation of an impressive double-height living space on the first floor. But many of the building's original features had been lost, so Sam reinstated mouldings and architraves. 'Everything had to feel intentional and understated because the owner doesn't like anything flashy or blingy,' says Sam. 'She wanted the space to reflect her character – a blend of calm, boldness and nostalgia.'

Sam spent two years on the revamp, ensuring all the spaces related to one another, while adding back character. 'Every room is a monochromatic cube, with spare, well-placed hits of colour and texture,' she says. 'The colour is added in controlled, meaningful ways. If you look closely, most of the spaces are a sea of white and timber and colour mainly comes from accessories. It's about a little

going a long way – gently pulling tones through from one room to the next.'

The result is a home that treads the line between timelessness and of-the-moment appeal. 'In fact, trendy never hits the radar with her,' says Sam of her client. 'We were guided by one question: "Does this feel like an artful move?". This has paid off in spades, with evidence of playfulness throughout. In the double-

height living area, a light has cavities that sprout trailing plants, while in a subtle but fun customisation that blue appears again via the edges of a pair of Frank Gehry Wiggle chairs painted by Sam. In the dining room and study, sisal rugs shaped like a serpent and a crocodile are a visual surprise, while the guest bathroom has a sink that resembles a bin. 'They are emblematic of the owner's love of the unusual – cheeky moments that play into her personality,' says Sam.

But it's the softening elements that inject the 'lived-in and deeply personal' feel that the owner craved, from the tactile leather knife pouches in the kitchen to the standout white oak four-poster bed. Special pieces, including a charcoal drawing and a vintage Mixmaster owned by the client's grandmother, are displayed on open shelving above the kitchen sink, a subtle nod to nostalgia. It all adds up to a home that shows that with a tweak here, a statement piece there and a confident splash of colour, anything is possible. 'Isn't that the dream?' asks Sam. 'If you're prepared to be adventurous, you can really ring the changes.'

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KITCHEN

Sam replaced a traditional Shaker kitchen with sleek cabinetry painted in International Klein Blue. 'I love that modernist juxtaposition between new and old,' she says of the softening coving and brick veneer that she added as a contrast.

Cabinetry with steel elements, Sam Sacks Design. **Leather pouches**, March SF. **Top-mounted sink** with side drainer, Officine Gullo. **Elan Vital deck-mounted telescopic tap**, The Watermark Collection



TOP FLOOR BATHROOM

Graphic tiles with a hint of retro patterning add dimension to this compact en suite. 'The sphere repeat riffs on the shape of the porthole window,' says Sam.

Brasilia tiles, Popham Design. Componibili storage unit, Kartell

MAIN BEDROOM

'We kept it clean and peaceful in this space, where a simple palette is offset by a contemporary timber four-poster oak bed to create quiet impact and architectural structure,' says Sam.

White oak bed, reproduced from an original design, Sam Sacks Design. Grace articulating wall sconces, Lostine. Hide side table in Ultramarine Blue, Hem