

CANADIAN

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Cool Recipes

HOUSE & HOME

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Fresh Style

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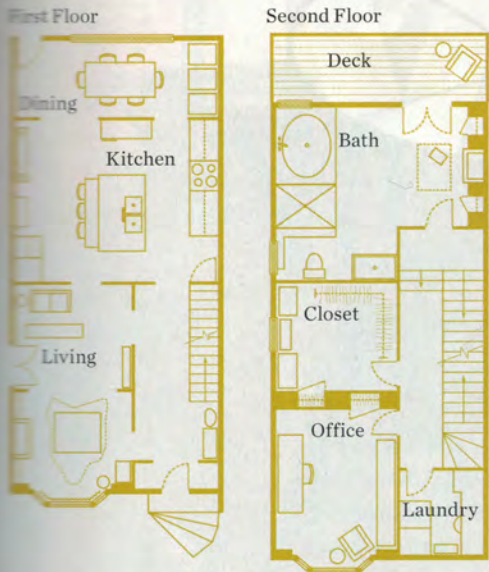
1 Living Room
3 Great Looks

**Indoors
& Out:**
Georgian Bay,
Vancouver,
Brisbane

Dufflet Rosenberg's Best Desserts

The Enlightened Home





A creative couple crafts a Zen-eclectic Victorian.

by GOBI KIM | Photography by ROB FIOCCA

A clean, slightly woody scent fills the lofty covered living room of Mona Zaidi and Eric Yealland's art-filled Victorian in downtown Toronto. "It's Japanese incense I found in Miami. I love everything Japanese," says Mona, a frequent traveller. "We're the people who come back from countries with backpacks full of crazy stuff. Travel really opens your eyes to a diverse world of ideas with respect to patterns, shapes and colors. I'm most drawn to the relationship between ornamentation and spirituality."

Mona's inspiration is clear in the serene monochromatic bathroom and kitchen palettes, the rich use of natural materials inside and out, and the harmonious masculine and feminine decorative elements. "The style of our house is influenced by the ideas of restraint, balance and harmony prevalent in Japanese design, as well as a good dose of contemporary art, and even elements of modern rustic style, such as architectural salvage," she explains. Her vision and ecologies come together in the home's artful vignettes, which inspire restful moments of contemplation.

After an initial successful experiment painting the baseboards a stunning glossy black ("It made the rooms feel two feet taller"), Mona, a filmmaker and writer, and Eric, a director, undertook the task of redesigning and renovating the house themselves. *CONTINUED ON PAGE 210*

BE BOLD

In the living room homeowner Mona Zaidi uses minimal furniture, and, instead of concealing the radiators, she celebrates them with a coat of brilliant gold paint that pops against the serene white walls. *Paint, Sherwin-Williams; Radiator, Farm Living; Floor, Sherwood Flooring.*



▲ FIND BALANCE

Custom quartersawn-oak bookshelves were crafted to match the style of the original fireplace. Mona used the organic lines of a hide rug (opposite) and an artful placement of unusual objects to offset the formal symmetry.

< THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Placed on the wall behind the living room sofa, an edgy urban-inspired wall decal takes on a surreal 3-D quality. A narrow bench with hand-painted detailing works as a space-saving coffee table. A Buddha, graphic throw pillow, simple branches and sculptural bowls add to the eclectic yet cohesive mix.

Wall stencil, Ferm Living; Buddha, Jalan.



▲ PLAY ON A THEME

Homeowner Mona Zaidi used simple reed matting framed in cedar to continue the Asian feel of the house outside, and to conceal an unsightly fence.

Mona's Top 5 Style Tips

1. Learn to appreciate emptiness as having a beauty of its own. Often this means editing out unnecessary things to give the remaining objects in the room a more dramatic presence, like art in a gallery.
2. Choose a restrained monochromatic palette and focus on creating interest with textures and materials instead of pattern and colour.
3. Allow natural light to be your primary illumination source.
4. Don't be afraid of darkness — black and charcoal are grounding and can provide a beautiful counterpoint to natural light.
5. Mix finishes — matte walls look as soft as cashmere set against glossy floors.



LET IN THE LIGHT

Counteract the darkness typical of Victorian hallways with striking dark floors and high-gloss black paint on the stair treads, which actually "kicks the sunlight off it" for maximum reflective quality. An elegant black-and-white palette showcases the intricacy of the original mouldings. **Wall colour**, Silver Drop (790C-2), **accent colour**, Irish Mist (790C-1), Behr.



< SELECT UNIQUE PIECES

A one-of-a-kind suar wood table abutting the island warms up the kitchen. For parties, it can be moved aside to create mingling room. A series of antique wardrobe chests from India (in background) make a unique bar/pantry. **Chests**, Haveli Home; **table**, Kuda.

BRING NATURE INSIDE ▾

The cedar Japanese *ofuro* (soaking tub), wood ladder, and a textured wooden bucket filled with sponges add to the Eastern feeling. **Tub**, Ginger's; **ladder**, HorseFeathersHome; **vases**, Teatro Verde.



ZEN AND THE ART OF DECORATING: Creating Thoughtful Vignettes



MOODY LIGHTING

Lanterns: Referencing Japanese lanterns, Mona incorporated several into her garden. "When lit on summer nights, the little dots of light invite guests into hidden corners of the garden. It's very simple to do, and the effect is quite romantic." **Lantern**, Pottery Barn.



SIMPLE CENTERPIECE

River rocks: Inspired by Zen rock gardens, Mona used close to 100 natural river stones and a single piece of hand-carved marble as a surprising centerpiece. "Playing with the stones is a delightfully tactile experience."



WOOD SCULPTURE

Buddha: Spiritual artwork creates an opportunity for a quiet moment of reflection. Throughout the house, Mona has used items that have personal meaning to her. **Buddha**, Jalan.



NATURAL PAIRING

Orchids: As with bonsai trees, caring for orchids is an art. A worn wooden planter adds authenticity to the look. Natural pink Himalayan salt and volcanic stone balance the pink orchid. **Tray**, Ginger's; **orchid**, The Orchids Shoppe; **rocks**, Selsi Sea Rocks.



ADD LUXURY TO EVERYDAY SPACES ^

In summer, the secluded deck extends the elegant, spa-like bathroom into the outdoors. A glass steam shower (above right) divides the room into different zones and lets natural light pour through the entire space. In winter, the fireplace adds luxurious warmth. **Mat**, Anthropologie; **stool**, Jalan; **outdoor chair**, Morningstar.

KEEP IT SIMPLE >

"I find I'm most relaxed in unfussy spaces," says Mona. In the third-floor principal bedroom, she picked "very, very comfortable" fine linens in simple white and added gentle, calm accents like lavender pillows and graceful leaf-shaped finials. Painting the badly damaged wood floor a clean white eliminated the cost and time of replacing the floor, and adds to the airiness and simplicity of the space. **Curtain hardware**, Designer Fabrics.

Mona designed the house to have opportunities for moments of quiet contemplation





▲ **CREATE AREAS OF INTEREST**

Inspired by serene Japanese gardens that make great use of small spaces, Mona planted for maximum impact in all four seasons. **Landscape designer, Inside & Out Garden Design.**

< **EXTEND YOUR LIVING SPACE**

An open pergola and long Sunbrella fabric drapes create a cosy outdoor dining area. Dividing the garden into distinct zones makes great use of the entire space, and creates unique "destinations" within the small footprint.

▲ **APPEAL TO THE SENSES >**

A square-cut slate and flagstone water feature muffles neighbourhood noise and adds sculptural interest.

▲ **FOOL THE EYE**

TOP LEFT: Reed matting in cedar frameworks conceals a garage covered in glaring white vinyl. Mirrored "windows" reflect the garden and bounce light around to create a greater sense of space and greenery.

