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PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEX LUKEY

NATURAL BEAUTY

“It was June, and the world smelled of roses. The sunshine was like powdered gold over the grassy hillside,” wrote Maud Hart Lovelace, and we couldn’t agree more. In fact, we can’t think of any month that seems as magical as June, and the houses this issue embody the serene simplicity that indelibly marks this time of year: organic elements, wide open spaces and a laidback luxurious aesthetic.

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Glass Half Full

A flood forces a Toronto couple to plunge into a renovation they've been putting off. The results? Simply stunning.

TEXT LAURA MUIR
PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX LUKEY
STYLING CHRISTINE HANLON



OPPOSITE A comfortable clean-lined sectional took the place of a tiny sofa. The top of the round coffee table swivels open to reveal extra storage space.

CONTRACTING, Parallel General Contractor; Decorator's White CC-20 **WALL PAINT** (throughout), Benjamin Moore; engineered oak **FLOORING** (throughout), Relative Space; **SECTIONAL**, Stylegarage; **SCONCE**, Old Faithful Shop; **MIRROR**, Commute Design.

ABOVE The graphic black and white artwork lends interest and complements the sophisticated neutral palette in this beautiful two-level Toronto condo.

The relaxed look of this downtown

Toronto condo was the result of a not-so-relaxing event. Designer Ryan Martin and his partner, Rodney Chong, had been contemplating updating their 800-square-foot, two-level space when disaster struck. “The condo suffered a flood,” says Ryan, co-founder of Croma Design. “Our washing machine broke and completely flooded the lower floor of the suite. We got a call and when we arrived there was three inches of standing water. So of course that ruined the flooring, the furniture, the baseboards, the doors, the drywall and so on.”

While the situation wasn’t ideal, to say the least, it forced the couple into a renovation they had wanted for a while. When they purchased the newly built condo 15 years ago, there was a lot to love. “We loved the way the space felt spread over two levels, its location, the view and the ceiling height,” says Ryan. But they weren’t too keen about some of the builder details and frustrating construction quirks. Also, by the time the flood came along in 2016, it was clear the condo’s aesthetic hadn’t kept up with the design-savvy couple. “It was starting to feel dark and it wasn’t feeling very much like *our* place,” says Ryan.



LEFT The living room's gas fireplace was given an easy update – out with the tiled surround, in with grey marble. Light wood elements throughout the space work with the light oak floors and create a beachy feel. The shelving unit was a miracle find. “We were happy to find a piece that fit perfectly in that little space,” says designer and homeowner Ryan Martin.

Marble **FIREPLACE SURROUND**, Ciot; white **CABINETRY**, IKEA; **SHELVING UNIT**, **FLOOR LAMP**, RH; **STOOL**, Coolican & Company.

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT With its slim profile, the chandelier allows for uninterrupted sight-lines throughout the open space. Hanging it required some creativity, though. “Originally there was only track lighting in here,” says Ryan. “So because the ceilings are concrete, we just swagged that over from the pre-existing track lighting junction box to hang the fixture over the table.”

DINING TABLE, Kroft; **DINING CHAIRS**, Italinteriors; **BENCH**, marble **BOWL**, EQ3; **PRINTS**, Inaluxe; ticking **TOSS CUSHIONS**, H&M Home; **VASES**, Grøn + White.



ABOVE The couple gave the kitchen a cost-effective makeover by painting the original cabinetry, installing new brass hardware and incorporating a Bianco Carrara marble subway tile backsplash. The grey and white colour scheme works with the original granite countertop. “We thought it might look strange to have all-white cabinetry with a dark band of countertop,” says Ryan. “But painting the bottom cabinets grey gave a little more cohesion and eliminated the visual clash.”

Gray 2121-10 **LOWER CABINETRY PAINT**, Decorator's White CC-20 **UPPER CABINETRY PAINT**, Benjamin Moore; **BACKSPLASH TILES**, Ciot; **FAUCET**, Roman Bath Centre.



OPPOSITE Elements like the floor-to-ceiling linen drapes (hung on a ripple-fold track system), luxurious bamboo silk rug and tailored upholstered bed frame create a look that's both cozy and sophisticated in the newly redone bedroom. "The amount of times that I hit my shins on the old wood bed frame," says Ryan with a laugh. "It was definitely time for an upholstered version!" The DIY artwork adds a personalized touch. "There are pressed flowers and leaves in the glass frames. And then it's a simple bit of blue and white-washed canvas above the bed," he says.

BED FRAME, Crate and Barrel; **SCONCES**, Schoolhouse; custom **DRAPERY**, Aleen's Custom Window Treatments; quilted grey **COVERLET**, H&M Home; custom **LUMBAR CUSHIONS**, Tonic Living; floating brass **PICTURE FRAMES**, CB2.

BELOW The metal nightstands suit the bedroom's size. "It's not a huge room, so we really searched for a nice option that was a good scale," says Ryan. Installing sconces beside the bed stopped the small-sized nightstands from being taken over by table lamps.



In a renovation that took two months, the dark and slightly dated space was overhauled to look both modern and timeless. (To keep the look cohesive throughout, they revamped both floors.) Ryan and Rodney wanted to create a bright fresh look that enhanced the condo's lofty vibe. "The suite gets a lot of western sunlight, and we wanted to play that up," says Ryan. "Plus, we wanted it to be comfortable at the same time, not too stark or sterile." Dark taupe walls were painted a crisp white and light oak floors were installed, creating a light neutral envelope. New high baseboards give the space some traditional sophistication, hits of brass add warmth and charcoal-toned elements offer contrast. Tailored furnishings, such as the bedroom's upholstered bed frame and the living room's sectional, are both inviting and clean-lined.

Since, due to the flood, they had to essentially start from scratch, the couple also took advantage of the situation to make a few small structural changes. For example, their bedroom closet was too deep and featured a strange bulkhead with awkward sliding doors, so they ripped it out and



RIGHT The couple gave the terrace, which leads off from the upper level, a more inviting vibe by placing prefinished decking over the builder-grade concrete pavers and installing PVC boards over the glass partition wall. The pieces of driftwood, found during a visit to Ryan's business partner's cottage, offer a sculptural quality, along with the plants, and lend a natural feel.

Prefinished PVC **WALL PANELLING**, black **PLANTERS**, The Home Depot; **SIDE CHAIRS**, Crate and Barrel; light grey **POT** (on table), Jardin de Ville; prefinished wood **DECKING**, **RUG**, IKEA.

BELOW With a vessel sink and gooseneck faucet placed on the side, the previous vanity drove the couple crazy. They replaced it with a simple IKEA vanity upgraded with beautiful brass hardware. A new medicine cabinet offers extra storage, while a wall sconce works with the brass throughout the space. "We also installed more lights in the ceiling," says Ryan. "It was pretty dim in there before." In the hallway, a glass-front cabinet offers display for accessories and books, as well as closed storage below. "So it can serve as a linen closet," he says.

VANITY, FAUCET, IKEA; **MEDICINE CABINET, RH**; **PRINT, Gron + White**; **CABINET** (in hallway), Crate and Barrel; **MIRROR** (in hallway), CB2.



replaced it with a properly sized closet with an organizing system and efficient swing doors. "Now the whole thing offers a lot more storage and takes up less space," says Ryan. Upstairs, a partial wall separating the kitchen and dining areas stuck out too far, making furniture placement difficult. Luckily, it wasn't load-bearing so reducing it by six inches was easy and allowed more space to incorporate a larger dining table. A built-in desk and cabinet area, with a busy zebrawood veneer, was also removed and replaced with a more streamlined cabinet made of stacked Bestå units from IKEA. "It's great for just storing so much of the stuff that all homes seem to accumulate," says Ryan.

It's clear the dark cloud of the flood came with the proverbial silver lining, and the transformation was considerable. But there are still some projects to complete, both big and small, including hanging drapery in the living room and replacing the kitchen. "A project in a designer's home never truly ends," says Ryan.



The entryway, which was previously lined with bookcases, features a functional simple vignette including a coat rack, slim console table and handcrafted mirror. "The leather provides a little bit of texture, a little bit of interest," says Ryan. "We were originally looking for a round mirror to hang above the table, but we found this and fell in love with it."

CONSOLE, Crate and Barrel; **MIRROR**, Lostine; **COAT RACK**, Neat Space.

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