

# vibrant *revamp*

How award-winning designer Rebecca Hay brought a whole lot of happy to her heritage home.

TEXT BETHANY LYTTLE

PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHANI BUCHMAN

**“The first thing anyone sees when they walk into my house is a big bright orange chair,”**

says Toronto-based designer and homeowner Rebecca Hay. “So it’s immediately clear we don’t take ourselves super seriously!” In fact, the armchair was a side-of-the-road find. “It was covered with awful faux leather, but it had a great silhouette. My husband and I didn’t have much money at the time, so I forced him to help me drag it into the car,” she says with a laugh. Having reupholstered the chair in citrus-toned polyester-blend fabric and introduced it into her living room, Rebecca took the laid-back fun factor further, pairing the vibrant wingback with happy yellow in the drapes and sapphire blue in side chairs. “Colour is delightfully personal, so it’s always inviting,” says the designer.

Like many older homes, this one, built in 1918, has no family room, so this space had to do more than look great. It had to be kid- and dog-friendly, too. So, for the sofa, Rebecca chose leather. “Our two young children have proven that the leather sofa is pretty much indestructible!” she says.

In addition to personality and functionality, this room needed to harmonize with the adjacent eating area, accessible via a wide entryway. To keep a sense of flow, Rebecca repeated the themes and hues from one room in the other. “The teak coffee table and bamboo shades in the living area echo the tonality of the hand-crafted dining table; the brass-based side table mirrors the warm finish on the bar cart; and the blue side chairs pair with the upholstery on the dining room’s vintage end chairs.”

“To me, a makeover isn’t about big changes, like removing walls. It’s about making small changes over time that grow with you and bring you joy.” Here, here!



## TOUCH OF HOME

Texture heightens the experience of a space. To that end, the leather sofa in this living room is softened with touchable toss cushions, the blue side chairs are covered in luxe velvet, the orange armchair is upholstered in a loose weave polyester-blend fabric and the teak coffee table provides an organic touch. To add to the mix, complementary patterns in the toss cushions, rug and drapery keep the look from being too static.

Wooden **SIDE TABLES**, upcountry.com.  
**TABLE LAMPS**, greatlighting.com.

## LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Upon entering this stately room, guests are greeted by the timeless hearth, surrounded by art homeowner and designer Rebecca Hay and her husband have collected over time. A raised chevron pattern in the wool rug plays to the similar motif on the drapery, while the butterfly art hanging above the orange chair pairs with the circles in the wingback's lumbar cushion.

Entanglement #1 **ARTWORK** by Johnnie Eisen. **FLOOR LAMP**, greatlighting.com.



## FAMILY, FAVORITES AND FLOWERS

Art by Johnnie Eisen, Rebecca's uncle, hangs in a place of honour above the hearth. To arrange the vintage coffee table, Rebecca visually divided it in quadrants. "I placed tall items in one area, mementos in another and coffee table books in the third. The rest of the area I left blank."



## IDEA MAKER

"I love fabric!" says Rebecca. That's why her starting point for a palette is often a toss cushion. The ikat ones here were the inspiration for the orange armchair and yellow drapes, which are hung higher and drawn wider than the window to accentuate the room's grandeur.

## STYLE COLLECTIVE

In the dining room, wooden elements, from the chair bases to the mod Mennonite-crafted table, lend warmth. The artwork, which frames the doorway and widens the visual field, features touches of blue that reinforce the accent hue on the end chairs and transition the eye to the living area. Everything here is kid-friendly. The seats of the Eames chairs wipe clean with ease, while the brass bar cart offers function and fun: "My four-year-old son loves to wheel it around," says Rebecca.

Eames **DINING CHAIRS**, dwr.com. **CHANDELIER**, jonathanadler.com. **RUG**, dominionrug.com. Sixth Street Series **ARTWORK** by David Kinsey, dkinsey.com.

