

Designers Jenny Dames and Romina Tina Fontana help a family of four make a previously renovated house feel like home.

TEXT MARTHA UNIACKE BREEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX LUKEY  
STYLING ME & MO

# It's Got Personality



**W**hen the Paré-Lewis family moved back to Canada after several years in the Middle East, they fell in love with this Victorian-era home in Toronto's Rosedale neighbourhood, and particularly the fact that it had already been renovated and needed very little in the way of updating. Just one problem: how to add their own personality to a house where everything looked complete. Designers Jenny Dames and Romina Tina Fontana helped them focus on a few special details that would make their new house feel like home. Here are the designers' top tips for giving your place personality.



**DESIGN**, Jenny Dames, Studio Dames; Romina Tina Fontana, Fontana & Company. **KITCHEN STOOLS**, RH. **WALL PAINT** (throughout), Chantilly Lace OC-65, Benjamin Moore. **WINDOW TREATMENTS** (throughout), Shutterblind. **HOME OFFICE CHAIR**, CB2.



## Tip #1

**TAILOR MADE** Wanting to ensure the home would work for the family's lifestyle, one of the first questions designers Jenny Dames and Romina Tina Fontana asked was, how did they use the space? As a result, comfy kitchen island stools were one of the designers' first purchases, providing a perch for informal on-the-go meals for the active family.

## Tip #2

**MAKING IT WORK** Carving out a desk area in a central location like the kitchen was indispensable for helping the family keep track of their busy schedules, as well as stay on top of paperwork. Mom Caroline and daughter Victoria (shown above), along with the rest of the family are often out on weekend and weeknights, so organization is key.



### Tip #3

**GOT TO LOVE IT** Pieces picked up while travelling or items with special significance are a surefire way to put a personal stamp on a space. Similarly, artwork that speaks to you or depicts things you love personalizes a home. Both Caroline and Victoria are avid equestrians, so images of horses were an obvious choice.

### Tip #4

**LIGHTEN UP** Even if you do nothing else to an interior, upgrading the lighting is a cost-effective and creative way to transform a house. Don't feel you have to be safe in your choices; these days, you can get statement-making pieces that rise to the level of fine art.



Cabrera waxed-concrete **CONSOLE**, cast-metal rectangular **TRAY, DINING TABLE**, RH. Small **BLACK JUG**, large **WHITE JUG**, Elite Mkt. Woven rush-backed **SIDECHAIR**, glass **BOTTLES**, Hollace Cluny. **WALL MIRROR** (in entry), **TALL VASE** (on dining room console), CB2. **LIGHTING FIXTURE** (in entry), Circa Lighting. **ROUND VASE** (on dining room console), **DINING CHAIRS, BREAKFAST ROOM CHAIRS**, Crate and Barrel. Dining room **LIGHTING**, Hollis + Morris.



**“EVERYTHING WAS VERY CAREFULLY CHOSEN: THE BLEND OF FAMILY PIECES AND ITEMS FROM THEIR TRAVELS WITH HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOM FURNISHINGS AND DRAPERIES, LIGHTING AND OBJETS D’ART IS TRULY THE MAGIC OF THIS HOUSE.”** – Romina Tina Fontana