

ROSEDALE HIDEAWAY

*Heritage house on cul-de-sac
gets a top-to-bottom makeover*

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*Barbara Barry seating with clean lines brings balance
into the living room, contrasting the traditional fireplace.*

The couple wanted the kitchen to have an industrial feel yet still have it work with the classic pieces in neighbouring rooms.



PETER HOUSLEY LIVES WITH HIS PARTNER, Andy Best, and their dog, Madeline, on a little cul-de-sac backing onto Rosedale's ravine lands. "It's always amazing to find these streets," marvels Housley. "You're just one kilometre from Yonge and Bloor, yet you think you're in the country."

Housley, who works in telecommunications, and Best, a consultant and former developer, bought the two-storey 1909 property five years ago. They stripped it down to the bones in order to restore it, with the help of designer Darrin Cohen and builder James Carruthers, as a dreamy spa-like space.

"You're just one kilometre from Yonge and Bloor, yet you think you're in the country."

"We essentially built the whole house around the master bathroom," says Housley. With its warm travertine feature wall and sombre granite floors, the minimalist room gives centre stage to a glass-sided steam shower and a six-foot tub, which is filled by a stream of water that flows dramatically from the ceiling above. These features are visible from the master bedroom through French doors. "It's an inviting place to shower, and that view pulls you out of bed when you wake up in the morning," says Cohen. ☞

"Everything is more interesting when there are surprises."



Peter Housley has an interesting collection of glassware on display in various rooms; here the tall, mottled orange flower vase ties in with the sculptural lemon yellow light fixture.



A coral rug on the dark custom-lacquered hardwood floor creates warmth in the dining room. French doors lead to the back deck, where Housely and Best go to fire up their grill—even in winter.

Not that the master bedroom isn't a cosy place to linger. It started out as a cavernous space, which Cohen advised the couple to make more intimate by introducing into the bathroom two concealed wall-to-wall closets and cushioned window benches for relaxing and reading. To keep things airy, they kept the impressive high vaulted ceilings, drawing attention to them with a seven-foot custom Naugahyde headboard and Swarovski-crystal-detailed light fixture with tiny flame-like flickering bulbs. Like all of the lighting in this home, the sparkling statement piece comes from Eurolite.

The brown, orange and pale turquoise details in the wool blankets, cushions and bedding are grounding, masculine touches in the room made otherwise ethereal with its cream, white and soft grey scheme. "It's very much a Darrin Cohen signature colour experience here," says Housley.

Downstairs on the main floor, Cohen opened up the space for the couple to facilitate entertaining. In a former life, the galley kitchen was for staff. Where the sink is now, there used to be a door leading to a stairwell that went directly upstairs, but there was no direct access to the dining and living rooms. When the walls were taken down, it became the heart of the home. 🏠

"I love a square room to accommodate a round dining table. A round table is so nice for conversation."

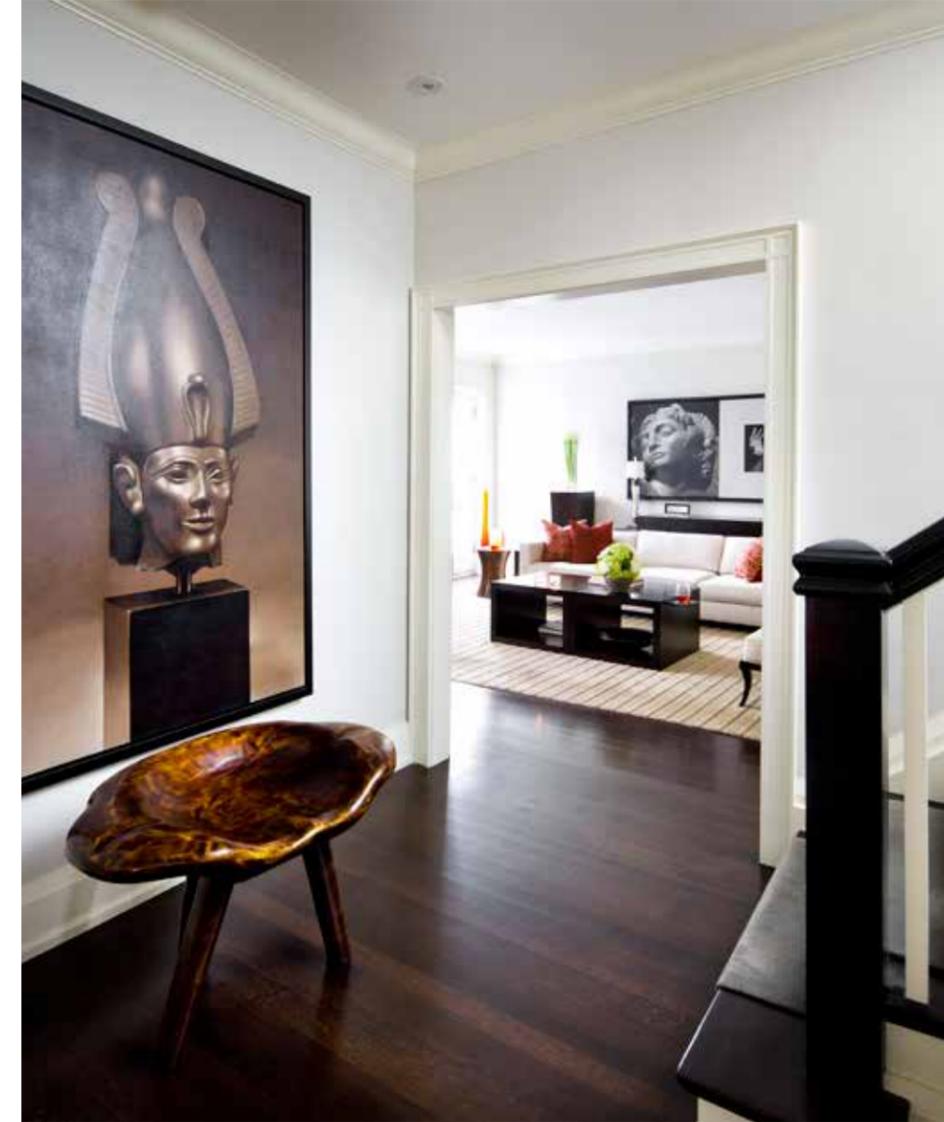
“It’s very much a Darrin Cohen signature colour experience here.” _____



The couple wanted the kitchen to have an industrial feel yet still have it work with the classic pieces in neighbouring rooms. “This is where we give Darrin a super A-plus,” says Housley. The designer helped strike the right balance by bringing in marble flooring, dark exotic hardwood cabinetry, 28 linear feet of Caesarstone quartz worktops and stainless steel appliances. The Capital six-burner gas range was designed by an engineer from the auto industry, hence its impressive bulk. The fridge is Sub-Zero – “the gold standard,” says Housley – and the dishwasher, Bosch – “one of the quietest on the market.”

Softening the masculine presence of the power appliances are pops of sunny colour: an elegant glass vase glowing at the window; a dramatic, curving Venetian blown-glass light fixture and a simple bowl of oranges. These warm touches make the kitchen inviting. The couple like to dine in here at their deli-style table when they’re not entertaining.

The formal dining room is a well-proportioned space with sunshine streaming in from the windows and French doors. It has a romantic vibe at night when the black velvet drapes are drawn and the grey Murano glass light fixture casts soft light from above the table. “I love a square room to accommodate a round dining table,” says Housley. “A round table is so nice for conversation.”



(Opposite) The centrepiece in the vestibule is a solid round Art Deco-style table. Its curves are repeated in the corner vase, crystal-ball lighting and simple flower arrangement. (This page) Housley bought the carved wood, three-legged stool at the bottom of the stairs in California; it works well with the sombre tones of the Egyptian mask painting by Will Fisk.

“We essentially built the whole house around the master bathroom.”



The master bedroom leads both to an ensuite bathroom and a media room— an intimate space where the couple can relax and read, listen to music or watch TV.

Images from an Italian architecture book becomes art once framed and placed on the ledge by the window in the master bathroom.

For Housley's fortieth birthday, Best commissioned the striking lacquered painting on the back wall of this room by a friend, Frank Milo. On its textured layers of crimson paint, coffee grains and plaster are painted two tall stick figures. "It's called Forever for Life, but the picture had been hanging for six months before Frank told us its name," says Housley. The artworks at the foot of the stairs – a hyperrealist Pharaoh mask painting – and in the living room – a Greek goddess and open hands – are by Will Fisk. They speak to Housley's passion for ancient Egyptian and Greek art and artifacts.

While the scale of the living room was challenging, a massive contemporary oatmeal-coloured sofa and three armchairs from Barbara Berry hold their own in there. Red, ochre and sage velvet and embroidered throw cushions make it feel cosy and provide continuity with the accent colours used throughout the house. The fireplace is original, only with a new gas fire installed inside for low-maintenance heating.

One of the most dramatic changes to the property was the transformation of a sun-room into the front entrance and vestibule. Previously there was a discreet side entrance, but Cohen felt strongly that a property with such elegance and impact needed a grand entrance to set the tone.

Mission accomplished? "I love walking in through this dreamy room with its sheer drapes and crystal balls hanging from the ceiling," says Housley. "It's such a nice welcome to our home." ☺

