



Modern Family

How do you transform a tired bungalow into something that's chic and comfortable for a family of four?

By Andrea Tomking
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Roxanne Doré describes her style as "functionally modern" and the term paints a fair picture of the home she and her husband, Yves Fréchette, have created in Ottawa's Rothwell Heights.

As you step into this open-concept bungalow, the design is reminiscent of a perfectly accessorized Mad Men-style power suit... but just imagine it being modeled with a pair of leather slippers instead of shiny black oxfords. This is the kind of sentiment that plays through the entire home. There is as much comfort rooted into this modern abode as there is style.

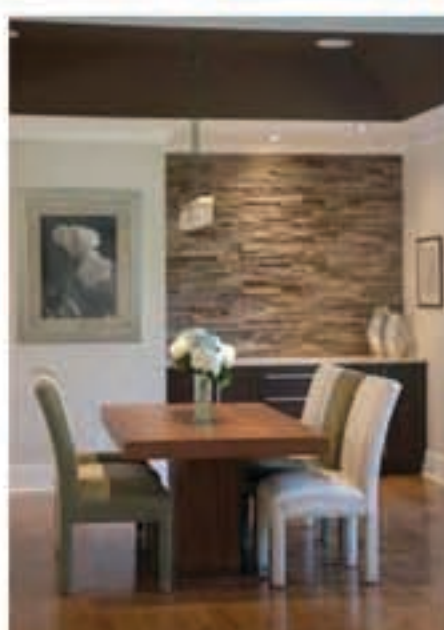


Roxanne, a self-employed software consultant, and Yves, a local business owner, moved into this 1950s-style bungalow during the summer of 2001. It was purchased with the intention of renovating.

"There were walls everywhere, low ceilings and it was very dark," says Roxanne.

The idea was to focus on the interior of the bungalow and push out certain areas to add square footage. They considered building upwards but the foundation wouldn't support it.

Their goal was to modernize, open up, lighten up and turn it into an attractive yet highly functional space in which they could easily keep an eye on the kids. In fact, keeping the family together (Roxanne and Yves have two school-aged boys) was the rationale behind many of the design decisions they made along the way.



TOP LEFT: The living room, dining room and kitchen seamlessly flow into one another. TOP RIGHT: The goal of the renovation was to modernize and open up the space. BOTTOM LEFT: Stone accent walls and high inset ceilings painted in a dark shade lend drama to the living space. BOTTOM RIGHT: A wood burning fireplace makes for a stunning focal point in the living room. Beyond, a unique staircase leads to a quaint upstairs loft, which currently serves as a play area for the kids.

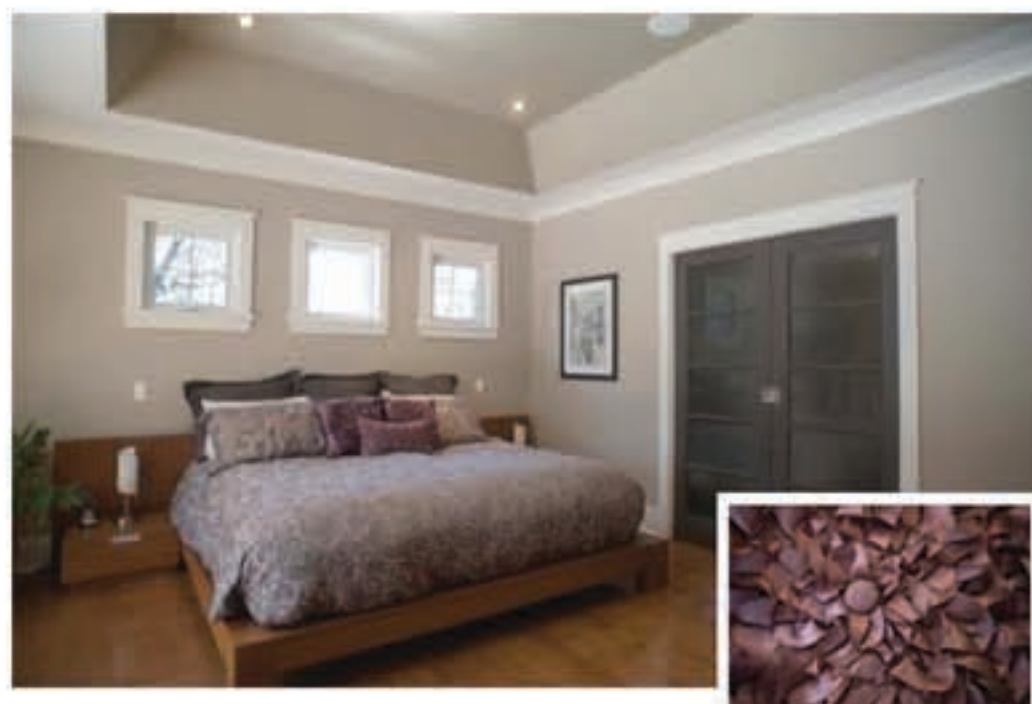
Architect Chuck Mills of Chuck Mills Residential Design & Development Inc. provided a lot of the magic that went into the home's new welcoming and open-concept design.

"Chuck was awesome," says Roxanne. "Yves and I had very strong design opinions and ideas throughout the project, but Chuck was always open to these and was able to incorporate them into the final design."

One of Roxanne's biggest priorities was the kitchen. It's the kind of kitchen that lends itself well to entertaining and cooking (although Roxanne insists she's not a very good cook). "This was not something I could compromise on," says Roxanne. "It had to be a big kitchen, with a big island and lots of counter space."

Roxanne and Yves chose quartz countertops from Marble Unlimited because they wanted a durable material that wouldn't stain. Custom cabinetry reduces kitchen clutter to a minimum. The island creates an ideal space while prepping a big Sunday dinner with extended family. Appliances were sourced from Universal Appliances.

Like every reno, there were a few issues along the way (at one point workers revealed a walled-up fireplace that was full of soot) but Roxanne says one of their biggest challenges was choosing the finishings.

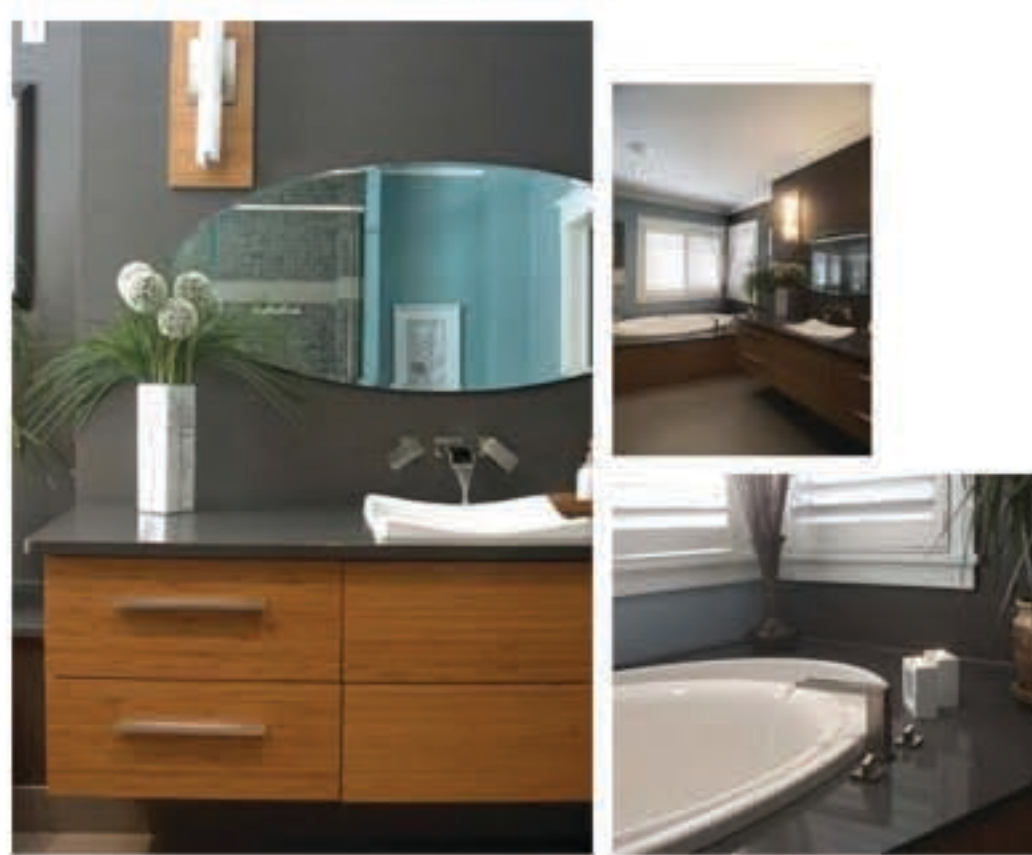


"Yves and I have very similar tastes. We're very lucky that way," says Roxanne. "We both like very nice things so that part was easy, but there were some days when I would say, 'Oh, if we don't get divorced by the end of this we're good for a lifetime,' " she laughs.

Their goal was to create a cohesive design that flows throughout the home, a design that is also highly practical from a parenting standpoint. Roxanne says she doesn't want to be the kind of mom who follows her kids around with a mop or who won't let them sit on the furniture.

Warm tones used throughout the space, along with expansive oak flooring give the home a welcoming feel. A wood-burning fireplace in the living room and a gas fireplace in the dining room make both areas comfortable spaces for entertaining.

High inset ceilings help define the living space and a coat of paint adds some unexpected drama to the mix.



"I have to give credit to Benjamin Moore," says Roxanne. "We brought in the consultant and she said, 'These ceilings are fantastic, you have to go dark.' "

They decided to just try it even though they weren't totally convinced it would work... but it did. "Everyone comments on it," says Roxanne. "Without the paint the ceilings wouldn't pop as much. They're so much more dramatic this way."

The most recent changes to their home have been to the outdoors. The deck, the stonework (Merkley Supply Ltd.) and the custom pool (Poolarama) all make the outside as comfortable and sophisticated as the inside. Rockcliffe Landscaping Inc. took care of front yard details, tending to the walkway, lighting and irrigation system for the newly sodded lawn.



"I think we're here for the long haul," says Roxanne. "But never say never!"

"We did talk about finding another property in the area and starting over. I wouldn't mind doing it again if we could build from scratch," she says. "But I want to enjoy this, take advantage of what we've done and enjoy it too. Who knows what the future will hold, but for now we're staying put."