

the New Traditionalist

DESIGNER **SILVANA D'ADDAZIO** PLAYFULLY WEAVES LAYERS AND DETAILS TO CRAFT A WARM, WELCOMING SPACE THAT FEELS CLASSIC — AND THOROUGHLY FRESH.

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TRENDSPOTTING DECORATIVE WALL MURALS

Homeowner Silvana D'addazio brought in decorative artist Kari Serrao to paint a whimsical meandering mural over her fireplace using a favourite wallpaper by Fromental as inspiration. She rounded out the Asian-inspired vignette with antique musician figures flanking an 18th-century Italian mirror, plus a delicate silk Fortuny light she picked up in Venice. **Table**, Ribbehege & Azevedo; **pillow fabric**, Luxembourg Gardens, Rose Cumming by Dessin Fournir; **artwork** (over sofa) by Giuseppe De Luca, De Luca Fine Art; **contractor**, Brushfield Construction.



DESIGNER SILVANA D'addazio's spaces are the sort that slowly creep up and wrap their arms around you, so that only once you're ensconced do you appreciate the layers you missed at first glance. Her career has been much the same. Over the years, she has worked under the radar for top-drawer Toronto designers Katherine Newman and Brian Gluckstein, so in fact, you may well have appreciated her evocative designs before, and been none the wiser.

Her 1880s semi in Toronto's east end has a similar quiet, organic story line. When they purchased it a decade ago, Silvana and her partner, restaurateur Saeed Mohamed (co-owner of downtown

dining hotspots The Huntsman Tavern and BQM) initially gave it a quick reno, ripping out old carpeting and repainting. But ultimately, they wanted to live in and get to know the space before making any major redesign decisions.

Six years in, Silvana launched her eponymous design firm out of the half-finished home, and once the firm had grown up and out into its own downtown studio, she and Saeed confronted the question: Find a bigger place or make the house work for the long term? Option B, the shrewd choice for an up-and-coming designer, was also the right choice for the couple. "We loved the neighbourhood, and we loved the tall windows and all that sunlight," says Silvana. "And after 10 years, we really knew what it was we wanted." Namely, to maximize the space, customize furnishings for cosy corners and make the most of a tiny, dark kitchen that gets a workout from the couple's busy schedule hosting friends and family. With a flair for colourful, patterned fabrics and a confidence that comes from her years in the industry, Silvana designed an exquisite sanctuary swathed in rich fabrics and bathed in warm light.

"I love using beautiful fabrics, but I also want people to feel they're not afraid to sit down," she says. "I don't want people in my house to feel nervous, in the same way that I don't want my clients to feel nervous in the spaces I create for them."

The finishing touches merge her affection for antiques and Asian motifs with Saeed's appreciation of fine art ("His love of paintings has brought me around to it, too"), establishing a pulled-together look that suits mornings lingering over coffee just as well as it does candlelit evenings over wine and a great meal. "I didn't want too vibrant a space," she says, singling out what she was careful to avoid. "This is calming to me."

INSET: Silvana (shown with partner Saeed Mohamed) designed a plush three-piece sofa to tuck right into the living room's window nook and upholstered its cushions in a chic but rule-breaking horizontal stripe (Wren by Mark Alexander from Billbrough & Co.). **Sofa fabrication**, Roen Furniture; **drape fabric**, Le Gracieux; **all drape sewing**, Wesley Seto; **wall colour**, Silver Satin (OC-26), Benjamin Moore.

TRENDSPOTTING

OPEN WALL DIVIDERS

RIGHT: By opening up the staircase wall, Silvana extended the small living room's sight lines. An open shoji-style screen is a subtle division between spaces and adds graphic flair. Caned panels on the tailored, white oak cabinet below inject more texture. The designer says she's not normally a "pink person," but chose the fabric on the armchairs' cushions for its beautiful texture and casual style. "It's not an overly precious pink." She balances it with pillows in a grey and white ikat by Lee Jofa. Long a fan of chinoiserie, Silvana has had some of her beloved collectibles on display for more than a decade (a good indication a piece represents a personal passion rather than a flash-in-the-pan fashion!). **Sideboard**, Silvana D'addazio Design; **chair fabrication**, Roen Furniture; **lamps**, Ribbehege & Azevedo.



ABOVE: In the front hall, an extra-large traditional arched mirror from Ribbehege & Azevedo is paired with mod Wishbone chairs by Hans Wegner and an Egyptian chest for a simple but striking vignette. Ten-foot ceilings make the Victorian semi feel more spacious, and the mirror draws the eye upward while bouncing natural light around the space. **Chairs**, Kiosk; **chest**, The Door Store; **pendant light**, Chameleon Fine Lighting.

Q+A

House & Home: How do you make what is essentially a very classic look feel so fresh?

Silvana D'addazio: I love cosy spaces. That's what I always try to achieve for my clients and for myself. But it's the detail that's key for me — things like the Moroccan tile on my kitchen backsplash. Sometimes, it's hard to convince clients to use something like Moroccan tiles; they worry they're too rustic or too country. But those are the sorts of details I absolutely want in my home. They just work — they take a look to a more sophisticated level. Every

area in my home has something that makes it a little more special. In the living room, for instance, it's the mural above the mantel. I also love mixing old with new. I love the mix in my front hall of the modern Wishbone chairs with the old Canadiana mirror and Egyptian trunk. Or the vintage dining room chairs with the clean oak table.

H&H: The way you've layered colour and fabrics also makes your home seem amazingly plush. What was your strategy?

SD: I like mixing cool tones with warmer tones in the same room, in terms of fabrics

and wall colours. You might think you should use only warm colours to create a warm feel, but adding cool tones balances the look. Most of the fabrics I use have stripes or a print, and I like layering those. My sofa is upholstered with two fabrics, though that doesn't pop out at you.

H&H: Does the same go for lighting?

SD: Yes. I'm all about layers of lighting. In my home, I've installed lights I've collected over the years. I don't like to do lighting spontaneously. I've really just found things I've loved, and they've come together as I've built on them. I'm not a chrome

person, so my living room, for instance, has antique brass, a pair of seashell sconces, some silver, a Fortuny light ... pretty soft colours that give a warmer light.

H&H: I've never seen anything like your living room sofa. Where's the idea from?

SD: Saeed wanted a sofa we could both really be comfortable on. We used to have a long three-seater here that just didn't work. It's the perfect nook for a built-in, and I really wanted to maximize seating and comfort, so I designed this to seat five at a time. It's not really built in: it's in three pieces. It's a great, cosy conversation area.

It's my spot first thing in the morning, with my coffee and my cat, Ralphie, beside me.

H&H: What's your favourite room?

SD: The kitchen. I never thought I'd have a big kitchen in this house ... but this one works. When I planned it out, it just came to life. We have all this storage space now — and even some empty drawers!

H&H: Any plans that didn't work out?

SD: I had a leather ottoman made for the open nook in the living room sofa. But it made it feel like a massive bed. I did find a place for it, though: at the foot of my bed.

TRENDSPOTTING PATTERN UNDERFOOT

Once she opened up the kitchen to the dining room, Silvana, who loves to entertain friends and family, decorated for maximum comfort. While the table is a sleek oval shape, it's also spacious and the perfect fit with vintage vinyl-seated chairs. An ample window seat provides a cosy postdinner nook. A Chinese flatweave rug in deep purple and loose roman blinds inject visual softness, and the Drop 2 pendant lights by Peter Bowles for Original BTC are a modern nod. New Arts and Crafts-style panelling on the walls and Moroccan-style privacy screening on the windows add architectural distinction. **Table**, Silvana D'addazio Design; **lights**, Design Within Reach; **blind fabric**, Marina by Cowtan & Tout, Primavera; **wall colour**, Silver Satin (OC-26), Benjamin Moore.



ABOVE: These open shelves in the living room, as well as glass-fronted cupboards in the kitchen, allow Silvana to display her collections of crockware jugs and vases and old crystal. The jugs here — artfully arranged to echo the accompanying books — are from antique markets around Toronto. True to her impeccable eye for detail, Silvana backed the nook in linen-look wallpaper, banded the edges in ribbon and lit the scene with a delicate shell sconce. **Wallpaper**, Metro Wallcoverings.

TRENDSPOTTING TAILORED TRIMWORK

The new galley kitchen is fitted with cabinets by Falcon Kitchens with glass-paned uppers and walnut-panelled lower cabinets that add warmth and contrast — for a look that calls to mind a tuxedo. The old kitchen was cramped and almost entirely closed in, so Silvana opened the space up to the back garden at one end with a pretty new door and casement and transom windows. At the other end, just a breakfast bar divides the kitchen from the dining room. A honed Palissandro marble counter, a Moroccan-tile backsplash, a coffered, panelled and painted ceiling and a graceful ribbed-glass light layer in texture. Silvana rarely closes the drapes yet loves the softness they bring. **Stools**, Silvana D'addazio Design; **drape fabric**, Primavera; **pendant light**, Chameleon Fine Lighting; **faucet**, Ginger's; **La Cornue stove**, Grange.



TRENDSPOTTING TEXTURED WALLS

In lieu of a headboard, Silvana upholstered the wall with a hemp fabric hand-blocked in a tiny floral, the same fabric she used for the living room drapes. A printed border at the edges of the fabric breaks up the expanse and helps define the bed. The same drape fabric in the dining room appears here as well. **Wall fabric**, *Le Gracieux*; **pendant light**, *Stanley Wagman Antiques*; **linens**, *Elte*; **drape fabric**, *Marina by Cowtan & Tout, Primavera*.



Hotel-style towel racks are practical for warming and drying towels and add sculptural interest. The curvy floor tile has a Moroccan feel.

Towel rack, *Ginger's*; **stool**, *R+Y Augusti*.



RIGHT: With its lavender subway tile, lavender-tinged marble counter and modern oak cabinets, Silvana's bath feels feminine but not fussy. The broad vanity has loads of space for toiletries on the counter and down below. Framing the tile like panelling makes the space feel polished, as do the ceiling mouldings. Delicate purple towels (here and top right) are souvenirs from a vacation in Turkey. **Mirror design**, *Silvana D'addazio Design*; **mirror fabrication**, *Bazay Blacksmithing*; **taps, sconces**, *Ginger's*; **tile**, *Versatile*.



An exposed chimney stack was painted white to balance the bookshelf on the other side of the bed. It injects texture and makes the little pedestal table feel like a curated work of art. Upholstering the boxspring gives the bed a custom-tailored look. **Wall fabric**, *Le Gracieux*; **sconce**, *Circa Lighting*.

