

INTO THE BLUE

A prewar fixer-upper is transformed with a clever mix of high and low.

Build your dining room around great seating

Homeowner Magela Bruno knew she wanted Panton chairs for the dining room, so she searched for a table that would work well with their curvy shape. This one, from RH Restoration Hardware, introduces a nice tension to the room, thanks to its clean lines and rustic charm. *Panton chairs*, Quasi Modo; *Risom Lounge chairs*, Hollace Cluny.

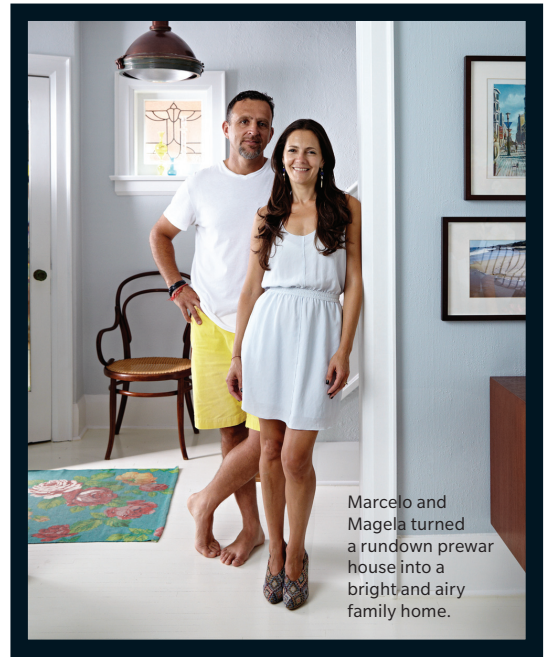
Text by STACY LEE KONG | Photography by MICHAEL GRAYDON

WHO: Homeowners Magela Bruno and Marcelo Palacios
WHAT: An 1,800-square-foot heritage home
WHERE: Toronto
STYLE: Eclectic modern



< Maximize natural light

One of the first things Magela and Marcelo did was give the hardwood floors a coat of slick white paint (they used a porch and deck formula for added durability). “I couldn’t live with the brown floors, with that honey colour staring at me! A fresh coat of paint made everything brighter right away,” says Magela. The floral rug and summery bags add a hit of playful pattern, while a bench and high hooks are practical additions. The wall art (bottom left) is a collage of family photos. **Wall colour,** Iceberg (2122-50), **floor colour,** Pure White (OC-64), Benjamin Moore; **lights,** RH Restoration Hardware; **bench,** Wildbird; **rug, brackets,** Anthropologie.



Marcelo and Magela turned a rundown prewar house into a bright and airy family home.



SAVE
Create DIY artwork as an easy, budget-friendly way to add personality

Unlike many of the homes in Magela Bruno and Marcelo Palacios’s leafy Toronto neighbourhood, their 1926 house hadn’t been torn down in favour of a shiny new-build. It was charming, but there were also a few design challenges: an unwelcoming basement, tiny kitchen, overgrown backyard and barely usable upstairs bathroom. “It didn’t look very good,” admits Magela, who runs a landscaping business with her husband. “But I have a lot of respect for the way homes were built back then, and we just fell in love with it.” The bones were great, and it was the right place to raise their kids, Santiago and Juana, 10 and 7. So the couple embarked on a slow-and-steady revitalization that included painting and renovating, plus completely revamping the outdoor spaces, to turn their hidden gem into a beautiful, functional family home.

SAVE
An inexpensive steel table, found at a flower shop, makes a pretty bar cart



✓ Consider the high-low mix

In the living room, a Girard coffee table and Mies van der Rohe Krefeld sofa are the cornerstones of the decor. “I’m attracted to mid-century modern furniture because I think it’s timeless, elegant and easygoing,” says Magela. The pale blue wall colour is actually a discontinued Benjamin Moore shade that Magela had her local paint store re-create. The fireplace was originally white; now it’s a moody blue-grey to contrast the walls. In the summer, when they’re not using it, they fill it with stacks of firewood to hide the unattractive inner workings and add natural texture. Clusters of vintage floral paintings, collected over several visits to the Aberfoyle Antique Market near Guelph, Ont., are a soft counterpoint to the sleek lines of the furniture. **Wall colour**, Brittany Blue (1633), **mantel colour**, Deep Space (2125-20), Benjamin Moore; **sofa**, **coffee table**, Knoll; **green bowl** by Martha Sturdy, Hollace Cluny; **pillows**, **floor lamp**, Anthropologie.



< Give each room a personal touch

A row of pendant lights picks up on the dining table’s rustic sensibility, while vintage shelves add storage without taking up a lot of visual space — Magela thinks they originally held shoes in a factory. A ceramic deer ornament is adorned with hand-written labels that describe each family member’s favourite meal and where they had it, and a quirky gnome table is a fun touch (and a recurring theme throughout the house). **Wall colour**, Gravel, **pendant lights**, RH Restoration Hardware; **gnome stool**, Quasi Modo; **shelves**, **deer ornament**, Blackbird Vintage Finds.



SPLURGE
Invest in great beds, like this beauty by Swedish brand Hästens



Set up a quiet retreat

A shapely, patterned armchair is a cosy spot to relax. The ribbon detail on the roman blinds picks up on the deep tone of the walls, but the shades themselves let in plenty of light. Magela found the pretty rug in Uruguay. It adds pattern underfoot and softens the effect of the dramatic walls. **Chair, pillow, Anthropologie.**



Go dark in grown-up spaces

The principal bedroom feels totally different from the rest of the house, more urban and dramatic. Dark blue-grey walls give the space a romantic feel. The light hues of the bedding add contrast. The dark stain on the wooden headboard, which Marcelo made out of old barnboard, blends into the wall, while colourful letters bring more pattern to the space. **Wall colour, Wrought Iron (2124-10), Benjamin Moore; bed, bedding, Hästens; accent pillow, Anthropologie; pillowcases, shams, solid blanket, bench, Au Lit Fine Linens; table lamp, Ikea.**



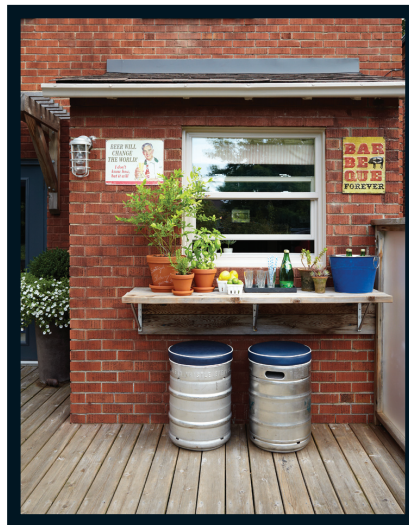
Play with contrasting palettes

All the beds in the house are by Hästens. Juana's red check is a fun contrast to the light pink walls. The portrait is from a family trip to Paris. **Bedding, Au Lit Fine Linens; floral artwork, Aberfoyle Antique Market; rug, Ikea.**



▲ Give different levels their own personality

Sleek and modern, the basement was completely renovated to create a place for the family to spend time together. “We didn’t want little rooms; we wanted one big space, so we needed to hide storage in a beautiful way,” says Magela. That meant built-ins, which were done in maple. The floor is a durable polished concrete. White walls and a recessed ceiling make the room feel spacious, while earthy tones and natural fibres add warmth. **Wall colour**, Pure White (SW 7005), Sherwin-Williams; **Eames rocker**, Herman Miller; **orange throw pillow**, Fluf; **patterned throw pillow**, beige **throw pillow**, dolls, Hollace Cluny; **grey bowl**, RH Restoration Hardware; **wall sconce**, Royal Lighting.



< Extend living spaces outdoors

At the kitchen window on the back deck, Magela’s playful spin on the takeout window features a rustic DIY bar — fashioned out of a simple plank of wood and inexpensive brackets — and fun stools made out of beer kegs topped with custom cushions.

▼ Make the most of a small backyard

Magela and Marcelo own a landscaping business, so their outdoor living spaces are as hardworking as their interiors. “People see small spaces as a challenge. They’ll say, ‘Oh no, I can’t do that; there isn’t enough room!’” Magela says. Instead, she recommends embracing the space you do have. Their long and narrow backyard lent itself to three distinct zones: the back deck for entertaining, a patch of green space for the kids to play and a pool area. They went with a small plunge pool and brick patio, which allowed for a sitting area on one end of the pool and a storage shed on the other. **Landscaping, pool design**, Landscaping De Sol A Sol; **pool construction**, Jones Pools; **chaise longues** by Cane-line, *Sign of the Skier*; **pillows**, RH Restoration Hardware.



SPLURGE
A plunge pool is a bold move in a tiny backyard, but it gets lots of use