

ISLAND CHIC TORONTO HOME DESIGN WITH IMAN STEWART

By
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Toronto-based interior designer [Iman Stewart](#) doesn't do generic. Whether staging rooms for her real estate clients or customizing spaces for a family's specific needs, Stewart strongly believes a home should always radiate a distinct personality. This has become the driving force behind her expansive [interior design career and company](#), filled with projects inflecting an eclectic, global style. Her approach feels particularly suited to the diverse community she's familiar with when working on Toronto home design.



Photo: Janelle Gokule

This is especially true for the city's large Caribbean enclave, where the Jamaican designer finds endless inspiration.

Stewart often taps into this rich cultural tapestry when reimagining spaces. "Canada is very multicultural, so I want to actually represent what Canada looks like versus what people think (it looks like)," says Stewart. "[Design more of what you feel](#) because then it's authentic to you. And whoever is attracted to that is going to appreciate it."

Her projects range from cozy bedrooms to eccentric home offices and even a restaurant or two, but one core theme remains: creating a space that is reflective of the person who will be using it while catering to their practical needs. "When you're designing, it has to have self expression," notes Stewart. "So we have to be very aware and cognizant of those key spaces or pieces in the home that can properly display that."

Iman Stewart breaks down the creative process behind three dramatic transformations that celebrate her cultural roots and reflect her individual flare.

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Beyond Basic

Stewart was asked to stage this apartment in Toronto's East End for viewing by a realtor who is a dear friend and fellow Jamaican. Tired of the typical all-gray staging projects, they both agreed to take a chance and tapped into their shared Caribbean roots to design the space. The final result prods visitors to imagine the apartment as home to a glamorous island diva who has enjoyed her share of adventures. Thus, the project embodied a distinct personality rather than trying to appeal to everyone (and becoming blandly inoffensive as a result).



Photo: Anthony Voltsinis

The risk paid off. “This property was only on the market for just about a week,” laughs Stewart now. “The buyer was from Ethiopia and she was really inspired by the space.” She adds, “When you design intuitively and create intuitively, that connects with other people.”

When conceptualizing the apartment’s show-stopping living room, Stewart first leaned into the cherry wood flooring that ran through the apartment, punctuating the strong hue with pops of vibrant colors like the emerald green velvet armchair. Metallic touches, like the brass-accented [Jade Wine Cabinet by Sunpan](#), introduced notes of glamour. The golden coffee table finished to mimic the look of coral subtly nods to the design’s modern island inspiration. Artwork sourced from online decor store Renwil line the walls in the main living room, giving the overall space a sense of being curated over time.