

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

By: [Bethany Lyttle](#)

Strong geometry and confident colour bring character and dimension to a newly built home.

One by one, an unexpected parade of yellow cubes and tawny honeycombs, milky globes and ink-black slabs made their way into this newly built home in Oakville, Ont. A dresser with Mid-Century-Modern curves was marched in behind a sharply mitred dining table. And bobbed lighting followed rectangles tufted in velvet. "This was definitely a house with an emphasis on geometry," says designer Rebecca Hay. "It's furnished with all kinds of interesting shapes."

The inspiration for Rebecca's approach began with the home's towering 12-foot ceilings and rambling rooms. Without unique adornment, they came across as boxy and sprawling. "By taking these open spaces and pairing them with fun shapes, we completely altered the experience of the home," she says.

The clients wanted a classic yet urbane midtown home. To this end, Rebecca took a hard look at finishes and proportions. "One thing that stood out was that the ceilings were high, but the doorways were standard height," says Rebecca. She reconfigured the doors to make them higher and often wider, in some cases doubling them to create stately French doors. She also noted that while the walls were expansive, the finishes looked impersonal and new. "Using MDF, we created custom layered wall panels and tall baseboards, which added layers of gracious dimension and shadow," says the designer.

To draw the eye further upward, Rebecca turned to colour and light. In some rooms, she added paint and wallpaper to the ceilings for surprising swaths of colour. In others, she hung chandeliers or pendants to do the job. Now, every room in the house has its own overhead point of interest. Says Rebecca: "Adding playful bits of personality is what lets a home become your life story."

In the end, though, it's the palette that most defines the home's downtown vibe. Sophisticated and restrained yet vibrant and expressive, the colour scheme manages to walk the line between classic and creative. So, how did Rebecca manage that? She started with complex neutrals, such as marbled whites, veined blacks and worn leathers, then paired them with joyful jewel tones in blues, golds, pinks and even magenta. "These touches of colour may be minimal, but they make an instant statement," she says.

If you're keen to try adding dashes of daring colour at home, Rebecca has some advice: consider introducing some mustard upholstery, as she did, on a pair of cube chairs, adding

some warm peony-pink pillows to your bed, or covering a bathroom wall in colourful butterflies. “Just remember that a little hue goes a long way,” she says. “The key is to use small touches, over and over, throughout your home.”

The same advice carries over to shapes – the more repeats the better. A spherical chandelier, for example, will look more at home with a globe-shaped vase or round mirror nearby.

So, if you’re seeking a simple tip that will result in a strong, cohesive, whole-home design, take it from Rebecca and make this your new move.



Photography: Mike Chajeki | CHAIRS, Sunpan

“The formal dining room is closed off from the rest of the house, so we allowed ourselves a little drama,” says designer Rebecca Hay. The 12-foot ceilings are covered in wallpaper, its blues are reflected in the vintage rug. A heavy modern table with brass frame is graced with a pair of chandeliers instead of a single fixture – something Rebecca recommends for extra-long tables. The wall art features framed feathers.



Photography: Mike Chajeki | CHAIR, Sunpan

Tucked away in its own corner of the house is a home office. Custom cabinets surround the window, resulting in a 20-inch deep sill that makes the house look older than it is. Handmade drawer pulls echo the curves on the gracious door and demilune pendant above. The cabinets are deep enough to store a printer, and feature a library sconce above, which gives a sense of studious luxury.



Photography: Mike Chajeki | NIGHT STANDS, Sunpan

Sharp corners and dark tones bring a masculine touch to the bedside tables, which support curvaceous modern lamps. The thick knotted custom rug and faux fur covers that top the ottomans soften the sharp lines of the black and brass canopy bed.