

SOFT

&

SUBTLE

London Calling

DESIGNER SARAH RICHARDSON DRAWS ON A LUMINOUS PALETTE OF PALE HUES TO TURN A DREARY U.K. ROWHOUSE INTO A PRETTY PIED-À-TERRE.

Text by ALISON GARWOOD-JONES | *Photography by* STACEY BRANDFORD





"I like a different colour for each room," says Toronto designer Sarah Richardson. "If you're going to open another gallon of paint, you might as well make it a different colour." In the lower-level living room of this London home she designed, butter yellow walls play off punchy cherry and burnt orange accents. Richardson placed her custom-designed sofas in a clubby back-to-back arrangement to take advantage of the marble and ormolu-inset

fireplaces that bookend the room. "It creates an opportunity to have different views in a room," she notes. **Sofas**, Sarah Richardson Design; **paisley pillow fabric**, Brunshaw & Fils; **silk pillow fabric**, Designer Fabrics; **Mulberry Home embroidered pillow fabric**, Lee Jofa; **Cowtan & Tout drape fabric**, Primavera; **table lamp**, 507 Antiques. **OPPOSITE**: Lavender- and rose-tinted glass pieces grouped on a mantel in the daughter's bedroom inject colour.



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Every morning, flocks of birds descend on wisteria vines and historical statuary in the private garden that serves a row of cream-coloured neoclassical townhouses in central London. Next come the dogs — terriers, mastiffs and corgis — trailed by their owners, a colourful assortment of modern-day dukes, ladies, earls and ambassadors. Last year, a flat in one of these elegant stone-and-stucco homes changed hands — a rarity when you consider most tenants hang on to their places for decades — and Toronto designer Sarah Richardson and her team flew across the pond to help the new owners, an American couple living in England with their children, and to update the timeworn space into a stylish second residence.

While the flat, located on the fourth and fifth floors, boasted beautiful views over the treetops, Richardson and her associates, Kate Stuart and Thomas Smythe, knew the project would be a substantial gut job when they first toured the 2,500-square-foot home, which has three bedrooms, two dens, and three-and-a-half baths, back in the summer of 2010. “After decades of not being touched, it was ready for a revamp,” says Richardson, who remembers walking into a space smothered in hunter-green broadloom.

Bound by strict historical guidelines, Richardson had to be creative about her renovation approach. “It had some limitations, but nothing that couldn’t be fixed,” she says. So with the help of London-based GRA Architecture & Interiors, she began updating the space to make it more fluid and family-friendly. The dated decor was tossed, and the carpets torn up. A local artisan then installed walnut parquet flooring inlaid with linear pale walnut borders. The kitchen and baths were gutted (and some baths enlarged), but the main living spaces were left as intact as possible. Delicate mouldings, that appear to be from the early 20th century were also retained.

To open up the space, Richardson had the walls painted shades of soft yellow, watery green and blue, and barely there pinks and lavenders. “This whole place is about colour,” she says, “only it’s not too intense, because the inside doesn’t receive a lot of light, and we wanted to make sure that when it was overcast — which happens for weeks on end — the spaces still glowed.” Take the family room, where she chose a colour scheme that alternates between cloudy London grey and bright sky blue. “That’s exactly how the weather is in this city: one minute it’s grey; the next minute it’s blue skies,” says Richardson. Darker hits of indigo in pillows and glass paperweights add visual contrast. Throughout, grey undertones create a transition from hue to hue and room to room.

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TOP RIGHT: Richardson installed bookshelves in an old doorframe to convert a full wall in the living room into a library. An Italian marquetry table, paired with French wing chairs (recovered in cut velvet), makes a perfect spot to plan the day. *Chair fabric*, Linwood; *chairs*, Matthew Upham Antiques; *table*, 507 Antiques.

BOTTOM RIGHT: “I wanted the house to feel like you could cosy up in every corner,” says Richardson, who tucked a red chaise longue next to an original fireplace for views out the living room windows. *Chaise*, Sarah Richardson Design; *chaise fabric*, Cowtan & Tout; *striped pillow fabric*, Linwood; *lamp*, Nicholas Haslam.





At the homeowners' request, Richardson completely gutted the kitchen and reimagined it as a classically inspired space with beautiful millwork and dentil mouldings. A refurbished skylight floods the room with natural light. Instead of eating in the formal dining room (now used as a family room), the family takes their meals at the kitchen's antique French wine-tasting table. *Maison Jansen chairs*, Nicholas Haslam.

“I like a different colour for each room. If you’re going to open another gallon of paint, you might as well make it a different colour”





Richardson chose the family room's metal coffee table for its industrial feel and because it works well with the watery blue notes in the room. "The table is durable, and something you can put your feet up on after a long day," she says. The sofa is covered in herringbone-style linen and mohair velvet, while the stools and throw pillows are a mix of flannels and striped linens, adding a hint of dapper Savile Row style. The lampshades were custom-made with blue banding. **Sofa, stools, Sarah Richardson Design; sofa frame fabric, GP & J Baker; sofa seat fabric, Threadcount; embroidered pillow fabric (on wing chairs), Schumacher; stool fabric, Cowtan & Tout; coffee table, rug, Elte; side tables, Ribbehege & Azevedo; mirror, Alfies Antique Market; lamps, Nicholas Haslam.**

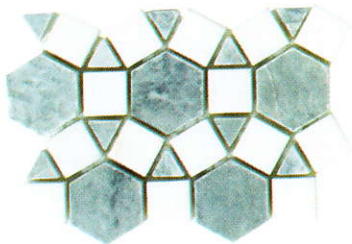


Soft & Subtle

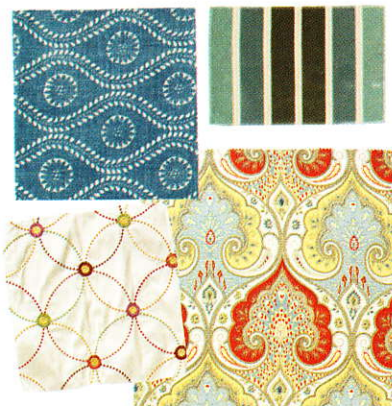
PASTEL WALLS OFFSET LIVELY ACCENTS IN SARAH RICHARDSON'S LAYERED APPROACH.



Muted, sophisticated paint choices
Clockwise from left: Retreat (SR2), Gown (SR9), Whitecap (SR62), Para Paints.



Dramatic mosaic tile
Sunflower polished-marble tile, Salttillo Imports.



Curvilinear prints and thick stripes
Clockwise from top left: Marney, Serenade, Têllo; Latika, Kravet; Cowtan & Tout Mezzo, Primavera.



Antique accessories
Glassware, Cynthia Findlay Antiques.



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1. Blue printed napkins carry the kitchen's palette down to the last detail. 2. A skillful mix of patterns infuses the family room with shades of blue, from soft to cerulean. **Chairs**, Sarah Richardson Design; **games table**, John Young Galleries. 3. Pinwheel tiles made of Ming green and Thassos marble bring subtle colour to the kids' Gustavian-inspired bathroom. **Tiles**, Saltillo Imports. 4. Designers Stuart, Richardson and Smythe (shown) added sparkle in the blue-grey kitchen with glass knobs. 5. Fresh blooms infuse bursts of colour. 6. An antique love seat in the den was the homeowners' lucky find: it actually fit through the room's narrow doorway. **Tables**, ChairTableLamp. 7. Antique wood storage brings the home's elegant look into the principal bathroom. **Tub**, Victoria + Albert. 8. Hand-blocked wallpaper with a dancing leaf motif draws the eye up the main staircase. **Etchings**, Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair. 9. Brass accents, including the twin beds, provide a grown-up gleam in the son's room. 10. In the daughter's room, a lavender ceiling contrasts softly with the red toile bedspread. **Headboard**, Sarah Richardson Design.



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ALL-NEW THIRD SEASON!

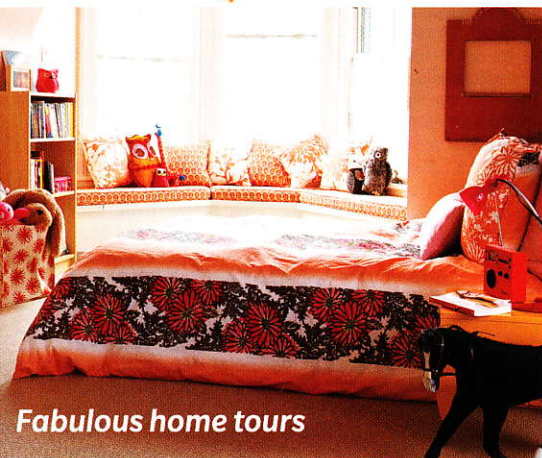
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Paints, call 1-800-461-7272 or visit para.com; Behr at The Home Depot, call 1-800-628-0525 or visit homedepot.ca.



H&H COLOUR GUIDE

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Page 50: Cork fibre board, The Home Depot, call 1-800-628-0525 or visit homedepot.ca; H.A. Kidd and

Company T-pins, [Fabricland](http://Fabricland.com), visit fabricland.ca, and [Fabricville](http://Fabricville.com), visit fabricville.com. **Page 52: Colour Clash: Paints:** Martha Stewart Living at The Home Depot, as above. **Words of Wisdom:** Holly Dymment Design, visit hollydymmentdesign.com. **Page 54: Five of the Best:** Lamps, Kartell, call 1-866-854-8823 or visit kartell.it; towels, Ikea, call 1-866-866-IKEA or visit ikea.ca; Dualit toasters, William Ashley China, visit williamashley.com, or email info@winecellarexpress.com; placemats, Avril Loreti, visit avrilloreti.com; French ovens, Le Creuset, visit lecreuset.ca. **Classic H&H Palettes: Neutrals: 1., 2., 3.** Designer Fabrics, Toronto (416) 531-2810 or visit designerfabrics.ca. **4.** Robert Allen (to the trade), call 1-800-333-3777 or visit robertallendesign.com. **5., 6.** Farrow & Ball, call 1-877-363-1040 or visit farrow-ball.com. **Island Brights:** 1. Designer Fabrics, as above. **2.** Farrow & Ball, as above. **3., 4., 5.** Robert Allen (to the trade), as above. **Page 56: Trompe L'Oeil:** Elte, visit elte.com; Primavera Interior Furnishings (to the trade), visit primavera.ca; The Paint Depot, visit paintdepot.com. **Page 58: Words of Wisdom:** Janice Lindsay, Pink Colour + Design, visit pinkcolouranddesign.com.



FOCUS

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Page 64: 1. West Elm, call 1-877-451-9519 or visit westelm.com. 2. Serena & Lily, visit serenaandlily.com. 3. Pine Cone Hill, call 1-877-586-4771 or visit pineconehill.com. 4. Lucca, Toronto (416) 485-4999. 5. Company C, call 1-800-818-8288 or visit companyc.com. 6. Ikea, call 1-866-866-IKEA or visit ikea.ca. 7. Julia West Home, Toronto (416) 324-7500 or visit juliawesthome.com. 8. Elte, call 1-888-276-3583 or visit elte.com. **Page 65:** 9. Revelle Home Fashions, Toronto (416) 703-4533. 10. HomeSense, visit homesense.ca. 11. DwellStudio, visit dwellstudio.com. 12. Crate & Barrel, call 1-888-657-4108 or visit crateandbarrel.com. 13. Om Home, visit omhome.com. 14. Springs Canada, call 1-800-265-8896. 15. Allem Studio,

visit allemstudio.com. 16. Virginia Johnson, visit virginiajohnson.com. 17. Au Lit Fine Linens, call 1-800-363-6080 or visit aulitfinelinens.com.



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Interior design, all custom furniture, Sarah Richardson, Thomas Smythe and Kate Stuart, Sarah Richardson Design, visit sarahrichardsondesign.com; architect, GRA Architecture & Interiors, visit grarchitecture.co.uk. **Page 69: Living room:** Drape fabric, Primavera Interior Furnishings (to the trade), visit primavera.ca; paisley pillow fabric, Brunschwig & Fils, visit brunschwig.com; silk pillow fabric, Designer Fabrics, visit designerfabrics.ca; embroidered pillow fabric, Lee Jofa (to the trade), visit leejofa.com; lamp, Five O Seven Antiques, visit 507antiques.com. **Page 70: Home library:** Chairs, Matthew Upham Antiques, visit moraandupham.com; chair fabric, Linwood, visit linwoodfabric.com; table, Five O Seven Antiques, as above. **Chaise longue:** Cowtan & Tout chaise fabric, Primavera Interior Furnishings (to the trade), as above; pillow fabrics, Linwood, as above; brass lamp, Nicholas Haslam, visit nicholashaslam.com. **Page 71: Kitchen:** Chairs, Nicholas Haslam, as above. **Pages 72 and 73: Family room:** Sofa frame fabric, GP & J Baker, visit gpbaker.com; sofa seat fabric, Threadcount, visit threadcountinc.com; embroidered throw pillow fabric, Schumacher, visit fschumacher.com; Cowtan & Tout stool fabric, Têlio (to the trade), visit telio.com; linen and silk throw pillow fabrics, Designer Fabrics, as above; coffee table, rug, Elte, visit elte.com; mirror, Alfies Antique Market, visit alfiesantiques.com; lamps, Nicholas Haslam, as above; side tables, Ribbehege & Azevedo, visit ribbehegeandazevedo.com. **Page 74: Family room window:** Games table (at window), John Young Galleries, Toronto (416) 482-3317; drape fabric, Clarence House, visit clarencehouse.com. **Children's bathroom:** Tiles, Saltillo Imports, visit salttillo-tiles.com. **Soft & Subtle:** Paints, Para Paints, visit para.com; tile, Saltillo Imports, as above; fabrics, Têlio (to the trade), as above, and Kravet Canada (to the trade), visit kravetcanada.com, and Primavera Interior Furnishings (to the trade), as above; glassware, Cynthia Findlay Antiques, visit cynthiafindlay.com. **Page 75: Guest den:** Tables, ChairTableLamp, visit chairtablelamp.blogspot.com; paisley pillow fabric, Kravet Canada (to the trade), as above. **Principal bathroom:** Tub, Victoria + Albert, visit vandabaths.com; towel rack, Lefroy Brooks, visit lestroybrooks.com. **Staircase:** Etchings, Decorative Arts & Textiles Fair, visit decorativefair.com.