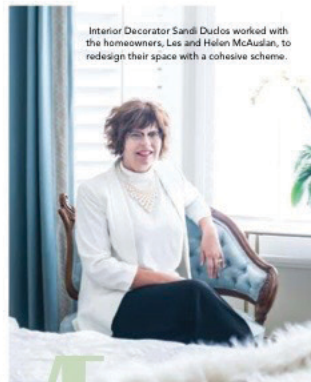


STORY **ADRIENNE BROWN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **TARA WEST**
FLOWERS **DUTCH MILL FLOWER SHOP**

All In GOOD TIME



Painting this oft-used brick fireplace completely transformed this home's main living space. A vintage sleigh in blue to match the mantel décor adds winter whimsy.



Interior Decorator Sandi Duclos worked with the homeowners, Les and Helen McAuslan, to redesign their space with a cohesive scheme.

Many empty nesters living in their homes for years face the same dilemma upon retirement: Is it better to move into a smaller, newer home or update their current home to suit their changing needs?

That's exactly the decision Les and Helen McAuslan had to make last year. The couple have been in their Waterloo home for 26 years and they knew they were ready for a change – they just couldn't decide what.

"We were looking at whether to move or spend money on our current home and we decided maybe bringing on a professional designer was the right way to go," says Helen, who says she has a difficult time imagining how a space might be transformed but who really loves her home and neighbourhood. That's why she and Les called **Sandi Duclos of Sandi Loren Duclos Interiors**, whose specialty lies in reimagining and transforming homes. Helen describes her as having "a never-ending vision."

"We really needed someone to be the quarterback for the design," says Helen. "Having Sandi on board made the whole process easier for us."

Duclos told the McAuslans that although they had a long wish list, not everything had to be done at once. They decided to focus on the main level of their home: their kitchen, living room, powder room, dining room and front entrance. She also refreshed their master bedroom upstairs.

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feature

Adding California shutters by **First Class Shutters Inc.** on all the windows instantly brightened the whole home but "all of the custom details are what take it to the next level," says Duclos. Custom drapery by **200 Vic Ltd.**, new lighting, some custom upholstery and lots of paint are the building blocks for the redesign. Some new (or repurposed) furniture and accessories complete the space.

The McAuslans had a carpenter build a custom mantel for their freshly painted fireplace. It had been red brick but is now a fresh white. And it's not just for decoration. Les says they light a real wood fire three to four days per week.

"Whenever the McAuslans can do something themselves, they like to," says Duclos. For example, Les painted the fireplace and Helen applied the gold leaf to the mustache pulls on her dining buffet. **Riley Painting Corp.** updated the online find with a shiny coat of blue paint (they also painted the master bedroom and main staircase and hung the wallpaper in the powder room).



ABOVE: The soft palette from the main level continues upstairs in the master bedroom, which is tranquil and comfortable. **LEFT:** The homeowners and Duclos selected wallpaper with a bold pattern for the powder room.

Helen says her favourite space varies depending on the day, but the dining space, which was formerly a living and dining combination, is a real star. The McAuslans had previously converted it to the single dining room, "but with Sandi's help it has become so warm, comfortable and uplifting," says Helen.

The powder room also really pops with blue. Duclos opted to amp it up with wallpaper, a statement mirror and fresh lighting.

Upstairs, the master bedroom got an overhaul too. It's now just as peaceful as the McAuslans' main floor. White walls serve as a soft backdrop for custom draperies and bedding by **It's Curtains For You**. The wood-beaded lighting fixture over the bed is one example of when the couple put their full trust in Duclos. She had sent them a photo of the fixture but Helen says she was unsure of it. Helen hesitated but trusted Duclos's advice and now says it's one of her favourite parts of the bedroom. "We both really grew to trust Sandi," says Helen.

"They're very humble people," says Duclos. "It's not a fancy house, but it's homey and comfortable." And who could ask for anything more than that? **on**



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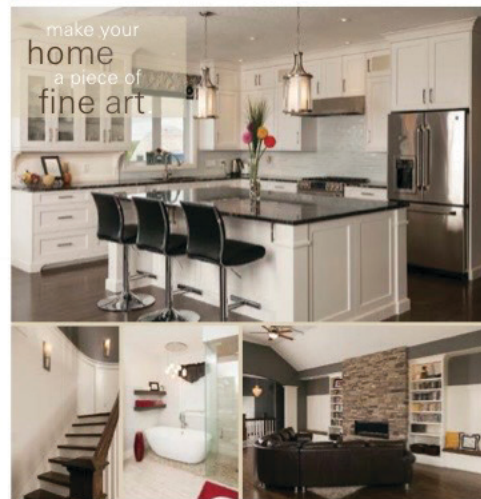
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feature



Champagne and blue chairs, plus a settee on one side, tie in to the main level colour scheme and complement the fresh blue buffet.

"She asked us both what colours our eyes go to," says Helen. Having gone through the earth tones in previous design schemes she did herself. Helen says she was ready for something fresher. Duclos suggested she look in magazines and mark back that appealed to her. When Helen went back and reviewed everything she'd marked, she found she was drawn to a grey and blue palette. Duclos was off and running.

"We've done some small changes over the years," says Helen, "painting, new carpets and so on." But this was the first time they had done such a big overhaul of a large space.

The McAuslans didn't want to replace everything in their home all at once. They wanted to work some of their existing pieces into Duclos's new design plan and she helped them do exactly that. For example, they had **Acadian Upholstery & Interior** reupholster some chairs the couple already owned. She found the perfect balance between a beautiful new space and something that would work for the McAuslans in their day-to-day lives.

The couple removed a railing between the kitchen and living room, as well as widened the walk-through and added millwork in the

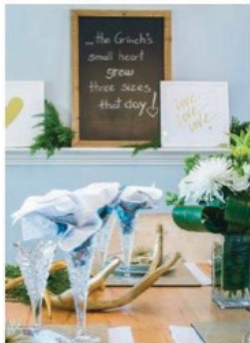
dining room and kitchen, and all of the other changes were cosmetic. All of the custom millwork, trim and mouldings were done by **Schmidt Custom Carpentry Inc.** "It's a fairly minor change," says Duclos, "but your cabinets then look like they go right to the ceiling. It adds dimension."

The kitchen was instantly transformed when the golden oak cabinetry was painted white by **Gibson's Home Furnishings**. It brightened the space so much that the backsplash and countertops didn't need to be replaced. The adjacent breakfast nook is the perfect spot to sit down with a morning coffee.

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BELOW: This breakfast nook on the far side of the kitchen peninsula is the perfect spot for a casual coffee or brunch with the morning paper. **BOTTOM:** Oak cabinetry in the kitchen got a fresh coat of white paint, which was the biggest change in the space. The countertop and backsplash didn't need to be replaced.



TOP MIDDLE: Wingback chairs at the front windows face in towards the dining room. "The china cabinet here was painted the same as the kitchen cupboards." **BOTTOM MIDDLE:** Floating shelves in the dining room are the perfect perch for decor and art that can be rotated and changed according to the season, including a chalkboard for sweet messages and quotes.

