

"Never underestimate the power of paint and fabric," says decorator Tim Lam of the caned barrel-back chairs he upgraded from garage sale finds to favourite pieces in the living room. On the flip side, the sophisticated sofa is a Sarah

Richardson original found on Kijiji that needed only a quick cleaning.

DESIGN, Design Maze, designmaze-tim.blogspot.ca; Giotto **WALLPAPER** (similar), Romo Fabrics & Wallcoverings; **SIDE-CHAIR FABRICS**, Robert Allen; vintage **COFFEE TABLE**, Tribute Decor; custom

DRAPERY, geometric-print **TOSS CUSHION FABRIC**, Tonic Living; **RUG**, canvas bird **PRINT**, **TABLE LAMP**, agate **COASTERS**, HomeSense; blue velvet **TOSS CUSHION FABRIC**, Designer Fabrics; marble-look **TOSS CUSHION**, West Elm; brass sea urchin **SCULPTURE**, Morba.

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CONDO 1
Tim's Refined Eclectic

LOVE *is in the* AIR

How to decorate for the one you love (when the one you love doesn't exactly love decor).

TEXT SARA CATION | PHOTOGRAPHY DONNA GRIFFITH | STYLING MORGAN LINDSAY

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hat's love got to do with it? Judging by the look of this Waterloo, Ont., condo, quite a lot, actually. The approximately 800-square-foot unit owned by engineer Chris Gabriel was designed by his partner of eight years, blogger and decorator Tim Lam. "Chris absolutely adores the space now," says Tim, "but if it were left up to him, the condo probably wouldn't look like this at all. It certainly wouldn't be as decorated." Because where →



LEFT Tim insisted that the kitchen's brown cabinetry, brown granite countertop and blue glass backsplash, which homeowner Chris Gabriel inherited with the condo, had to go. Though upgrading the countertop, replacing the backsplash, updating the faucet to a showpiece and adding the slide-in range was a bit of a splurge, the couple cut costs by simply repainting the existing cabinetry

and applying a DIY barnboard treatment to the peninsula's base.

Front Facade P5226-24 **UPPER CABINERY PAINT**, Para Paints; quartz **COUNTERTOP**, Natural Stone City; **BACKSPLASH TILES**, Creekside Tile; **RANGE**, TA Appliance; **FAUCET**, Brizo; barnboard **PANELS**, Stikwood; **RUGS, STOCKPOT**, HomeSense; **CABINERY HARDWARE**, Upper Canada Specialty Hardware; square **CUTTING BOARD** with rounded edges, grey **BOWL**, Indigo.



LEFT Chris (left) is from Germany and had planned to return there, but he met and fell in love with Tim and hasn't looked back since.

ABOVE Though country charm isn't exactly in Tim's wheelhouse, he wanted to indulge Chris's style throughout the space – and that's especially visible in the dining room, which doubles as an office. "That door is hands-down my favourite piece in the room," says Tim, who found it at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore for around \$100. "And I got it just like that – I didn't have

to refinish it or anything." He did, however, tape Alanna Cavanagh's silk-screened artwork in the window to hide the stuff inside (which includes pantry and office staples).

Sandberg Wallpaper Waldemar **WALL-PAPER**, Örling & Wu; Front Facade P5226-24 **WALL PAINT**, Para Paints; **DINING TABLE, TABLE RUNNER**, HomeSense; **DINING CHAIRS, BANQUETTE**, Sarah Richardson Design; *Empty Belly* **ARTWORK**, Alanna Cavanagh; **CHANDELIER**, West Elm; custom yellow **TOSS CUSHION**, Tonic Living; custom grey **TOSS CUSHIONS**, Fine Interiors by Susan; **BOWL, PLATES, PITCHER**, Indigo.





The sideboard in the living room offers a nod to one of Chris's desired elements: natural wood. Above it, the gallery wall displays artwork and travel mementoes the couple has amassed over time, including a quirky cuckoo clock that references the couple's shared affinity for birds.

Major Reno P5226-14 **WALL PAINT**, Para Paints; **SIDEBOARD**, Gus Modern; white-painted coral **ARTWORK**, black & white striped **BOX**, HomeSense; dog **PRINT**, Elte; *Small Brogue Shoe* **ARTWORK**, *Sail Away* **ARTWORK**, Alanna Cavanagh; seagull **PRINT**, Carococo; **CLOCK**, Suite 22 Interiors.

“Chris likes **RUSTIC SIMPLICITY**,
and I gravitate to **MORE POLISHED
AND REFINED SPACES.**”

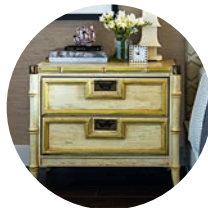
The bedroom's soothing grey, yellow and white palette allowed Tim to play with pattern, from diamonds to stripes to polka dots. Asian-inspired elements like the faux bamboo nightstands and pagoda-shaped table lamps add elegance to the geometric look.

Kenneth James WALLPAPER, Primetime Paint & Paper; BED FRAME (painted), IKEA; HEADBOARD FABRIC, Kravet Canada; polka-dot DRAPERY FABRIC, Tonic Living; DUVET COVER, HomeSense; striped SHEET SET, Rug, West Elm; dog PRINT, Elte; TABLE LAMPS, Cabin Boy; custom fretwork-patterned TOSS CUSHION, Fine Interiors by Susan; custom botanical-print TOSS CUSHIONS, Switch Studio.

HIGH
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CUSTOM
HEADBOARD



TIM
LOVES



CHINOISERIE
ACCENTS



WHIMSICAL
WALLPAPER



PLAYFUL
PATTERNS

HIS SIGNATURE
REFINED
ECLECTIC
STYLE



LEFT A tiny cheater ensuite with doors leading to both the living area and the bedroom left little wall space, so Tim had the bedroom door replaced with a wall, which now accommodates artwork and a towel bar. The builder-basic vanity was cleverly customized with a brass-coated toe kick for a floating effect, while the glitzy cream and gold bird wallpaper casts a glamorous glow.

Daydream **WALLPAPER**, Hygge & West; Major Reno P5226-14 **WALL PAINT**, Para Paints; quartz **COUNTER-TOP**, Natural Stone City; **FAUCET, TOWEL RING**, Brizo; custom **TOE KICK**, Anvil & Co.; **SCONCES**, Shop 219; **MIRROR, WASTE BASKET**, HomeSense; striped hammam **HAND TOWEL**, West Elm.

BELOW The high-gloss dark grey wall paint in the bedroom acts as a luscious counterpoint to the subtle texture of the

grasscloth on the feature wall behind the bed. The herringbone throw is a souvenir from Chris's hometown in Germany.

Film Festival P5221-41 **WALL PAINT**, Para Paints; **ARM-CHAIR**, Sarah Richardson Design; **SIDE TABLE**, Elte; **FLOOR LAMP**, Jonathan Adler; custom **LUMBAR CUSHION**, Fine Interiors by Susan.

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Chris is a little bit country, Tim is all city. "Chris likes rustic simplicity, and I gravitate to more polished and refined spaces," says Tim. And who better to steer you in the right decorative direction than the one you love?

Case in point is the living room. Chris didn't want one at all – he thought it should instead be converted into a spacious office, with an added wall closing it off from the kitchen. But Tim convinced him that the dining room could double as a chic and cheerful workspace, allowing the living room to reach its full potential.

The starting point for the room – and subsequently the rest of the condo – was the Ming dragon drapery fabric. "When I showed it to Chris, he was so excited," says Tim. "I was actually a bit surprised that he went for it. I joked, 'Quick! We have to buy it before you change your mind.'"

But this push and pull didn't define the whole design process. Chris's love of natural wood comes through in accents like the living room coffee table, the base of the kitchen peninsula and the pantry door in the dining room. To accommodate Chris's passion for entertaining, Tim incorporated a host of seating areas to encourage conversation. And, of course, Chris had final say over everything – even all that wallpaper.

Wallpaper in every room is something Tim really pushed for, even though Chris associated it with dated interiors. "My biggest moment was when I converted him," says Tim. "When the first strip of bathroom wallpaper went up, Chris emphatically exclaimed, 'Oh, that looks great!'" The condo is the perfect mix of the two of us – and I'm proud to say we both love it."

