

# BC Home

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## the DESIGNER ISSUE

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INTERIORS BY  
JENNIFER SCOTT  
eclectic + informal

# Vintage Love

In this Vancouver home, layers of style and sentiment reveal a couple's longtime love affair with one another and the city

TEXT WENDY GOLDSMITH PHOTOGRAPHY TRACEY AYTON

**MEMORY MINE** Jennifer Scott, who relaxes on the veranda, draws on two decades of memories with husband Trevor to fill her home with "mental keepsakes," along with vintage finds, like the pendant salvaged from the Biltmore Cabaret.

When Jennifer and Trevor Scott were teenagers, the escape route from their quiet hometown of White Rock to the big-city fun of Vancouver involved a bus rumbling over the Granville Street Bridge. Each time it passed a certain sunshine-coloured low-rise on the South Granville side, they would whisper to each other, "When we grow up, we'll live in that little yellow apartment."



Twenty years and six shared homes later, the couple, who met in fourth grade and started dating at 16, never did move into that apartment. In fact, like many young couples priced out of the city's western neighbourhoods, they are laying down roots on the East Side, in a three-storey wooden character home on a somewhat neglected, gravelled stretch of Prince Edward Street. Verandas front and back provide a peaceful view of a delightfully rambunctious garden, much loved by their equally exuberant daughter Sienna, 2. The backyard leads out to the Mountain View Cemetery, where Trevor – a consultant to hotel and hospitality industry owners and developers – enjoys early morning walks with Jack Russell terriers, Montana and Six Pack. It could be somewhat quiet for an adventurous couple, who spent their twenties at live gigs, art shows and avant-garde theatre. But spend a few hours visiting, and it soon becomes apparent that the unofficial deciding question for all matters big or small is, "How fun would that be?"

Growing up together has given the couple more shared memories than most. They're a source that Jennifer – who co-owns a wardrobe and interior design firm (A Good Chick to Know, with best pal Rachel Harrison) – often mines for inspiration, working mental keepsakes such as "that little yellow apartment" into their actual home in creative ways.

For example, Jennifer and Trevor's "when we grow up" sentiment inspired a graphic print above the staircase leading to the top floor. Drawing on her design degree, Jennifer laid out a poster with blocky lime-yellow text under a smoky Vancouver skyline. It looks sharp and professional, easily believable as a stand-alone art piece. But since Jennifer also has



**THE LAYERED LOOK** Every item in the home seems to exude personality and patina. In fact, Jennifer admits that she rarely buys new furniture. Instead, she seeks out vintage pieces that have history, like the original France & Son sofa (top) she bagged for a bargain. **COLOUR THEORY** Although the kitchen and bathrooms are wrapped in crisp white, the rest of the home bursts in bold, juicy colour. The wallpaper choice and graphic artwork (Jennifer's homage to that little yellow apartment) are a perfect fit for the 1910 home.

10 years of experience in fashion – as a stylist, a booking agent and a wardrobe advisor – she didn't leave it hanging solo. Rather, she created a whole ensemble, beginning with cheerfully futuristic wallpaper of oversized orchids in metallic yellow and silver. She painted the front of each step bright citrus too, and made a companion poster depicting a stylized map of Toronto with a red heart marking their engagement site; the text below reads, "Just call me angel of the morning, angel," the song on the radio when Trevor proposed.

This is not a house meant to be gulped down whole. Each lamp, each chair, each painting shouts from its place, begging to tell stories. That thigh-high black trunk in the corner? Purchased for Jennifer's very first apartment at 18 and moved from condo to condo ever since. The old-school record player? From a friend, Clint Moroz, owner of vintage shop Space Lab on Main St. (How else to play the stack of records Trevor inherited from his uncle?) The Tang-hued light hovering over the dining table? Salvaged from The Biltmore Cabaret, the gritty live-music venue on Kingsway.

Piece by piece, story by story, it's apparent Jennifer does not solve design dilemmas by throwing money at them. "I almost never buy new furniture," she says. "Your budget stretches so much further and you end up with a more layered, lived-in feel."

Jennifer and Trevor were able to further stretch their pennies because the house, built in 1910, needed very little structural work. Both the kitchen and the bathroom had been upgraded recently in crisp, clean whites ("Not my taste, but not worth changing," shrugs Jennifer). The biggest change was adding a staircase leading down to the self-contained suite in the basement. Knocking down a wall between the suite's kitchen and sitting area created a comfortable family room and play area.

So instead of rebuilding, Jennifer was able to concentrate on her favourite part: "finding the perfect thing." But the 30-year-old designer admits her just-eclectic-enough style took years to mature. Her first condo in Kitsilano was decorated, "admittedly very poorly, with stuff other people would think was cool."

While Jennifer's confidence has grown, Trevor laughs that his influence has been squeezed out. "I went away to Boston for four days, and when I came back the house was like night and day. She got rid of my favourite couch!" Trading Trevor's beloved fabric sectional for a black, leather sofa





## Designer insight Jennifer Scott dares to DIY

- **CHEAP TRICK** Ugly chairs are cheap at garage sales, and not worth the cost of properly re-upholstering. Jennifer staple-gunned grey comic-themed fabric from Ikea around a five-dollar chair (right) for a fun addition to Sienna's nursery. Save the professionals for pricier finds.
- **CANVAS YOUR LOVED ONES** Got a particularly artsy wedding photo or baby shot? Stretch to approximately the same width as the bed and hang above for inexpensive, original art. London Drugs prints photos on real canvas up to one metre (40 in.) wide for less than \$150.
- **OPEN HOUSE STEALS** Owners are often downsizing and desperate to unload designer furniture – even if they don't know it yet, says Jennifer. "I just drop my card everywhere with instructions to call if they're selling." The couple purchased their antique dining table and chairs this way for only \$500.
- **DRESS IN LAYERS** "Vintage books and lighting add the most depth to a room," says Jennifer, even if everything else is new. Use retro lamps and stacks of interesting old books, such as paperback westerns or children's classics, to give a too-perfect room some personality.
- **NURSERY NAME GAME** Instead of relentless bunny or puppy pics, choose some baby-room art with adult appeal. Jennifer framed magazine covers of Grace Kelly holding Princess Caroline and Jackie O with son John Jr. □



was one of Jennifer's only concessions to baby-proofing. "Dog hair, wipe it off. Sienna spills, clean it up. I can't be freaking out about these kinds of things." It didn't hurt that she scored the three-seater, an original France & Son, on Craigslist for a mere \$1,500.

Surprisingly, all six of the couple's previous homes were outfitted entirely in whites and greys. "This is my first home with bright colours ever," says Jennifer.



**OUTER SPACES** The house has a glorious backyard, where Jennifer and Trevor can entertain, and Sienna (right) can play. The fully outfitted porch illustrates Jennifer's inimitable style.

"And my first character home. A traditional home in muted neutrals would look too old. It's not interesting when the style is an exact match to the house."

Colour does seem to shriek with joyous abandon from every part of the house. "Ta da!" shouts the pumpkin-orange lamp in the hall, squatting atop a grey side table. "Surprise!" screams Sienna's circus-green ceiling, just a few steps along from the practical all-white bathroom. And perhaps most shocking of all: three traffic-stopping photos in the living room taunting, "Dare you." It does require some nerve to take Fred Herzog photos of '70s Vancouver and Photoshop them *neon*. It's inappropriate ... isn't it?

But then again, how fun is that? And how is it that Jennifer can get away with neon-izing famous art prints and salvaging lighting from nightclubs, while the total effect is not tacky, but charming, comfortable – even grown-up?

"Say you walk into someone's house," explains Trevor, "and it's totally decorated in Elvis stuff." Mmm hmm. "But if they *love* Elvis," Trevor continues, "then that's awesome. It's not out of *House & Home* [magazine] with no personal connection. So you can appreciate that.

"Particularly here, because we know we're going to be here for a while, Jenn's buying things that really mean something to her. She's saying, 'This isn't just trendy cool, this is what I like.' So when I see how much of her is in every piece in this house, I say, 'Baby, it looks awesome.'"

"That's not your first sentence," says Jennifer.

"No," Trevor retorts. "My first sentence is 'Where the hell's my couch?' But I get over that." ■

See SOURCES on page 122 STYLING Heather Cameron

