

HOUSE & HOME OF THE MONTH

Balancing Act



CLASSIC SYMMETRY AND SOFT HUES GIVE THIS SUMMER HOME A GRAND NEW LOOK.

Text by BETH HITCHCOCK | Photography by MONIC RICHARD



Above the fireplace, a Johanne Martel painting becomes a focal point, bringing together the home's cream, black and pale blue palette. Designer Daniel Brisset chose furniture upholstered in pale grey linen to keep the room feeling relaxed, yet polished enough for entertaining, which homeowners Robert and Kiki Legault do

frequently. **Design**, Daniel Brisset; **Designer**, rug, The Red Carpet & Rug Company; **coffee table**, Geladan. **OPPOSITE**: A console stained off-black seems to float on the living room's pale floors. A bench tucked underneath offers extra seating, and its trendy suzani print adds edge to the traditional room. **Console**, Style de Vie Veranda.



Few homeowners contemplating a new-build could sum up their vision in 10 words or less. Yet that's exactly what Robert and Christiane Legault (known as "Kiki" to friends) did five years ago, when they asked interior designer Daniel Brisset to reinvent their summer house near Magog, Que. "A small house with a big attitude," says Kiki with a laugh. "That's what we told Daniel we wanted."

As the French are fond of saying, *Et voilà!* — there you go. It sounds simple enough, but for Brisset, a Montreal designer known for timeless and traditional spaces, the challenge was to bring a restrained elegance to the Legaults' design brief. He also had to resituate the new house on its lot in an exclusive golf community. The footprint of the one-storey home that previously sat on the lot ran along the width of the property, parallel to the street. "Many houses are built this way, and I don't quite understand it," says Brisset. "Even with a wide lot, you end up with no backyard." He proposed moving the new building's foundation to the side of the lot so it ran along the length instead. Now, the Legaults can enter a covered terrace from any room in the house to enjoy views of their garden and new pool rather than the street. It's a layout that lends itself to their summer-house lifestyle. "We feel like we're in Provence," says Kiki. "We open the doors every morning to swim laps, and they stay open all day long. When friends or family come for dinner, we eat outside until midnight with candles and music playing. It's magical."

In keeping with the Legaults' wishes, the just-over-3,000-square-foot house feels airy and spacious thanks to ceilings that soar up to 16 feet in the kitchen, light-coloured walls and floors, and an orientation that allows for sight lines from one end of the house to the other. "There's no corridor in this house," explains Brisset. "It all flows from one room to the next."

As for "big attitude," Brisset made his statements with arched and oval windows, chunky millwork and wide-plank floors, an element the pair had admired in Brisset's own country house (featured in *H&H*, April 2010). His idea for the palette came from the outdoors, which is skillfully framed by every window and french door. In the kitchen, he even went as far as to paint the ceiling pale blue. "This isn't quite a sky-blue colour, but you understand the reference," says Brisset.

Apart from the soothing palette, Brisset brought calm to the interior with a studied emphasis on symmetry, something he believes is the cornerstone of good design. Every sconce and lamp has a mate, and every piece of furniture is offset by another of equal scale. Even decorative accessories, like topiaries, come in pairs. "This, for me, is key. I could talk about it for hours!" Brisset says. "Symmetry has to be there, even in contemporary styles. Why would you ever design one big window on one side and a small one on the other?"

When Robert and Kiki walk in the door after being away, it may not be the symmetry they admire, but that's the beauty of design: when it works, it's innate and almost invisible. It simply feels right. "Every time we open the door, we stop and say to one another, 'Wow. How beautiful it is.' Every time!" says Kiki. "It's our little *bijoux*." **H&H**

OPPOSITE: The pale blue upholstery on the Louis XVI-style dining chairs injects subtle tone-on-tone dimension into the neutral room. The curvy wrought-iron chandelier provides embellishment, while a pair of lamps at either end of the sideboard creates a classical arrangement in front of the

window. *Sideboard, lamps, chandelier, Style de Vie Veranda.* RIGHT: A mirror hung on the side of the pool shed mimics the main house's charming circular windows. Cast-iron urns help frame the vista and carry the symmetrical touches found indoors out to the garden.



Robert and Kiki Legault on the terrace of their Magog, Que., summer home.



Kitchen Confidential

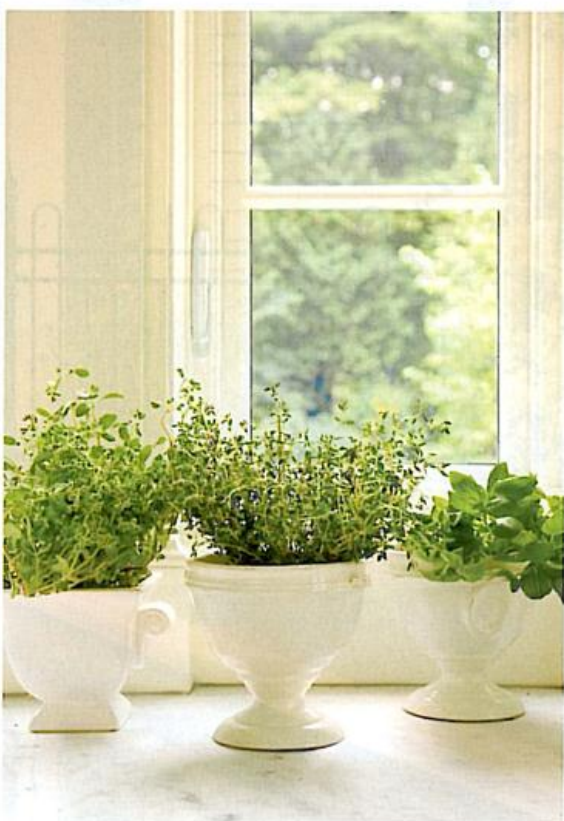
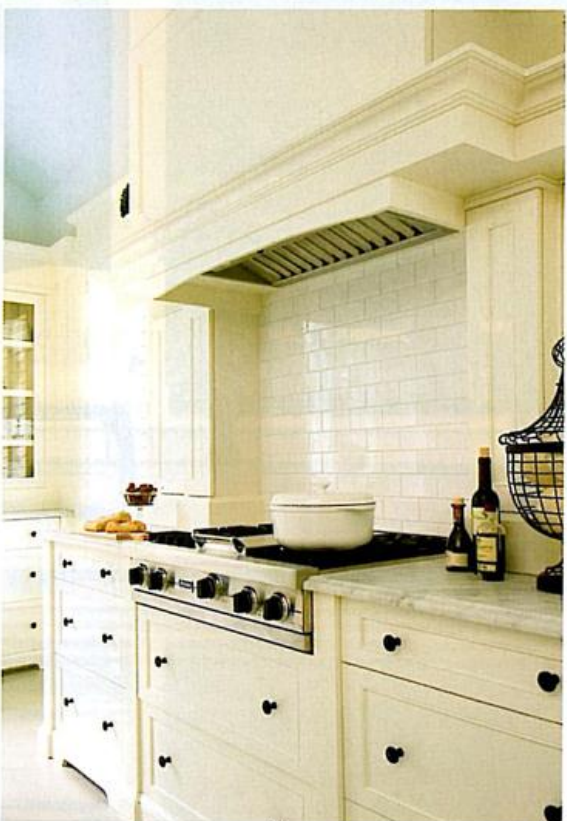
THE LOOK: Timeless elegance with a feminine spin. The design eschews trends in favour of symmetry and classic silhouettes. A 16'-high ceiling painted pale blue emphasizes the architectural grandeur.

THE LAYOUT: A U shape with central island. Footed cabinets with a furniture feel flank an arched window above the sink, while a large island offers prep surface. A separate pantry (not shown) houses small appliances and food.

THE EXTRAS: The range hood is concealed behind a panelled stack and substantial mouldings. A mix of open and closed storage ups both the practicality and the wow factor.

THE MATERIALS: A mix of painted wood and Carrara marble countertops, painted wide-plank pine floors, wrought-iron light fixtures, subway tile, oil-rubbed bronze hardware.





TOP LEFT: The kitchen's layered millwork is what makes it special. "The mouldings throughout the house are spectacular," says Kiki. Placing the sink in front of a tall, arched window takes advantage of the garden view, while tailored sconces from Celadon speak again to Brisset's love of symmetry.

TOP RIGHT: A huge, ornate off-black lantern from Style de Vie Veranda highlights the kitchen's 16'-high ceilings. The light fixture, mullioned windows and glass-front cabinets come together to create what Kiki calls, "A European look with a bit of country elegance." *Ceiling colour, Windy Sky (1639), Benjamin Moore.*

BOTTOM LEFT: The recessed niche behind the cooktop is covered in subway tile.

Combined with the fan's panelled stack, the area resembles a stately fireplace. The rectangular pillars on either side of the cooktop have touch-latch doors that conceal storage for spices and cooking oils. Brisset chose simple oil-rubbed bronze knobs to draw attention to the detailing of the cabinets.

BOTTOM RIGHT: With all the room's natural light, herbs thrive on the counter and emphasize the home's indoor-outdoor feel.

OPPOSITE: Brisset continued to mix casual and chic with the kitchen countertops: while the island's counter is painted wood, the counters on the perimeter are Carrara marble. With no sink and no cooktop in the island, it functions as a perfect breakfast bar.





The home's symmetrical architecture is evident in this view of the exterior, from the pool and garden. French doors from every room open to the covered portico, where the Legaults frequently entertain. **Contractor,** Denis Legault Construction.

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ABOVE: Dramatic double doors open into the stunning ensuite bath, where an oval bathtub with paneled sides awaits in a window bay, surrounded by nature. Brisset kept the bathroom simple to highlight the views and natural light. TOP RIGHT: Robin's-egg blue wallpaper from Schumacher takes the powder room from basic to beautiful, and reinforces the home's overall cream and blue scheme. Applied panel moulding and an antique mirror add extra architectural interest.

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OPPOSITE: The principal bedroom's taupe walls and ivory linens make it feel luxe but not lavish. A tall lamp from Style de Vie Veranda echoes the scale of the custom-upholstered headboard and introduces a note of drama that's picked up by the black caned-back chair. Ceiling-height silk drapes from Crescendo emphasize the french doors that lead to the covered terrace. **Bedding, linens, Toile Sur Rendez-Vous; chair, side table, Style de Vie Veranda.**