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THE BRILLIANT, BEAUTIFUL AND ULTRA-USEFUL DESIGN WORLD OF KARIM RASHID

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AN ARTIST'S ASTOUNDING ABODE
Tour Lori Morris's dynamic and dazzling new home

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Autumn Issue

AN ARTIST'S STOUNDING BODE

Living Luxe can't get enough of the ultra-lively, inimitable design icon Lori Morris, so we were absolutely elated and honoured to tour her new home. Spoiler: It's as magnificent, dynamic, sophisticated and exceptionally dazzling as she is.

By Lisa van de Geyn
Photography by Brandon Barré





Lori Morris is as dynamic and vivacious as ever. She's coming off a simply splendid summer — feting her birthday with those near and dear, travelling to marvellous locales, savouring live music (it's food for her soul) and working on utterly exquisite estates most of us can only dream about. The master artist and iconic designer is the epitome of verve and exuberance — they're qualities she brings with her to every project she completes for her eponymous firm (one of the most coveted design houses in Canada and certainly throughout the world), along with a bold sophistication and experience that emanate versatility and panache. With an unmatched gift, a certain genius for couture design and a striking effervescence, Morris is opulence and glamour personified; she has perfected the art of infusing lush extravagance and idyllic functionality into her clients' homes — no matter their style, preferred genre, favourite colours or budget.

So, when it came time for the artist to design her own space — a nearly 10,000-square-foot abode in the delightfully charming small town where she grew up — she was excited to bring her rich elegance and flawless, sexy style to her home. “I lived in Dundas, Ont., my whole life and moved to Toronto for university, then came back 40 years later and I absolutely love it. I feel like I'm living in a Hallmark movie. It's very romantic and very picturesque in its beautiful rolling hills and waterfalls, trees and the escarpment. It's complete tranquility, which is why I love it so much here,” she says fervently.

Creating her space has been an energizing experience for the luminous designer. While clients have been known to bestow Morris with carte blanche when it comes to designing their homes, she revelled in creating this space for herself. “One of the privileges of being an artist is I'm able to see the house in its finished state before I even start, and that's the biggest gift I was given in the industry I've been in for more than 35 years,” she says. “The thing about doing your own house as a designer is you've got a completely blank slate and the restrictions that are often put on you as part of a client relationship are non-existent. When designing for yourself, you get to do whatever you want, and that's a joy.” Morris conceptualized the design of her home by recalling ideas and pieces she's loved from past work. “It was a very simple decision for me to bring in everything I've loved in every house I've designed in my career. Whether it was a ceiling style or floor inspiration, or something I loved about the cabinetry or certain textures or colours, I've had the immense privilege of doing this for a long time and when I leave a project, there's always a particular detail that I love. I think to myself, when I do my house, I'm going to do that. That's how I started deciding what I wanted to do here.”

The residence is an unparalleled work of art. It's everything Morris (and the House of LMD) embodies — it's perfectly chic, charmingly bold and



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beautifully full of character. “The palette, style and genre can all be described as ‘Sexy French,’ which I created as our signature brand. It’s something I love because it combines two genres — one being modern design, which I adore, and the other French design, which I also love,” she says. When it comes to her colour palette, a variety of stunning shades of blue reigns supreme, and there’s a definite feeling of jollity, fun and comfort throughout the home. “You have to create based on how you want your home to feel. For me, it’s always about the overall elegance. I love an elegant feel and inject full personality and colour and interest, which is a signature for me.” Morris also gravitates toward what she calls the “texture party” — she excels in mixing metals, sheens of paint, fabrics, wallcoverings and furniture. “Having a blank slate for myself was very exciting, and it was very easy for me to put together the things I love and wave a little magic wand.”

Magical is an undeniably suitable adjective for the spectacular home she created. Her office is a marvel, with its custom blue wallpaper with an iridescent Chinoiserie pattern. “When you’re a creative person, it’s important to work in an atmosphere that’s inspiring. I feel grateful to work in a blue-and-white Wedgwood jewellery box of architecture and design details. It’s a party of beautiful textures and fabrics and materials,” she says. “It’s the most inspiring space I’ve ever worked in. There are windows on both sides, and I can see the seasons in terms of the foliage and the winter wonderland and the beautiful sun coming in and dancing on the chandeliers.” Every inch of the room is perfectly meticulous, including the obviously pretty ceiling, which Morris did in lattice detail. Even the piece that holds her samples is exquisite, with its glass French doors. “Combined with an antique mirror, brass, high-gloss cabinetry and finished with Wedgwood detailing, it’s dazzling.”

The segue to the office exudes playfulness. The dark-blue piano lounge was once the living room, but Morris repurposed it to be a sexy space full of textures, including the beguiling blue crocodile wallpaper and the Murano blue glass light fixture. “Juxtaposition is at play here, ▶





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too,” she says. “I found a beautiful century-old Dutch floor that I wanted to replicate, so we reproduced this Old-World rustic floor to give off a casual feel throughout the house. This allows you to include more formality around it, so there’s a juxtaposition of finishes. That’s what creates interest and allows the somewhat formal areas to be more informal.”

Stroll through what she affectionately calls the “football-watching room,” and you’ll discover exceptionally ornate details in the archway from this room to the kitchen. A wall of animal prints — which are neutrals for Morris (“I know it’s very hard for other people to see, but in my brain, they’re neutral”) — done in flocked velvet leopard wallpaper surround the black archway and make way for a sneak peek of the black-and-white Wedgwood ceiling in the kitchen. “This is deco-inspired, which is another genre I love,” she says. In the kitchen, the cabinetry is black lacquered with brass details. There’s white Calacatta marble on the countertops, a black Lacanche stove and custom-designed art deco cabinetry. The blue-and-white Wedgwood ceiling is a callback from the office and balances the colour palette of the black and gold. “The beautiful bird motif with the pinks and soft greens and browns and blues on the barstools brings interest to the space and softens it. It counterbalances the hardness of the black and offers whimsy and romance, which I love to add in every room.”

Even the hallway from the kitchen is an absolute masterclass in high-end design, with the 20-foot long-haired cream-coloured bench as the star. “There’s also a bar there with wine and drink fridges. It’s a stopping point between spaces, with the opportunity for a textured pillow party. Drinks, tables and antique mirrors surround.” For Morris, it’s always about LMD’s signature style of designing in layers, and that’s what she’s done in this space, and throughout the entire estate. She’s ensured her home is elegant, timeless, creative, playful, whimsical and sublime. Always radiating a graceful aura and luxe sensibilities, it’s no surprise the final product is flawless, dreamy and blissful, like the artist herself. ❶