



nationalpost.com

NATIONAL POST
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 19, 2023Find your home
at nationalpost.com/homes

“I’m a texture girl. For me it’s velvet, bouclé and fur. The gushier they feel in my fingers the happier I am.”

- DESIGNER
LORI MORRIS

Chinoiserie wallpaper and a lattice ceiling detail bring drama to Lori Morris's blue-and-cream home office.

Designer's home office is a 'texture party'

Furs, wools, velvet and a resistance to trends make Lori Morris's workspace a study in risk-taking

IREK BENAROGA

Many people go to the office begrudgingly. But not Lori Morris. The founder of Lori Morris Design has constructed a glamorous and gutsy home office in Dundas, Ont. — she has another in Toronto's Annex — that not only thrills but bucks design trends.

Wonderfully absent is the viral Californian trend of pale oak and plants. Also missing? Scandinavian anything. And there isn't a single stick of cane furniture or a Herman Miller chair in sight. Instead Morris has layered her lair in Wedgewood blue and cream from top to bottom.

"It's a perfect jewel box full of personality with porthole windows that feels like a conservatory," she says.

The office is in a new, ground-floor wing of Morris's 4,500-square-foot stone country house. Birds on branches — festooning the room's pearlized powder-blue chinoiserie wallpaper — engulf the showpiece space that's nestled in nature. Other stimulating features of the heavily windowed office include gold doors and double-height oval mirrored cabinet that's so gargantuan and whimsical — it's accessed by a ladder — that it looks like something from a Lewis Carroll story. Morris stows her fabric samples inside it.

Then there's the furry-sided office chair that speaks to the designer's affection for touchy-feely surfaces.

"I'm a texture girl," she says. "For me it's velvet, bouclé and



Morris designed this glossy desk that features gold rails and an ornate decorative detail.

fur. The gushier they feel in my fingers the happier I am."

That explains the "texture party," as she describes the mix of furs, metals, wools and velvet used throughout the office, from patterned pillows to the wool and velvet sofas, settees and chairs.

Shiny blue with glossy brass rails, even the desk isn't average. Hand-carved appliques give it regal attitude.

"I've always been a desk

girl, which is why I built this office," says Morris. "When COVID started, you incorporated your dining room or kitchen table or some other space to be your quasi make-shift office, which was my case as well."

But that set-up didn't cut up, so two years ago Morris did a large-scale renovation to the home.

She built two additions on either end of the house. "One

encompasses my office and the other the family room, gym, kitchen and entertaining space," she says of the black-and-board-clad wings. "I also wrapped the whole house in outdoor decks and terraces." All of which connects to a cascading landscaped area in the back where flowers and trees lead to a large pool and cabana.

The original stone of the house is 100 years old. The goal, says Morris, "was for the new parts to feel like they've always been there." A glimpse of the stone, once the outside of the house and part of the fireplace, is seen in the office itself. Naturally, Morris couldn't leave it as is. For old-new juxtaposition, and because she liked the masculine energy in the feminine space, she put up a painting by Yannick Fournie of a man looking at his phone.

Morris acknowledges her tastes are singular. "I am not the mainstream norm," and calls her firm "the antithesis of so much design."

But those who know, know. Over the 30 years she's been in business, she's done projects for well-heeled clients variously located in Muskoka, New York City and Florida.

For Morris, getting out of the city has been a tonic. "My hometown is where my heart is," she says of Dundas. "I always knew I'd move back."

Of course, it helps that her office is a one-of-a-kind power pad. "When you're in this space it's so moving," she says. "It's so creative and inspiring that I can't possibly not have a smile on my face. Being here makes me truly happy."

INSIDE

Condos

Four towers bring excitement to Etobicoke skyline

Page HP2

Holmes

Best ways to keep your home cool in the summertime

Page HP5