

TEXT
BETHANY LYTTLE

PHOTOGRAPHY
DONNA GRIFFITH

NIGHT & DAY

No, he's not a superhero. But what designer and blogger Tim Lam does when he's not working at his day job makes him seem like one.

BELOW & RIGHT Gold and grey combine beautifully in the airy living room. Designer Tim Lam purposefully chose bigger pieces in solid colours so he could play with pattern in the accessories.

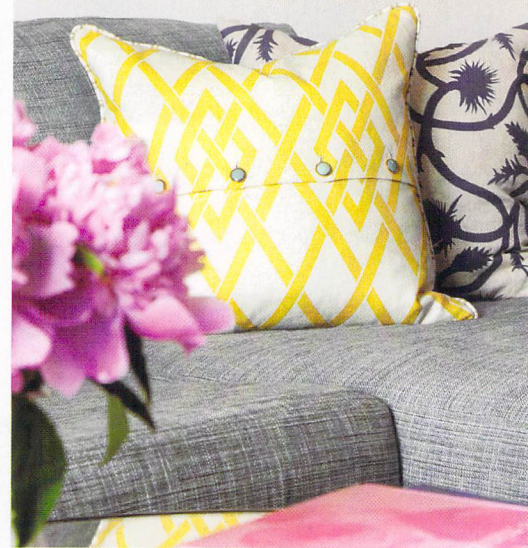
Custom **DRAPERY**, custom yellow lattice **TOSS CUSHION**, Tonic Living; purple thistle **TOSS CUSHION**, HomeSense; custom zebra-print **LUMBAR CUSHION**, Wesley Seto Design.

BOTTOM LEFT Tim and homeowner Christine Dang met in Grade 9. "I had a hunch that he was a creative genius," says Christine. "He's always been so passionate."

BOTTOM RIGHT The armchair in a corner of the living room is Christine's favourite piece. Tim rescued it from a junk pile

and revived it. "Even though it had to be reupholstered, it was still cheaper than buying a brand new chair," he says. Tim cleverly disguised the mechanical panel behind the armchair with DIY artwork that he made by stretching fabric over a wooden frame.

FLOOR LAMP, Jonathan Adler; **TOSS CUSHION**, HomeSense.




During the day, Tim Lam is a chartered accountant. By night, he transforms into the designer and blogger behind Design Maze. His mission? To save people from dull bedrooms and boring living rooms. But long before Tim began this dual career, homeowner Christine Dang knew all about his talent. "We went to high school together," she says. "In art class, everyone was always crowding around Tim's work." So when Christine moved into her yawningly generic rental unit in Markham, Ont., the first thing she did was call on him.

Christine presented Tim with a real challenge: a 650-square-foot suite with zero character. And since it was a rental, the makeover couldn't include fresh paint, wallpaper or any major renovations. On top of all that, she had a tight budget.

"She wanted a home that would reflect her personality," says Tim. "To me, that meant pretty, but not too girly." So Tim selected streamlined furnishings and a chic grey, gold and lavender colour scheme while dodging rental rules and restrictions with real ingenuity. "For starters, I stretched leaf-print fabric over a wooden frame to create some visual interest in the living room as well as cover an unsightly panel. It weighed nearly nothing, which meant





Streamlined furnishings, such as the sleek sectional and round coffee table, don't crowd the small living room. The rug was selected for its lavender colour, and the artwork was matted in grey to bring depth to the walls.

DESIGN, Design Maze, designmaze-tim.blogspot.ca;
SECTIONAL, IKEA; **COFFEE TABLE**, RUG, TRAY, West Elm; **SIDE TABLE**, TOSS CUSHIONS, HomeSense; **ARTWORK**, Carococo.

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RIGHT, TOP To save space in the master bedroom, Tim selected a bed with storage underneath. He created the desk/vanity using two dressers and a piece of painted plywood.

HEADBOARD, SIDE TABLE, HomeSense; **DRESSERS, IKEA;** **DRAPERY CUSTOMIZATION,** Fine Interiors by Susan.

FAR RIGHT There is beautiful natural light in the master bedroom, so Tim made the most of it by placing Christine’s workspace against the large windows. A clear Ghost-style chair provides seating without dominating the room.

TABLE LAMP, HomeSense; **white TRAY,** SS Print Shop **ARTWORK,** Indigo.



4 RENTAL-FRIENDLY DECOR IDEAS

DESIGNER TIM LAM SHARES A FEW OF THE TRICKS HE USED IN THIS RENTAL CONDO.



DRAPERY

Customized fabric shower curtains are a stylish and affordable alternative to made-to-order drapes.



DESK/VANITY

A custom-built workspace made from two dressers and a piece of plywood was designed to fit the space.



FABRIC ACCENTS

Tim stretched patterned fabric over a wooden frame to hide an unsightly mechanical panel.



WALLPAPER

Foam board was covered in designer wallpaper to create a temporary accent wall.



we could hang it up with sticky hooks." To combat the boring builder beige paint in the den, he crafted an entire wall of foam board covered with geometric hexagon wallpaper. "When Christine moves, she can just pull down the accent wall," he says.

And keeping costs low was no problem for this master of resourcefulness. In an act of brilliance, Tim made bedroom drapes from inexpensive shower curtains. "They only cost \$40, and they look amazing," he says. It was the desk/vanity that most impressed Christine. "He got two as-is dressers from IKEA, then attached a piece of painted plywood to the top," she says. "I can do my makeup there in the morning and use it for my laptop at night – it's perfect." Christine says it's her favourite piece in the house: "It reflects my taste, but it also attests to Tim's creativity." If that's not proof that there's no job too big for this design hero, we don't know what is.

ABOVE The den's gold and charcoal accent wall is actually several pieces of foam board covered with wallpaper. "It's easily removed," says Tim. The pattern on the inside of the bookcases takes the daring look even further. "I love mixing prints," he says.

COLE & SON HICKS HEXAGON WALLPAPER, Lee Jofa; **SCONCE**, Jonathan Adler; **ARTWORK**, HomeSense.

RIGHT "I was hesitant about placing the table at this angle," says Christine of the den's arrangement. "Now, I love it." The striped rug makes the room feel wider than it actually is.

SIDECHAIRS, Sarah Richardson Design; **RUG**, DwellStudio; white **VASE**, Indigo.



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