

Canada's HOME IDEA BOOK

RENO+DECOR

- HOME FINDS • THE BENEFITS OF CUSTOM CABINETS •
- EXTREME HOME MAKEOVER • COMPACT KITCHENS •

The
Kitchen
edition

Island, countertops and
 backsplash: **Laminam**
Fokos Talco

FEB./MARCH 2025 \$6.95



2025
TRENDS
 IN HOME DESIGN
 AND DECOR

Elevate your builders' basic house to a place that feels like home

Level up

by JESSICA CINNAMON
photos STEPHANI BUCHMAN



A newly built home sometimes resembles a blank canvas: Plain walls, basic flooring and standard fixtures. While these basics provide a solid foundation, personalizing and upgrading your space can take it from a generic homebuilders' basic structure to something that feels more like "home." Here are some key areas to focus on to transform a homebuilders' basic interior into a reflection of you, and where to invest your money to get the biggest impact.

Dress up the walls

Walls are the backdrop to every room and upgrading the paint and wallpaper can dramatically change the ambience of the space. Opt for premium paints that offer richer pigments and better coverage. Choose colours that reflect your personality and set the desired mood for each room. Accent walls in bold shades or serene hues can create focal points and add depth. The wallpaper creates a more luxurious look. Modern wallpapers come in a variety of textures and patterns, from subtle linen to bold geometric designs. Feature walls in a living room or bedrooms can make a striking statement.



Add moulding and trim

Details such as crown moulding and baseboards add elegance and a finished look to a room. There are a variety of simple ceiling details available that can be painted to match or contrast the wall colour, for added visual interest. Installing wainscoting or beadboard in your dining room, hallways or bathrooms can add timeless charm and unique architectural detail.

Flooring makeover

The type of flooring in your home sets the stage for style and comfort. Consider upgrading to hardwood. While it's a bigger investment, hardwood flooring is durable and timeless, and can significantly increase the value of your home. Choose a finish that complements your decor style, from classic oak to darker stains. Luxury vinyl plank is a cost-effective yet stylish alternative to hardwood, offering the look of wood with enhanced durability and easier maintenance. It's especially great for high-traffic areas, a basement or homes with pets and children.

If you're looking for an even more economical, non-committal way

to personalize your space, consider using area rugs. These can be used to define functional areas within an open space to add warmth and to introduce colour and texture.

Light fixtures and hardware

Often overlooked, these are the jewellery of the home and can transform basic materials into something spectacular. Replace generic light fixtures with statement pieces in the dining area, the kitchen and the entryway. Statement chandeliers and pendants can serve as focal points and elevate the entire room's aesthetic. Combine ambient, task and accent lighting to create a versatile and inviting atmosphere. Use dimmers to adjust the mood according to the occasion.

Similarly, swap out generic cabinet knobs and handles for stylish alternatives to make a significant visual impact. Choose finishes that complement your decor, such as brushed nickel, matte black or antique brass. Upgrading door handles and faucets in the kitchen and bathrooms can add a touch of luxury and coherence to your design.



Jessica Cinnamon is the principal designer and founder of Toronto-based Jessica Cinnamon Design Inc., a multi-disciplinary design company that creates stylish and well-curated interiors, and provides complete bespoke residential design services in Toronto, the GTA, cottage country, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Kitchen and bathroom enhancements

These are critical areas where thoughtful upgrades can provide aesthetic, functional and financial benefits. Countertops are a focus, with high-end materials such as quartz or granite offering durability. Or opt for a natural marble for a luxurious look. These surfaces are beautiful and practical for a busy kitchen. Similarly, backsplashes are an instant attention-grabber, so ensure it's for all the right reasons. A relatively minor investment can have a big payoff.

In bathrooms, update the fixtures and fittings. Replacing standard faucets and showerheads with designer options can enhance the look and functionality of these spaces. Look for modern, water-efficient models.

A balancing act

Transforming your home's builder-basic materials involves a balance of strategic investments and creative enhancements. By focusing on a few key areas in the home's principal areas, you can create a space that reflects your personality, meets your needs now, and can be a great selling feature down the road.