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•TORONTO•

THE ONE TO WATCH GILLIAN GILLIES

SIPPING LAVENDER TEA from a spun brass teapot in an oatmeal-hued room, it's easy to feel at ease in the home of Gillian Gillies. And that's no accident: the designer is known for creating cosy spaces that make clients want to cocoon. "People are intimately affected by their environments," she says in her lilting Scottish burr. "That's why I love working on vacation homes; it's where people really are themselves. I want to create spaces that make people feel cared for."

Gillian left her native Edinburgh to take a job with a design firm in Glasgow in the late '90s. She spent five years reviving the beauty of the city's "grand old ladies": architectural gems drowning in layers of paint. Then, in 2002, while vacationing in St. Lucia, she fell in love with a Canadian and relocated to Toronto, launching her design practice in 2004.

The designer has an ongoing love affair with Scottish wool blankets and throws (but definitely not the tartan-on-the-shortbread-tin variety). Her signature design flourishes also include linens and silk, tailored furnishings and textural accents like baskets. The colours she favours are historical, slightly muddled tones that act as a foil for the harsh, cold light typical in northern climes.

"In Toronto, we're cooped up indoors more than we'd like to admit," she says. "That's why it's important to surround yourself with breathable, textural fabrics and zero-VOC paints that don't affect the air quality." Gillian's interiors are a soothing sanctuary, buffering lake breezes or even a highland gust.

"I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN EVERYTHING PERFECTLY MATCHES. I LIKE SPACES TO LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN BUILT UP OVER TIME, EVEN IF EVERYTHING IS BOUGHT AT ONCE"

Photography by Virginia Macdonald



LEFT: This cottage in Ontario's Kawarthas region features a palette inspired by nearby Stoney Lake. In the open-concept main floor, an aqua blue sectional sits beneath Heather Allen Hietala's clay and steel installations. Custom **sofa**, **armchair**, Whittington & Co.; **sofa fabric**, Bilbrough & Co.; **chair fabric**, Robert Allen; **installations**, Oeno Gallery; **coffee table**, Arteriors. **BELOW:** Gillian layered the dining room with her trademark textural accents and a lushly beaded mirror to amp up the warm, tactile effect. **Table**, Crate & Barrel; **chairs**, Cocoon Furnishings; **pendant**, Currey & Company; **mirror**, Palecek.



ABOVE: In this guest room, a tufted headboard, shag rug and chunky knit throw are cosy counterpoints to the blue walls. "I'm a huge lover of blankets and throws; I have them in every room of my clients' homes." **Linens**, Eastern Accents; **throw**, West Elm.

