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**KATIE  
LOWES**

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Full  
Makeover  
Issue!



# Before & After: A Gentleman's Parlor

By **Irene Edwards** on October 24, 2014

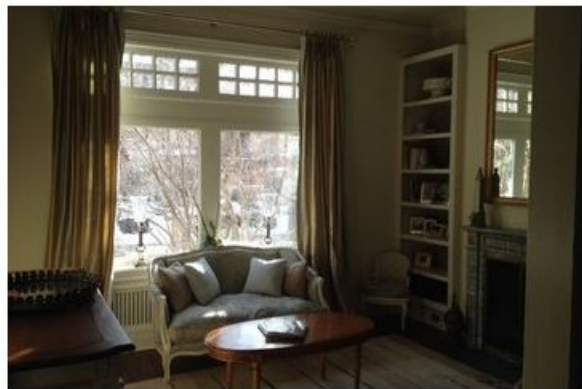
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(A living room makeover by McGill Design Group. Photographs by Virginia MacDonald)

All he wanted was a comfortable, quiet space in which he could kick back and watch football. But with a (fourth!) baby girl on the way, who had time? Such was the design dilemma facing this young family when they collaborated with Colleen McGill of Toronto's **McGill Design Group** on the revamp of a formal, rarely used living room at the front of their home.





"The existing bookshelves weren't great," recalls McGill of the original interior (see the Before photo at left). "The mantel was lovely but had a strong personality. The color scheme and room style needed to work well with it." Despite her predilection for light, airy spaces, the designer was drawn to a deep, moody palette of saturated blues with brass accents, which made the room feel clubby

and timeless yet strikingly contemporary. A blue gray suede wallpaper provided the luxe backdrop, with the handsomely structured **Tuxedo Sofa** (from Plum Furniture, the designer's own line) taking center stage. "It's just the right length for a tall man to lie down on and watch a game, and it's extremely comfortable, with its generous depth and down-filled pillows," says McGill. Bookshelves, ceiling, and trim were painted in the same hue, which unified the look.



An antique credenza (visible above) serves as an anchor on one side of the room and provides a spot for a well stocked bar. "Perhaps this speaks to my upbringing, but every house should try to have a special bar area and at least one darker, more masculine space," McGill says. The oversize mirror above the credenza and the large wool and silk rug add a feeling of expansiveness to the relatively small space. "Make sure to size the carpet to the room; having it sit no more than 12 inches off the walls will make the room feel bigger," the designer explains. And as for the "big, manly TV"? It's not pictured in these photos, but it's certainly in the mix discreetly positioned with no visible wires. Game on.



#### TIPS FROM THIS MAKEOVER

**1. Smaller spaces look great in dark hues.** "A saturation of color creates drama," says designer Colleen McGill (pictured below).

**2. Add vertical elements to make a space seem taller.** "I often hang drapery high for a feeling of grandeur and openness."

**3. Play up a home's architectural features.** "In the case of this particular space, the existing marble fireplace mantel with gold accents was ideal."

**4. Don't be afraid to go large.** "Counterintuitively, bigger pieces of furniture can actually make a room feel bigger," says McGill.

