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HOUSE & HOME

THE MAGAZINE OF HOME & STYLE

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DESIGNER PROFILE:
WHITE HOUSE DECORATOR
MICHAEL S. SMITH

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THE INSPIRATION

Warm wood, a colourful striped runner and walls filled with framed artwork make an inviting first impression in this home's front entry.



Philip Mitchell

The Toronto designer answers your decorating questions.

Q I'd like to redecorate my staircase, including the upper landing and outdoor porch (visible through glass doors at the top of the stairs). Any ideas on how I can update them? — **C.B.**, via email

A I love how much potential your staircase has. It doesn't need a major overhaul, just a few updates to brighten it up and make it more inviting.

Hardwood flooring and treads bring a sense of refinement to a staircase. If you have hardwood under your current carpeting, pull up the rug and refinish the wood and treads beneath. If you don't, make an investment and have them installed. A medium-brown oak finish will bring real warmth to the space.

The generous width of the staircase will allow you to add a runner and still see a nice amount of hardwood on either side. Take a cue from the Inspiration image and choose an eye-catching runner, then add stair rods for an extra hit of detail and character.

Your current wall colour works well, but the handrails stand out too much. Here's an

easy fix: Paint the handrails the same colour as your walls, and they'll blend in seamlessly.

Staircases are great spaces to display a collection of artwork or family photos. A gallery like the one shown will have a big impact. Choose a variety of frame sizes, matting styles and finishes that relate to one another, and hang the pieces along both walls.

You don't have enough headroom for a hanging light fixture like the one in the Inspiration image, but a pair of decorative flush-mounts will add just as much flair. Install one above your entrance landing and another one on your second-floor landing.

Lastly, set a pair of handsome rattan lounge chairs on the balcony to carry the sight line up the stairs and outside, and frame the view with reverse pinch-pleat drapes that skim the floor in a fun print that complements the runner.

1. *Rafters dining chair*, Hauser. 2. *Larkin Stripe wool stair runner* in Blue-Sand, Elite. 3. *Stair runner hardware*, Lee Valley. 4. *Morris flush-mount light* in Antique Zinc by Suzanne Kasler, Visual Comfort. 5. *Ambiance Collection red oak flooring* in Velvet Brown, Lauzon. 6. *Iznik Oasis linen* in Santorini by Diane von Furstenberg, Kravet.



BEFORE



BEFORE