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OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: In the bathroom, antique leaded paned mahogany doors were retrofitted for the built-ins. The vanity, which has an Empire look, was fashioned out of a mahogany chest. Vintage etchings showing classical Greek scenes were hung around the room. Antique doors, The Door Store.

BOTTOM: At first glance, the objects on the painted Biedermeier bench in the principal bedroom seem just for show, but the casual tableau — of books, orange Hermès boxes and vintage cases — evolves frequently, depending on what Sharon is reading or has acquired. Orchids, Horticultural Design.

RENEW WITH WHITE

"I get close to, and comfortable with, my possessions and when I love, I love forever," says Sharon. Her vow is exemplified in the principal bedroom, where paint and textiles helped her breathe new life into old favourites. Bought at auction 20 years ago, the chair, for instance, was spruced up with dark stain and a faux-leopard print. Likewise, the lamps, originally mahogany, came alive when painted a luminous white. The Biedermeier bench was also treated to a coat of ivory, while Sharon's cherished faux-bamboo bed got a lift from smart white bedding and a green coverlet. "White lasts forever. I have duvets that are over 20 years old that I've stitched up and reused," she says. "Plus, white always makes you feel as though you're in a hotel, and I love that." Wall colour, Strong White (2001), Farrow & Ball; orchid etchings by Fitch; bedding, Au Lit Fine Linens.

SEE SOURCE GUIDE

SHARON'S RENO ADVICE

FOCUS ON ONE AREA AT A TIME Renovations can be overwhelming, so try to envision the outcome of a small section rather than the finished project. This will help you feel better about the fact that your home is in disarray.

REPEAT ELEMENTS Consistent details, such as the brass pulls and mahogany doors and furniture Sharon uses, lend a cohesive look to a home. "It makes you feel comfortable going from room to room, not suddenly jolted by a totally different look," she says.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER Go on a purging mission before your reno. Stow the stuff you must keep out of view in a cupboard, so you can imagine what your new space will look like unencumbered.

COMMUNICATE WITH TRADESPEOPLE Be diplomatic because each tradesperson often blames the previous one for mistakes. "You have to be the arbitrator and make sure everyone gets along," Sharon says. "I kept everyone happy by making jokes and being light about it." At the end of the process, "if you notice deficiencies, make a list of necessary repairs and call everyone back until you're happy with the job."

MIX IT UP At first glance, you wouldn't think that some of Sharon's pieces, such as the whitewashed pine table with black Ultrasuede chairs in the living room, would mesh, but her style of creatively blending disparate objects always creates alluring settings. "That's my favourite thing to do," she says. "I can see a fixture in somebody's store and a table elsewhere and know they'll work together. I usually remove matching pieces and replace them with different ones." **H&H**

