



Creative Spaces: A Couple of Entrepreneurs Make 13,000 Sq Ft Cozy!

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A stylish, modern showplace for an eclectic art collection doubles as a comfortable family home where a pair of globe-trotting entrepreneurs can spend quality time with their three children and two dogs...and throw one heck of a glamorous party!



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Who: Entrepreneurial Toronto couple, one of whom was founder of a Yonge Street favorite and the other a founder of one Canada's most successful global brands.

What: A six-bedroom, custom built, 20 year-old home that is roughly 13,000 square feet. The construction is steel and concrete, typical of modern design, though the traditional lines and hand-cut stone give the exterior a look reminiscent of English Tudor. This was done so as to respect the style and integrity of the neighbourhood, however inside the look is more contemporary/modern.



Rana Florida: I understand you did a major remodel when you purchased the house. Can you tell us what was done and how long it took? What challenges did you face during the renovation?

Home Owners: The home was 14 years old when we purchased but it had never been finished. It took us about three years to get to where we are today. Had we not lived here during the changes we could have done it in one year.



H.O.: The work included completing the central staircase, which had no railings; we also replaced all of the old French style fireplaces. We installed a new kitchen, added a gym, changed all the wood floors, and finished the landscaping. The original owners had several designers work on the home, all of whom clearly had very different visions of what it should look like. The challenge for us was to create a cohesive look while trying to save some of the more expensive marble surfaces.

R.F.: *When you remodeled the kitchen, what thoughts and considerations were given to the selection of the appliance and/or other features?*

H.O.: We try to eat well, so we really wanted a steam oven—out of the four ovens we have it's the one we use the most. The food warmer allows for better timing of food preparation. The pizza oven provides the opportunity for a whole other eating experience, to have casual dinners with guests where everyone makes their own favorite pizza.



R.F.: *Your home is undeniably grand but with an intimate feel. How did you manage the scale of the rooms to create such a balanced, serene effect?*

H.O.: When rooms have great scale, so should the furniture you choose. Filling a large space with lots of small pieces tends to make a room feel cluttered rather than intimate. We have chosen over-sized pieces that suit the scale, with suspended fixtures wherever possible. We also added large fireplaces in most rooms to help create a cozy feel.

R.F.: *Your art work is quite moving. How did you build your art collection and how do you decide on where to place it? Do you always have a vision?*

H.O.: My work has always been in a creative field; I can appreciate any creative work. I've been around for a while and so I've collected a few things... I love all mediums and I've been collecting since I was young so naturally the art is very diverse. I do seem to gravitate to very large pieces which require lots of space.



R.F.: *Whether for business or pleasure, you and your partner have travelled the world. Have any of these locations influenced your design aesthetic?*

H.O.: Most of our furniture and art was acquired as we travelled. We seem to have a lot of Italian stuff. I guess it's fair to say that Italian design has had the most influence on our aesthetic.

R.F.: *Care to share any stories about how you came by some of your wonderful pieces? How do you put things together?*

H.O.: We try to coordinate our trips to coincide with any antique or art shows that may be happening. In Italy I found four huge paintings done on antique venetian glass of Commedia Dell'Arte figures. They were salvaged from an Italian ship in the '40s. These now cover our dining room walls. I found hundreds of Murano blown glass discs in a small shop in Florida which we used to make a very large, unique chandelier. It's great to find something old that can be reworked into something that's totally new.



R.F.: *The bar looks like the interior of a glamorous hotel. Is this your preferred spot to entertain?*

H.O.: It seems like the most natural place to congregate when we are entertaining; we can play bartender and pretend we can make great drinks.



R.F.: *Which is your favorite room in the house? What is the most used room in the house?*

H.O.: That would be our living room/den. It is one of the larger rooms, and the room where the bar is. It has lots of comfortable seating and a fireplace that makes it very cozy. Also, we can move all the furniture out of and quickly to convert the space into a small club with a dance floor.



R.F.: *What, if anything would you like to change about this house?*

H.O.: We love our home. We have lots of space indoors and out to entertain which also offers privacy for us and the kids, something we continually need more of as they get older. We love the neighborhood and its proximity to everything we like about our city. Right now I wouldn't change anything. Well..... maybe I could try a new paint colour ;)

