

**YOU COULD WALK PAST** this spectacular house every day and never give it a second glance. From the street, it's a pretty stone-and-yellow-brick neo-Colonial in a prestigious Toronto neighbourhood dotted with old Tudor-style homes and handsome new-builds.

But be prepared to blink when the front door opens. The photo of a cheeseburger in the foyer is a clue, but the view — your eyes skimming over inky ebonized oak floors, past Astroturf-green dining room chairs so crisp and modern against gallery-white walls — straight through to the 1,800-square-foot addition and backyard beyond is the clincher.

A house with a past demands owners who can imagine its future, and when media executive David Katz and Lisa Diamond Katz, co-owner of Toronto gallery Art Interiors, envisioned what this 3,000-square-foot home could become, they had much more in mind than simply bringing the wiring up to code and slapping on a couple coats of white paint. When they bought the circa-1938 home in 2012, they loved its warmth and cosiness, and wanted to put their own artful stamp on it. "We thought we'd do a little bit of this and a little bit of that," Lisa says. They had no intention of building an addition.

But when they discovered that all the plumbing and electrical had to be ripped out and redone, and that not all of the original interior would be salvageable, they realized the old home's dark, gloomy wood panelling, small bedrooms, "creepy" basement and tiny kitchen were not part of its charm. The idea of adding space made sense for this active family of four (kids Sadie and Sam are 12 and 10). But trying to imitate the style of the old home in a new space didn't. Fortunately, David's uncle Milton Katz is a Toronto architect known for seamlessly marrying historical buildings and contemporary spaces.

"We wanted an addition that was decidedly modern, something clean and timeless that also had an organic feel," says Lisa. But this was no shotgun wedding. "We love the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary, the idea of incorporating the old exterior with a modern addition at the back — it's what makes this house, as a whole, so interesting. Good design goes well with good design, regardless of the period." The offbeat concept makes perfect sense coming from Lisa, who launched Art Interiors to promote talented fledgling artists and make edgy works accessible and affordable to even the most neophyte Toronto art buyers. Rejecting the "shoebox shape" of so many contemporary homes as too trendy for the addition, they were inspired by the idea of an urban barn pared down to a simple, iconic shape.

The project, spearheaded by Whitehall Homes & Construction, took 10 months to complete and involved removing the entire back wall

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## STYLE STATEMENT

# THE GALLERY COMES HOME

This neo-Colonial home pushes the envelope by setting busy family life against a white backdrop dotted with pedigreed pieces of furniture and forward-thinking artwork. And yet the owners haven't compromised comfort or liveability. "Within each room, we create little vignettes of old and new. We change them all the time. Each vignette is a composition using weight and colour, and art and objects. When you love each piece to begin with, everything works together," says owner Lisa Diamond Katz.



**ABOVE:** The couple's eclectic mix of sentimental pieces (the 1920s-era table was a wedding gift from Lisa's grandmother) and vintage collections (David has more than 15 antique Catalin clocks by Seth Thomas) adds endearing personal style throughout their home. **Artwork** by Stephanie Cormier, Art Interiors.