

Picture Perfect

Local decorator Tanya Collins shows off her sense of style — and fun — as an organizer of, and participant in, Old Ottawa South's first home tour

BY SARAH BROWN

TANYA COLLINS JUST LAUGHS when asked to describe the pre-renovated turn-of-the-century house she moved into in 2000. "In disarray would pretty much cover it," she says. Still, it took Collins just one year to renovate and revamp a dark duplex, turning it into a sunny single-family home with a lovely open-concept main floor. Her goal, in which she succeeded admirably, was to modernize while keeping the charm of the house through old-style touches such as the mouldings. Eight years on, the rooms have found their true character, filled with a glorious mix of designer items, eBay finds, family heirlooms, and stylish bargain pieces discovered at HomeSense. Little wonder, then, that Collins now spends her days running a very busy design and decorating business (www.tanyacollinsdesign.com). "I take projects from the renovation stage through to the decorating," she says. Though she has no formal training in the biz (she has a master's degree in science and has also trained in homeopathy), Collins says she comes by her artistic bent naturally — her maternal grandfather was an influential player in the Bauhaus movement in his native Czech Republic, and an uncle runs an antique business in Toronto. Want to see this house in person? Collins puts her place on show — along with a couple of others she has worked on — as part of the first Old Ottawa South Home Tour on May 31. "Homes Between the Bridges" features six area houses and is raising funds for the Old Ottawa South "Firehall" Community Centre Redevelopment Fund. For more information or tickets call 613-247-4872 or visit www.homesbetweenthebridges.ca.



1. The salon-style **art wall** in the living room showcases a real mix of pieces — personal photographs, works painted by friends, family heirlooms from Collins's Czech grandparents, and eBay finds. This landscape by Czech artist Miloslav Holy dates from 1940.

2. Collins says she loves to discover style at all price points. This **wingback chair**, bought for a case of beer,

was a rescue from Quinn's Ale House on Bank Street. Collins had it reupholstered at Da Silva Upholstery.

3. The custom-made **ottoman** is big enough to prop feet and display Collins's collection of design books.

4. The modern-look **lamp** is a HomeSense find.

5. The **chair** was bought on auction in the U.S. Collins found it while eBay surfing.

6. Collins was also on eBay when she discovered this **untitled 2004 piece** by New York-based artist Lucas Grant. She says simply, "I buy what I love."

7. This **2005 abstract** is yet another eBay find. The Toronto artist goes by the name Sandi.

8. Not surprisingly, Collins found this **Louis Ghost Chair**, a Kartell classic, impossible to resist.

9. The **kitchen** (which is open to the dining and living rooms) was designed by Collins, who then collaborated with Friedemann Weinhardt at Design First Interiors to make it happen.

10. After buying these traditional **chairs** at a local second-hand store, Collins gave them a fresh, modern look by stripping them, painting them white, and reupholstering them in a bold David Hicks fabric.

11. The art deco **chandelier** is the dining room's showpiece. It was sourced from the Toronto antique dealership owned by Collins's uncle.

12. The **dining room chairs** hail from the Gluckstein Home line.

13. Providing a real hit of colour, the fabric for the raspberry velvet **drapes** was purchased at C&M Textiles.

