

NEXT WEEK**YOUTHFUL THINKING**

The latest trend is home furnishings just for kids.

**HOME HEATING****BURNING DESIRES**

The newest furnaces use old-fashioned wood as a renewable source of fuel. J3

**GOOD THINGS****SQUASH PEELED**

The easiest way to peel a winter squash is to cook it first, Martha Stewart says. J4



Your Home

J SECTION » TORONTO STAR « THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2006 ★ thestar.com



TORY ZIMMERMAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR

The drapes in the parlour of the home of Lee Caswell and Blaise Gertz are from around 1850 and were rescued from the Christie Mansion in Toronto. The room also features the original Greek Revival fireplace. Below, at the foot of the modern bed featuring a leather headboard, is an antique trunk that was used by the military to hold uniforms. It was discovered in a home in Cobourg.

Expecting the unexpected



Port Hope couple boldly restore a Georgian townhouse, adding some funky, modern accents

SHELLY SANDERS GREER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

After renting out their 1844 Georgian townhouse as three apartments for years, Lee Caswell and his partner, Blaise Gertz, decided to call it home.

Caswell, who runs Antiques on Queen in Port Hope, and is president of the Canadian Antique Dealers Association, wanted to remain true to the home's classic and Greek Revival detailing on the exterior, but he was also determined to bring today's bold colours and patterns inside, reflecting their individual tastes.

Today, after four years of con-

struction and design, the home is complete. And, just as Caswell and Gertz intended, this eclectic residence is a standout with its striking combination of classic heritage, bold modern and funky retro styles.

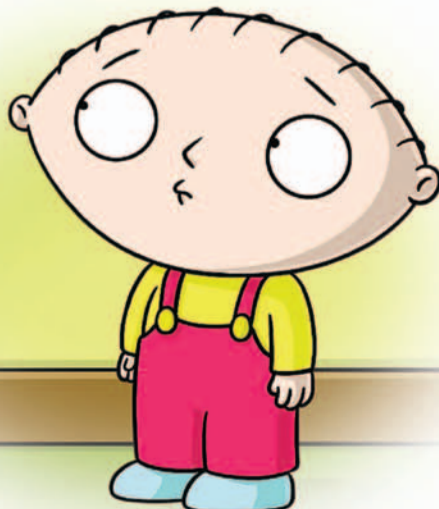
"The contractor and architect we worked with had strong sensitivities to old buildings," Caswell says. "They had some respect for the home's original intent. What you project to the neighbourhood is really important."

The exterior is exactly as it would have been in the 1800s,

► Please see **Antiques, J6**

can Stewie cope with
married life?

New Episode
FAMILY GUY
9.00



Global  **SUNDAY**

8.00 The Simpsons
New Episode

9.00 Family Guy
New Episode



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TORY ZIMMERMAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR

The kitchen, above, features all the modern conveniences, as well as colourful cushions, top left. The guest bedroom, left, is the only room they wallpapered and is full of chinoiserie. The clock on the mantel of the master bedroom, right, is French and depicts Hermes reviving Prometheus.



Classic home, funky finishes

► Antiques From J1

with classical and Greek Revival detailing. Caswell and Gertz had the symmetrical windows restored, the chimney was rebuilt, the brick was painted the authentic red colour reflecting the home's style and age, and the grout, which had been painted black in the 1930s, was lightened.

But once you step through the elaborate front door and on to the wooden pumpkin- and charcoal-coloured checkerboard floors, you realize that this is no ordinary restoration.

"For the front hall I bought a ribbon for an adding machine to use as a stencil for the squares, which I then painted pumpkin," Caswell explains. "In the dining room, which has the same pattern only a bigger scale, I traced linoleum squares. We did it ourselves and found it to be easy."

An antique armchair, once used as a potty chair, is upholstered in purple suede and is the perfect finishing detail in the hall, telling guests to expect the unexpected.

The parlour, which is off the hall, is a melting pot style with heritage drapes, charcoal walls, antique furniture adorned in modern fabric, and the original Greek Revival fireplace.

"The fireplace mantle was copied from American architect Asher Benjamin's book *The American Builder's Companion*, which was published in 1827," Caswell says. "The Greek keys in the corners of the mantle are exactly like those in Benjamin's book, and the bookcases, which we had built, were designed from the same book. The right bookcase actually covers a radiator."

"We had noted Toronto architect Phillip Carter, who specializes in libraries, design our bookcases and our terrace. He also did the addition for Port Hope's heritage Capitol Theatre."

The floral curtains were the inspiration for the parlour and are one of Caswell's favourite pieces. At one time, they hung in Toronto's Christie Mansion and 30 to 40 years ago, made their way to Port Hope. Caswell discovered them in a Port Hope home and when the owner was moving on, he quickly offered to take them.

"The woven silk curtains are from the 1850s and are probably French," he says. "The original tassels were intact and every



The unique umbrella stand is from England and made about 1881.

edge had little bobbins attached. But there was a lot of damage, especially from animals, so we had them cleaned, altered and re-lined. We based the parlour's colour scheme on the curtains, which tie the whole room together."

Painted in a bold red, the dining room is a dramatic contrast from the parlour. The many an-

tique pieces here say heritage, but an eye-catching tray collection on one wall adds modern drama.

"More than half of these trays were hand painted by an old friend," Caswell says. "He has died so this wall is sort of an homage to him."

► Continued on next page



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY TORY ZIMMERMAN FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Antique dealer Lee Caswell, left, and his partner Blaise Gertz, restored their Port Hope Georgian townhouse, below, to its original glory, adding many modern touches. The front entrance, above, is a dramatic statement that leads the visitor into the rest of the house.



► Continued from previous page

Made of either paper mache or tin, most of these trays are from 1850 or earlier. The oldest is from 1780. Caswell's friend would find these trays at antique stores and repaint them. The most eclectic room in this house is the kitchen, boasting wooden floors painted a vivid pumpkin, the original red brick fireplace, built-in period armoires, and sleek glass cabinets. "The armoires come from farmhouses and are from the same vintage as this house," says Caswell. "We had them built-in as corner cupboards. One holds the fuse panel and is a pantry and the other is for storage." Modern and traditional are fused together with the wooden and glass cabinets. Caswell says the corner where the glass cabinets are was dead space and

Blaise had the idea to put in glass cabinets to hold their more decorative crystal. The more functional kitchen necessities are housed in new wooden cabinets, which Caswell painted the same colour as the trim in a full gloss. "This fools the eye as you can't tell the old from the new," he says. Three chairs, a fireplace and two pillows in the kitchen are a perfect conclusion for the tour. Two chairs are dark wood antiques, but the pillows resting on them scream retro with their vibrant, funky circular patterned fabric. In stark contrast is the other less formal chair, which is painted white with the paint crackling. The fireplace is a Port Hope original but the china carefully displayed on its mantel is blue and white Chinese exports. "We wanted our home to be re-

laxed, not uptight or stuffy," Caswell says. "You can't be afraid to put modern fabric on an antique. You can also mix old and new art. Your home should be all about you. Mix it up and have some fun." **HOW TO CHOOSE ANTIQUES FOR YOUR ECLECTIC HOME** As president of the Canadian Antique Dealers Association, Caswell loves living in Port Hope which he calls "a playground of antiques." Here are three tips from Caswell on what to look for when choosing antiques for any type of home: ► Go for the classics. Think of an antique piece of furniture as a basic black suit where you can change the look with accessories. Choose a dining table that can do double duty as a library table in the future. For a hallway, pick a traditional table and place

an ultramodern chandelier above it. Or purchase a period table and mix it with modern chairs. ► Be prepared to spend. Caswell says you should consider antiques as investments. Quality is something you will never regret. ► Get professional help. Make sure you're looking in reputable stores and ask for help to examine the quality of pieces. The best place to start your search is on the Canadian Antique Dealers Association website: www.cadainfo.com. Here you will find reputable dealers across the country, collecting advice and information about the industry **Shelly Sanders Greer** is an Oakville-based freelance writer with a passion for historic homes. You can reach her at shellywrites@cogeco.ca.

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