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NEW EDITION



A Room of Their Own

A Beaconsfield couple builds an adults-only retreat styled like a boutique hotel room

BY SIRI AGRELL

When most parents crave peace and quiet, they send the kids upstairs to their rooms. John and Wanda Ely decided to do things differently: they created a third-floor refuge of their own. The couple, who met at architecture school, had long wanted to make their mark on the yellow-brick house they bought in 2002. The Argyle Street lot was originally the site of a laneway garage; in 1939, the garage was torn down and rebuilt as a rental duplex by its owner. By the time John and Wanda moved in, the duplex had been modified into a single-family home with a cramped second-floor bedroom. They considered adding a rooftop deck, but after the arrival of their daughter, Dessa, who is now six, and their son, Jackson, four, they came up with a plan for a third-floor master bedroom instead.

Wanda was wary of the effort and expense involved. "John is the big-ideas guy," she says of her husband, who's now a software developer. "So he sold it to me as our own boutique hotel suite." The couple designed everything together and sourced all the materials; the entire project took four months. The contractors were able to do most of the work from the outside with scaffolding, keeping disruption inside to a minimum.

The finished addition, which looks like it was snapped on top of the house Lego style, has windows on three sides—a rarity for a downtown home. The airy space incorporates sleeping, sitting and bathing areas, and even though it's Wanda and John's domain, the whole family occasionally gathers here to eat breakfast on the deck or to watch a movie.



1 The bathing-in-the-bedroom setup is unconventional, but Wanda wanted the Kohler tub to be open to the rest of the room. The tub surround and vanity include towel niches and even shoe storage.

2 Friend and artist Stephen Chung took this photograph of the couple during their 2001 wedding reception at the Steam Whistle Brewery.

3 Wanda filmed this 1950s Osvaldo Borsani reclining lounge, a collector's piece for fans of mid-century modern, from her parents' Burlington living room.

4 Wanda and John designed the laptop table together using a piece of tile left over from the washroom floor. They turned to Rodrigues Art Steel Works, a wrought iron fence maker down the street from them, to fabricate the painted steel frame.

5 The built-in medicine cabinets, which are flush with the wall and lacquered in the same colour, open with a gentle push—no knobs or pulls required.

6 An enclosed toilet room provides privacy.

7 This memorabilia wall displays their kids' artwork, an oil painting by John's great-grandmother and a backlit photo poem.

8 The heated travertine floors from Stone Tile International separate the bath area from the sleeping quarters.

9 The couple upgraded a pair of IKEA wardrobes by encasing them with custom mahogany doors and a surround, both by Gibson-Greenwood.

10 The lush grey wool rug by Lanart Rugs (\$13 per square foot at Home Depot) was custom-cut into a U shape so it would tuck around the bed.

11 The 21-by-21-foot addition, with rough-sawn cedar siding, was constructed by Prumo Building and Design.

12 High-tech hardware makes this 400-pound Spanish cedar sliding door easy to open.

13 Weather-resistant Sunbrella fabric on the outdoor sectional from Andrew Richard Designs means the cushions can stay out until the snow starts to fall.

14 John made this coffee table for Wanda as an anniversary gift, building it from layers of plywood with threaded rods and casters.