

2009 HOME TOURS

BY SHAWN GILLIAM // PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE HENKE

No matter how polished the woodwork or primped the pillows, the homes featured here all are fun and remarkably family-friendly—and they beautifully express what it means to call the Twin Cities home.

[Patti and Robbie Soskin]



ENTERTAINING IS ROUTINE

for Patti Soskin, one of the owners of the popular Yum! Kitchen and Bakery in St. Louis Park.

"Our house is always filled with people," she says. "We probably had 50 kids over for dinner last week. That's just how it works." So when she and husband Robbie, CEO of Compass Marketing in Minneapolis, began renovating their 1940s Hopkins home, entertaining needs ranked high on the priority list. "What had been four separate rooms opened up completely," Patti says of the plan by Julie Snow Architects. "We now have one great space where everyone is together." Walls of floor-to-ceiling windows further the engaging feel. "The first day it snowed, our daughter, Maddie, said, 'I love this house—it's like living in a snow globe,'" Patti says.

The renovation was almost as rewarding as the result, and the Soskins are quick to credit their design team—including architect Snow, project architect Tyson McElvain, interior designer Connie Lindor, builder Streeter & Associates, and cabinetmaker Brad Braaten—for making it fun. Working relationships have now developed into good friendships, Patti says. "They'll probably be forever connected to us."

← Patti and Robbie Soskin relax with their teenagers, Zach and Maddie, and their Havanese, Edith. (Son Jorie, 23, lives and works in California.) The built-in firepit, part of a landscape designed by Coen+Partners, exemplifies the sleek yet relaxed nature of the home.



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In the kitchen, Wenge cabinetry pairs nicely with ebony-stained walnut floors, acrylic countertops, and stainless-steel appliances. The plan received special attention from restaurateur Patti Soskin as she decided where every item, including small appliances, would go.

The walnut-and-bronze dining table, custom-made by BDDW of New York, comfortably seats 12. Patti's collection of mercury glass dresses the table when it's not in use.

Zebra-wood chairs by Flexform, modular sectional sofas by Minotti, and a custom alder table by Brent Comber anchor the living room.

Floor-to-ceiling aluminum-framed windows and doors an inch thick (two 1/4-inch glass panels with a 1/2-inch air pocket in between) wrap the main living space. "I feel like the yard is an extension of the house," Patti says.



[Mary Lahammer
and Chad Flynn]



VIEWERS OF TWIN CITIES PUBLIC TELEVISION'S *Almanac*: At the *Capital* know reporter and anchor Mary Lahammer for her political savvy. But one step inside the south metro home she shares with her husband, Chad Flynn, and their daughter, Bayliss, and you realize that her love of history rivals that of journalism.

With degrees in both disciplines, Lahammer began to gravitate toward a timeworn look following travels to England with Flynn. The pair, who originally favored modern styles, fell in love with antiques fairs and venerable old manors. "Slowly one antique crept in, and then another," she says.

The result particularly appeals to Flynn, a financial underwriter at HealthPartners, who spent time as a child in his mother's hometown of Coventry, England. Shelves in the couple's library are full of trophies and other sporting antiques, including a rugby ball from Coventry and a photo of Flynn's grandfather with the professional rugby team of Wales. "Everything has a story," Lahammer says. Their love of "the rusty and crusty," as they call it, has blossomed into a side business called In Like Flynn Furnishings, which sells English and Swiss Army antiques out of Hunt & Gather in south Minneapolis. The next buying trip comes this fall, when the family plans to hit antique fairs in England. "When we were building our home, we'd bring back a container," Flynn says. "But now we just fill lots of suitcases."

The ever-evolving look is far from perfect. "We've always had the philosophy that our daughter can touch everything," Lahammer says. "I think it's easier to live with antiques than with new pieces. If something happens, it just becomes a part of an item's history." Flynn agrees: "We try to stay away from antiques where you can't put your drink down." Indeed, even the home's most formal space, the dining room, is put to regular, sometimes rambunctious, use. "We actually had our daughter's fourth birthday party there, so it's not just for stuffy occasions," Lahammer says. "I dressed up every chair with princess costumes, and we had Barbies lining the runner."



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↑ Four-year-old Bayliss joins her parents, Mary Lahammer and Chad Flynn, and chocolate labradoodle Lady Godiva (named after the historical figure from Coventry, where Flynn's family has roots) in the cozy library.

← The dining room's 18th-century English walnut armchair joins new side chairs covered with slipcovers sewn by Lahammer. Pewter and silver add warmth. "My mother-in-law gives me a hard time about not cleaning my silver," Lahammer says. "But I tell her I want it to look old. I love the patina."

→ The master suite's blue and cream palette includes a headboard Lahammer upholstered when she was nine months pregnant and on modified bedrest. "What a project," she says.





"EVEN THOUGH MINNESOTA HAS A COOLER CLIMATE, YOU CAN HAVE A FEELING OF LIGHT AND AIRINESS AND ALL THINGS OPTIMISTIC."

[Anne Cashill and Jose Vido]



THEY GOT MARRIED in Rio de Janeiro and took their last vacation in Italy. But Anne Cashill and Jose Vido's true piece of paradise is their 1911 stucco two-story near Lake Harriet. "Because I work in New York and come back to Minneapolis on weekends,

I wanted this to be our fun country house in the city," says Cashill, who is vice president of merchandising for the popular accessories brand Coach. She and Vido—president and owner of MorningStar Coffee, which is served at top Twin Cities restaurants and sold at Kowalski's—set about renovating the home shortly after they were married. "It was interesting as a newly married couple to embark on a significant project like this," Cashill says. "At times I was like, 'Impasse!'"

For the most part, the two were on the same page. They wanted a large kitchen and more bedroom and bath space, but they didn't want to lose their home's classic cottage style.

"At many points, our builder said it would have been easier to tear the house down altogether, but we wanted it to feel like it really fit into the neighborhood," Cashill says. "The façade stayed within its original form."

Yunker Associates Architecture's Martha Yunker and Bryan Carpenter (now with Alchemy Architects) doubled the home's square footage while remaining sympathetic to the landscape. Brazilian teak floors and pale wall colors finish most spaces and subtly connect with Vido's Brazilian heritage. "Even though Minnesota has a cooler climate, you can have a feeling of light and airiness and all things optimistic," Cashill says.

The process proved enjoyable. "I've been collecting home magazines for the better part of my life," Cashill says. "If I had a second career it would probably be in interior design or architecture." But here, she appreciated passing tear sheets to the builder, Structural Image, and a host of custom



↖ A pool and patio give the city dwelling a weekend-house appeal that Anne Cashill and Jose Vido enjoy with their Coton de Tuléar, Neve. The pool was important to Vido, who was on the University of Minnesota and Hamline swim teams.

↑ Pillows made of Fortuny fabric from Cashill's longtime friend and fellow MCAD alum, New York antiques dealer David Duncan, bring pattern to the living room's Barbara Barry sofa.

➔ Cashill purchased the dining room's Murano glass chandelier in Italy. The paint color is Sesame by Benjamin Moore. "It's such a great color," Cashill says. "Is it green or is it yellow?"





craftspeople. "It's so important for me to compliment all of them," she says. "Everyone saw our vision and worked cooperatively toward solutions."

Brad and Roger Asp, who built the fireplace mantel in the living room and the cabinets in the kitchen and library/TV room, worked from photos from Cashill's British magazines. "They were spot-on with every detail," she says. Simone Stoilov did the metalwork, including the custom console table in the dining room, and Maureen Lyttle applied the delicate gold leaf to its surface. "I love that we have so many artisans in the Minneapolis area, and that they're so hugely talented," Cashill says. "The house is 98.9% exactly what we wanted."

← Light pouring through the sink window and a fixture with linen shades from Muska Lighting illuminate the gourmet kitchen, with its mix of black (Williams-Sonoma Home bamboo stools, ebony-stained cabinets) and white (hand-made backsplash tile, Veneto marble countertops) finishes.

↓ The home's double lot provided room for a new pool. The addition, which extends from the back of the home, left space for a small side courtyard.

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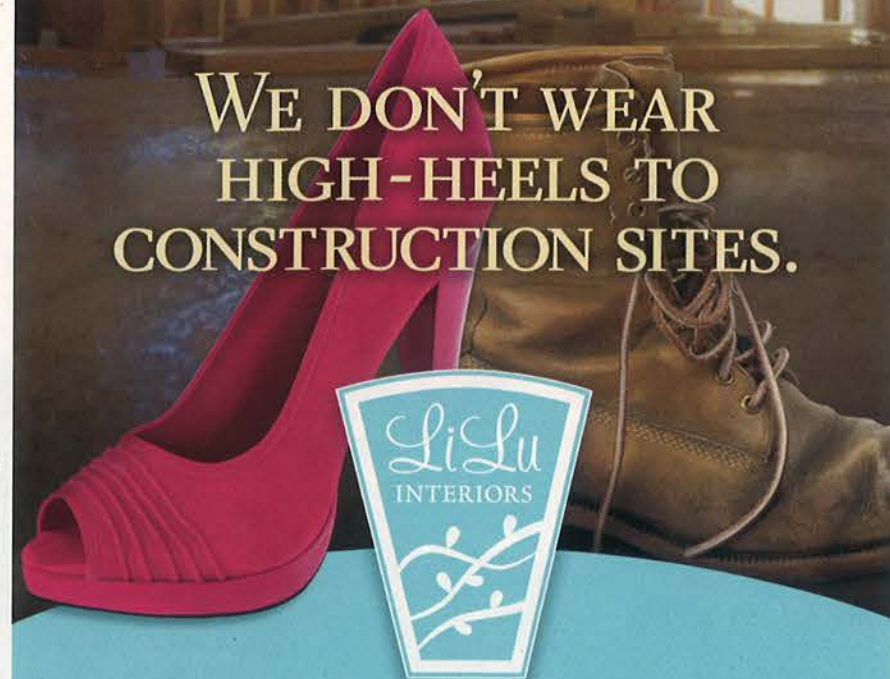
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← Boston terrier puppy Hooper is right at home on the living room sectional. The Graves purchased their art at MCAD's annual art sales.

↓ Ben and Lindsay Graves and children Camden, MijaBella, and Baktiyar take a break in the sunroom. The birdcage, which Lindsay found on Craigslist, then cleaned and repainted, keeps cockatiels Chico and Bananza close to the action.

↓ A fixture from Citilights contrasts with the dining room's traditional architecture. The Suchitra Mattai painting is one of the couple's favorites.



[Ben and Lindsay Graves]



THEIR NAME BELONGS TO one of Minneapolis's top hotels, the Graves 601. So it should come as no surprise that Ben and Lindsay Graves's 1923 Colonial near Lake of the Isles hints at the chic modern style of the hotel. "When we moved in here, I told Ben I wanted a house that didn't say anything, so we started with something very clean," says Lindsay, a former English teacher and founding partner of copywriting firm Content Farm Creative. "Back then, it was certainly a striking look, and it was calming for me because it was uncluttered." The décor, she says, grew in response to a houseful of young children and the desire to break away from the heavy period looks of their two previous homes, an Arts and Crafts and an Italianate. "Our kids were little then, so there was more—well, different—chaos than there is now," Lindsay says. But as the children grew older (Camden is 9, MijaBella, 8, and Baktiyar, 6), the couple wanted something softer and warmer, with more doses of their personality. "We started by putting back our old Oriental rugs and taking some of the things we'd collected on our travels over the years out of storage," Lindsay says. "It's interesting to see how clearly our homes have reflected who we were at different places in our lives."

Although the two still appreciate sleek interiors—Ben serves as president of Graves Hospitality Corporation and is responsible for the architectural design of the hotel's hot new bar, Bradstreet Craftshouse—they welcome whatever comes their way at home. Currently, it's a new Boston terrier puppy, who joins two cats, two cockatiels, and a host of fish, frogs, and eels. "Some days it's a menagerie in here, and other days it feels like a full-on zoo," Lindsay says.

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COV	33.13	-0.29	Factst	FCS	49.26	0.71	ITC	ITC	42.27	0.55	MarVest	MVA	13.24	0.12	Worship	WOR
BAP	49.64	0.40	Factst	FCS	49.26	0.71	ITC	ITC	42.27	0.55	MarVest	MVA	13.24	0.12	Worship	WOR
CS	33	-0.99	Factst	FCS	49.26	0.71	ITC	ITC	42.27	0.55	MarVest	MVA	13.24	0.12	Worship	WOR
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HOME TOURS. 2009



[Michele Tafoya and Mark Vandersall]



FALL MEANS FOOTBALL for ESPN/ABC Sports reporter and WCCO Radio host Michele Tafoya. But when she's not reporting from the sidelines or doing an interview in the studio, chances are she's at home in Edina with her family.

The sports-loving Tafoya and her husband, Mark Vandersall, a financial advisor, built their home around a casual, open plan and low-maintenance materials. "We didn't want this to be a place where we'd worry about what the kids would do," Tafoya says. "Any space where the kids are going to be is pretty up to snuff. We're not going to go, 'Oh my God, they poured grape juice on the white carpet.' We didn't want to go in that direction."

The couple worked closely with designer Greg Walsh of ID inside design in Minneapolis on a scheme that serves their laid-back style and also creates a welcoming haven for friends on game day. The kitchen opens wide to the living room, where children Tyler, 3½, and Olivia, 9 months, can play while Mom and Dad make breakfast and dinner. Vandersall, who does most of the cooking, chose a cooktop with a griddle for making omelets and pancakes. Tafoya planned for a cabinet with a beverage refrigerator outside the main work zone so the kids could easily grab juiceboxes. The lower-level family room boasts similar conveniences. The bar's microwave and small cooktop is ideal for snacks, and its glass-door refrigerator keeps cold drinks handy. An adjacent kids' activity space features a basketball hoop and a floor covered with sport court tiles.

Finishes reinforce the relaxed feel. "We went with a lot of dark wood and terra cotta," Tafoya says. "It has a warm, old-world feel that's inviting. We wanted this to be a place where you could sink in and live, where you didn't have to be perfect. We can't live that way."



↖ The kitchen's old-world look contrasts with the classic Minnesota style of the adjacent screened porch.

↑ Michele Tafoya insisted on a screened porch where her family could enjoy summer evenings without mosquitoes. Here, she relaxes with her husband, Mark Vandersall, and children Tyler, 3½, and Olivia, 9 months.

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Dark-stained knotty alder cabinets pair with Cocoa Cohiba granite countertops in the kitchen and family room. "The granite has what's called a leathery finish and has a soft texture," Tafoya says. "To me, it's one of the most beautiful parts of the house." Terra-cotta tile flooring in the kitchen gives way to stained concrete on the lower level. But the family room's standout feature is the TV arrangement—a big screen topped with two smaller flat panels, plus one at the bar. "Our vision for fall Minnesota weekends is to have friends over to watch college or pro football on

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↑ Tafoya and Vandersall wanted a British pub vibe for the family room bar. Sports memorabilia from the University of California, Berkeley, and the U of M—their alma maters—fill two of the shelves.

multiple screens so we can keep track of multiple games," Tafoya says.

Finishing their home (they're still hanging art on the walls) comfortably coincides with Tafoya's return to Twin Cities airwaves in WCCO Radio's popular afternoon drive-time slot. It also comes on the heels of the adoption of daughter Olivia, an experience that had Tafoya, Vandersall, and son Tyler in Colombia for seven weeks this past spring. "All of us were in one room in this little guesthouse in Bogotá, dealing with the adoption and also the fact that Olivia had a heart condition and needed surgery," Tafoya says. "It was quite a trip, but we wouldn't trade it for the world." ▲

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Michele Tafoya shows us parts of her home that we didn't have room to include, from the man cave to the family's playroom, at mspmag.com/homes.

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