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HGTV star Melissa Davis talks shop about her favourite subject, which of course, is real estate.

It's fair to say Melissa Davis eats, sleeps and breathes all things real estate. The interior designer, most known for her role as art director and series designer for the past eight seasons on the award-winning HGTV show In-come Property, admitted she's still taking her work home with her after 18 years in the business.

"On a Saturday night I'll be watching a movie with my partner, and be on my website looking at my stats, thinking how I can get my Twitter followers up."

For Davis, it's this love for her work which she credits her success to, combined with the ability to find people who share that passion when it comes to the all-encompassing realm of real estate.

"I am not good at separating the two," she said when I asked about work and play. "So I just make sure I surround myself with those who are like-minded in that way. For me, my work is enjoyable. I love not just designing and real estate, I like nurturing business. I like manipulating my web stats and all the things that go along with that. To me, that's fun."

As expected, her plate is currently chock-full. Aside from a "secret" project she's working on for HGTV that she couldn't spill the beans on quite yet, she's also got a full docket of resale investment consultation work. A graduate of Sheridan College's Interior Designer program, Davis said the best overlooked investments always tend to follow the same formula, especially in Toronto, which is also the city she calls home.

"When you look at the rings of these really hot areas, it's a really simple format. You go on the map and draw the epicentre of the success areas. And then draw a circle around those areas, and if you look at the little triangles between those connected circles, those triangles tend to be the ones that do have issues maybe holding them back. It may be housing or train tracks, but the reality is as those cities densify those triangles begin to disappear. So if you're able to purchase in those little pockets, they will always be a good investment for the future or down the road."

With her hands in so many various aspects of the real estate world, one must wonder how Davis juggles the spectrum that goes from the artistic expression of interior design down to the number crunching of buying and selling. But as Davis eloquently puts it, it all flows into one, and while it's impossible to keep them in separate silos, that's the beauty of it.

"To be honest, I try not to turn one off and turn the other on. That's what has brought me my success. I think you can be creative with designing a space, and still take into account the financial implications and the emotional implications and the business implications. When I'm working on someone's house, I'm working on what will be their greatest asset, and likely is their retirement plan. So I need to have my business hat on when I'm making those decisions even if they're inherently creative or artistic."

Of course, Davis is always working at expanding her experience in the business. Currently she's taking a few Canadian Securities Institute courses to brush up on her financial planning knowledge. And once again, she appears to be taking her work home with her.

"I love math and finances, and it has always been something I haven't really been able to properly dig into. So that's exciting because I spend a lot of time sitting with finance guys and brokers and I don't feel like I have the grasp of the language just yet. So believe it or not that's my night-time reading right now." www.royallepagehome.com



Best August Since 2007

August 2015 was yet another month in which home sales in the jurisdiction of the London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® were the best they've been since 2007's Global Financial Meltdown. A total of 864 homes sold in August 2015, up 9.2% overall from August 2014. "2015 is shaping up to be a really good year," says The President of the London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®. "So far we're up a solid 9.4% from 2014." "Over the last few months we've started to see some tightening up of supply," says the President of the London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®. "It's too early to suggest that we're going into a Sellers market, but, with supply shrinking, it's definitely a good time to list."



Breakdown of August Residential Sales

Type	Average Price	Increase from 2014
Detached	\$282,560	4.3%
Condo	\$191,624	5.2%
Total Residential	\$264,980	4.4%

Type	Units Sold	Average Price
2 Storey	207	\$332,207
Bungalow	128	\$229,689
Ranch	106	\$311,791
Townhouse Condo	85	\$153,811
High Rise Apt. Condo	38	\$175,762

August was also a banner month for London's Sister City of St. Thomas, which, with 81 sales, also had its best August since 2007. The average price of a home in St Thomas Year-to-Date stands at \$218,733, up 9.4%. Sept 1, 2015 - London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®

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Rustic Vibes in the City

Who says you can't have your cottage and live in the city too? Actually, I suppose Eva Gabor said it, but that was so long ago. More and more these days, we are striving to get away and escape from the craziness of our daily lives and just relax and recharge our brains in the quiet of a small, cozy nest in the woods. But the reality is that most of us just don't have the luxury or the means to have that second home out in cottage country.

If you just adore a penthouse view, but also love that land, spreadin' out so far and wide, then dismiss any thoughts of leaving this room. With the large influx of the 'Restored Factory' style lofts, we are often left with exposed pipes and duct work, minimizing our design choices to be more modern and minimal. Or at least that's what we thought. Why not mix the country and city together?

Our client wanted exactly that. He works and lives within the frantic hustle and bustle of the city and prefers the open concept with exposed brick and pipes, but he also likes that old school, lumberjack vibe of the rustic look that is absolutely everywhere these days.

The trick here is to use the industrial bones of the space and surround it with warmer, more rustic and vintage items. We placed a desk on one side of the bed directly in front of the air ducts, doubling it as a nightstand and a chrome and glass twig table on the other side. Then we flanked two very opposing styles of art to top it off. This also balances out those giant air ducts and makes them disappear, but still allows them to be there and seem almost on purpose, like we meant to have them there.

And who could forget that amazing bed?! I mean, really! There is no doubt that this bed demands attention and creates an amazing focal point in the room, but at the same time it makes you feel all warm and cozy. Like snuggling up in the blankets, with the smell of a winter fire and Peameal bacon sizzling on the wood stove.

One of our favourite things to do is mix patterns that really shouldn't belong together, but somehow they work. One of the easiest tricks in doing this properly is to make sure the scale of the patterns are really quite different from each other.

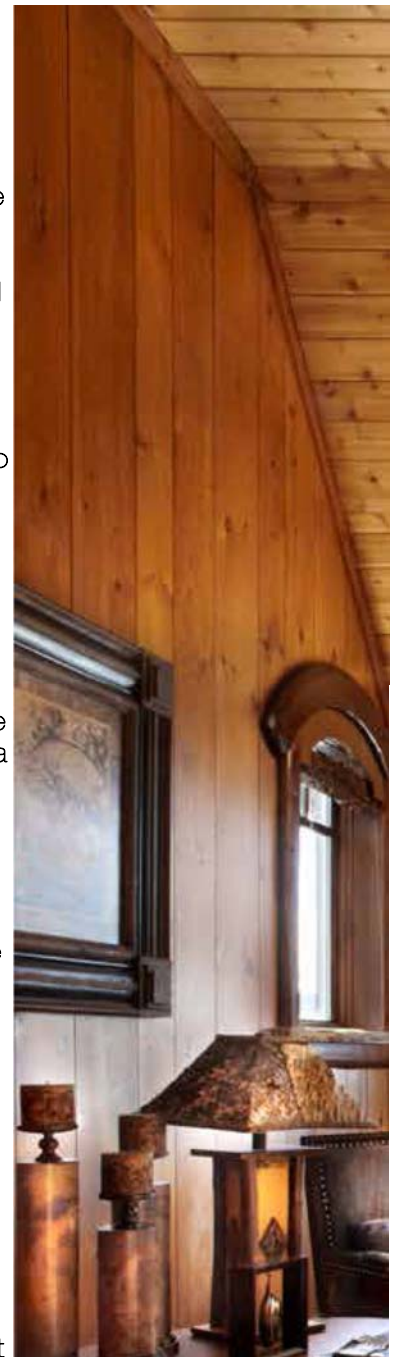
In this case we used a very small navy gingham fabric for the inside of the 8 foot headboard and then wrapped the sides and back with a larger scale red plaid. The headboard wraps around you like a big ol' Lumberjack protecting you from the cold. Let's just stay under the covers for a bit longer, shall we?

The Heritage Maple side and foot rails are joined at the front corners with custom-made ball and claw feet that are painted out in Heirloom white. Mixing fabric and wood together in one large furniture piece is another favourite of ours. The mixing of mediums evokes custom and bespoke.

The original hardwood floors were sanded down and simply clearcoated to allow all the weathered scrapes and bumps to show through and then we placed a couple rugs under the bed to counter the coldness against the feet.

We took the industrial vibe of the city and the warmth and nature elements of the country and fused them together seamlessly to create a spectacular environment that our client will love for years to come.

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