

»TORONTO STAR«

# New in Homes & Condos

SECTION H  
SATURDAY  
APRIL 10, 2010  
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## CROOKED HOUSE

Children (and dogs) will love to spend time in their Funky Bunky, **H2**



## GREEN ZONE

You can grow a green lawn without chemicals, Mark Cullen says, **H4**

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## DESIGN



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLOS OSORIO/TORONTO STAR

Matt Dusk enjoys one of the singlemalts from his large Scotch collection while relaxing on the orange sectional in his basement hide-away.

# From Dusk till dawn

Matt Dusk is turning the music world upside down with his modern take on vintage classics; the same thing might be said of his house, which is dedicated to all things Rat Pack



thestar.com

Go to [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com) or [www.yourhome.ca](http://www.yourhome.ca) to see two videos of Matt Dusk at home with the *Toronto Star*.

Matt Dusk's bedroom makeover has turned the space into a cozy oasis.

RITA ZEKAS  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Walking into Matt Dusk's living room is like a citrus flashback. The room is so dominated by a shocking orange shag rug, one expects Bob Newhart and Suzanne Pleshette to pop in at any moment.

It also takes the eye away from the grand piano, the tool of his trade.

"I love orange; it is warm and very '70s," says the jazz singer/songwriter, who is appearing on April 16 and 17 at Harbourfront at the Enwave Theatre. "It is Frank Sinatra's favour-

rite colour. Orange is very sexy and warm."

The 31-year-old crooner's devotion to all things Rat Packish is evident in his '60s ranch-style home in Etobicoke. The basement lounge is like Vegas North.

He loves palm trees, reflected in his artwork and Moroccan tapestries, as well as in the awesome iridescent palm wallpaper in the master bedroom.

"There are two themes in this house: Palms or boats," he explains. "I have a sailboat. I love the simple life — when things get tough, I go fishing or sailing to escape. Cell phones don't

work on Lake Ontario."

The native Torontonians travels constantly. Phrases like "When I was in Poland last weekend..." keep cropping up in conversation but not in a pretentious "I-am-a-world-traveller-and-you're-not" way.

Dusk and his girlfriend Julita (a non-performer) have been in the house for a year and a half. He spotted it while on tour in the southern U.S.

"My job is touring," he allows. "I saw 30

DUSK continued on H16

## AFTERGLOW

# When it comes to service, Tridel sets the bar high

How company handles after-sales service is winning them awards

THERESA BOYLE  
TORONTO STAR

When Jessica Lui took possession of her new condo last December, she noticed a few problems with the one-bedroom unit. The bathtub tap was loose, the washer-dryer unit was placed so close to the faucet that she couldn't turn the tap on or off, and there was some water damage on the bedroom ceiling.

Despite these flaws, Lui describes herself as a happy customer.

She reported the problems to the customer service office at Tridel's Grand Triomphe 2 on Yonge near Finch and in no time — with no fuss — everything was fixed.

This is the third newly built condo that the 58-year-old retired Canada Post supervisor has purchased and she knows that expecting perfection is unrealistic. Defects are par for the course when there are hundreds of workers in numerous different trades and thousands of materials going into the building of a condo tower.

But what sets one builder apart from another, observes Lui, is the reaction to a purchaser's concerns. Where some builders might quibble over their obligations or be tardy in fixing a problem, Tridel was attentive and responsive, Lui says.

"The thing I like about Tridel is that they take that extra step. They give you more information and are always open to hearing about our concerns," she says.

"They are very approachable, they keep in touch with you along the way, and they seem to go out of their way," she adds.

Lui's experiences might help explain why Tridel has been ranked the top condo builder in customer satisfaction in the Greater Toronto Area by J. D. Power and Associates for four years running. Tridel has topped the list ever since the U.S. market research firm started ranking new condo builders here in 2006.

Tridel is also the Ontario Home Builders' Association's reigning builder of the year. Showcases in the foyer of Tridel's Dufferin St. head office are laden with awards. They include Tarion's highrise builder of the year for both 2007 and 2008, and BILD's highrise green builder of the year for 2007,

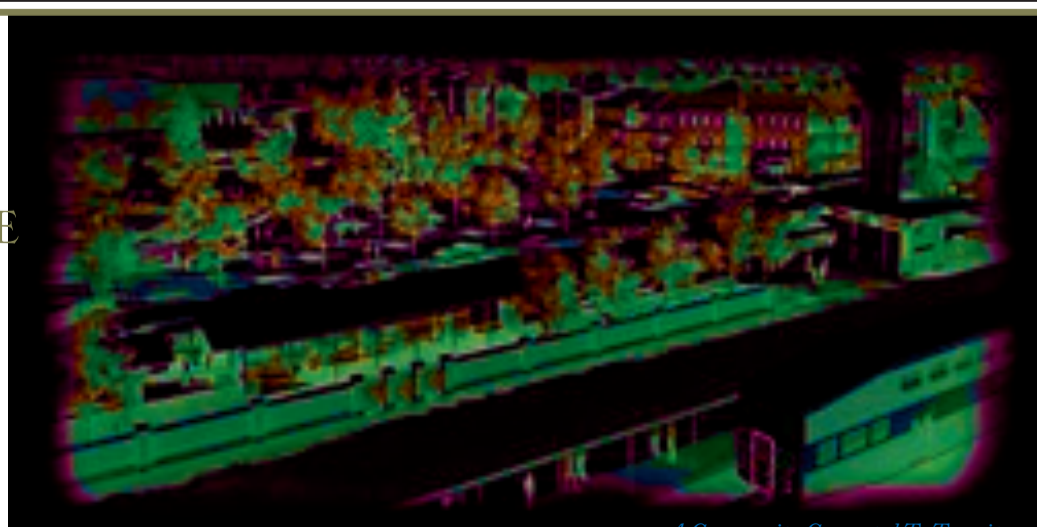
TRIDEL continued on H7



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## HOMES & CONDOS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLOS OSORIO / TORONTO STAR

Matt Dusk, right, shares a giggle with designer Glen Peloso of "Restaurant Maker," who helped Dusk turn his bedroom and ensuite bathroom into a beautiful retreat.

# Good news: Matt Dusk is back in town

DUSK from H1

houses on MLS and I fell in love with this one. It was built in '63 and has '60s flair. I loved the open-concept with kitchen and family room separated — important for traffic flow."

The kitchen was the deal maker. "I loved the Mediterranean feel, the terra cotta floors. I had three days off from the tour and flew back and made the offer."

A lot of the pottery in the kitchen comes from his travels or from HomeSense.

The kitchen had been renovated in '92 with a fireplace added — one of three wood-burning fireplaces, the other two are in the basement and living room — and a sunken family room/sun room complete with flat-screen TV, rattan chaises and patio doors leading out to the backyard, which has a pool and a honking big barbecue.

There are four bedrooms and four bathrooms. One basement bedroom has been converted into a small studio where Dusk recorded the vocals for the music for Jason Priestley's new dark comedy series *Call Me Fritz*.

There were three months of renos. He did the master bedroom, adjacent bathroom and the basement.

Dusk assisted in the demolition of the bathroom. He is mighty handy with a sledge hammer.

"We are happiest when we are the most creative or most destructive," cracks interior designer Glen Peloso, who executed the master bedroom revamp on the second floor.

"If I pay someone \$3,000 to do it, how much whiskey can I buy with that money?" demands Dusk, whose basement bar is well stocked with single malt Scotch.

"I got into Jack Daniels because of Sinatra," he confesses. "Jack was Frank's drink."

Peloso and Dusk met and bonded over a mutual love of tailoring. Dusk is very dapper in sports jacket, striped bespoke shirt and strategically ripped jeans.

Sinatra would approve. Okay,



The shockingly orange shag carpet in the living room plays against the stark white of the sofa and chairs. Orange candles, gold drapes and glass tables give the room the 1960s feeling that Dusk loves.

maybe not the jeans.

"I met Glen at a party in Canada for Pal Zileri, an Italian line that sponsors me," Dusk recalls. "He said 'Hey, what about if you do something with your house?'"

The master bathroom was gutted and the flooring replaced with basket-weave black-and-white tiles. The basket-weave is echoed in vinyl wallpaper in the centre of the bedroom's closet doors. The built-in valance on the draperies is very '50s and the retro metal phone from Pottery Barn on the night table nails the period.

Peloso describes the style of the bedroom as "deco and transitional; Matt is a soul caught in the '50s. It is all about that era in music and time and evokes a great Old Hollywood hotel. It is totally Rat Pack."

"Glen made it as inspiring as the living room where I write music," Dusk says. "I wanted the bedroom

to be very Miami and Vegas and Rat Packish to embrace the character of the house."

A Frank Sinatra coffee table book has pride of place in Dusk's adjacent office, painted in shades of green from lime to chartreuse — it is his Green Room. There is the obligatory homage to palm trees in a wall hanging and the picture hung in the stairwell looks like a Hawaiian shirt print — without the cheese factor.

Paintings of landscapes and/or water scenes line the hallway on the second floor. "There is no greater crime than bare walls," Dusk laughs. "It is the reflection of my style without taking out a mortgage."

Downstairs in the basement is Dusk's entertainment centre. He loves to entertain; he swears he is a homebody.

It's not your father's rec room. There is a built-in bar, flat-screen

TV, fireplace, poker table — "this is how I make my money and how I lose my money"—and DIY chairs, reupholstered by Dusk in a green polka-dot print.

"I went to Fabricland," he says. "I got second-hand chairs and refurbished them. I spent \$250 for eight chairs, all in. They were used for staging and I got them on Craigslist."

He learned how to do the reupholstering from YouTube.

The basement is fully carpeted with an orange sectional sofa. "It's my bat cave and my space to entertain and play cards. It fits 20 people. I don't like having people sit on the floor."

"I designed a bar with a bronze mirror because it is a '60s thing. I get ideas from travelling through Europe."

Framed posters conjuring up Old Hollywood are everywhere: Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca*; Sinatra in "Come Fly with Me" mode.

"In that era, life was simple; people had direction," Dusk says. "The men were gentlemen and the ladies were beautiful. *Casablanca* is a romantic image of mystique and wonder. When I got into music, people paid attention to how cool a boy of 17 was wearing a tux. It was the era of dressing to the nines.

"Even recording at Capitol Studios, in the same room Frank recorded (Dusk recorded "Back in Town" in 2006 in Capitol Records' fabled Studio A with a 58-piece orchestra), every day I wore a suit and tie out of respect for the musicians and the music. I saw the photos of Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole and it was 'why am I here?'"

### RESOURCES FOR BEDROOM MAKEOVER

- **Custom drapery & all bedding materials:** Sun-Brite Drapery & Bedding, 416-741-9430, [www.sunbriedrapery.com](http://www.sunbriedrapery.com)
- **Wallpaper:** Crown Wallpaper & Fabrics, 416-246-2315, [www.crownwallpaper.com](http://www.crownwallpaper.com)
- **Bedside wall lamps & console lamp:** Living Lighting, 905-790-9023 or 1-866-463-4124, [www.livinglighting.com](http://www.livinglighting.com)
- **Area carpet:** Carpet One Floor & Home, 1-800.CARPET-1, [www.carpetone.ca](http://www.carpetone.ca)
- **Pocket door and closet mirror:** Loews Home Improvement, [www.loewshomeimprovement.net](http://www.loewshomeimprovement.net)
- **Door hardware:** Taymor Inc., [www.taymor.com](http://www.taymor.com)
- **Round mirror:** Casalife, 416.922.2785, [www.casalife.com](http://www.casalife.com)
- **Picture frames above bed:** Michael's, [www.michaels.com](http://www.michaels.com)
- **Florals:** Fresh Floral Creations, 416 968-1270, [www.freshflorals.com](http://www.freshflorals.com)
- **Paint:** Benjamin Moore Aura, Gray Mist, [www.benjaminmoore.ca](http://www.benjaminmoore.ca)

Indeed, Dusk says he was more into house and electro music than jazz.

"A buddy handed me a CD and it was the first time I heard Big Band music," Dusk recalls. "It was a recording of 'Witch Craft.' I didn't care about Frank Sinatra before he died. I was with St. Michael's Choir School and I had a vocal range similar to Sinatra's. I used to get karaoke tapes because it was a great way to get dates."

He hadn't intended on singing professionally. He was going into his dad's packaging business and in 1998 went to York to study economics. That lasted one year, when he switched to the music program and graduated with an honours degree in jazz and popular music.

This is his first house. Family is important to him; his parents live a block away. "That is why I moved here."

His punishing touring schedule notwithstanding, it's a good time for his genre.

"Harry Connick Jr. and Michael Bublé made it a very 'male' sound," Dusk says. "It's about timing; Look at Frank Sinatra and Andy Williams. Andy Williams is a terrific singer."

Dusk has been at it 12 years professionally but says he isn't making Bublé's \$50 million paycheck.

What would he do with \$50 million? "My house would be looking differently," Dusk says.

Except perhaps for the orange rug. • For more information on Matt Dusk, including ticket sales and a video of his new single, "Good News," go to [www.mattdusk.com](http://www.mattdusk.com). To see more of Glen Peloso's work, go to [www.glenpelosointeriors.com](http://www.glenpelosointeriors.com)



Dusk's collection of Scotch whiskey is displayed in his custom bar in the newly renovated basement of his home, which is a shrine to all things Rat Pack.

