



## LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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## AROUND THE HOUSE



Courtesy, Anna Williams

## Keep it shiny

**TIP** • Copper cookware requires a little effort to keep it shiny. Here are some tarnish-removal methods from the International Copper Association:

■ Make a paste of equal parts salt, vinegar and flour. Rub the copper with the mixture in a circular motion. Wash the pot carefully, rinse thoroughly and dry.

■ Dip half a lemon in kosher salt and use it to rub the copper surface. When the tarnish disappears, use a soft cloth to polish the copper with beeswax for a lasting shine.

■ Boil copper utensils for several hours in a pot of water mixed with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 cup white vinegar. Then wash the items with soap and hot water, rinse and dry.

— McClatchy Newspapers

## An iPod for every throne

**GADGET** • Because high-tech knows no bounds, Atech Flash Technology has introduced a combination iPod dock and toilet paper holder.

The product has the unwieldy name of iCarta Stereo Dock for iPod with Bath Tissue Holder, but I prefer my editor's suggestion: iPoo.

"Now you can enhance your experience in any room with your favourite music from your iPod," the company's website promises.

The dock can be wall-mounted but needs to be plugged into an electrical outlet so it can charge your iPod while it's playing. The unit's four speakers are designed to stand up to moisture. It sells for \$99.99 US at [atechflash.com](http://atechflash.com). The iCarta+ model has a built-in rechargeable battery and sells for \$129.99.

— McClatchy Newspapers

## Portable reno primer

**BOOK** • The mother-daughter duo who collaborated to write *The Pocket Decorator* have teamed up again to produce another portable primer, *The Pocket Renovator: An Illustrated Guide to the Language of Home Improvement and Renovation* (Universe Publishing, \$25.95).

In a way that is neither pretentious nor boring, mother Pamela Banker (an interior designer) and daughter Leslie Banker (a journalist), decipher the language of home improvement. They discuss general prep work, including building codes, permits and construction plans, and offer renovation tips. Appendixes explore the topics of green design, a safe and healthy house, financing and real estate.

This guide is written with first-time homeowners and renovators in mind, but it's also a handy reference for those who consider themselves old pros.

— The Washington Post

## INTERVIEW

SASSY SCOTS  
stampede  
INTO TOWN

Decorating duo Justin and Colin ruminate on the horrors they have encountered in Canadian homes — crowded kitchens, avocado-coloured bathrooms, and those dark, dank holes we call basements.

JOHN IRELAND  
CALGARY HERALD

The secret's out; the mask has been lifted. As Canadians, we have always prided ourselves on being the polite, well-mannered, sophisticated inhabitants of North America. Not anymore.

All it took to finally reveal the wild and crazy side of all things Canuck was a pair of Scots. Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan, those tartan titans of home decor, have brought their worldwide mission to banish bad taste to the Great White North. The cheeky hosts of several successful design shows in Europe are headlining Colin & Justin's Home Heist, set to debut in October on HGTV.

Now several months into their two-year assignment, McAllister and Ryan are taking a short break from filming (60 rooms completed, millions yet to go) to make their second appearance at the Calgary Home & Interior Design Show this weekend at the Roundup Centre.

The Calgary Herald contacted the lads at their Toronto condo, where they ruminated on the horrors they have encountered in our crowded kitchens, in our avocado-coloured bathrooms, and in those dark, dank holes we call basements.

**Calgary Herald:** What are your early impressions of Canada?

**Colin:** We are having the best time. People think Canadians are polite and all that, but the people whose houses we've worked on are the craziest face of Canada. The program is going to be a real eye-opener. Canadians will watch and go 'Oh, my goodness, that's us. That's actually who we are.' We decorated one home in yellow and black and the woman of the house decided to dress up as a giant bee. It's been a really crazy adventure.

**Justin:** We're loving it, absolutely loving it. I have to say Canadian people are incredibly warm and incredibly welcoming. We have only met genuinely interesting people who have gone out of their way to make our stay here as good as it can be.

**CH:** Can you compare Canadian design disasters with those you encountered in Great Britain and Europe?

**Colin:** That's the lovely thing about bad taste — it doesn't discriminate. It doesn't know anything about geography or social class. It's got nothing to do with how much money you've got. We're just loving the fact that we're seeing Canadian bad taste in all its shapes and sizes.

**CH:** Have you been able to pinpoint a particular bad taste that is uniquely Canadian?

**Justin:** You have such beautiful trees here and yet people tend to clad their houses in fake timber and fake wood and fake plastic timber panneling. Or people go to the other extreme and they completely clad every part of their home, top and bottom, with real wood. Colin and I are sometimes terrified to go into people's homes in case we sit still too long and end up timber-clad ourselves.

**Colin:** We're trying to get into the psyche of Canada, how you use your homes differently. Obviously the weather has an effect on certain things that you have to have, like the great Canadian mudroom. A third of the space in your Canadian homes is wasted on a basement with nothing in it. They look like a serial killer's lair with a very dated TV sitting in the corner.

**Justin:** Canadians are also obsessed with these huge American fridges, these monolithic fridge-freezers. And massive ranges. How much cooking are people intending to do; how much storing of cold goods are people intending to do? It just seems bonkers.

**CH:** What's the worst decorating faux pas you've encountered so far?

**Justin:** We saw one house where they had carpeted the ceiling in the bathroom, as well as the sink surround. I mean, that's mental. The carpet was also on the floor and the window ledges. Finally — the piece de resistance — they had carpeted the cistern of their toilet. That is just insane. These carpet fetishes are almost out of control. They are creating homes that are nothing short of terrifying.

SEE SASSY, PAGE G2

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