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MY DIGS

Circa 1940s fixer-upper, fixed up

Location: Mount Pleasant

Price: Envyable. "I think we were one of the last people in Vancouver to buy a free-standing, single dwelling family home in Vancouver for under \$300,000."

Square feet: 2,600

Length of time here: Almost four years

Occupants: Nicole Oliver, actor, voice-over artist, and host of *Crash Test Mommy*, on the Life Network. Oliver played detective Kelly Blake in *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*; lead in *The Felling*, and took on roles in shows such as *The Collector*, *Outer Limits*, *The Sentinel*, *StarGate SG-1*, among others. Lives with husband Chris and toddler sons, Grady and William.

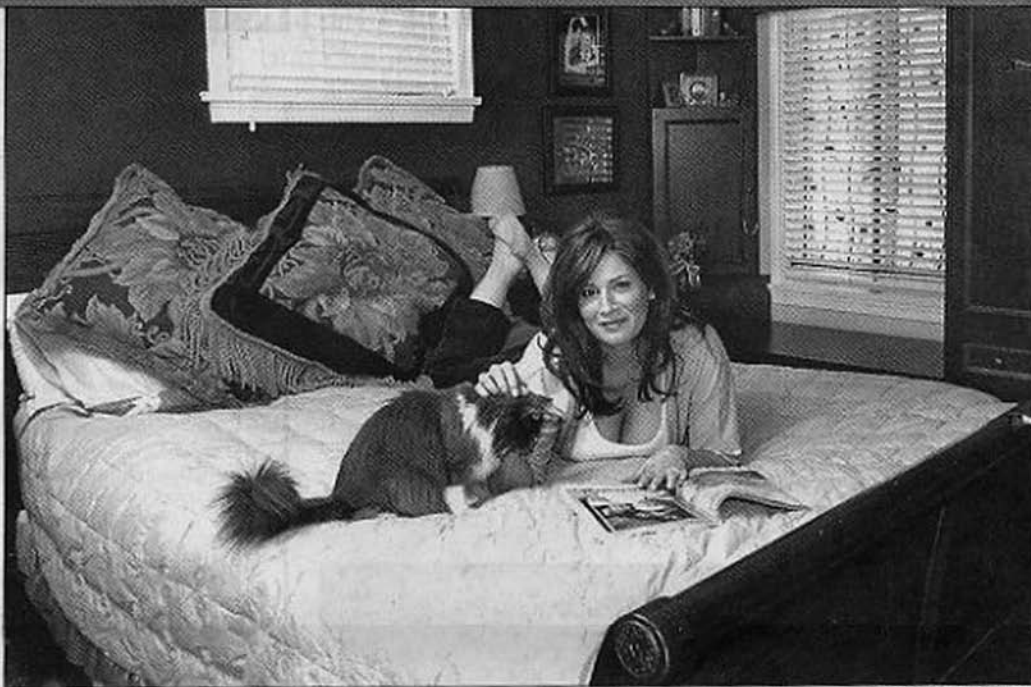
First thing I changed: "When we purchased the house, it had orange shag carpeting, lime green walls, rebar on the windows and had been divided (illegally) into three suites. Our first mission was to return the home to its former glory, but somewhere between the drywall and the final coat of paint, we found out we were pregnant. Now we have two little boys, and thankfully the orange shag and rebar are a thing of the renovated past... We replaced rebar on windows, updated all the light fixtures, laid new carpeting and laminate flooring, installed a brand new kitchen, re-did bathrooms, added exterior doors, a security system, [and much, much more]."

Feature I brag about: "The wood-burning fireplace. It is such a treat on a cold fall/winter night — heck, just about any night! — to sit in front of a crackling fire and have a glass of Shiraz with my husband and catch each other up on our day. The other part of the house I adore is the deck off of the kitchen. It provides us with another 400-square-feet of living space and becomes our dining room/lounge in the warmer parts of the year."



Oliver's coveted fireplace and family-heirloom mirror.

That one conversation piece: "The most obvious one is the mirror over the fireplace. It used to hang in my husband's grandparents' home in West Vancouver. It then moved to my husband's parents' home in North Vancouver. Six years ago, when they decided to sell the family home and move to a condo, Chris noticed the mirror was still hanging on the wall above the fireplace after the movers had left. The mirror was kind of like a 'Cinderella's shoe' in our quest for the perfect house. If the mirror



Nicole Oliver, lounging with the family feline in her Mount Pleasant home. After extensive renovations, Oliver and her young family have created an abode with a decor style she calls "Pottery Barn after one too many martinis."

wouldn't fit above the fireplace, then the house we were looking at wasn't even an option."

The décor: "The style we were going after was warm and cozy. My husband and I wanted our home to be a place that you could relax in and that people would feel instantly at home in when they entered. We used lots of warm-toned colours (camel, taupe, chocolate, cream) and natural fabrics (leather, suede, sisal) in the décor and we pulled the colour red throughout the home, adding that consistent punch of colour in almost every room. I call my decorating style 'Pottery Barn after one too many martinis.'"

Downsides: "The only downside is that we live on a peat bog area, so the roads are very bumpy and some of the houses have settled in our area to 'Leaning Tower of Pisa' proportions. Our home, according to all inspections, is doing just fine, thank-you-very-much."

Neighbourhood haunts: "My husband and I love all the little boutiques and restaurants up and down Main Street; ok, we love the restaurants, I love the boutiques. To dine/sip cocktails we love The Public, Habit, The Reef and The Five Point. For shopping, Barefoot Contessa and Johnathan + Olivia. JJ Bean at 14th and Main is where I get my morning latte fix and the bagels at Solly's (28th and Main) are perfect for Sunday mornings."

Compared to our last place: "Our last place was an apartment in the West End with a glorious 40-foot long deck with a breathtaking, nearly unobstructed view of English Bay. Needless to say we were very popular around fireworks time! While we miss looking at the ocean every day, we do not miss the noise and traffic of the West End."

Most recent home purchase: "A chaise for the living room from Pottery Barn and some 600-thread count sheets for our bedroom. I love love love the chaise — did I tell you how much I love the chaise? — and I swear I sleep better with those darn sheets on our bed! My husband's sleep was a little restless when he saw the bill for them, but we do spend one-third of our life asleep so..."

Favourite apartment activity: "My favourite activity is playing in the sandbox with my two boys. When they're napping, and if I have some free time, I love to putter in the garden. My thumb is actually now somewhere between an olive-brown and a light green; I hope to be a full-fledged green-thumb gardener before too long."

Do you love what you've done with your digs, or dig your 'hood? Share it with fellow WestEnders readers. Drop an email to mydigs@westender.com