



Rana Florida, Associate Editor

Rana Florida is a lifestyle columnist, and the writer and editor of HGTV.ca's [Creative Spaces](#). Follow Rana @ranaflorida

Creative Spaces: A Vibrant and Daring Toronto Penthouse

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When the Tukul family relocated to mid-town Toronto, they imagined a comfortable home for themselves and their two young children — and at the same time, a fun and vibrant place to entertain their large circle of friends and family. Two designers, Goran Tijanac and Alexander-Sasha Josipovicz, helped them make that dream a reality.

The bright yellow color and fragrant scent of quince (like a mix of apples, rose petals, and lemon) was their jumping off point; their only guideline beyond that was to use lots of color, art, and unique furnishings. The sculptures, chandeliers and paintings that fill the Tukul's condo are as animated and daring as the palette of colors on its furniture and walls: hot pink, purple, yellow and green. They call their home “Cardak,” after the mythical place that exists between the Earth and the Heavens, where only happy people live.



Living room, featuring [Jakub Dolejs'](#) sculpture, *Frankenstein* 2012

Rana Florida: Describe the neighborhood and house.

Ms. Tukul: It was new construction: a 4,000 square foot duplex penthouse with three bedrooms and four bathrooms, and access to the wrap-around terraces from each principle room. Being able to see the glorious sunsets was big selling point for us.

RF: Tell us about your overall vision for the home.

MT: Growing up as we did in the former Ottoman Empire, we were used to intense color combinations like lilacs, greens and yellows. We added iconic furnishings by the Campana brothers, juxtaposed with antiques and art works that had either been handed down through our families or that we acquired through local dealers.



Punchy green backsplash in the kitchen

RF: What was the biggest construction challenge you overcame?

MT: Delivery of materials and the logistics of construction posed problems in a building where some tenants were already living, but the MultiCore and Line to Line construction crew's were experienced and handled them with ease.

RF: Describe the team dedicated to the project and your working relationship.

MT: We chose the Sarajevo-born architect Goran Tijanac, founder of the Line to Line Design Company, and the internationally acclaimed interior designer Alexander-Sasha Josipovicz, who was born in Belgrade. Though we are of different ethnic and professional backgrounds, we share a lot: all of us hail from the war-torn Balkans and we are attempting to rebuild our lives in Canada. Our first meeting felt almost like a reunion; we instantly connected not just as collaborators but as friends.



This pink armchair and purple drawers decorate the master bedroom

RF: Your furniture is so vibrant and has such a great punch of color, where did you find such unique pieces?

MT: Shopping for eclectic and iconic pieces always poses challenges in conservative Toronto, whose retailers tend to avoid daring choices. Sourcing those “I need to have it” pieces is an art form in itself—one that Sasha excels at.

RF: Tell us about the chandelier in the master bathroom.

MT: The purple grape Murano chandelier was the first purchase we made with the team. It sent a signal to Sasha: *Go for it! I am not a Stepford wife.*

RF: I love the artistic nook under the stairs. Please describe your use of space.

MT: We utilize it more for its sentimental aesthetics than its function. The wallpaper behind the floating staircase evokes both a Kilim rug and a magic carpet. [Bocci](#) lights from [Eurolite](#) suggest a starry sky, while the built-in bench seating along the wall creates a tent-like atmosphere. It is impossible to climb or descend the staircase without being drawn into “Ending,” Thrush Holmes’s massive and enigmatic painting.



A dreamy reading nook under the stairs

RF: Tell us about your dramatic art collection and the sculpture. Do you consider a theme or a vision for each room when selecting the pieces?

MT: The artwork was selected by Sasha; he went with his gut feeling on each and every one of them. The rod iron sculpture is irresistible: sexy, curvy, and grand scale. We love it.

RF: The kitchen is daring and stunning, describe the green black splash and any other materials.

MT: We cook a lot and we wanted kitchen space to have continuity with the rest of the house—to have clean lines, be modern and filled with lot color. Green symbolizes a lot to our family, and the kitchen/family room is where we spend most of our time with our kids. Sasha used green glass only for vertical services, to fill the space with its bright reflections.



Master bathroom, with his and her sides separated by the shower

RF: The dining room looks out onto a private green filled courtyard, which brings in a lot of natural sunlight. Was outdoor space an important component in the overall design?

MT: Wrap around terraces not only provide visual extensions to the principle rooms, they get to be used as well. We furnished them with outdoor furniture from Royal Botania and landscaped them with maintenance-free wild ornamental grasses that move with the wind, creating a kind of spontaneous performance art, 24 hours a day.

RF: What is your favorite room in the house and why?

MT: My favourite room is the master bedroom on the second floor, which is both contemporary and romantic. Facing west, it offers unobstructed views of the sunsets, juxtaposed with its own vibrant color scheme. Falling asleep with the one you love, being so close to the stars, makes every hard working day worthwhile.