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The Standard

AT HOME

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Designer Digs

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of some of Niagara's top designers



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DESIGNER DIGS



Architectural embellishment
This simple "shoebox" is transformed with the addition of details like the arch above the breakfast bar and glass blocks for the bath.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake home **Wendy Edwards** and her husband live in was once a "shoebox cottage," she says. They bought the 840-square-foot shoebox on a three-quarters-acre lot and were so busy professionally they've not had time to finish it yet.

"We only had time to spare on Sunday mornings, so it took us two years to plan," she says with a grin. "We were also going through a slight recession then, so we took it a bit at a time."

Entertaining space was a priority, Edwards says. They do a lot and wanted enough space that guests would be comfortable everywhere. They opened up the interior, making a larger dining space that involved the kitchen – and it's the kitchen where everyone gathers.

Windows were placed high in the wall, anticipating the need for privacy when a house was built next door. It has a southern exposure so there's always great light, she says, and because it's high, it doesn't need window treatments.

Furniture in the living room is casual: sofas and chairs from the 1930s, collected from the time the cottage was built; sentimental pieces such as her grandmother's gateleg table, and a one-of-a-kind coffee table that didn't get much interest at a High Point furniture market, so Wendy eventually bought it.

Edwards loves textures, she says. She has blended chenille and wick-

er, marble and leather. She likes odd shapes with a story. Sleek lines of a modern television are right at home in the wrought iron and multi-textured living room.

There's a distinctly Caribbean flavour to the great room, because the Edwards love the colour and the warmth of the islands and have picked up many art souvenirs from their trips. A pair of Mexican lampshades are notable on one wall, while other lighting casts a bright, though gentle glow. Lighting is important, says Edwards. It creates moods.

With her love of additions and renovations, Edwards did some interesting things with a guest powder room. As it had no window, she added glass block in the wall, which lets in light from the main rooms. It also looks blue because it reflects the blue wallpaper and accessories inside the powder room.

"I'm not a blue person. I don't know why I did that colour," she says. "But I like it and it gets lots of comments."

Very earthy tones are used throughout the house, with blue tiles in the earth-toned ceramic floor. A cork floor went into the kitchen for warmth and more texture. And a bulkhead was installed over the kitchen entrance, hiding a structural wall and blending with the curved living room wall.

Bit by bit the house is becoming a home, but there's no rush, says Wendy. ■