



The Mod Couple

After retiring early, the Toroks bought a farmhouse in Terra Nova, northwest of Toronto. Now they spend their

TERRA NOVA, NORTHWEST OF TORONTO. NOW THEY SPEND THEIR days gardening and motorbiking

BY SIMON LEWSEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIN LEYDON | JULY 23, 2021



Who: Susan Torok, a former decor manager for a builder, and her husband, Steve Torok, a former interior design firm owner.



What: A modernist three-bed, three-bath country home on 1.3 acres in Terra Nova.



Susan and Steve met on a blind date in 2018 and realized they had just about everything in common, including a desire to retire early and leave city life behind. The following year, they found the perfect place to do it, an hour's drive from Toronto, and put their properties in the city on the market (a townhouse in Markham for Steve and a detached in Vaughan for Susan).

Steve, who's pretty handy, took on the repairs: patching up the radiant-heating system and rewiring the electricals so the thermostat, blinds and sound system could be controlled by apps. Susan hired interior designer Michelle Berwick to craft tactile spaces with natural and industrial finishes. They moved in a few months before the onset of the pandemic, and added a pool this spring.

Despite being lifelong city dwellers, Susan and Steve quickly adjusted to the rhythms of country life. Susan has taken up gardening with a vengeance, and Steve, who owns two motorbikes, splits his time between riding through the surrounding Mulmur Hills and working on home improvement projects. He's currently building a home gym above the garage, and a pool house. "We've both worked hard all our lives," says Susan. "Now we're finally enjoying ourselves."

Susan and Steve rigged up a sound system in the great room and were stunned by the stellar acoustics. They love listening to Phil Collins's "In the Air Tonight," with its pounding drums and washes of reverb:



They use the upstairs loft for quiet reading, playing the guitar or naps. At night, they like to watch the moon as it moves across the sky from that vantage point:





Susan and Steve purchased this diptych at Niche Decor:



The swivel barstools from Sunpan are always a hit with guests. They're comfortable enough to sit in for hours:



“When we purchased the house, the front door was black. We thought it needed some colour,” says Susan:



The landing window overlooks rows of pine trees in the backyard. “When I looked at the real estate listing photos,” says Susan, “I thought the picture windows were artworks hanging on the walls”:



Here's their bedroom:



And the main bath:



Designer Michelle Berwick chose these decorative sheep to add levity to the interiors. “They’re no-maintenance pets,” says Susan. “You don’t need to feed or walk them, and they’re very well behaved”:



Occasionally Steve helps out at a neighbour's farm. His tasks include harvesting alfalfa, fixing equipment and looking after the livestock: Scottish Highland cattle and a flock of sheep.



Steve owns a Moto Guzzi and an Indian Motorcycle Scout. He had sold the latter a few years back and instantly regretted it, so Susan tracked down the owner and bought back the bike at sale price as a surprise gift:

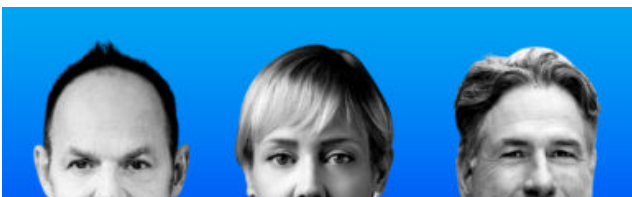


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