



at home

Cartoon creators **MELLENY MELODY**
and **CLIVE SMITH** live an animated life.

BY DAVID MACFARLANE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAFI ROSEN

112 CANADIAN HOUSE & HOME

There's a bicycle in the front hallway that is upholstered in pink marabou. It's called the Barbie Bicycle of Love.

It was created by Melleny Melody, the lady of the house, who is the voice of Cheer Bear and Baby Tugs on the *Care Bear* cartoon series. Melleny is a "renovator of clothing, cakes, and frames," and her creations have appeared in galleries, in movies, and on celebrities such as Shelley Duvall and Helen Shaver. The Barbie Bicycle leans against a dark green wall that is filled with an entire flock of duck wall-ornaments. Then, on the landing of the stairs, there is a Thai Buddha beside a Salvador Dali painting of Jean Harlow. This is set against the real 1940s wallpaper that Melleny Melody and her husband Clive Smith, a co-owner of Nelvana Films, Canada's largest independent animated film producer and the company behind cartoon hits such as *Beetlejuice* and *Babar*,

found in a downtown Toronto paint store. Clive Smith considers the wallpaper "a very lucky find" and is especially partial to the abundant pink, rose and green floral pattern in the front room where the grand piano and the white chandelier and the pink mantel and the Chinese headdress reside. "I think of it as a cross between an ice cream parlour and a bordello," he says.

They call it the Ho-Ho house. And as Melleny Melody and Clive Smith show you around ("Did you see the wall o' masks?" they ask) they spend a good deal of time laughing. ("No, I didn't," you say.) Well, you have to see the wall o' masks and sure enough, around the corner from the cartoon-coloured, poster-lined, loft-bedded room of their seven-year-old son, Zach, there is a wall filled with masks that has the words "wall o' masks" printed on it. And Clive Smith and

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Melleny Melody chuckle again — which is precisely the point. The Ho-Ho house reflects the uncontrollable sense of humour and the giddy spirit of fun that pervades their lives. "This is a family home," says Melleny. "That's what it's all about. That's why it is the way it is. It's not my creation or Clive's creation. The three of us like it like this, and it just sort of happened."

Apparently, the way it happened was that in 1979 Melleny Brown, an aspiring Toronto actress who was living in New York City, began pestering Clive Smith, the congenial vice-president of the steadily rising Nelvana, for a job. One thing led to another, and eventually Melleny saw the inside of Clive's apartment. "I couldn't believe it," she says. "It was as cluttered and as crazy and as full of strange things as my apartment in New York. I moved my hockey bags right in."

Twelve years ago Melleny and Clive bought their large Victorian home. "The first thing we did was the bathroom," Clive says, and if ever there was an interior decorating understatement, this is it. "Doing the bathroom" consisted of installing a large, step-up Jacuzzi, a swordfish, a bright red television aerial mast, fish from California, fish from China, a 1950s satellite chandelier, a mirror from an old fireplace, and a wall mirror with a frame that Clive made using insulation foam, shells, plastic lobsters, rubber frogmen and an octopus.

"It's entirely functional," Clive says, as he winds up the propeller on a toy speedboat embedded in the rolling waves of the insulation foam. He lets it go with a flourish. But the propeller fails to turn. Clive Smith rolls his eyes. "Darling," he calls out to Melleny, "the cleaning lady's been playing with the picture frames again." ♦