

New in Homes

M SECTION » TORONTO STAR « SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2004 ★ thestar.com

Colourful storeys

Pizza delivery drivers will have no problem finding the house at 289 Kingsdale, not only because the address is lit up at night.

Husband and wife team delight in dressing up Willowdale in homes that evoke their native Brazil. Former pizza delivery man enjoys creating easy-to-find, stand-out addresses, *by Donna Laporte*

Brazilian builders José Oliveira and his wife Selma have completed their second customized home in the Bayview-Sheppard area and it is every bit as stunning as their first.

The Orange House, as it became known, married the culture of their adopted home to their native Brazil, evoking hot sun and warm autumn colours. And it caused quite a stir in conservative Willowdale.

Kingsdale is commanding equal raves; real estate agents who flocked to a recent open house were wide-eyed. Some said it belonged in Rosedale or Forest Hill — a tribute to its grandeur.

José figures that a public open house on May 8 drew about 100 visitors, and created "more noise" than one for the Orange house.

"Keep your imagination going. You're dressing up Willowdale," one visitor wrote in the guest book.

Another wondered, "Which colour will be next?"

The attention to detail is impressive. Take the house number, for example.

When José first arrived in Canada, he got work delivering pizzas. Unlike many new immigrants, he didn't need to take a menial job.

Selma was a successful architect in São Paulo and he had just left a job as chief financial officer for the largest real estate company in Brazil.

He took the delivery job because he needed to improve his English and also wanted to scope out the neighbourhoods where he would soon be building.

The lack of lighting often made it hard for him to find the right house, making on-time delivery a challenge — though telling people how tough it was generated better tips, he says, chuckling.

No delivery person will have that problem here.



MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR

Builder José Oliveira and wife Selma, an architect, have now outdone their first, bright orange house by building their second, in Monet blue. The spacious, architectural, unusual homes have drawn a great deal of favourable attention from neighbours, who adore the homes' vibrant hues.

► Please see Colourful, M6

Innovation

'I'm building my name'

► Colourful From M1

Architectural technologist Bruno Di Tomaso, who did the drawings for Selma (she's a renowned architect in São Paulo but isn't sufficiently fluent in English to write her Canadian exams yet), gives high marks to both the style and workmanship.

"When I see lines and everything is symmetrical, that's called passion," he says.

"I love Selma's designs. She has great, innovative designs."

Even the North York committee of adjustment, which approved the final design, had kind words for Selma's work, José says.

With essentially the same work crew as before, they completed the 5,000-square-foot house (including the finished basement) in seven months. Workers went above the call, offering to help in unexpected ways, José says.

Loyalty is earned and rewarded, he says. He adds that in Brazil, he has employed the same crew for 25 years. With two projects on the go there, he and Selma still spend 20 days a month out of the country. After those jobs are completed, they will concentrate on building their business here.

Listed for \$1.34 million, their new open-concept, five-bedroom home features "crema marfil" marble flooring in the foyer, kitchen, master ensuite bathroom and laundry room. Living and dining rooms have crown moulding and brown birch floors with marble border. Extensive use of windows and wall cutouts allow light to pass through the open space even on a dull day.

The pièce de résistance is the family room, situated on its own half-floor along with a den. The family room's focal point is a limestone fireplace, with floor-to-ceiling windows on each side. The den's double French doors



MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR

The family room focal point is a limestone fireplace with floor-to-ceiling windows on each side. Below, the kitchen has "crema marfil" marble flooring, as does the foyer and master bathroom.

allow for privacy, yet offer a view of the rooms below. It could easily double as a home office.

The master bedroom has glass-block windows, a cathedral ceiling, a walk-through closet leading to the ensuite bathroom, which has whirlpool tub, separate shower, private bidet and toilet and a skylight.

An oak staircase leads to the finished basement, which features a light-coloured floor, wet bar, wine racks, fireplace, guest room and four-piece bath, small cedar-lined sauna, and cold room.

The two-car garage connects to a mudroom beside the kitchen.

Off the kitchen in the back is a cedar deck with a gas-barbecue outlet. A pressure-treated fence offers privacy. Out front, an interlocking driveway slopes down on the east side to accommodate a next-door neighbour in a wheelchair, in case she is inclined to visit her new neighbours.



A small brass plaque tucked unobtrusively by the main entrance bears the company name, Studium T Building Inc.

José loves the house so much he'd like to live there, but recognizes "we have to test the market."

"I'm building my name," he says proudly.

Although Selma has been

asked to draw plans for other houses, she steadfastly refuses. Her heart and soul goes into each project and she feels fully responsible for the end product.

For those who are wondering, she has already chosen the colour for her next masterpiece: a light but vibrant green.

Now that's a house of a different colour.