

## HOMES & CONDOS

### CONDO PET

# Love at first sight

JANICE BRADBEER  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The Hickey family was planning to welcome a dog into their home, but not for a few years. However, when they “dog sat” gentle Abby this past April, it took the Toronto couple just an instant to fall in love with her.

“We started babysitting Abby on April 2 and decided almost immediately we wanted to keep her. We adopted her on April 11,” says Joanna Hickey of the lovely beagle and Australian cattle dog cross.

Joanna and Chris Hickey were engaged at the time and agreed to look after Abby for friend Tim Purvis, who was fostering Abby until the dog rescue organization, Take Me Home, could find the medium-sized dog a new home.

“As Chris and I absolutely love dogs, we jumped on the opportunity,” says Hickey, an executive coordinator for a health organization.

She brought the black-and-brindle Abby home to her 1,200-square-foot, two-bedroom Leaside condo, where Abby quickly impressed them with her calm demeanor and affectionate hugs and kisses.

“It was interesting at first as I kept her at the condo while Chris hadn’t moved in yet. But while it was a bit

of a challenge initially and the timing wasn’t exactly as planned, we are very happy about how things turned out,” says Hickey.

Abby, who is about 2 years old, was used to roaming unfettered on the farm she originally came from. Highrise living proved an adjustment, although her independent, adaptable nature meant that she was content to entertain herself when alone.

Plus she proved a smart, quick study. “It probably took her the longest to get used to walking in an urban area and a set walking schedule,” says Hickey. “For the first couple of weeks, she would get very excited by all the people, bikes and cars going by. However, after maintaining a consistent walking schedule, she has since become very comfortable in her environment.”

In fact, Abby’s surroundings are “amazing for anyone with a dog,” and include a couple of nearby parks, two pet stores and two leash-free areas all within easy driving distance.

Joanna and Chris, who works as a regulatory analyst for a telecommunications company, also like their condo’s proximity to a grocery store, public transit, restaurants and other conveniences. Hickey has



Abby, a beagle and Australian cattle dog mix, has adjusted to living in a condominium with her new family, Joanna and Chris Hickey.

owned the condo for over two years and Chris moved in after they married in June.

The condo provides enough space for Abby, including a generous terrace where the two play fetch, Hickey says. “Abby loves to lie in front of the patio door. It is almost impossible to get her to move when the sun is shining in the morning.”

The Hickeys put Abby on a walking and feeding schedule and try to expose her to different environments.

“When Abby does get overly excit-

ed or misbehaves, we find that she responds very well when we make her sit and be calm before continuing on. As for us, when Abby gets excited (such as barking at bikes or joggers) we sometimes have to remind ourselves to be patient and to remember how far she has come in the short time we have had her,” says Hickey.

And that short time has been a happy one.

“Most importantly, she has brought a lot of joy to our family, which makes her special to us.”

### HOME VIEWING

# Creativity is in you, just let it out, Russell says

Host of HGTV’s ‘She’s Crafty’ has been upcycling since she was a small girl

JENNIFER WILSON  
YOURHOME.CA EDITOR

Before twentysomethings started hosting Friday night knitting parties and whipping up their own upcycled headboard over the course of a weekend became something to brag about, Wendy Russell was already creating her own eco-friendly goodies.

Upcycling is “something I’ve been doing since I was a small tot,” says the host of HGTV’s *She’s Crafty*, explaining that her grandmother was a single parent who, struggling to raise two children, made what she could and reused and repurposed whenever possible. Her mother, and then Russell herself, continued the tradition.

“We weren’t allowed to go out and buy fancy things,” she says, recalling how, as a child, when she wanted a Barbie dollhouse her grandmother made her one — a gesture she now appreciates as far sweeter than the purchased version.

“I’ve always been recycling and upcycling,” she says, commenting on how trendy her hobbies have become.

“It’s always going to be in style because we are all trying to save the planet now.”

Russell will be sharing her tips for stylish entertaining at the Fall Home Show Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m., where she’ll show viewers how to make trifle/candy dishes, slate cheese trays and her favourite party foods, including a pea guacamole that she just can’t get enough of.

On her own table, Russell says she always likes to provide a little takeaway for her guests, for example, reusing her stockpile of flowerpots filled with white rocks and succulents.

Not only is it a beautiful gift, she says, but it also “alleviates the need for a centerpiece.”

She also likes to dress her table with conversation starters, such as using 9-by-12 sheets of paper as placemats paired with crayon filled cups so guests can doodle, share notes and play games.

“As adults, we often forget to have fun because we’re so busy working on our careers and taking care of the kids. We end up sitting down to this very serious dining table,” she says, so why not mix it up and “get creativity going . . . who knows where it will lead!”

Her other entertaining tip is to “make sure that everything you have on the table is something that you love. Make sure everything has a story and you connect to everything,” she says. Not only does it ramp up your decor but it also “makes for great conversation.”

And, of course, she urges everyone to explore creativity in their own homes. It’s “important to look at something you have and think about making it better,” she says. Take grandma’s china that has been collecting dust on the shelf and “you can make a three-tier cake stand fairly easily with strong glue, epoxy, plates and candlesticks,” says Russell.

Or, when tasked with the problem of a family collection of unused silver spoons, she suggests creating a hot plate. She suggests fastening the spoons, using epoxy, to one layer of heat safe acrylic, and then fastening another sheet of acrylic on top of your design using nuts and bolts in the corners. “You can see your spoons, but they have a function,” she says.

“I think if you are considering getting rid of something because you’re tired of it, (first) look at it with a different set of eyes, see if there’s another use you can make of it,” she says, suggesting looking to home decor magazines for inspiration.

“Creativity, it’s in there people. I know you have it! Let it out!”

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