



"She's come up with creative ways to have kids and a beautiful environment," says fellow HGTV star Vern Yip.



"I love that every day is different and every client is unique," says Olson (in her Toronto home).

HGTV'S CANDICE OLSON

DESIGN FOR LIFE

The *Divine Design* judge shows her decorating prowess with style that's right at home with her rambunctious family **BY CHARLOTTE TRIGGS**



"I always tell people that if you find a good contractor, don't let him go. I married mine!" says Olson (at home with dog Chaplin, husband Jurij, Beckett and Pyper).

Her home's design "is really eclectic," says Olson. "It's modern but not severe. We incorporate a lot of natural elements but from a tongue-in-cheek perspective."



A lot has changed since Candice Olson entered the interior design business more than 20 years ago—especially at home. "When I first started, I didn't have kids," says Olson, who now lives with "two very active children, a dog, two cats and a husband who's probably worse than all of them!" Now the HGTV designer, 45, knows firsthand that, as in her Toronto 1950s-style side-split home, family must trump form. "It's great to design a beautiful, modern, sleek home like you'd see in a magazine," she says. "But if it doesn't suit your lifestyle, it's really wasted."

It's a lesson Olson—who hosts HGTV's hit show *Divine Design* and judges the network's top-rated *Design Star*—learned the hard way. "There are no more white linen sofas in my house," she says with a laugh. "We have a rule here: Anything below 36 inches has to be brown or black—the color of

chocolate or peanut butter!" Olson prides herself on being able to design within those limitations. She was also able to turn a small business (she began designing private residences and restaurant interiors in 1989) into an empire that includes her own line of products. "We don't have one of those houses where there's a rope that separates the kids' area from the adult area," she says. "There's a happy medium. It's all about fabric choices, accessories."

But Olson admits even she can sometimes get a little overwhelmed trying to reconcile high-minded design and her "big, happy, furry family," especially with the upcoming renovation to their home. Husband Jurij, 39, "is a builder, so he has definite opinions—and he's German, so they are amplified even more!" Olson says. Her kids Pyper, 6, and Beckett,

4, are also keen to call the shots: Pyper wants a balcony, while Beckett has "design theories that revolve around Spider-Man, Iron Man and Batman," she says. "I tell people marriage is a compromise, and so are renovations. I'll try to practice what I preach." In the end, Mom's the expert—even if the kids aren't impressed with her TV-star status. Jokes Olson: "I'm no Hannah Montana!" ●