

This copy is for your personal non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies of Toronto Star content for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, or inquire about permissions/licensing, please go to: www.TorontoStarReprints.com

ENTERTAINMENT

What goes on inside Toronto's Darling Mansion?

By **Denise Dias** Special to the Star

🚩 **Wed., Jan. 27, 2016** | ⌚ 3 min. read

If you've ever had brunch at Luna or mojitos at Julie's Cuban on Dovercourt Rd., chances are you've spotted the out-of-place mansion on the corner that meets Mackenzie Cres. One of the largest homes in the area, it's a storybook tangle of ivy-covered red brick, sculptured balconies and ornate gardens. And up until recently, it was starting to look decrepit.

The neglected property was originally listed in late 2013 at an outrageous \$3.3 million, where it sat on the market for months and was relisted several times. Finally, in November 2014, Tanya Grossi, a then 40-year-old bar owner and entrepreneur, purchased the place for \$1.85 million with two investors.

Her ambitious vision to transform the magnificent 6,000-square-foot estate into her primary residence, a creative event space, and a bed and breakfast took only four months to realize.



“It’s been a labour of love,” says Grossi, who ran the recently closed Parkdale bar Salvador Darling. “I was enamoured with this property 20 years ago when I lived up the street and to live here now and be the ‘madam’ of this place is surreal.”

Since opening last April, the *Darling Mansion*, as it’s now known, has been growing busier with private bookings and overnight guests, mainly through word of mouth and social media.

Several artists live in residence on the third floor, including photographer Mark Maryanovich, who was recently hired by the Governor General of Canada to photograph 100 Canadian musicians for Canada’s sesquicentennial in 2017.



The Canadian web series *Carmilla*, Peter Lynch’s soon-to-be-released film *Birdland* and a video for local musician SATE have all used the quirky rooms of the home as a backdrop. Celebs with a certain level of street cred have also graced the manor. Oscar-winning actor Geoffrey Rush hosted a private dinner there during last year’s Toronto International Film Festival.

On the second floor, Grossi rents out four large bedrooms, lavishly decorated with her extensive collection of unusual antiques and artwork. Rooms start at \$99 per night or \$2,000 a night for the first two floors. Besides a meal and a mattress, Darling guests have access to the essentials: kimonos, hula hoop and a tickle trunk.



A peek inside the Darling Mansion

The facade: Commanding the northwest corner of Dovercourt Rd. and Mackenzie Cres. in Toronto's west end, the Darling Mansion is an unassuming creative venue made up of cool event spaces and themed bedrooms for nightly rent on [Airbnb](#) or the home's website.

The inside: The iconic Victorian mansion in the Little Portugal neighbourhood was reimagined last year by Tanya Grossi, a native Torontonian who remembers being fascinated by the property growing up in the city. Grossi redesigned the house from top to bottom, filling the rooms with her personal collection of oddities and antiques, to create a whimsical retreat for guests.



For rent: Taxidermy, colourful wallpaper, erotic photography, vintage lighting fixtures and fur throws: a few of the eccentric items that contribute to the eye-popping decor in the mansion's four rooms for rent. Guests can choose from the Opium Den, the Magic Carpet Ride Room, the Wes Anderson Room or the Boudoir Room.

The owner: Grossi poses in the Boudoir Room, which features a custom-made mirror suspended from the ceiling and a striking, 3D-looking cheetah by local street artist and muralist Birdo.

The events: The Darling Mansion can be hired for private events including bachelor parties, charity galas, birthdays, weddings, plus film, music or editorial photo shoots.



YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN...



BUSINESS

Working from home due to the pandemic? You're eligible for a big tax break — here's how to get it

🚩 Jun. 16, 2020

Sacred and Secret: The GTA's hidden burial sites



HOMES

Darling Mansion serves two purposes for Evan Biddell

🚩 Aug. 13, 2016





UPDATED INTERACTIVE

Toronto's chief medical officer is begging people to stay home. This interactive map shows where gathering in groups poses the greatest risk

🚨 Oct. 03, 2020

More from The Star & Partners
