

THE



TOP Antique bar from the Mexican cantina



PHOTOGRAPHY CHIAN, MILK PHOTOGRAPHIE

Across the Americas

NO STRANGERS TO THE CITY-STATE, FORMER MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO SINGAPORE EDUARDO RAMOS-GÓMEZ AND HIS FAMILY RETURN AFTER A FIVE-YEAR HIATUS. OBSERVES ALEXANDRA KOHUT-COLE, A MAN'S HOUSE IS HIS CASA

ORIGINALLY FROM EDMONTON, ALBERTA, WESTERN CANADA, Pamela Ramos-Gómez waited for the children's school year to finish in New York before making the move to Singapore, while her husband arrived ahead in January with the furniture. Consequently, he designed the apartment. "Aren't I fortunate?" asks Pamela. "And he did a fabulous job; I just put in my two bits worth every now and again and he took care of it." While the man of the house does not always take charge of household moves, he does have a say in how things are done.

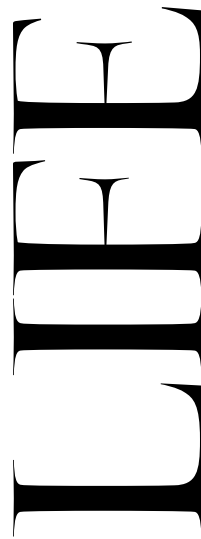
The interior, says Pamela, is an eclectic mix absorbed from Canadian and Mexican roots and "from picking up the things we have seen along the way." Everything in the apartment comes from a trip or has some kind of meaning, be it having belonged to either family in Mexico or Canada "or something to do with the

kids." Pamela likes her husband's design of the apartment and agrees they often share the same tastes. "He's very creative and focuses on the big picture and can put things together very well. I am more detail orientated so we fit together."

The most unusual aspect of the interior is the



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Favourite breakfast set from a Mexican country farmhouse; The Ramos-Gómez children, María, Gabriel and Sebastian; Dining room, a fusion of visual culture



The interior is an eclectic mix absorbed from Canadian and Mexican roots

use of black for many of the walls – the perfect backdrop to the art which hangs on them, creating a gallery-like effect. “Eduardo thought the black walls would be nice. We had them in Mexico City first where he suggested black walls to separate the living from the dining room. So when he suggested it for here it turned out very well.” Clearly, collecting art is close to the heart of the Ramos-Gómezs. “We try to collect but we are running out of walls and if we continue we will need to get rid of some or get new houses.”

Rather disarmingly, up on entering the hallway guests come face to face with an antique carving of Christ, at least 200 years old. Originating from a church in Mexico, it’s sculpted in wood and mounted against the black. Nearby is a vibrantly colourful triple series of Mexican rooster paintings next to an Indonesian work of similar subject matter and colouring.

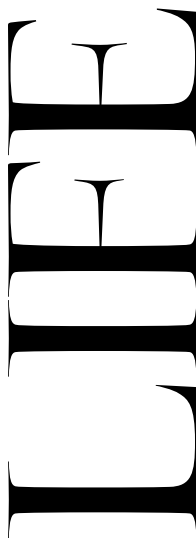
When facing the “red” corner of the sitting room a large Chinese wooden cabinet comes into view next to the riot of fluorescent colour that’s another piece of Mexican artwork, providing an enlightening backdrop to an assembly of Myanmar lunch boxes of differing shapes



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Chinese cabinet from Shanghai; Mexican caste painting; Pamela with son, Sebastian
OPPOSITE
Grape chandelier and family portrait

HOMES

Private
Lives



and sizes yet all lacquered in similar earthy reds and black. Behind the sofa stands a remarkable screen, hand-painted in black lacquer and gold, also shipped from Myanmar. Pride of place on the other side of the screen is the Chinese hope chest.

Mirroring the Myanmar screen is the black painted wall which creates a division between the sitting room and the dining room; the large space created by these divisions is another sitting area. Immediately in front of this wall is a chaise longue, above which hangs an ethereal family portrait painted in 1993 before daughter Maria was born. The artist, son of the Mexican artist who painted an earlier portrait of Pamela placed in the hall, left a space for Maria to be added but on her arrival into the world, her own portrait was painted and hangs next to the original work. To the other side of the painting, work by Mexican artist Bustamante displays an outsize ceramic blowfish and small toucan.

This part of the room is a treasure trove of unusual finds. To the left is a refinished, large, old carved wooden bar from a Mexican cantina with two matching chairs placed either side of it. The arrangement brings to mind an almost medieval still life combination with Mexican pots, the centerpiece of which is a still life painting featuring Mexican ceramics. The matching mirror to the bar is too tall to hang here; instead, it hangs in the hall looking out over two antique chests from New York. As Pamela



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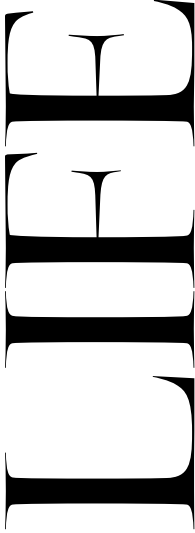
explains, “We have only lived in two houses where the ceilings were tall enough to place the mirror atop the bar.”

Directly opposite the bar from the cantina is a gift from when the Ramos-Gómezes first got married, a pale wood double-door cabinet which opens

TOP Second sitting area
RIGHT Distressed blue wooden breakfast chest

HOMES

Private Lives



up to reveal a beautifully appointed drinks bar. And then the eyes are drawn to the pièce de résistance. Pamela's most favourite item in the house takes the form of an enormous central "grape" lamp hanging majestically from the ceiling. Bought in Mexico City in an antique store, dating back to approximately 1910, its former home was a bordello. "I absolutely adore it and have never seen anything else like it anywhere." The door from here leads, via the kitchen, to the second favourite item being Pamela's breakfast set in a soft powder wood of table, chairs and dresser; recovered from an old farmhouse in the Mexican countryside, it has been restored, refinished and reinforced.

On entering the hallway guests come face to face with an antique carving of Christ



entitled *Jicamas in Love*, an explosion of orange pumpkin light over the Jicamas. The painting above the chest in the dining room is from Mexico. It describes many types of castes in Mexico and the names of the combinations when a foreigner marries a native Mexican. **Q**

TOP FROM LEFT

Grouping of religious icons; Striking Mexican ceramic

BELOW FROM

LEFT Icon; Myanmar screen behind a Chinese hope chest

