



The boys raided Alice's house in Toronto

By FRANCESCA COOKNEY

ALICE Reis's home was dark and gloomy with chunky furniture and dated accessories – the whole place was in desperate need of a makeover.

It was so awful that when TV interior design duo Colin and Justin saw it, they raided her home, removed the furniture and swooped on Alice as she arrived to watch her son at football training.

"We called it the house of gloom," said Colin who was last seen on UK TV watching in horror as partner Justin Ryan braved croc-infested waters in the I'm A Celebrity jungle. Now having spent much of the past four years away from home, the Scottish boys are back with their new show, Home Heist, which was filmed in Canada.

Toronto mum-of-four Alice is the subject of the first episode and it's a good thing she's thick-skinned – the designers didn't mince their words when it came to her furnishing sins.

"In this show, we're like your brutally honest best friend who dares to tell you you've got BO or dandruff... except we do it with your home," explains Colin.

"The ambush side of the show is almost as big as the design side," he says. "In one show, we took all the furniture to the zoo and put it in the tiger cage. Then Justin and I rode in on elephants."

Justin is quick to add: "But we don't ever tell you your house is ghastly and you should burn in hell. We say you need help and that we're here to do that."

Nevertheless, handing over your home to Colin and Justin is a nerve-racking experience. "I was a bit worried," says Alice, 47. "I've seen some of the homes they've done before and some of them can be quite 'out there.'"

On the day when all is revealed, she arrived sweaty-palmed and anxious to see what they'd done to her house. The results were predictably colourful.

"We do use a lot of colour," says Justin. "But only where appropriate. We want to make it relevant."

"But we try to challenge people's perceptions of design as well," adds Colin.

The series has already been popular in Canada and the boys are hoping to do a British version. "The style is totally brash but I think it would work here," says Justin. "I think we could pull it off."

●● **HOME Heist starts Wednesday, August 25, at 9pm on The Style Net-**



Alice with kids Nicholas, Andrew, Olivia & Anthony



Living room

THE living and dining rooms were decorated in matching red and white to create layers of light and colour.

"We try to bring in colour in ways people might not have thought of," says Colin. "We've taken a red rug as our kick-off point and replicated the pattern on the walls. We added big antler chandeliers to tie in with the wooden floors."

●● **Alice's verdict:** "They hit it right on the head. I love the patterned rug and the chandeliers are such conversation pieces."

"The only thing I would change is the sofa. I envisioned something you could put your feet up on."



Dark & gloomy house was transformed

FROM GLOOM..TO VA-VA VOOM

TV's Justin and Colin give a home wow factor



Hallway

THE boys went for bright yellow wallpaper while the woodwork was painted white – as was the piano.

"If it had been a beautiful piano, we wouldn't have touched it," says Justin.

"But it was an old junky piano sitting in a dark hallway with dark walls and timber so we painted it all white and used strong yellow wallpaper to open the hall up and make it bright and beautiful."

●● **ALICE'S verdict:** "It really awed me just how bright everything was. There was so much light in the house, just from changing the colours."



'Junky' piano gets whitewash



Kitchen

PART of the wall to the dining room was knocked through and the old Ikea units were replaced with cream shaker-style cupboards.

"The kitchen held a lot of memories for Alice but it had to go," explains Justin. "She's raised all her children in that house so it was important we built her something the whole family could enjoy."

●● **ALICE'S verdict:** "The kitchen was a sore point for me. My son,



The old units were ditched

Andrew, is a cook and we'd spent a lot of time in that kitchen. But I've got a lot more storage space now and they opened it up on to the dining room – I love it!"