

DEE DEE HANNAH

BEAUTY, BRAINS AND A FABULOUS FAMILY - THIS RENOWNED CANADIAN ARCHITECT HAS IT ALL



Dee Hannah has it all: an, a flourishing career, a fabulous family, and architect Mary Jo Estimer. Dee Hannah, architect, is the Design and recently it Miles Mindful. The Mary Jo Estimer, Dee Hannah and her children, Richard and

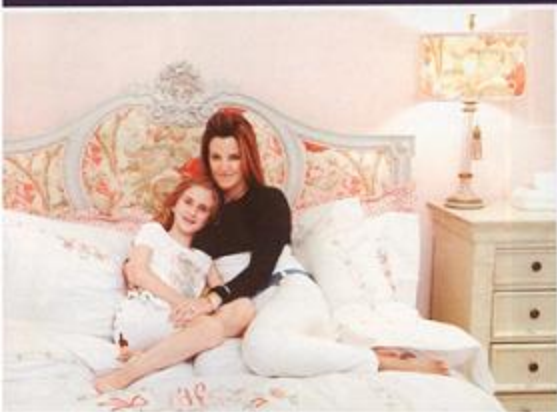
job, and manages to achieve that rare balance between home and work life. "I was always the girl up for doing my 'real' work," she tells *Elle*'s Gosnell. "But I also liked to travel and go to parties. I have great friends, a great family - I try to be that well-rounded person." Here, Dee Dee welcomes us into her spectacular Toronto home and opens up about her life, love, and passion for design.

People have an image of you as a beautiful success story, but don't forget to tell the story of who you are. Tell us how you became interested in architecture. I have this crazy inner mind - as a kid I would sit down and write a math exam and get between 96 and 100 per cent. Give me a French exam and it was a different story! But I also loved design and fashion - so for me, math and fashion seemed to go ▶

'I want to be taken seriously, but I don't want to give up my life'



Dee Dee wears one of her favourite dresses by Wayne Clark. Below: With daughter Rachael, 10, in Rachael's bedroom. Her precious time with the kids and welcomes their friends, too. 'Rachael had a pool party for her grade four class and, of course, I was invited. I was so excited to be invited and we had all the kids in the lower level of the house. The ping pong table became the picnic table!'



hand-in-hand in the form of architecture.

Did your parents approve of your career choice? My mom is an artist and my dad is a lawyer so they gave me this crazy yin-yang: creativity combined with a huge thirst for knowledge. Someone once said to me, "You don't always have to win," and I said, "Really?" No matter what I do, I really want to get the most out of it, whether it's working, running or playing tennis.

Where do you get your drive from? As a woman you can get labelled in so many ways. If you are attractive, you have to prove yourself a little more. I had to work hard - trying to balance being able to have fun and being

'After four years of dating, Rob proposed to me in bed. I was so excited, I split the sheet in half with my ring!'

taken seriously. I want to be taken seriously, but I don't want to give up my life.

You and your husband, Rob, have been married for 19 years. How did you meet? We met at the Copa! It was at the Black and White Polo Ball. Interestingly enough, a year before that I was at the Isabella Hotel and I remember looking across the room and saying, "Who is that guy? I don't recognize him." And someone said, "That's Rob Hannah." Hm! He had just come back from New York. I said, "I am going to go talk to him," but I never got there. Six months after that I was up in Muskoka playing ping pong and there he was again. And then there I was, at the Polo Ball, and he had heard of me!

What did he say to you? He came up and asked me if I had a black bathing suit with a yellow zipper and I said, "Parlon me?" And I said, "Yes I do." And he said, "You're the girl! You're the girl from Muskoka!" Years later, I found out that he'd written about me in his diary!

How did he propose? After four years of dating we went to La Scala for dinner and he gave me a black box. I opened it and they were earrings! I started to howl. He then took me back to the apartment and proposed in bed. I was so excited that I split the bed sheet in half with my ring! Those were magical times.

You and Rob are very close ... We really grew up together. I was in my last year of school [when we met] and he was starting his business. I used to make our Christmas decorations from scratch. It was such fun. We finally got rid of his black leather sofa last year!

You really have done it all. Is there anything you'd like to achieve that you haven't already? I want to keep loving what I do. If I can keep things fresh, that's important. I have also become really involved in a charity called Out of the Cold, which my aunt started. I want to continue to really nurture my kids so that they can find something they love and can pursue in life. **11**

INTERVIEW: ANDRYN ENGEL
PHOTOS: ARASH MCALLEM/HELLO! CANADA
HAIR & MAKEUP: JOJO LUTCHAK
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In the family room with Rachael, husband Rob, son Jake, 14, and dogs Sassy and Sparkie. 'We live in the family room,' says Dee Dee. 'I love hanging out there in my track pants with my feet on the table!' Below: The beautifully co-ordinated master bedroom.

