

Exploring Asylum Hill 211 Collins St

The more we search, the more interesting are the stories of the homeowners in Asylum Hill. Take for example Mervin Mathurin and his wife Maria MacDonald and their son Ryheem. Mervin and Maria went to school together in St. Lucia, but it wasn't until they both immigrated to the U.S., she to Hartford and he to Brooklyn NY that they met again. It was nearly two decades ago while she was visiting New York and it wasn't long after that that they were married and living in an apartment on Sisson Ave. He continued to work in New York as an electrician coming back each weekend.

Almost by fate, they found 211 Collins St. As Mervin tells it, "it was time that we settle and buy our own [home]...so one morning I took my bike and road around the neighborhood... I happened to ride over here and I said 'this is the house'."

Mervin must have sensed the combination of good bones and the need for TLC that told him it could be a good deal. It took more than a year for the mortgage company to take possession, and the auction to occur, but in the end, they managed to get the home they wanted.

For the first three years they lived on the third floor, while Mervin fixed up the basement, first and 2nd floor.

"Even when we bought this house, I still worked in New York, and every Friday I'd come home and that would be my Friday, my Saturday, my Sunday, for three years." Mervin said. Eventually they were able to move into the first floor unit and rent out both the 2nd and third floor apartments. You would think that having all three units completed he's be ready for a break, but he recently started the renovation of the rear entrance and is likely to have that completed in a month or so. He's modeling the wood siding on the newly completed 52 Huntington house that he can see from his back yard.

In July, the 2nd floor three bedroom apartment became vacant so they spent a month painting and preparing it for the next tenant. It's just now been listed on Zillow.

Mervin no longer commutes to New York; he works for the State of CT doing electrical maintenance at State buildings.

Thanks to his neighbor, Barry Green's recommendation, Mervin came to an AHNA meeting, and was very impressed. He's looking forward to making lots of new connections in the neighborhood, and he wouldn't mind finding another house in the neighborhood or in Hartford in need of some TLC.

For more photos, including some of the renovated interior and the 2nd floor apartment currently available, go to: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/XiZKkJau7wgcnc6DA>

