

'Curb' host is appealing, but 'Crashers' works for me

Staff photo by JIM REED



"Yard Crashers" host Ahmed Hassan poses with a fan at Lowe's on South Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa. Ahmed was at the store with the DIY network crew interviewing home owners to find a yard to crash with a landscape makeover in an upcoming show.

By [KIM FRANKE-FOLSTAD](#) | The Tampa Tribune

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A few weeks ago, I wrote some unkind words about HGTV's new version of "Curb Appeal," now known as "Curb Appeal: The Block."

To recap: Too much pretty-boy host, not enough homeowner how-to.

Today, I get to be nice.

A different landscaping-makeover show, DIY's "Yard Crashers," came to Tampa last week, and host Ahmed Hassan and his crew were everything a loyal viewer could hope for.

"Yard Crashers" is a lot like "Curb Appeal" and another old favorite, "Landscape Smart," used to be. The homeowners are expected to help. The host shows them how to pull up sod, lay pavers, plant flowers and do other projects. They get a great new yard. And, along the way, the viewer picks up some inspiration and a few usable tips.

Yes, Hassan is every bit as pretty as the new "Curb" host, John Gidding, but he gets his hands a lot dirtier. Penny and I watched him in action for about an hour on the first day of taping, and in that time I saw him use a rake, a shovel, a sod cutter and a

pitchfork. He relocated a giant earthworm (that everybody thought was a snake) to a safer spot. He directed his crew and local contractors, along with Ballast Point homeowners Tom and Brooke Larossi and their family and friends. And he did all of that while the media (yours truly included) stopped him for interview after interview. And get this, fellow gardeners: Word at the site was that Hassan, who is a landscape designer, was more interested in the details about the plants going in than the hardscape, even though the plan includes a kitchen, a fountain and other big projects.

Hassan and local landscape designer Mac Garner, co-owner of TropicScapes Landscape Design & Installation, were two of the hardest working people in the Larossis' backyard, and also the most skilled. But they seemed to be having as much fun as anyone.

"We love what we do," Hassan acknowledged with a grin. "We think what we do is special."

If you've ever watched "Crashers," you know that *joie de travailler* translates to a very fun show.

My only gripe about "Crashers" is all the time wasted at the beginning of each episode finding homeowners to "ambush" and offer a yard makeover. Thanks to his growing popularity, it's becoming difficult to find anyone who wouldn't want Hassan to come home with them, so it looks like they'll be dropping that diversion in the future.

Now that the weather is warming up, you'll no doubt be back outside enjoying your own garden, so you'll want to set your DVR to catch the show. "Yard Crashers" is on at 9:30 p.m. Mondays on DIY. Older episodes air at 9 a.m. Sundays on HGTV. The Larossi makeover will air on DIY sometime during "Crash Week," July 5 through 9.