



Goli Basiri of Harmen Design



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Floor-to-ceiling windows framed in black make a striking statement in the home, flooding the space with natural light and seamlessly blending the indoors with the outdoors.

# A SOLID *plan*

*Elio Gatto and Nicole Scaffidi had a vision. Having grown up close to the Bedford Park area of Toronto, Elio knew he wanted to build a modern but natural-looking home that blended well with the older bungalows and mature trees that made the area so cosy. "Including elements like wood and stone was important to us," he says.*

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STORY **DENISE WILLSON**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **LARRY ARNAL**



**ABOVE:** Statement lighting and a wall-mounted vanity with a backlit mirror create a sophisticated and modern appeal. **LEFT:** Dramatic lighting, curved furniture and pops of black create the modern aesthetic Elio and Nicole envisioned. **BELOW:** The entryway is clean-lined and architectural with natural stone and wood blending seamlessly.

**THE COUPLE FOUND THEIR IDEAL PROPERTY IN 2020**, and although the COVID pandemic put the project on ice for a while, they spent the time gathering their team of experts.

The couple hired **Dmitri Knyazev** of **Evandale Homes Inc.**, a GTA builder with more than 15 years of experience building large-scale commercial projects. “We specialize in high-end, complex projects that require a detail-oriented mindset,” says Dmitri. His Air Force engineering background made him the perfect project manager to bring Elio and Nicole’s vision to life. Evandale Homes specializes in net-zero efficient homes with minimal air leakage, low-cost heating, extra insulation, structural integrity and soundproof floors and walls. “We don’t use typical building supplies,” says Dmitri. “We follow higher standards than those dictated by

city building codes, going above and beyond to source and install high-quality building supplies known to increase performance and home value.”

The couple rounded out their team with the architectural firm **Contempo Studio** and **Goli Basiri** and **Kia Kazemian** of **Harmen Design Inc.**, the designers who understood Elio and Nicole’s vision and brought immense creativity and focus to the project. “We design houses to tell homeowners’ stories,” says Goli. “When homeowners know what they want and love to participate in the design process, projects run smoothly and quickly.”

The build took less than 11 months from start to finish. Elio loved every step, often sending pictures and notes to help with design and decorating choices. “There was little need for back-and-forth between us and



the builder,” says Goli. “We created a detailed design and Dmitri implemented the plan perfectly.” The builder echoes this sentiment. “Harmen Design leaves no room for errors or questions because their plans are so incredibly detailed,” says Dmitri. This team has worked together before, and each brought a unique expertise without stepping on each other’s toes, saving time and money.

The 3,600 sq. ft. two-storey home boasts massive black windows that flood the open-concept space with natural light. “The floor-to-ceiling windows are my favourite feature,” says Elio. **Grace Windows & Doors** provided windows and skylights. The all-white walls, simple trim and clean lines draw the eye to **Magnum Millwork Inc.**’s elegant built-in cabinetry throughout. Appliances disappear in the gallery-like kitchen, and the double-tier island offers plenty of room for food prep, serving and eating. The back-lit glass, porcelain and aluminum shelving are perfect for displaying the couple’s collection of treasures.

The open-riser staircase and glass surround lend to the airy feel, while the white oak floors, composite wood panelling and veined stonework add warmth. The engineered hardwood flooring was supplied

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**ABOVE:** The dining area exudes understated elegance, featuring a glass-topped table paired with light-coloured upholstered chairs supported by sleek black legs. **LEFT:** The family room has a modern and relaxed vibe with a low-profile sectional sofa, fireplace and backlit shelving for décor and family keepsakes.

by **Complete Flooring** and stained on-site. The porcelain tiling for floors, walls and backsplashes was provided by **Nuovo Surfaces Inc.** and installed by **Costa Marble & Granite. Royal Oak Railing & Stair Ltd.** provided the staircase. Modern light fixtures, built-in LED strips and track lighting create a layered look, highlighting subtle textures and design details. The integrated LED lighting was expertly installed by **Versacon Electric Ltd.**

Elio says that while he and Nicole are not frequent imbibers, their favourite part of the project is the feature wall of wine bottles in the dining room. "It's like a piece of art," he says. The designers say their favourite feature is the stunning built-in display in the glass-enclosed office. "The original design had a den on the main floor," say Goli, "but

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The two-tiered island provides additional seating and adds visual appeal to the kitchen. All appliances are sleekly integrated to enhance the architectural beauty of the space.

*Sleek and memorable, the combination of light wood and dark countertops in the prep area adjacent to the kitchen stylishly keeps meal preparation contained and organized.*



# feature

we changed it to an office so Nicole can work from home a few days a week.”

The couple love to socialize with friends and family, and the build was designed with entertaining in mind. “We like to cook,” says Elio, “and the open-concept layout allows our guests to mingle in a large area.” The basement bar and seating area are for casual get-togethers and more formal soirees.

In the primary suite, cool whites and greys are offset with pale wood-grain panelling and simple yet elegant pendant lights. An ingenious U-shaped walk-in closet with custom cabinetry complements the main-level millwork, while the skylight brings natural light to the couple’s morning routine. “The stonework in the primary en suite is amazing,” says Goli. “The floating vanity topped with porcelain from Italy is not only stunning and functional but top-notch craftsmanship.” The main-level powder room and lower-level bathroom incorporate the same surfaces and lighting. Plumbing fixtures throughout the home are from **Cesario & Co.**

“Everything was planned and built with our lifestyle in mind,” says Elio. The busy

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**LEFT:** The home office is light-filled and sophisticated with a refined white desk and more shelving to display décor items. **BELOW:** The lower-level seating area is cosy and subdued, with a sleek fireplace, large television and statement lighting. **BELOW LEFT:** The open staircase design not only allows natural light to flow freely throughout the home but it also serves as a stunning architectural feature, creating an inviting and airy atmosphere.



# Harmmen

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**ABOVE:** In the primary bedroom, a platform bed takes centre stage and sleek bedside tables exude a contemporary elegance. Light wood accents throughout the room enhance its warm and inviting ambience, creating a cosy retreat for rest and relaxation. **LEFT:** Continuing the sleek aesthetic, the primary en suite features underlighting and wall-mounted fixtures, adding a modern sophistication to the space. The seamless integration of these elements creates a luxurious space, perfect for unwinding after a long day.

couple wanted modern elegance without the upkeep. Superior building supplies and quality workmanship ensure this home will sustain generations. “We can use our home without worrying about the maintenance,” he adds. Their French Bulldog Vinnie can run around the house without leaving a trail.

Elio and Nicole say this first experience building a home from scratch was amazing. “We’d heard building horror stories,” says Elio, “and we didn’t want the experience to be negative in any way. It’s in our nature to be organized and thorough, so taking the time to select the right builder, architect and designer was a key factor in our positive experience.” Elio’s advice to those embarking on a new home build? “Select a team you trust, then let them fly without holding up the process. Know what you want and make decisions quickly.” In other words, have a solid plan. **OH**