

# LIGHT-FILLED S P A C E S

*A new Kingsway build is a contemporary  
take on an ivy-covered home*

BY SUSAN KELLY • PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBERT HOLOWKA • STYLING: ROSE BARROSO

**ROSE BARROSO WAS LISTENING** to the radio as she pondered what to call the home that her company was constructing in The King-sway area of Toronto. “I give all the homes I build names; they’re all my babies,” the custom-home builder explains. The announcer mentioned Blue Ivy, Beyoncé’s name for her daughter. In her mind’s eye, Barroso saw the striking black stucco of the home’s contemporary exterior, punctuated with wood-clad accents. And she felt it had the same comforting, enveloping effect as ivy on traditional homes. And so the two-storey stunner was christened Black Ivy.

The owner of Barroso Homes, who has been a builder for the past 12 years, has been putting her own unique stamp on luxury contemporary homes for the past eight years. For this Hartfield Avenue home, she made two compromises. To respect the more traditional architecture of the surrounding neighbourhood, she would tone down her usual approach, which is highly and boldly modern. “I wanted to respect the streetscape,” she says. “There is nothing traditional about Black Ivy, but I wanted to avoid creating an ultra-modern build, so I toned down the modern theme.”

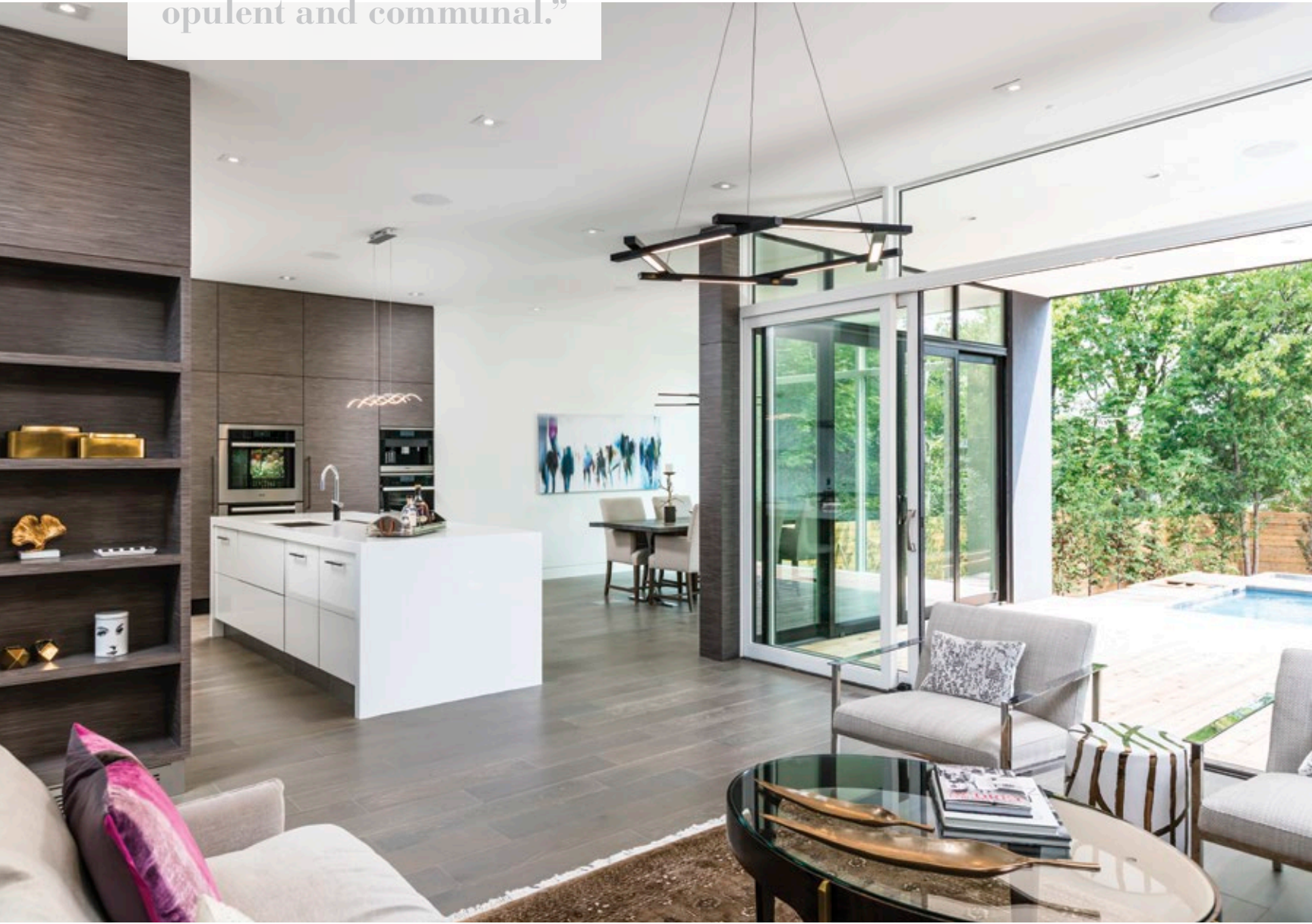
Moreover, this home would be smaller than most she builds, just under 5,000 square feet, in response to demand in the area.

“I designed it with a couple in mind, one who were either growing their family or looking to downsize,” she says. There are four bedrooms plus a nanny suite in the basement and a flex space that could easily be a home office or gym. 🏡



*The living room’s linear fireplace was strategically placed under the television to create visual balance. Inset wood shelving creates horizontal design interest. Fireplace: Napoleon; porcelain fireplace tiles: Marmol Carrara Blanco Brillo.*

“It’s all meant to be open, opulent and communal.”



*In the kitchen, sleek ultra-high-gloss cabinets provide textural contrast against the grey beech wood veneer millwork. Appliances: Miele.*

Despite what the name might imply, the home’s light-filled interiors feel spacious and airy, largely due to their openness to the backyard. On the main floor, both the dining and living areas have a wall of windows plus two sets of double sliding doors. In summer, both can be completely opened, creating a seamless flow to the back deck and pool area. Since the home backs onto a property at a lower elevation, with no sightlines, it enjoys maximum privacy.

The light effects continue come evening. Drama is added to the entrance by a hallway lined with linear architectural lighting. Inset into the drywall, it creates a discreet welcoming glow. Heard but not seen, future owners can choose to be greeted at the door by the friendly voice of Alexa, Amazon’s “intelligent personal assistant.” With a few voice commands, they can access the sophisticated smart-home system to turn on the lights or adjust the temperature. Or just chat about news and weather, Barroso says.



“It’s all meant to be open, opulent and communal,” is how Barroso sums up her intention with the main floor’s open-concept layout. It provides a perfect flow between the kitchen, living room and dining area. The large kitchen island, topped with Vicostone quartz, is intended to serve as the focal area for living. It not only makes it easy to interact with guests, but houses two indispensable dishwashers. It also holds a 30-by-six-inch second sink, which can be filled with ice to chill champagne or white wine, or serve oysters. ☞





*Builder Rose Barroso artfully injected design elements from other styles to contrast with the contemporary backdrop, including a rustic live-edge dining table. The seating area (left, top) features ultra-modern chairs juxtaposed across from a classical-style sofa. Chandeliers: WAC/Modern Forms Lighting.*

The wine cellar, usually banished to a basement, here forms a distinctive living room wall feature. “It is designed as a conversation piece but also to be very practical and accessible,” Barroso says. It will store and display as many as 480 bottles. And for those who wonder where to store their cases of wine, the builder designed a custom bench for that purpose. It also accommodates crated champagne bottles.

Barroso says the Black Ivy theme “crept into the house in a good way.” Adding splashes of black, she finds, makes a bold contemporary statement and unifies the home’s colour scheme. Black accents include lighting fixtures and the living room’s linear fireplace and television. Black hardware on the doors makes an elegant statement as do the black faucets in the kitchen and laundry room. In the powder room, a black sink adds punch along with a black marble Marmo faucet from Aquabraxx. ☛

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*Cutline 04: Dvira has a flair for original lighting ideas. Over the island, she hung a pair of chandeliers from Restoration Hardware that are made of wooden beads painted white and distressed.*



*The exterior is clad in charcoal-grey stucco and is punctuated with black trim and warmer wood-toned accents, all engineered to be virtually maintenance-free.*

The contrast of black elements is striking against white walls, the Italian marble-effect porcelain tiles on the fireplace, and the high-gloss white wood-based Polygloss cabinetry from Germany in the kitchen and family room. In addition to being attractive, the cabinets are both UV- and abrasion-resistant.

Beech wood millwork and ash-grey brushed oak hardwood floors add texture and warmth to the ground floor. “The interior is intended to be contemporary and inviting. I want to show people how comfortable modern design can be,” Barroso says.



Upstairs, natural light fills the space thanks to a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows in the master bedroom that affords a wide-angle view of the backyard.

The white marble master bathroom contains one rogue element, in that it does not fit the Black Ivy theme: the freestanding tub clad with mosaic tiles, a one-of-a-kind piece signed by the artist. A mix-up in the ordering meant that rather than black, each hand-painted tile was a different vibrant hue. But with reaction to it so overwhelmingly positive, it stayed. “Like most of the elements incorporated in this home, it was meant to stand out — and it does,” says Barroso. ✎

*The master bathroom is pure contemporary chic and the perfect backdrop for the one-of-a-kind standalone tub. Tub: Mosaik by Aquabraxx; chandelier: Pierce by Artemide; 3D wall tiles: Diamond White by Porcelanosa.*