

CANADIAN[®] BUILDERS QUARTERLY

Mizrahi Design Build

Canada's first ISO 9001-certified company creates extremely high-quality builds, on time and on budget. p. 24

MAY 2011

KILBARRY HILL CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

Toronto's rising stars of
custom-home construction



The bedrooms in the Braemar Avenue residence showcase Kilbarry Hill's modern aesthetic, with tall ceilings giving way to large windows and natural lighting.

KILBARRY HILL CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

Three brothers tackle the Greater Toronto building scene with youthful energy and charisma

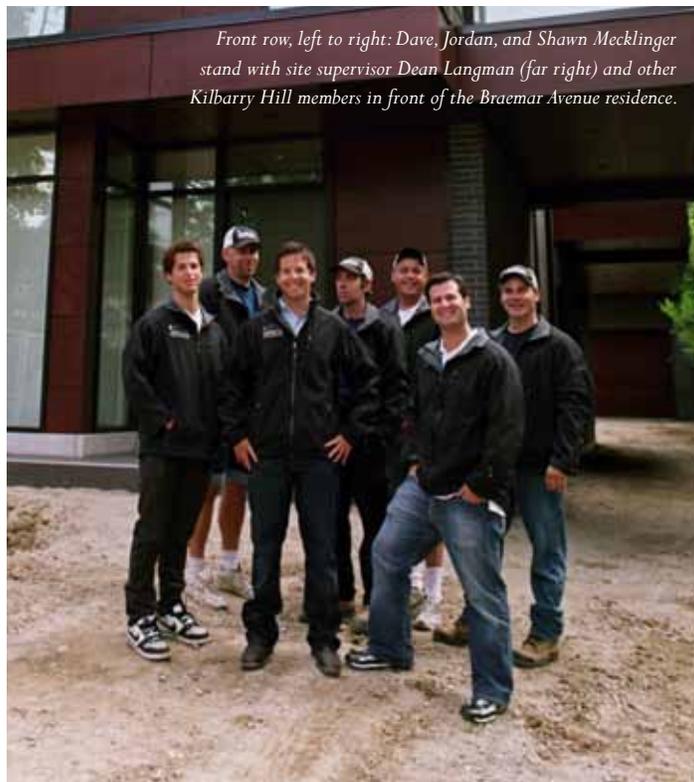
BY KELLY O'BRIEN

SHAWN MECKLINGER ISN'T DOING TOO BAD AS THE 32-year-old president and director of business development for the 6-year-old Kilbarry Hill Construction, a high-end residential-construction firm serving the Greater Toronto Area. Today, his company specializes in modern-home design, incorporating cutting-edge building materials into many of its projects, and pulls in around \$1.5 million a year. Shawn—who was only 26 when he started Kilbarry Hill with his younger brother Jordan in 2005—has wasted no time growing the company from a two-man operation into a full-service custom-home-building and renovation firm with a reputation for doing high-quality work, on time and within budget.

Shawn and his brother may be young, but that doesn't mean they're new to the industry. In fact, construction is pretty much in their blood. The brothers grew up working for both their father and grandfather, who each have construction companies specializing in larger residential and commercial projects. But while the family business was pivotal in their training as craftsmen, Shawn says they wanted to make a name for Kilbarry Hill outside of the family legacy. "It's very difficult to blaze your own trail when you're in a family business," he says. "But we wanted to make our mark—we didn't want to be known as so-and-so's son or so-and-so's grandson."

Rather than sticking with the side of the market that they were used to, the brothers went after custom renovations and home building. "We came from this background of the larger-scale residential, and in order to sort of carve our own niche, we went smaller and more focused, more modern," Shawn says.

Building a name for a brand-new company in a brand-new corner of the market is a challenging process, but for the Mecklingers it all came down to relationships. Their first project was a home renovation, which they took as an opportunity to prove themselves. "Somebody gave us a chance, and we worked hard," Shawn says. The project



Front row, left to right: Dave, Jordan, and Shawn Mecklinger stand with site supervisor Dean Langman (far right) and other Kilbarry Hill members in front of the Braemar Avenue residence.

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
DOWNSVIEW, ON

FOUNDED:
2005

EMPLOYEES:
9

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
CUSTOM-HOME
BUILDING AND
RENOVATION

ANNUAL REVENUE:
\$1.5 MILLION



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—Shawn Mecklinger, President & Director of Business Development



paid off, and each subsequent job led to a good referral, providing more work, such that Kilbarry Hill quickly made a name for itself.

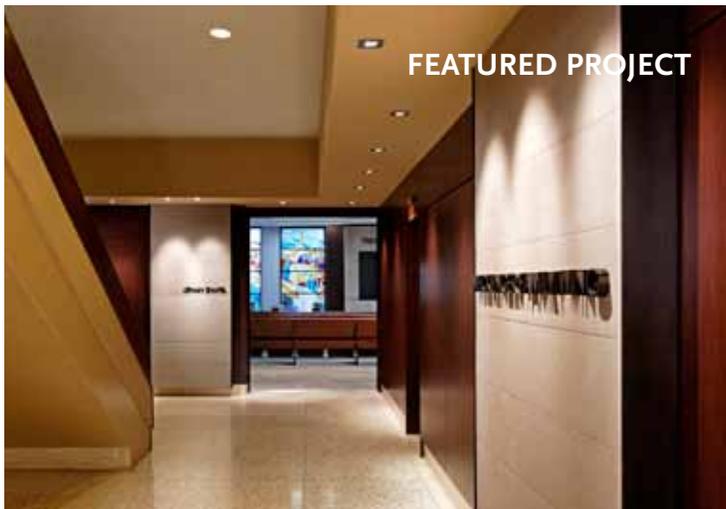
One such referral, a little over a year after the company opened its doors, found the company working on renovating a century-old building in downtown Toronto. The building had formerly housed an auto-body shop and a photography studio. Kilbarry Hill came on board to transform the building into lavish loft apartments. Simi-

lar to other such conversions, a modern design aesthetic was key, and because this project was the company's sole focus at the time, Shawn says the firm embraced that. Ever since, the modern look has become a Kilbarry Hill trademark.

Kilbarry Hill's design aesthetic isn't the only area where the company has earned a reputation for being ahead of the times. While the brothers' age has sometimes been a hang-up—like when they're sitting down with clients who are twice their age—it can also be an asset. Shawn, along with his brothers Jordan (vice president and director of operations) and Dave (who joined the firm last year as vice president and director of site operations), uses an iPad, and credits the device with helping to keep things streamlined and efficient.

Their ages also brings with them a certain eagerness. "We're young and hungry, I like to say," Shawn says. This energy manifests in a lot of different ways—everything from an enthusiasm for keeping up with the latest building trends and technologies to a willingness to answer the phone or visit a jobsite on a Saturday.

But it's more than a youthful spirit that sets Kilbarry Hill apart from the crowd; it's also the brothers' passion for helping people design and build their dream homes. "It's not all about the bottom line," Shawn says. "At the end of the day, it's about keeping people happy." CBQ



FEATURED PROJECT

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue

Although Kilbarry Hill Construction specializes in residential work, it doesn't mean the company won't branch out when the occasion calls for it. The Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, a long-overdue renovation for the circa-1960s synagogue chapel, shows off Kilbarry Hill's ability to transform a banal interior into a modern masterpiece. The revitalized worship area features custom bronze framework fitted with modern stained-glass panels, distinctive wenge paneling that contrasts with the pale limestone flooring, custom-made beech-wood pews, and a hand-blown-glass light fixture in the shape of an eternal flame suspended from the chapel ceiling.