

STORY CATALINA MARGULIS | PHOTOGRAPHY VALERIE WILCOX

# *serenity now*





Sometimes self discovery comes at the most unexpected of times. In the case of Nunus Molu, she discovered her tastes were actually simpler than she imagined when she finally had the chance to customize her home from scratch after moving from her Woodbridge family home to the Kingsway area of Etobicoke.

“I had driven through the neighbourhood and thought it was the best thing ever,” recalls Nunus, who has a 16-year-old son, Sami, and 23-year-old daughter, Sienna. “My son plays hockey and goes to a high-performance school in the area. The drive is so convenient now. My daughter works downtown and it takes just 20 minutes to get to work. We can walk to many places and enjoy the city. It’s the perfect neighbourhood for our family.”

Still, while Nunus and her husband Saj had found the ideal location, the ideal home proved more elusive. Enter **Designtheory** designers **Leanne Tammaro** and **Adolphina Karachok**, who helped the couple achieve the home of their dreams with their custom build.

“We were involved from the beginning of the process, so we were able to work directly with the clients and architect to study the design from the perspective of the end user to achieve the best layout for the family,” says Leanne of the 3,200 sq. ft., four-bedroom home.

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**ABOVE:** A spectacular marble slab fireplace surround is a focal point in the family room. **OPPOSITE:** Design elements such as black accents and the use of the same draperies in each of the main living spaces come together to create a unified home.



For the interior, the focus was all about a light-hearted approach. “The main request was that they wanted a bright, white home that still felt warm and livable. Their previous home was quite dark, with heavier traditional elements and finishes, so they wanted the opposite feeling in this home,” says Leanne. The designers also worked creatively to combine Saj’s love of traditional details, with Nunus’s preference for a more modern aesthetic.

The result: Wall panels and ceiling details, against an all-white backdrop. “We introduced panel moulding on the hallway walls and carried it to the staircase from the main to second floor. This provided Saj with his preferred traditional detailing. We thoughtfully paired this panel moulding with a custom metal and wood railing to bring a more traditional feel to the space, rather than going overly modern and introducing a glass railing,” says Adolphina. “Metal can often look heavy but because of the delicate size of

the posts and the transitional detail, it’s not overwhelming. This is a feeling that’s echoed throughout the house.”

In the dining room, the designers introduced another traditional element with a coffered ceiling. “Saj wanted to see this detail somewhere, and we thought the best place for it would be the living and dining rooms,” says Leanne. Recessed panels painted a creamier shade of white layer the space.

While the designers chose to keep the living and dining room windows white to balance the homeowners’ pre-existing furniture and the coffered ceiling, elsewhere in the house, window trims are painted in black. “We always like to introduce black into our projects – it’s a grounding factor,” says Leanne.

“Black and white is such a nice, classic pairing,” adds Adolphina. “It provides a neutral canvas for us and allows us to put any other texture or colour with it. It will never go out of style. It’s timeless.” *Continued on page 82*



The dining room's coffered ceiling creates a more formal, traditional feel. **OPPOSITE, LEFT:** The custom built-ins blend seamlessly with wood beams in the family room. **RIGHT:** A contemporary lighting piece is perfectly placed. **BOTTOM:** The staircase is transitional with a blend of metal and wood.

# feature

**RIGHT:** Wood beams soften the all-white kitchen.  
**BELOW:** Tiling the wall from top to bottom adds dimension.  
**BOTTOM:** The addition of metal in the lighting and hardware creates balance.



Besides black details like the trim and staircase pickets, wood elements break up the all-white palette. “We went back and forth in the kitchen over creating a dark grey or wood-finish island, but the clients were adamant about having an all-white kitchen,” says Adolphina. “To create balance and keep the space feeling warm, we added custom wood beams that run through the kitchen to the family room, and we used the same veneer for the family room millwork as well.”

Just as the kitchen rangehood mimics the black strapping on



the ceiling beams, the wood bookcase complements the beams and continues the look from the kitchen through to the family room. “We found the perfect marble slab for the TV wall, and the wood worked perfectly in combination with it. We intentionally kept the shelf backing white, which really softened it.”

For the flooring, the designers selected a wide plank white oak hardwood with warm undertones. “It’s a nice compromise between traditional and modern,” says Adolphina. “The flooring set the tone for the house and worked well in grounding the kitchen.”

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Leanne Tammaro and Adolphina Karachok of Designtheory.



*“The bathroom is all hard surfaces but it feels soft,” says Leanne.*

Tiled and sophisticated, textures balance out the white bathroom.

# feature

The designers also incorporated wood details to soften the all-white palette of the master en suite. “The initial request was to go all white. We talked our clients into adding warmth by introducing wood elements and continuing the feeling through the house.” The vanity design features face-framed cabinet doors installed with the grain on a 45-degree angle to create a chevron pattern. Porcelain tile with a wood-like texture in the shower repeats the chevron pattern. “The bathroom is all hard surfaces but it feels soft,” says Leanne.

The result: A bright, sleek space that’s also warm, with the sophistication of traditional details that don’t overwhelm. “They both really liked a tailored look but want their space to be livable and comfortable,” says Adolphina. “We made sure there was a softness and sophistication to the space, and that there was a cohesive flow from room to room.”

“Leanne and Adolphina have their vision, but they really got me,” says Nunus. “I wanted it to be a house, not a museum. I wanted it to be livable, cosy, yet bright. Old meets new. They really listen. Building this house and being able to have whatever I wanted, I realized how simple I was in my taste. It’s clean and crisp and I love it.” **OH**



**TOP:** A boutique-style custom walk-in closet and vanity invites pampering. **ABOVE:** Face-framed cabinetry is sleek and streamlined. **RIGHT:** A textured wall makes the laundry room fun and functional.