

TORONTO'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DESIGN

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**FALL
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UP YOUR ALLEY

Meet Mr. and Mrs. Solares –
your friendly archi-green specialists

By Julia Belluz

Down a quiet laneway not far from the Art Gallery of Ontario, a three-storey house sits on a site where a dilapidated two-car garage once stood. The new home, angular yet elegant and clad in brick and steel, gives the once scrappy location a whole new injection of life.

Even better, Laneway Loft is an eco-friendly marvel. It was designed by Solares Architecture, a firm run by Tom Knezic and Christine Lolley, who are making a name for themselves by pushing the green-building envelope to its max. Since founding their business in 2005, they've converted homes across Ontario into energy-efficient abodes, including a Muskoka cottage and a house in Brampton. They're now working on a LEED-platinum conversion in Cedarvale Park, Toronto.

Transforming abandoned sites within the urban core, like they've done with Laneway Loft, is also part of their agenda. The new home uses south-facing solar panels to supplement hot water needs, and the steel siding and roofing use recycled materials that have been locally sourced. Other passive cooling and heating techniques, such as deep roof overhangs that shade the house in summer months, and low-emission windows that face south to maximize on sun exposure during the winter, keep the home's operating costs to a minimum. So while the additions cost more than your average building materials, Knezic and Lolley say the savings over time will be substantial. □

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