

Vebi Barami, owner of Barami Construction Group, stands in front of the New York City skyline.

# A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

*Barami Construction Group thrives on borough time*

by Chancellor Page

If you've ever asked for directions in Manhattan, you were probably made aware that the layout of New York's most populated borough forms a grid. A favorite of urban planning and design, the grid has been an expression in some of the more remarkable ancient as well as modern and postmodern cities, including Manhattan, which owes its rectilinear organization to the Commissioners' Plan of 1811.

The grid is valued as a system of sense, redirecting organic and haphazard development, and in Manhattan, it brings together architectural marvels and public spaces to create a network brimming with innovation and creativity. It was in this borough that Vebi Barami, owner of *Barami Construction Group*, found himself in 1990, a long way from his home in Europe, on a trip that would make an immediate impression on him and have a lasting impact on his future.

## EMPOWER GRID

"I fell in love with New York immediately," Vebi says. "I studied and worked in Kosovo, in what was then Yugoslavia. In Manhattan, the buildings, skyscrapers and high-rises were unique and something I had never seen before I landed at JFK. No city compares to Manhattan."

Vebi was visiting friends and was captivated by the energy of New York City. Walking the grid of streets and avenues, in awe of the vertical climb of skyscrapers, he was astonished by design that transcended anything he had seen before. At that point, he understood that he needed to live there and to contribute to the development of this remarkable city. It was an empowering realization, and his timing couldn't have been better.

## BUILDING NEW BEGINNINGS

In the 1990s, Yugoslavia was embroiled in a series of wars that divided the country. Vebi and his wife, Gena, understood the implications and immigrated to the United States, making a home and raising a family in New York City, away from the political turmoil that threatened Kosovo. It was a move that established a new beginning for his family, restored Vebi's passion for architecture and renewed his childhood dream.

"I had a love for buildings since I was a child," Vebi says. "I began meeting people and took courses and found I could contribute my piece of art to this great city. It means the

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world to me that I am one of the people building or improving the buildings in New York."

Over more than a decade, Vebi has seen his dream come to realization. Formed in 2007, Barami Construction Group is a trusted licensed general contractor serving New York City, Westchester County and New Jersey for more than 10 years. The company boasts an impressive client list including eBay Inc.; New York Aquarium; Momofuku in New York City; The New Yorker, A Wyndham Hotel; Workforce1; the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America; Westbeth Artists Housing and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

"I would like to thank all our clients, our team, our employees, subcontractors and suppliers who have helped us to grow substantially in business," Vebi says. "Special thanks to The Blue Book Network® and Darwin Lee, the executive business development manager, for helping connect us with many potential clients."

## PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

What began as a dream turned into action—a solitary initiative that set the groundwork for a talented team unified by great work, a customer-centric focus and the desire to create an outstanding reputation. Vebi took time to establish and cultivate a skilled team around him with a depth of expertise and a passion for excellence and improving communities.

"I started the company by myself," he says. "It was only me and I created a great team. The owner has to have a great team around him. We started meeting clients, and project



**Barami Construction Group responded to Hurricane Sandy in 2012, assisting hundreds of families at the Nordeck Co-Op Apartments in Arverne, New York, by renovating 360 apartments in six buildings.**

by project, we became one of the most well-known general contractors in the city. Barami Construction is a full design-build company. We have great architects, engineers and designers on our team.”

For Vebi, creating a great team aligned with bringing the best ideas together, valuing the expression of the group over the individual, and establishing a team environment on respect, collaboration and communication, all with a passion to exceed every client’s expectations.

“We treat everybody as equals,” Vebi says. “We have good labor and management, supervisors and project managers and people who make the company successful. We have the right people in the right positions, and everyone knows their role.”

That sense of extreme accountability has been what has made this company thrive in the five boroughs, also extending to communities outside of New York City. It’s a day-to-day process built on client satisfaction, quality and delivering on

time. Vebi focuses on planning to anticipate the variables of the business.

“There’s no routine in construction—every day is different,” he says. “I make sure that we’re prepared the day, week and month before so there are no surprises. With general contract work, there are a lot of components. You have to communicate well and make sure everything’s going as planned. Sometimes the client wants to do something different from what the architect has drawn, so you have to be flexible and

adaptable. Every client is special and should be satisfied, and every job, whether it’s big or small, residential or commercial, should be on time and within budget.”

## **BRINGING BACK HOPE IN FAR ROCKAWAY**

Vebi was inspired and awakened by New York, making it home for his wife and two boys, Roni and Rini, and creating a family business focused on this community. His son, Roni, is Vice President and is in a position to continue the great work on residential and commercial jobs, private and city contracts, and interior and exterior renovations that have established Barami Construction Group as a versatile leader in construction. Vebi and Roni have also made sure that this is a company of significance that restores hope.

“We give laborers a chance,” Vebi says. “We hire newcomers and immigrants. They really want to work, and they’re good assets for the company.”

Since its origins more than a decade ago, the culture of the company has



**Interior renovation of a kitchen space at the Nordeck Co-Op Apartments.**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ILIR RIZAJ



Barami Construction Group did an interior design remodel of Momofuku Nishi, Chef David Chang's new Manhattan restaurant on Eighth Avenue in Chelsea.

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been a reflection of its heart and commitment to the families and communities who call New York home. When Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012, for instance, it devastated the coastal peninsula of Far Rockaway in Queens. The aftermath impacted thousands of families who experienced widespread flooding, power outages, fires, damage and decimation of their homes. Barami Construction Group responded by making partial or full renovations to 360 apartments in six buildings, assisting hundreds of families at the Nordeck Co-Op. The Far Rockaway project took Barami Construction Group more than a year to accomplish and was one of Vebi's proudest moments, allowing him to give back to the community he loves.



Stage, seating and acoustic design at the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in New York.

"Far Rockaway was one of our biggest projects," Vebi says of the rebuilding and renovation effort. "We brought back hope to this part of the city. We helped families resume their lives. The best parts of construction are the unexpected moments—when you satisfy a client or make a family in an apartment happy. It makes all the time and hard work you pour into a project worth it." 🦉

*Chancellor Page is a copywriter, editor and adjunct professor who enjoys storytelling and exploring what makes company leaders tick.*