

BY THE RIVER

Styling and Photography • Alisha Townsend

Model • Dek Hassan

Location • Mill Race Park, Cambridge

Floral sports shirt,
Stenstroms, \$399;
Check sports jacket,
Tagliatore, \$1,099;
Striped scarf, Armani, \$249;
Pocket square, Dion, \$65.

WHERE TO GET IT:
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ABOVE: V-neck sweater, Horst, \$118; Check shirt, Bugatchi, \$175; Purple pant, Bugatchi, \$159.
LEFT: White dress shirt, Tiger of Sweden, \$192; Vest, Matinique, \$159; Pinstripe jacket, Gaudi, \$250; Distressed denim, Fidelity, \$210.

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ABOVE: Coat, Blue Industry, \$389; Dotted dress shirt, Blue Industry, \$189; Slim chino black denim pant, Naked and Famous, \$155; Hat, Brixton, \$59; Laptop tote, Incase, \$100.
LEFT: Check sports shirt, Xacus, \$299; Cable-knit hoodie, Phil Petter, \$1,039; Premium denim, Jacob Cohen, \$579.

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Check suit, Lab, \$1,099; Striped shirt, Stenstroms, \$319; Striped tie, Ermenegildo Zegna, \$219; Pocket square, Armani, \$99.

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MEET ^{THE} MODEL

Dek Hassan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Dek Hassan's journey to Kitchener has been an eventful one.

Eager to escape the violence in his home country of Somalia, he set off after high school at age 17 to join his older brother, already in Cape Town, South Africa.

That journey was far from a direct flight.

He said it was a dangerous trip that involved paying people, such as bus drivers, to hide out in their vehicles. Sometimes, when encountering a checkpoint where he didn't want to be discovered as a refugee, he says he'd hop out ahead of time, walk through woods and then meet the bus a few kilometres down the road after they were clear of police.

Hassan's tone changed to excitement as he recalled his time in Cape Town. It was a place of many opportunities. It was also where he fell in love, which ultimately became his reason for leaving the city where a big piece of his heart still resides. He met Nema Sulub of Kitchener in 2013 while she was on vacation in Cape Town. They married three years ago.

Being with Sulub and their 2½-year-old son, Bilal, is what drew him here last December, in time to experience winter. Let's just say the 26-year-old's first taste of cold and snow did not go well, as evidenced by a short-lived construction job.

"I said to my wife, 'Please, can we go back to Africa?'"

With the cold weather out of the way, the young family was soon forced to spend time apart. A daughter, Bilan, not due until the fall, was born prematurely in July, so Sulub had to stay in Hamilton as the baby received specialized care at McMaster Children's Hospital.

Sulub's mother had been helping to care for Bilal while Hassan travelled back and forth to Guelph during the week to work at a Linamar automotive parts manufacturing plant. Then, on the weekend, he'd get a ride to Hamilton to be with his wife and baby.

He made time for our fashion shoot along the banks of the Grand River at Cambridge's Mill Race Park because he's looking to build his Canadian portfolio. This is his first magazine exposure. And, the week after our shoot, he had a couple of more jobs lined up including a commercial for Broil King barbecues.

Lena Herold, owner of Cameo Models in Waterloo, says she was pleased to work with him when he applied earlier this year. "He has a very nice look," she says. "You always want to add more diversity to the roster. He definitely filled a demand."

While a language barrier will make it a challenge for him to take on English-speaking roles, she says he's a good fit for a lot of jobs as models of Asian, African and Indian backgrounds are being sought out.

"His look is very popular."

Hassan is thankful for any opportunity he receives.

He says his experiences in South Africa don't count for much here. Except for one.

If you meet Hassan he will be eager to tell you about his role in a 2015 movie, "Eye in the Sky," which starred Helen Mirren.

He plays one of the terrorists that a team led by Mirren's character tracked down and eliminated by using an aerial drone attack. Hassan's character was one of the ones in the house that was blown up – twice.

This big-screen face time is a source of pride for Hassan. He certainly hopes it won't be his last. 



Dotted dress shirt, Blue Industry, \$149; Zip-up hoodie, Reigning Champ, \$150; Freestyle vest, Canada Goose, \$395; Waxed premium denim, Naked and Famous, \$249; Leather lace-up boot, Chippewa, \$295; Duffle bag, Filson, \$435.

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