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TRANSFORMING BEAUTY

EM Design's Elizabeth Metcalfe and Nicole Webster give us the scoop on their latest residential project

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A classic, modern living room by EM Design features dove-grey velvet and linen sofas by Kravet, a custom ivory lacquered sofa table, custom built-in bookcases and a Powell & Bonnell contemporary wing chair upholstered in a deep mink mohair fabric



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A low-profile geometric plaster design on the ceiling highlights an ethereal hand-cut white glass and polished nickel light fixture, navy velvet chairs by Kravet and a hand-knotted area rug by Weavers Art



The kitchen features a bespoke ceiling light fixture by Ridgely Studio Works and a large-scaled hood and range that balances the great room's fireplace design



EM Design founder Elizabeth Metcalfe and designer Nicole Webster create a stylish and sophisticated modern family home that feels both luxurious and comfortable

At the core of Elizabeth Metcalfe Interiors and Design is a belief that living in beauty is transformative. From her warm and amiable personality to the serene and welcoming interiors she creates, Elizabeth Metcalfe gives new meaning to the idea that you are what you design. “The story varies but the handwriting is always the same. Our rooms have a quiet luxury, an understated elegance and unquestionable beauty. They’re chic and sophisticated in an approachable way.”

The award-winning interior designer and founder of Elizabeth Metcalfe Interiors and Design is graciously welcoming. When I enter her atelier, the rays of an afternoon sun cast a glow upon the calm and beautifully decorated studio accented by softly coloured neutrals. The firm’s workspace reflects Metcalfe’s philosophy that the essence of good design is rooted in simplicity. “Minimal luxury is thoughtful design

executed to the highest level of quality. As a society, we have changed our perception of luxury and how we can incorporate it into our everyday lives. It is to be enjoyed and embraced,” says Metcalfe, a wife and mother of three.

By Metcalfe’s side is interior designer Nicole Webster. Since joining EM Design five years ago, Webster, a fashion devotee, has flourished under Metcalfe’s tutelage while sharing her fondness for sourcing beautiful, quality fabrics, constructing streamlined silhouettes and conveying modern-classic interiors. “We’ve always believed in each other and that’s really been the key to the growth of the firm. We instantly clicked,” says Webster. Apart from their like-minded approach to interior design, staying true to their brand’s identity has played an integral part in the company’s success thus far. “We do what we love and we do it well,” says Webster. Metcalfe agrees. “While we work on a broad spectrum of styles, our underlying foundation

remains consistent. Our clients have confidence that we will deliver true to our brand. With consistency comes trust.” Fuelling their impenetrable vision are key inspirations that include acclaimed interior designer Barbara Barry, the iconic creations of Chanel and the sophisticated colour combinations of British label Mulberry and fashion house Chloé. Metcalfe notes how “beauty is a result of scale, proportion, colour, form, repetition, harmony and balance. It’s fundamentally the core principle of all great works of art.”



Above: A foyer with custom rift-cut oak wall panels, upholstered fine wool niche panels, glass and brass wall sconces, luxurious mohair sofa and dramatic Laura Kirar mirror

Left: Modern sensibility is achieved through clean lines, captivating light fixtures and muted hues

need to have concise, factual, well-organized documents summarizing the information they need to make an informed decision,” says Metcalfe. They take on this role with passion, reverence and dedication.

After two and a half years on the Oakville project, EM Design produced results that were nothing short of spectacular. Running seamlessly through the home are subtle references that repeat an undeniable sense of calm, harmony and balance. Beautiful furnishings include a dramatic two-tone finished breakfast table by Kravet, a custom ivory lacquered sofa table, round ottomans upholstered in an iconic Kelly Wearstler black and ivory print, and unexpected light fixtures by Canadian manufacturers Ridgely Studio Works and Gabriel Scott. When asked what space they love the most, the designers both dive into the esthetic of the dining room. “The feeling you get when you walk into this room is awe-inspiring — I can’t even explain it — it’s so beautiful. It’s layered, rich and elegant, yet very approachable and warm,” says Webster, who notes how the room’s dramatic silk drapery and navy velvet chairs strike an unusual yet symphonic balance against soft metals and an etched bronze mirror over the fireplace. “When our clients saw their finished home after a lengthy design process, they were overwhelmed with the sheer beauty. It was an amazing experience for us as well,” says Metcalfe. “We take immense pride in our work and it’s a wonderful feeling to know that they’re going to have so many good memories in their new home. I believe that a home well loved is a life well lived.”

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Throughout the years, EM Design has lent its distinctive fingerprint to hundreds of residential projects across affluent pockets in Toronto and the GTA. Their latest project is one of Metcalfe and Webster’s favourites — a 6,000-square-foot manse in south Oakville developed by custom-design luxury builder Camilla Homes.

The architect of the lakeside home, Michael Pettes, instinctively knew that EM Design was the perfect fit. Rooted in classic design and modern sensibility, Metcalfe and Webster set forth to design a home from the ground up and incorporate unique design elements. “It’s our responsibility as designers to explore possibilities to take projects to the next level. We believe in educating our clients. It’s important to us that our clients are inspired, not intimidated, by the process of design. Our clients

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— Elizabeth Metcalfe