

In the formal living room, the striking view is the star of the show. Aside from a pop of pattern in the form of two matching ottomans, designer Elizabeth Swartz kept the rest of the space neutral to honor the home's waterfront location.



Semi Formal

Traditional and modern are a memorable pairing in
this waterfront family retreat.


By Jacqueline deMontravel | Photography by Michael J. Lee

A home designed by Elizabeth Swartz in Hingham, Massachusetts, is a courageous collaboration of color, pattern and style without looking like a little girl taking a whirl with a home dress-up box. Blending both classic and contemporary looks, the design works because it features a pared-down presentation of quality design choices.

This new construction was designed for empty nesters and visits from their growing family. The residence is ideal for both everyday life and larger gatherings with big, comfortable open rooms as well as smaller separate spaces for alone time.

The design honors refined living with the formal dining room and world-class kitchen. The entryway has traditional trappings with sentimental period pieces and art, while a casual boat bag loosens the formal atmosphere. "I believe our homes should reflect us. Things that have meaning—family heirlooms, art collected from travels, books that matter—these should be honored and celebrated, incorporated with other items that we find beautiful," says Elizabeth.

Playful, less formal touches are seen throughout, such as ottomans in colorful patterns and patches of painted walls in lipstick shades. "I choose colors the same way I design spaces for my clients, by listening both to what they say and don't say about what they like, spaces they find attractive, their memories of wonderful rooms or homes. I then take that information and relate it to the light, the architecture, details, etc.," Elizabeth says.



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Neither the homeowners nor the designer were afraid of pattern. Here, they papered the built-in bookshelves with a striking pink damask before introducing plaid coral throw pillows and a floral print on the cozy armchair.

Bold floral fabrics and color were central to the theme of the office. The home had a beautiful, functional built-in for the printer and file cabinets that incorporated traditional details to match the rest of the house and sported bookshelves for displays and a tack board for photos and notes. Elizabeth and the owners created a wonderful space to attend to business by designing a custom desk in a soft gray-stained finish, refinishing a oak desk chair that had been in the family, continuing the custom gray wool carpeting in this room and adding bold wall color and leather on the desk chair as well as a fun striped fabric on the upholstered chair.



Elizabeth Swartz's Design Guide

- **Blend design elements and accents based on size, color, significance and location.** If there are too many personal artifacts, they can be rotated. Editing is a large component of striking design.
- **Trendy or timeless?** Good design is not about either but about creating a look that is both attractive and functional and incorporates things you love.
- **Consider ideas you may not originally have thought to consider** like converting the underused dining room into the family room, reclaiming the unfinished space above the garage, or creating a home tailored to your family.
- **There are "good sense" rules for space planning,** but not for decorating.
- **Hire professionals you like and are comfortable with—** creating a home is a very personal experience.
- **Using bright, cheerful colors with consistent white trim throughout the house** results in the cheerful look the homeowner wanted.



All the colors of the rainbow come into play in this happy breakfast nook, which is a happening spot for the homeowners and their large family.

The master bedroom is a sanctuary from the hubbub of family gatherings and the bold colors and patterns of the rest of the home. Elizabeth used a soft white gauzy fabric with simple embroidery for the window treatments, an off-white silk with gray embroidery for the bed and table skirts, and a custom headboard upholstered in gray mohair. Custom built-ins and family heirloom furnishings contribute to the peaceful feel.

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The selection of materials played an important role in this bathroom. The gray-veined marble on the floors, walls and countertops is a neutral yet interesting back-drop that allows the hot pink accents on the ceiling and window treatments to shine.



Coastal Consideration

- A home at the seashore requires different materials and finishes to stand up to the harsh elements.
- A seaside home can incorporate the sand colors of the shore in beautiful modern architectural details and be very minimalistic in furnishings and accessories, or it can

have the rustic charm of the early seaside cottages. This home follows neither of these prescriptions yet still works beautifully on the shore. It is traditionally detailed with many family furnishings but also incorporates fun, colorful décor.

Elizabeth struck a more subdued note in the kitchen, where ash-brown cabinets and stainless steel ensure a classic look that will never feel dated or go out of style.



The kitchen was designed with plenty of space for lots of helping hands. The dark-stained hardwood flooring and white trim continue from other areas through the kitchen, unifying the home. The gray-stained custom oak cabinetry was chosen to be a bit more contemporary than the more traditional white trim details throughout the house. And the metallic copper of the glass backsplash repeats the finish of the family heirloom copper pots used in the space.

The colors in the stone for the countertops included the soft gray of the cabinets, warm pinks, as well as sand colors. The pattern of the stone mimics the pattern of sand at the edge of the ocean. "We chose a bold striped fabric for the window treatment and custom built-in banquette at the breakfast table and added a bold blue to the walls to pull the room together," Elizabeth says.

The home's fun and playful theme continues outdoors with a colorful statement by the deck dining chairs.

