

[design + decorate](#) > [house tours](#)

This Family Got Rejected by Kelly Wearstler. Thankfully, They Didn't Take No for an Answer

Proof that persistence is everything.

BY LAUREN MECHLING PUBLISHED: OCT 19, 2023



Fancy a challenge? Try obtaining the interior design services of [Kelly Wearstler](#). “It’s like having [Beyoncé](#) come to your kid’s bar mitzvah” is how Rob Scheinberg describes his elaborate adventures in persuading the high priestess of Hollywood luxe to say yes to putting her spin on his Toronto home. But he and his wife, Danielle Eden-Scheinberg, had already gotten it into their heads that none other than the Los Angeles design legend was destined to work on their newly acquired house, a five-story, 9,000-square-foot Tudor Revival mansion in the leafy neighborhood of Forest Hill.

After an initial inquiry was met with a “Sorry, she’s busy,” the pair prevailed upon a friend in London who had an in with Wearstler to back-channel on their behalf. The designer, who presides over a 65-person team and a portfolio bursting with everything from boutique hotels to her own lifestyle brand, was still busy. The couple flew from Toronto to California to make their case in person. “We don’t take no for an answer,” Scheinberg says.



Wearstler was impressed by the depth of her visitors' design knowledge, as well as another shared passion: animal activism. The couple run Dog Tales, a rescue shelter in Ontario for some 230 abused and abandoned animals, including horses, cows, and dogs. The 50-acre property has rolling hills and nap beds that Eden-Scheinberg fashioned from antique furniture outfitted with dog mattresses.

“It’s like having Beyoncé come to your kid’s bar mitzvah.”

Wearstler lives with her husband, two teenage sons, and a one-year-old son, as well as two rescue dogs and a revolving door of pregnant shelter dogs, whose litters her family tends to for months before placing the puppies in new homes. As for meeting the two prospective clients, “we really connected,” says Wearstler, who grew up in South Carolina and comes at her bold, luxurious aesthetic with an innate sense of groundedness. “It was their energy that won me over.” They were in business.



Over the next four years, the texts were flying fast—and so was Wearstler, who made regular visits north of the border to monitor the progress of her clients' house, where a team of architects was transforming the traditional interior into an oasis of rounded edges and sweeping archways. Wearstler was blown away by the home's enormous windows that overlook the grounds and their 80-foot-tall trees. "The landscape just pours in," she says.



The couple, who grew up in Israel and have a young son and daughter, wanted their home to reflect the earthy, Bauhaus-inspired aesthetic of their youth. They took Wearstler on a trip to their homeland, and the trio spent two weeks soaking up Mediterranean design in Jaffa, a historic seaside quarter of Tel Aviv. “That was very important to us,” Eden-Scheinberg says. “There’s a beautiful old European feel to the houses that we wanted to emulate.”



By then the designer and her clients had a firm understanding of the world they aimed to build together, and Wearstler set off on her own global scavenger hunt, sourcing vintage pieces and new commissions from dealers and artisans. She searched for beautiful, bold objects that beguile. In the daughter's room, for instance, bedside lamps by British designer James Shaw light up the space with a Seussian joy. Wearstler's team customized many other items, including covering vintage dining chairs in one of her own fabrics and crafting a low-to-the-ground primary bed whose headboard stretches well beyond the width of the mattress. "We wanted to bring a sense of coziness to the space," she says.

Working as a team, the stakeholders converted a historic Toronto home into a whimsy-inflected wonderland that stuns with its low-key glamour. "The house has an old soul, and we gave it a new spirit," Wearstler says of the change. "It's really modern and warm. Everything is tactile, and a little softer than usual."

The Torontonians and Wearstler have taken their relationship to the next level—three times over. They are now in cahoots on a family retreat in the Ontario countryside, a ground-up house in Costa Rica, and an animal hospital that is soon to open outside of Toronto. "There are other projects she might do with us," Scheinberg adds. "Maybe three more is not enough for us."

As for Wearstler, she will need no more persuading. "I absolutely love it. Rob and Danielle bring so much to the table, and we learn from each other," she says. "They make me a better designer."