

# Detail-oriented

## 20 questions with interior designer Melanie Elston

**Resides in:** Charlottesville  
**Best known for:** Use of color

### 1. Antique or modern?

A blending of the two.

### 2. City or country?

I moved from a city in hopes of learning more about life in the country.

### 3. Which colors do you use most?

I love burnt orange paired with almost anything!

### 4. Which materials or textures do you frequently use?

I really believe it's important to have pattern in a room, so I always try to use a more neutral fabric or texture on larger pieces and tend to be more splashy with the chairs and pillows.

### 5. What is your favorite interior design-related word?

Aesthetic.

### 6. Does your home look like the one you grew up in?

Somewhat. I tend to be a little more modern. However, I learned a lot about interiors from my mother, who was and still is always fiddling in her home. She has fantastic taste and her passion for creating a beautiful home helped forge a foundation for what ended up being my career.

### 7. Does a room need a view?

It certainly can't hurt!

### 8. Favorite designer or architect?

Although my design aesthetic (see, there's the word!) is much different, I am always in awe of Darryl Carter's interiors.

### 9. Which design blog, website, TV show, or magazine do you peruse religiously?

Traditional Home and House Beautiful are the two magazines that I tend to gravitate towards.



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### 10. Design-wise, what should a homeowner never scrimp on?

There are several things, but the one that is always neglected is accessories. The odd trinkets from travels or a painting that speaks to you are the things that give a home soul.

### 11. Design rule you like to break?

If I have heard it once, I've heard it a million times: Build a room around a rug. I completely disagree. Building a room should be an organic process and I always bring the rug in last after things have come together.

### 12. What is your favorite room in the house?

The kitchen. For me, it's the heart of the home because it's always a gathering spot for families and friends. A significant amount of love and laughter comes from a well-used kitchen.

### 13. What is your most treasured possession?

If I had to name one thing, it would be a ring that my father gave me.

### 14. What do you wish you could do without?

A car and the corresponding traffic!

### 15. What are you afraid to DIY?

Everything! I can envision it, but handy I am not.

### 16. Have you ever had a change of heart about an object or a style?

Yes, but not usually with a client. I second guess myself more when working on my own home.

### 17. If you could live in one historical figure's house, whose would it be?

Georgia O'Keefe's home in Abiquiu, New Mexico. It's an aesthetic that I love, but could not create on my own. I love the spare rooms, white walls, and simple architecture. I admire it because it's such a departure from my own way of life.

### 18. On what movie set would you like to live?

*The Great Gatsby.*

### 19. If you were reborn as a piece of furniture or an object, what would it be?

A femininely carved French fireplace made of bold Nero Marquina marble.

### 20. What is your first design memory?

Picking out my first "big girl" bedroom wallpaper. An innocent cream paper with little pink rosebuds. It went up on the walls and it could not have been more hideous! Who would have thought that I would end up an interior designer?



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