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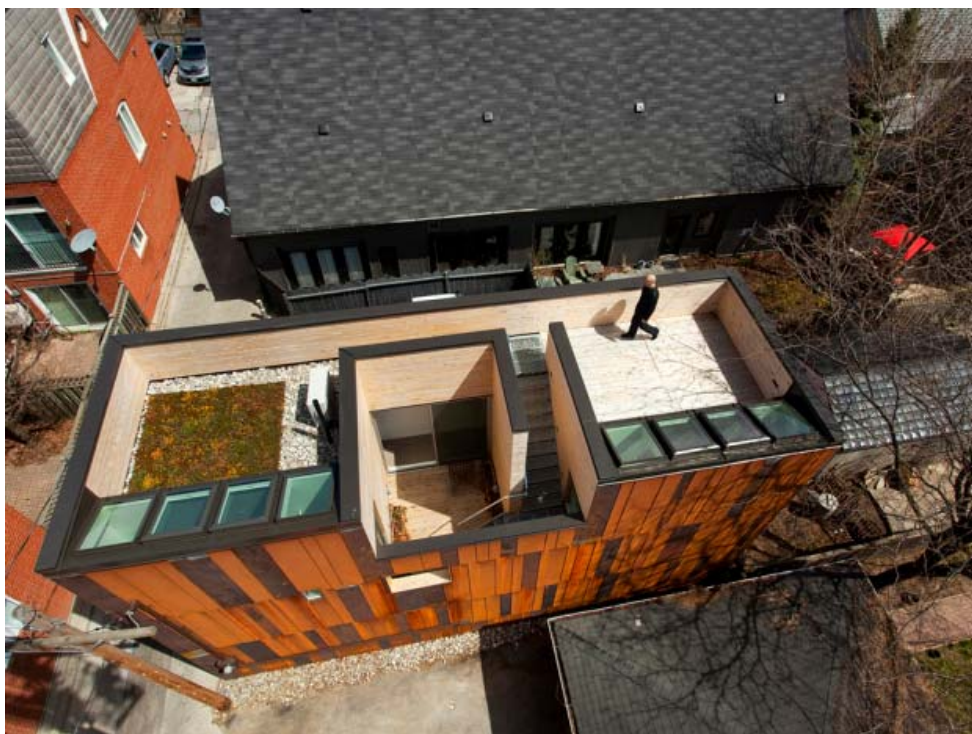
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Superkül's husband and wife team of architects know how to make a house a stylish home



KELVIN BROWNE | July 7, 2013 2:00 PM ET

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Shai Gil Photography

Superkül's husband and wife team of architects make designer houses into homes

The husband and wife who are the principals of superkül, Andre D'Elia and Meg Graham, are cool, but not so cool they don't understand how people want to live in houses today. "I think people are attracted to our houses because they sense they can be comfortable there, not just because they like the look of them," says Meg. Indeed, surfing through their portfolio, the houses are sleek, somewhat minimal and yet definitely not unfriendly. Andre points out this is not accidental. "We like a certain modesty; we focus on light, the materials and proportions. Great proportions are essential." Elegant proportions are indeed super cool. No amount of marble and fancy fixtures can redeem a space that begins with the handicap of thoughtless proportions.

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Superkül has been in business for 11 years graduated from architecture at Waterloo a architects) and eventually started a busine

arleton University and then worked at KPMB. Meg e both working at KPMB (an astounding incubator of great n of 15, including them. In addition to award-winning

houses, the firm has designed the Fielding

or St. Joseph and other commercial projects.

What have Meg and Andre learned about

ed their firm? Almost in unison, they say “a lot.”

“Working on a commercial project, even w
personal.” Andre continues: “Our clients a
time to understand all the details.”

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Shai Gil Photography

“It takes time to appreciate what a client wants and needs,” says Meg. “Some start with clippings of our work or other houses but it's never that easy as just build this. It's a process.” Andre adds, importantly, “You're realizing someone's dream for them, it's a big financial commitment, but it has to be enjoyable, fun too, or it's not going to work out.”

Our clients are typically very busy people, but when it comes to the design of their house they'll make time to understand all the details

Another learning was the realization that it takes a village to build a house. Not just all trades who construct a house but the myriad consultants involved in any project, many of whom the client never meets. “Every project has a different team,” says Meg. “It might seem like if you've built a house before, the client is all that changes, but it's usually different relationships each time that are what realizes a project.”

As I'm speaking with Meg and Andre, the word “trust” comes up quite often. Clients trusting the architect, of course, but architects trusting that they can push and question a client sometimes to get them to end product that will make them happy, rather than be something they saw in a magazine. Meg mentions a phone call she'd had recently from a client who had some doubts about an aspect of the house, but went ahead assuming the architects knew best. “It was really nice,” said Meg. “He said ‘I just now got why you did those doors that way.’ He was pleased that he'd trusted us, and pleased that we'd pushed a bit.” It must be very reassuring when you're an architect to have clients validate your recommendations, especially when they're not design decisions that are standard.

I can't resist asking about the firm's name. “Well, we were having a drink ... and we didn't want a name with people's names in it ... and we wanted something that was memorable” How lucky to be cooler and more savvy a decade after you gave yourself the challenge to be super cool.

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