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# Margaret Russell And Tomas Maier Celebrate Firooz Zahedi's Book, My Elizabeth

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## Margaret Russell And Tomas Maier Celebrate Firooz Zahedi's My Elizabeth

*Architectural Digest* Editor In Chief Margaret Russell and designer Tomas Maier hosted a cocktail and book signing Thursday for photographer Firooz Zahedi's new book, *My Elizabeth*, at Maier's Upper East Side store. 100% of the book's proceeds are being donated to The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF).

*My Elizabeth* is a collection of portraits of Taylor taken by Zahedi as they spent time together, traveling to Iran and Europe, playing softball in Montauk, cooking fried chicken in her kitchen. Zahedi also wrote the text.

"It was a struggle for him at first as he's not really a writer," said Beth De Woody, Zahedi's wife. "But he wrote from the heart and it came out beautifully. He met Elizabeth Taylor when she was 44. Even though a lot of people see the younger, glamorous years, these years were more interesting. She was a beautiful person who took on the AIDS mantle because her friends like Rock Hudson died of it. She wasn't afraid to use her fame and glamour to bring awareness to the situation. She lobbied the government and worked very hard. She also had a side

that was very natural and casual. When she became your friend, she was your friend for life.”

Zahedi met Taylor in Washington, D.C. when he was 27. She was impressed with his photographic talent, and in 1978, he moved to Los Angeles to become her personal photographer for the film *A Little Night Music*. Their friendship blossomed.

“Only Firooz could have produced this book,” said publisher Marta Hallett, of Gliteratti Incorporated. “He was with Elizabeth Taylor when she was living her life in a genuine way. It’s a look that you can only get from a dear friend who has known you for a long time.”

Zahedi’s book, which is getting a lot of acclaim, was turned down by bigger publishers. He is thrilled for Hallett, and grateful that she took a chance.

“Marta published this book in a big, beautiful format. She took the chance when larger publishers didn’t, and now she’s the envy of all those other publishers, because the book is on the cover of *People* magazine with a five page article inside. *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Architectural Digest* have all written about it.”

George Farias hosted a dinner at The Carlyle following the cocktail. Guests included collector Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah of Kuwait, gallery owner Leila Heller, Fran Drescher, Kathy and Billy Rayner, Richard Mishaan, and artist Quinn Tivey, Taylor’s grandson, who spoke of the work he continues as co-trustee of The ETAF.

“I was just in D.C. at AIDSWatch, where our key push this year was for more comprehensive sexual [education](#). There is currently a bill on the table, the Real Education For Healthy Youth Act, which would offer a more comprehensive sex education program, and also offer a more inclusive program for the LGBTQ community. It’s important to create a safe place where young people can talk about sex and sexuality. Not everybody has that at home. Adolescence is a really sensitive time.”