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## NANCY MIMS

### THE INNOVATOR

Black butterflies cover the wall in Nancy Mims' family room. Whimsical, they flutter over the lacy suggestion of stylized plant forms that draw the eye. Emitting the joy of a warm spring day, they're part of a pattern designed by Mims for her company Mod Green Pod. "Our wallpaper has no harmful vinyl," she says, describing how for decades the wallpaper business has coated its product with toxic substances. "We want to create products that won't harm the planet or its users," says Mims, noting that this swanky wallpaper is even wipeable.

Wipeable is important when you have kids. Mims knows—she has two, 6-year-old Clara and 9-month-old Atticus. "I wanted to clean up the world for them," she says. So, she joined her sister-in-law Lisa to form a home fabric and wallpaper company that is completely green. They use only organic cotton, which is milled, harvested and finished without toxic chemicals. The resulting upholstery-worthy canvas is hand-silk screened in New England, where artisans follow centuries-old methods and use water-based inks. (The wallpaper follows a similar safe process.) A pioneer, Mod Green Pod is the only company working with organic cotton in this way.

Botanical-inspired designs and bold colors define a thorough, but connected collection. Neither formal nor casual, the patterns are versatile. Omnipresent in each, a creamy background references the original cotton and suggests the earth. Varying in size, patterns are chic, but classical and clean, and full of good humor.

Veterans of the fashion milieu, both women are dedicated to the concept of a sustainable world but enjoy the creativity of *au courant* style. "We didn't want to sacrifice one for the other. Our products are both safe and fun," she says, as she shows examples of the upcoming line called the Sprout Collection, consisting of three fantastical, botanical patterns named after the Mims children.



BY KATHERINE RICHARDSON • PORTRAIT BY J. ATTIE

### Architects

## MAIER+ZELTER THE POWER COUPLE

You'd probably recognize their home before you'd recognize their names. John Maier and Ulrike Zelter's first collaborative project, the renovation of a 1950s duplex in North Austin, put them on the map and has since been published in several books, seen on television, featured in magazines and newspapers and visited by Austinites during the 2003 American Institute of Architects Homes Tour.

In 2002 the pair formed their firm when they each found themselves between jobs. Maier, an architect schooled at The University of Texas, and Zelter, a German native who earned her architecture degree from the Fachhochschule Bochum, began by taking on any and all small addition and renovation projects that came their way.

Having done it themselves, Maier and Zelter have a strong understanding of the issues their clients face. The pair sees the majority of their projects through from start to finish, intent upon educating people about the design process as they go. As with any couple, the two have their individual strengths and weaknesses. Maier speaks of Zelter's ability in design concepts while she tells of his playful creativity. They recognize that collaboration includes compromise, between themselves and also with their clients, and they work hard to incorporate ideas into a final design solution that is agreeable to everyone. Inclined toward modern design, the team nevertheless bases designs for homes, additions and renovations on how their clients live. Staying true to the culture and climate, often weaving interior and exterior spaces together, they keep their design in harmony with the character of the original space.