

THE KILLER COMBO



text lisa skolnik

JULIE FISHER & RACHEL CROWL

WHY WE LOVE THEM: Good partnerships are hard to find. But Fisher and Crowl are a killer combination, and in a nine year stint have amassed intriguing projects to prove the point. "We're balanced," acknowledges Crowl, who calls Fisher "a spirited, outgoing, energetic risk-taker." Fisher reveres Crowl's "strategic and thorough problem-solving approach to challenges." Their personalities and proclivities give them different, but complementary, areas of expertise; Fisher has an exhaustive knowledge of new product and emerging trends, while Crowl possesses sterling technical experience and proficiency. But they share the same aesthetics and objectives: "we're not planted in any design camp but favor clean lines," says Fisher, and "our goal is to build projects that are beautiful but people can really live in," insists Crowl.

WHAT THEY HAVE DONE: Crowl has a Bachelor of Architecture from Virginia Tech, is licensed and has worked for a string of firms, while Fisher has a Bachelor of Arts from The School of the Art Institute, Chicago, a Master of Architecture from the University of Illinois, Chicago and is almost done with licensing exams. They focus on restaurants (Bluebird, just completed in Bucktown, is shown here) and residences, and have moved from small rehabs to substantial new construction projects—some of their own making. "After doing so many homes for developers, we realized we can be more clever and creative about custom features and aesthetics when we do it ourselves, so we've done four spec homes," points out Crowl. Three are occupied; the last is just finishing up.

Q. If you could come back as a piece of furniture, what would it be?

A. "A Fatboy pillow, which is a bean bag for the 21st century," quips Fisher. "I don't want to be reincarnated as anything that can't eat. What's the point of life without food," counters Crowl.

Q. How would you describe your approach to design?

A. "Life is complicated. We design things for real life, that people can really live in," maintains Crowl.

Q. Do you have a motto?

A. "Don't take it all too seriously. If you can't have fun, why do it," insists Fisher.

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