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Summer 2006

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Urban Style

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Drama on the Drive



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INTERIOR MOTIVES

Looking for a classic modernist?
An eclectic traditionalist?
A transitional . . . oh, never mind.
With so many designers and
decorators to choose from, it can be
tricky finding one you'll click with.
These five firms stand out from the
crowd by specializing in a certain
type of client—you, perhaps

BY CHRISTINE BOCKELMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATRINA WITTKAMP

THE XY FACTOR

James Dolenc Thomas Riker

Clients who abhor fussy decor flock to JamesThomas, the three-year-old partnership of interior designer James Dolenc and Thomas Riker, who trained as an architect. "I'd say our look is best described as tailored," Riker says. **A Guy Thing:** Although it wasn't the intent, the firm's client list includes a lot of men living solo, including local NBC anchor Don Lemon. **Money Is Time:** The two charge by the hour (and don't upcharge for furniture) after carefully estimating the time they'll need for space planning, shopping, and everything else. "It's very methodical. Guys respond well to that format," Dolenc says. **Cool, Not Cold:** Riker and Dolenc steer clear of concrete, pure white walls, and other stark elements in their designs. Their softer version of modern means comfortable furniture, warm woodwork, and color. For accent pieces, they might incorporate tribal artifacts or, if the customer is up for it, a sparkly chandelier over the dining table. "We want rooms to be warm and welcoming, not sterile," Riker says. **Plain Talk:** Riker and Dolenc are approachably down-to-earth and speak the language of the layman. "We don't throw around big words. We don't show clients lots of tear sheets. We don't try to make things overly complicated," Dolenc says. "It's furniture. These aren't life and death choices."

JAMESTHOMAS, 2401 W. OHIO ST., 312-738-7300



Thomas Riker (left) and James Dolenc, seated in vintage Saarinen Tulip chairs, softened the look of NBC anchor Don Lemon's modern-edged condo with pieces from the 1950s.

A man with short brown hair, wearing a light-colored striped button-down shirt and blue jeans, is sitting at a dark-stained wooden dining table. He has his hands clasped on the table and is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The table is set with a potted orchid, two lit candles in tall holders, and a small vase. The background shows a modern kitchen with dark cabinetry and a white countertop. The lighting is warm and focused on the man and the table.

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