

CTC&G

Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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The New



MEET THE DESIGNERS

AS SEEN IN
CTC&G
Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

Carrier and Company



THE TIMELESS WORK OF Carrier and Company runs the gamut from Tribeca lofts and Florida vacation homes to notable fashion offices. Married founders Jesse Carrier and Mara Miller collaborate as parents and as principals of the firm.

You started dating at FIT and then married in the following decade while working at different firms. Why did you start your own company? We were expecting our first child, Mara was cutting back, and Jesse was between jobs and working with some freelance clients. It seemed like the time to make the move.

How did you know your work would mesh? The firms we had worked for were similar, during our courtship we enjoyed going to flea markets and antique shows together, and we were budget oriented, we'd buy what we could afford that would work. It was a natural evolution of taste for us.

In the foreword to your book *Positively Chic Interiors*, *Vogue* Editor Anna Wintour praises your achievement of "high style" with a "very human-scaled sense of warmth and joy." What are you aiming to achieve? Every room should be livable, with space for air and life. Think of homes with the formal room that is only used for two holidays out of the year. That's a disaster; life's too short.

Instead of following a recognizable style, you may juxtapose an ultra-modern Parsons table beside a pair of Renaissance-style gate leg end tables. Why mix things up? Involving different periods creates spaces that can endure. We try to steer clients away from identifiable trends that can date the project. While individual components may not share a heritage or aesthetic, they do harmonize creating cultivated spaces that feel curated and collected over time.

Mix Masters A 2015 CTC&G IDAs winner (TOP RIGHT) exemplifies a masterful mix of contemporary art with heirloom pieces. Watercolor-like wallpaper (BOTTOM RIGHT) is an unexpected backdrop for historic maps. See Resources.

In one design, you let pine knots bleed through wall paint. How do you avoid that appearing to be a mistake? It's okay to do that in a country home: It is a site-specific example of a look that speaks to appropriateness of place, the overall aesthetic, which is what makes a home feel authentic. We try to be appropriate to the place, the location, architecture, landscaping. You never want things to look imposed or fake.

And that's part of Connecticut's appeal to you? Yes, there's a pride of place, an identity. People fall in love with the Connecticut/New England fantasy. They buy into that line, and that keeps the aesthetic so charming and the property values high.

“Every room should be livable, with space for air and life”

What happens when your tastes differ? It doesn't often come into play, but if there's a discrepancy in views (should the walls be blue or dark brown?), we always try to honor the one who feels more strongly. Basically, we go with conviction and passion.

After the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, you were hired to refresh the *Vogue* offices. Why the switch to cushy sofas and armchairs in the lobby? In the movie, it was stark and white and rigid, and that's fictitious. The real feel is much more homey, English country—that's Anna's personal brand that we tried to achieve. —Sharon King Hoge



PORTRAIT: SANG AN; TOP RIGHT: ZACH DESART; BOTTOM RIGHT: PIETER ESTERSON

Meet Jesse Carrier and Mara Miller at the Near & Far Aid Designer Breakfast on May 12. For more information, go to nearandfaraid.org