

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

BY TIFFANY JOW

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK GONG



BLOG THIS! Design cultists Bill Smith and Brian Forehand sit pretty at the "Low Rez/Hi Fi" installation at 1110 Vermont Avenue, NW.

DESIGN, WITHIN REACH *Students of architecture Bill Smith and Brian Forehand school the District on houses that rock*

"I love urban irony," says local architecture buff Bill Smith, referencing a vintage chrome-and-leather-clad 345 Airstream Motorhome he saw parked on R Street in the midst of his morning commute. Smith and fellow design guru Brian Forehand are the masterminds behind design-cult.com, a blog that responds to the capital's ever-changing facade with a savvy-smart edge. Not only does the duo write about buildings that take advantage of material, space and skin (like Polsheck Partnership Architects' Newseum and the revitalization of NoMa), they also critique gallery openings, explore their fascination with designer Mark Nason's man boots and explain why a new vino shop in Dupont rocks their world.

The punch of their posts lies in the pair's projects, past and present. Smith hails from Christian Zapatka Architects and has a hand in the contemporary renovations of Logan Circle's lust-worthy townhouses.

The architecture addict gained cred after a stint with Pei Cobb Freed & Partners—which might explain why he adores the East Wing of the National Gallery. Virginia Tech grad Forehand, currently at Bonstra Haresign Architects, was involved in the recent renovation of the swank Studio Theatre. Now, he's working on an innovative design for a building on 14th Street, near Florida Avenue, where he intends to bring modern bite to the historic structure's more traditional guise.

Written for those who appreciate the BMW I-Series as much as Christian Louboutin and concrete countertops, this locally focused blog has captured approving nods from Washington's designerati. "What's significant about DC design is this trend of a new modernist voice in terms of architecture and art," Smith says. "There's an emerging bohemian scene that's starting to affect design with an urban influence. It's exciting!" ■

HOTS: Thom Browne suits, Dupioni silk, sustainable living, well-integrated ornamentation, contextual modernism, accessible glamour, intelligent and affordable design, reflective finishes, personal uniforms. **NOTS:** Crocs, hysterical preservationists, Crate and Barrel, cheap pseudo-historical replication, irresponsible consumption, pointless decoration, overstated luxury, timid design, chain restaurants.