

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

BY LISA MARTIN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY LAI



TREE LOVE Just minutes from downtown, Matt Holley's Kessler Woods is home to a new nature preserve

NATURAL SELECTION *Developer Matt Holley's mod squad settles in Oak Cliff*

Back in 2002, Matt Holley sold his house, packed his belongings and was ready to move to Boston when he fell in love.

The object of his ardor? Ten acres in Oak Cliff, which he developed into Kessler Woods, a highly acclaimed residential community with an adjoining nature preserve. Drawing architectural inspiration from mid-century masters, the neighborhood boasts an enviable visual unity; it's also now where Holley calls home with Diego, his spry terrier. "My passion right now is Oak Cliff, which has such a fascinating history and some of the prettiest neighborhoods in Dallas," says the Texas A&M engineering grad. I am such a big believer in this area. Now is the time to do things here."

His almost-move inspired a new business direction when Holley sold his home. "The guy who bought it said, 'I really love this whole modern thing, but I don't know how to do it.'" Holley sold most of the furnishings to the anxious buyer. Today, Sky Modern (his construction company with architect Doug Hildinger) is harnessing that concept with a furnished spec house, down to edgy art on the walls. This will set a buyer back a cool mil or two, but it makes sense for those wary of a DIY approach. And with other projects slated, there's no denying the fact that Holley is about to step out on his first love. Well, who can deny this energetic developer a dalliance or two? Dreamers are notoriously tough to pin down. ■

HOTS: Fast German and vintage cars, the Alaskan wilderness, urban living, Shakira belly dancing, Local restaurant in Deep Ellum, Orange salon, morning runs around White Rock Lake, Hostess Cupcakes, Cuarto Leches cake at La Duni, Friday drinks at the Belmont **NOTS:** Bad bugs on my computer, traffic, narrow-minded people, conspiracy theorists, laziness, middle-aged men in Abercrombie, mullets, self-righteous granolas