

# AIMEE AND DUDLEY SIMMS

## Despite opening their business just twice a year, pair find success

By Kimberly Goad

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

Aimee and Dudley Simms were at a crossroads two years ago when they decided to go into business together.

Dudley had just graduated from seminary and was having second thoughts about the teaching career he'd planned.

Aimee, who had been running her own clothing business, Sweet Pea Designs, was ready to devote more time to her burgeoning interior design business.

"I was doing hand-painted women's clothing," says Aimee, 29. "But, through word of mouth, I had begun helping people with their homes. Dudley would go down to the Design Center with me and as he was brainstorming for a business (opportunity), he realized there was a niche for people who couldn't afford a designer but like pretty things."

They decided to bring shipments of English antiques, reproductions and decorative art and accessories to Dallas and hold twice-a-year sales in temporary spaces. They call the business Highgate House.

"When we went to England the first time and came back with our shipment, we were going to open a full-time retail store," Aimee says. "But the overhead was so

incredible, we just thought, 'It will take a long time to make a successful business with that high overhead.' So we opened in a temporary space in Snider Plaza. That short-term sale went so well, we knew we were on to something."

They'll be holding their third sale Oct. 17-29 at 3109 Monticello. Later this fall, they plan to settle into a permanent, by-appointment-only studio.

The Simmses, who are Park Cities residents, met in 1985. Dudley was a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Aimee was studying at the University of Texas at Austin.

"We were both in Hawaii with Campus Crusade for Christ and we became friends," Aimee says. "At the end of the summer, we each went back to school and he started writing me."

The next summer both went to Japan with Campus Crusade. At the end of the summer, Dudley proposed and they got married in December 1986.

As for the ins and outs of working together, Aimee says, "Our temperaments are suited to each other. The minute we got married, we moved to Chapel Hill and he finished school. Then we moved to Austin and I finished. And then, in Dallas, he was in seminary, so we've always been together a lot."



PHOTO: Michael Ainsworth

Aimee and Dudley Simms import items for their furnishings business, which opens for sales twice a year.