



MASTERS & APPRENTICES



TRADE SECRET

"Choose the right fabric for the job. Wool is a great all-rounder. It has a certain amount of stretch, is fairly hardwearing and makes up very well," Mark Castaldi
Martel Upholstery, Richmond, Victoria; (03) 9428 9900 or www.martelupholstery.com.

Martel Upholstery

Elsa Castaldi is bent over a sewing machine, talking and laughing while her son Mark and his mate Ivan Mattucci wrestle with a chair frame nearby. The Martel Upholstery business is a family affair, launched a decade ago by Mark (above, right), who learnt the trade from a Frenchman. Ivan (above, left) joined as his apprentice in 1992 and the team is responsible for some of Melbourne's best-dressed furniture. "It's about taking something old and shabby and giving it a new life," says Mark, explaining the bug that captured them.

First-generation Australians (the pairs' families hail from Friuli and Abruzzo respectively), the two specialise in restoring mid-century furniture, and credit their lineage for their success. "Upholstery requires patience, attention to detail and a bit of creative flair," says Mark. "Italian craftsmen tend to put a lot of attention into the detail."