



This month David Fox celebrates 10 years of successful product and furniture design. We felt this deserved a little recognition, so here are some of David's highs and the journey to both national and international success.

**The beginning:** A decade ago David was a designer and design manager for a tubular steel bedroom furniture manufacturer in west Yorkshire. He crafted a lot of his technical ability from working closely within a manufacturing environment. In 2002, he decided that he would pursue his own creative studio, named 4orm design, offering industrial design and product development services.

Unhappy with the direction of the domestic and bedroom furniture market, he decided he would try his hand at the contract market.

**The acute pester:** After days, weeks and months of cold calling and the pestering of a number of manufacturers. Local businessman and entrepreneur Jonathan Hill (Connection Seating), finally gave in. 'You design beds...can you design me a table?' he asked. 'Yes? Well go on then – there's some money, go and design me a nice table.'

**The decade:** In 2003 the Bar Table entered the market, followed by the Bar Dining and Coffee Table. After seeing the results, Foxy then – and bare in mind that he had never designed a chair before – thought he would try his hand at designing some seating, in a hope to achieve some success in the sector. Later that year he conceptualised and

offered up to the market no less than four chairs: Korus (Connection Seating), Smile (Nominique), Kruze (Boss design) and Zone (Pledge Office Chairs).

Kruze became an instant success. Although undoubtedly much of this was down to the astute design, David himself puts some of this success to luck and also the employing of R&D Manager Mark Barrell, who he had previously worked with at HJ Berry.

Between 2003 and 2006, based on a rapidly growing commercial success, a number of new and extended David Fox developments entered the marketplace – including Kalm and Venue (Connection Seating) and Kruze Lounge (Boss Design). Both Kalm and Kruze went on to win a host of prestigious international design awards.

In 2006 David had 'the great pleasure' of meeting (his words, not ours!) 'now friends and sterling fellas' Mick, and Henry, where a London meet, and interview led to a profile publication in Mix Interiors. 2007 saw a Mixology North Designer of the year award, and soon after David received a call from Office Chairman, now re-branded Ocee Design, asking whether he would be interested in collaborating with them to further their portfolio of products. Following a busy 18 months Ocee Design made its debut at Design Prima – the highlights of a busy stand being the new Oval and Asteroid tables.



In the years up to 2009, the Connection collaboration continued with Gloss, Halo and Zeus. Not resting on his laurels, 2009 proved another great year for David as Kruze scooped Best of NeoCon, whilst he personally picked up Mixology and FX Designer of the Year awards.

Despite these successes, David still recalls the sad time when Jonny Hill had his terrible accident. David himself is a keen racer of motorcycles, and knows that the risks are high, but that there is no more euphoric feeling than crossing the finish line faster or better than you did before. 'I guess elements of this are apparent on how he approached product development,' David tells us. 'For that he will always have my admiration.'

Later that year, at Design Prima, Naughtone launched the Pollen Stool. This was the fastest development yet – concept to completion taking just an astonishing four weeks. This was soon followed by the Time brassware series for Vado.

We ask David about his concept for the much-loved Rinse in Leeds. 'It's basically a few like-minded industry folk and friends partaking in liquid beverages from around the world!' he grins. This led to the beginnings of a conversation to design a fabric with Camira – the eventual results being Nuna and Adrenalin.

Meanwhile, David's products were beginning to get seen and specified on an international level and 2010 saw the Kruze Lounge for

Boss Design win the Gold Award for Seating in Dubai. And speaking of international moves, the designer soon set his own sights overseas. 'I had been trying to persuade Tonon to work with me for over five years, then in Milan 2010 I showed them Poppy. They instantly liked it, and it was developed in preparation for the 2011 Cologne IMM, where it received the German interior innovation award – and later that year went on to win the prestigious Red Dot, and the Good Design award, with the Design Guild award also being added to the honours list.'

Early in 2011 the playful Magic Mushroom – now shortened to Magic for legal reasons (!) – caught the eye of a certain Brian Murray, and was launched by Boss at Clerkenwell Design Week. This was then followed by the launch of Touch benching for Ocee Design.

'It's been a fantastic and enjoyable 10 years, and I hope the next 10 will bring as much pleasure,' David muses. 'I've loved creating the products and meeting the characters that make this industry great.'

And the immediate future? Well, over the next 12 months a number of new products will be launched at Milan, NeoCon, Clerkenwell, London Design Week and Orgatec. Oh, and we've also just heard that David's picked up a Design Guild Mark for his Magic Stools. Magic.

We'll leave the final words to the man himself. 'Most of all, thank you all for making a decade so memorable.' ●