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BANG ON DESIGN

PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG KERSHAW/DAVID MIST TEXT PENELOPE BARKER

OVER MORE THAN A DECADE, DAVID GRANGER AND BRYAN MARSHALL OF BANG DESIGN HAVE HAD AN UNSWERVING COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND INTEGRITY IN ALL THEY DO: WORKING CLOSELY WITH CLIENTS, EXAMINING THEIR NEEDS IN FINE DETAIL AND REACHING THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION. THIS PROCESS HAS RESULTED IN A BODY OF WORK THAT HAS A CONTINUOUS THREAD OF STRENGTH AND CHARACTER, LINKED WITH AN INDEFINABLE HUMAN QUALITY AND CHARM – EVEN A POETIC SENSIBILITY

Millions of television viewers from Sweden to Swaziland saw their designs during the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Their furniture designs have been exhibited around the world and are part of the permanent collection of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. Their 'Plus' range of furniture for Formway was awarded Best Award for Furniture Design by the New Zealand Best Design Awards and the inaugural Australian Design Award for furniture. They were featured in the International Design Yearbook for three years running in the 1990s. This year, they have three products in the running for an Australian Design Award: their 'Lucid' series of bathroomware and tapware for Starion/Caroma, an upholstered dining chair for King Furniture and 'Motif' collection of tapware for Dorf Clark Industries.

Since joining forces to form Bang Design in 1989, industrial designers David Granger and Bryan Marshall have built up an impressive body of work, but Bang is hardly a household name. That may well be about to change. After 12 years of commitment to creating "the best possible work", Granger and Marshall have reached a level of confidence and breadth of experience that could well see Bang Design making a global impact. To celebrate this shift, Marshall and Granger decided a change of identity was timely and symbolic.

"We felt it was time for a change of our graphic identity," says Marshall. "Our logo no longer reflected us accurately. The recent development of Bang's website – bangdesign.com.au – provided the spark we were looking for. It was the way the web address created the new word "bangdesign". It began to define our new identity."

"FOR US DESIGN IS A VERB NOT A NOUN. IT IS A PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS WHERE EVERYTHING IS QUESTIONED IN ORDER TO FIND BETTER ANSWERS."

This rigorous approach and unswerving commitment to excellence has been the Bang signature from the very beginning. Throughout their body of work runs a common thread of functionalism with a human factor: an indefinable element of charm and sense of animation. Bang's attention to detail is a measured process of taking every issue and zooming in close, then pulling back wide to view the full >>



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01 DAVID GRANGER AND BRYAN MARSHALL OF BANG DESIGN 02 THE 'LUCID' SERIES OF BATHROOMWARE FOR STARION INDUSTRIES, MANUFACTURED BY CAROMA, WAS LAUNCHED AT THE DESIGNEX EXHIBITION IN SYDNEY IN APRIL THIS YEAR. THIS GROUND-BREAKING PROJECT WAS THREE YEARS FROM INITIAL BRIEF TO LAUNCH. GRANGER AND MARSHALL CONSULTED WITH LEADING AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTS AND INTERIOR DESIGNERS TO FIND OUT THEIR "WISH-LIST" FOR AN IDEAL CONTEMPORARY BATHROOM. WITH ITS BOLD, MODERN FORMS, SENSUOUS SHAPES, SPACE-SAVING WALL HUNG UNITS AND INNOVATIVE, VISUALLY DISCREET TAPWARE, 'LUCID' IS SURE TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT MARK IN THE HIGH-END ARCHITECTURAL MARKET



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03/04 KITCHEN AND BENCH DETAIL OF BANG'S DESIGN FOR SOURCE FOUR NINETY, CAROMA'S VENUE FOR COLLABORATION AND PRESENTATION TO THE ART AND DESIGN INDUSTRY 05 'RADIUS' SHELVING WAS AN EARLY BANG DESIGN PIECE 06 SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC DISTANCE MARKERS FOR FIELD EVENTS 07 LANE MARKER FOR TRACK EVENTS, DESIGNED TO EVOKE THE ATHLETE'S STANCE READY TO EXPLODE OFF THE STARTING BLOCKS. BOTH MARKERS WERE BATCH PRODUCED AS ROTATIONAL MOULDINGS. 08 BEFORE DESIGNING THE PRODUCTS FOR THE SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPICS, THE DESIGNERS SET OUT TO SEE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AUSTRALIAN: TRAVELLING TO THE OUTBACK AND THE BEACH, INTERVIEWING PEOPLE AND TAKING HUNDREDS OF PHOTOS. FOR THEIR TRANSLUCENT BLUE MEDAL CONTAINERS THEY HAD JUST EIGHT WEEKS FROM BRIEF TO MANUFACTURE "AND WE COULDN'T MISS THE DEADLINE!"

>> picture and ensure appropriateness. With each new project, their challenge is to create deceptively simple and charming solutions from a complex set of requirements, constantly striving for an original point of view and with the ultimate objective of longevity: to create ideas and forms that last and have strong reason for being.

"Design doesn't work in isolation," says Marshall, "and we learnt that because we had to live off it! Design is part of a bigger process and the more we understand about the bigger picture, the better we can produce a design solution. It's all about problem-solving. There are a whole series of different factors you've got to find answers for from product development and manufacturing to the marketing and sales. We get involved as much as we can so the result is better as a result of the process. It's not just 'Here's a sketch and let's hope it flies'."

"We put ourselves in other people's shoes," adds Granger. "We like putting on other people's hats because we don't go about it for our own reasons."

"THIS ISN'T A WORK OF ART FOR US, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE A VERY STRONG SENSE OF AESTHETICS IN OUR WORK. IF SOMEONE HAS A NEED, IF SOMEONE HAS A BRIEF, IF SOMEONE HAS AN OBJECTIVE THEN, OKAY, WE HAVE A DESIGN PROCESS THAT WE CAN APPLY OURSELVES TO."

"It's about solving problems but solving them in a way that some element is brought to the table that elevates it to a standard where the client or the customer gets something of stronger value. If it doesn't have some greater benefit then we are simply creating more and more disposable things." "Hopefully," adds Marshall, "our objective would be that our products would perform better, they would last longer and that they would provide that aesthetic quality that essentially >>



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>> makes people feel better about the space they are working in or the objects they are using. Australian products can't compete on price, the only way they can compete is on value. Our designs may not be the cheapest products out there or the most accessible but they are very valuable – you get terrific value for money."

"I think indulgence is a good word to describe it," says Granger, "but we're not indulging ourselves but our client and our customers. We're not there to tell them how to do things. We're there to work out exactly what they're looking for. Getting all the ingredients, identifying what those ingredients are then putting them together in the right way. It's very much a collaboration. The best work is produced when you have a good relationship with the client. We tend to gravitate to certain clients." "It evolves from the first meeting," adds Marshall, "and rapidly deteriorates into friendship!"

Granger and Marshall both grew up in Canberra, both always wanted to be designers and met when they were both studying industrial design at the University of Canberra. This shared background – and shared values – has seen their creative and business partnership thrive.

"It seems to come back to a work ethic," says Marshall. "The approach that nothing is that difficult, you can always find a solution, rising to the challenge, breaking new ground – in all aspects, even down to the point of how you get the business through the door. That innate understanding because of that shared ethic means that there's not a huge amount of communication backwards and forwards because there's a general level of understanding and a phenomenal level of trust. We're both focussed on the same thing."

"THERE'S A NATURAL YIN AND YANG TO HOW WE WORK," ADDS GRANGER. "WHAT I'M NOT STRONG ON BRYAN IS STRONG ON AND WHERE WE ARE CROSSING OVER WE'RE VERY MUCH ATTUNED. THERE'S A NATURAL FLOW."

In the past three years, the pair feel they have reached the position they wanted to get up to when they started.

"The point we have reached in recent times is the desire to be involved in a more diverse body of work," says Marshall. "We were very much focussed on furniture in the early days because furniture was a way to express the difference in our way of thinking in real terms. We still want to do furniture but we really did want this diversity and in the last few years we've been able to get into projects from espresso bars to exhibition work and more product design-oriented and brand development activities. Ideally, it would be great to work with clients with a bigger international base."

Watch this space as Bang goes global.

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 T (61 7) 3630 6800 'MOTIF' IS AVAILABLE THROUGH DORF CLARK INDUSTRIES
 T 1300 765 865 'PLUS' IS AVAILABLE THROUGH FORMWAY FURNITURE
 T 1800 333 221 **W** formway.co.nz 'TALON' IS AVAILABLE THROUGH WILKHAHN
 T (61 2) 9310 3355 'PIGGLY WIGGLY' AND 'SHORT QUICK' ARE AVAILABLE
 THROUGH ANIBOU T (61 2) 9319 0655

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09 BANG'S EARLY FURNITURE DESIGNS INCLUDED THE 'SHORT QUICK' CHAIR **10** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FORMWAY FURNITURE. BANG WAS ENGAGED TO DESIGN, DEVELOP AND PROTOTYPE THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL YET DISTINCTIVE 'PLUS' RANGE OF OFFICE FURNITURE – SHOWN HERE, THE OTTOMAN AND ACCOMPANYING TABLE FROM THE RANGE **11** LATE IN 2000 BANG WAS COMMISSIONED BY DORF CLARK INDUSTRIES TO CREATE THE MOTIF COLLECTION OF THREE-PIECE TAPWARE. THE RESULT WAS A BOLD GRAPHIC AESTHETIC OF 'MIX AND MATCH' HANDLES AND ACCESSORIES. THE 'MOTIF' COLLECTION WAS RELEASED EARLIER THIS YEAR **12** SOON TO BE RELEASED, AND ONE OF THE FIRST "DEDICATED 'DOMESTIC' FURNITURE RANGES" FOR KING FURNITURE... THE KING DINING RANGE, INCLUDING CHAIRS, AND A SLEEK SET OF COMPANION TABLES.



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