

# LIGHTING UP THE BADLANDS

## DESIGNER PROFILE: JOHN GREG BALL

TAKING INSPIRATION FROM THE BADLANDS' ICONIC GEOLOGICAL FEATURE, THE HOODOO LAMP IS WINNING AWARDS AND GETTING RECOGNITION ACROSS THE COUNTRY

By Michelle Magnan  
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**ALBERTA'S BADLANDS HAVE been good** to Calgary native John Greg Ball. Inspired by the hoodoos, Ball, an industrial designer, and his friend, Edmonton-based Shoko Cesar, designed their signature HooDoo Lamp in early 2005. Ball and Cesar recently returned from Toronto, where they picked up a Canadian Interiors Best of Canada award in the products category, as well as the people's choice award.

"We came up with the idea while we were in Edmonton," says Ball, who studied industrial design with Cesar at the University of Alberta. "Designers tend to be really focused on the global landscape — things that don't really have anything local about them, but just look good. We like to do that too, but we thought it would be interesting to apply something more to these objects. Our idea is to apply

where we come from — the local Alberta prairie style — to our products."

The hoodoo-shaped lamp is a stunning homage to the badlands. Standing four feet tall, the lamp looks like it is made of wood, but is actually made of a plastic called coroplast. The coroplast absorbs the colored light from inside, casting a unique glow in blue, orange, white or green. At first glance, it looks as though the lamp is one sculptured piece. It is deceiving.

"Coroplast is basically like plastic cardboard," says Ball. "We have it cut in shapes and then we stack it all together with glue."

With all the recent exposure from their

award wins, interest in the HooDoo Lamp is lighting up. Buyers can find the lamps in select retail spots, including Ingleswood's Block Furniture. Calgaryans may also see a large-scale HooDoo Lamp around town soon — a Toronto firm has approached the partners to design a 10-foot version for a local project. Ball, who works at Heworth, an office interiors company, during the day, makes the lamps in his spare time at his home studio. Cesar also makes them in Edmonton.

"We weren't prepared for people to order them, so we're scrambling a bit," says Ball. "It's exciting, but it's shocking too."  
The lamp is just one instalment in Ball

and Cesar's HooDoo series. A HooDoo coat rack is available and a bottle opener is on the way. Ball says the plan is to head back to the hoodoos soon, this time with a group of designers to see what ideas transpire. As for the pair's next venture, it's already on the go.

"The next project we're working on is a series of skateboard graphics," says Ball. "They're all like the HooDoo series, inspired by the prairies. One has cattle and barbed wire. It's hard to make western look trendy, so we had to work really hard at that." Chances are the results will be just as interesting.

"We both see the world as artists first," says Ball, "and then we apply design later."

