

DESIGN

ALBERTA

Story by Sonya Procenko

ALBERTA FURNITURE DESIGN INDUSTRY GAINS MOMENTUM

BEYOND ALBERTA'S BORDERS, Alberta furniture designers are increasingly exhibiting and garnering rave reviews. Loyal Loot's Dara Humniski showed her "Coat Hang" at Salone el Mobile, Milan's International Furniture Fair this April. Tim Antoniuk launched his Morphing Series at New York's International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in May.

Chet Domanski and Chris Brandt of BLVD Furniture participated in the Alberta Architecture & Design exhibit at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington this June/July.

Many emerging and established designers say that the province is actually reaching the point where they don't need to move to Toronto and New York to advance their careers. Edmonton and Calgary have become big cities that are more fluent in contemporary ideas about design with groups like Made in Edmonton and the Industrial Designers of Edmonton Association (IDEA). The University of Alberta's Industrial Design program, which has produced some of Alberta's best designers, has essentially made Edmonton a hotbed of design.

"Alberta design has hit a Renaissance, something new is really happening," says designer Tim Antoniuk, a U of A Industrial Design professor. "People broadly are becoming more design aware, developing more opinions about the way they feel about design. Among Alberta designers, there is the Western drive, the prairie mentality of working hard. Alberta design esthetically is subtle and gentle. The prairie landscape is woven into the products."

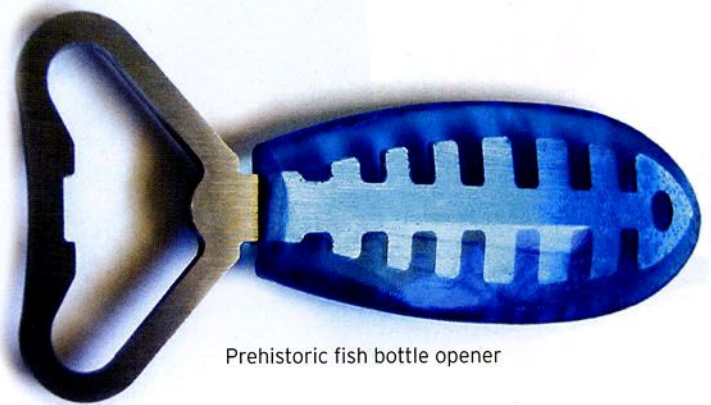
Why not consider investing in original Alberta-designed furniture and accessories for your new home? *These are a few of Alberta furniture designers:*

Greg Ball

Calgary designer Greg Ball burst onto the national design scene with his Hoodoo Series with designer Shoko Cesar (www.shoko.ca). In 2004, they launched their furniture and accessory series inspired by Alberta's Hoodoos. The series includes their prehistoric fish bottle opener, Drumheller skyline coat rack and Hoodoo replica floor lamp. "Hoodoo products offer elements of the Alberta Prairies to the global design landscape. By adding meaning to each product, Hoodoo items are intended to be timeless, well-designed objects for the contemporary home," say the designers. One weekend, while exploring the Badlands, Ball and Cesar hiked 20 miles on a friend's ranch and later studied fossils in Drumheller. "The wild Alberta cactus, the different shapes of Hoodoos, the skeleton of a fish all blew us away," says Ball.

Ball currently works at Advanta Design Group (www.advantadesign.com) and designs in his home studio. He co-founded Industrial Designers of Edmonton Association (IDEA), a forum and platform for designers to showcase their work.

Now, IDEA's annual exhibitions Frost and Thaw attract international submissions.



Prehistoric fish bottle opener

Websites: www.johngregball.com, www.hoodooos.ca

Available at: Block(Calgary), Collectiv(Edmonton)