



aïshti magazine

Love & live in style

35

Lusty laundry

Introducing the post-modern housewife

APR/MAY 2008 LL10,000 US\$7



9 771995 230000

FASHION STYLE DESIGN FOOD ENTERTAINMENT TRAVEL ART BEAUTY PEOPLE



Be-five

In Extremis

BELGIAN LABEL EXTREMIS IS CREATING WAVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN SCENE.



Bronco Corral

There are those who create interesting new designs of furniture, and then there are those who innovate – who change our whole concept of design and function. Dirk Wynants, the head of Extremis, falls into the second category. The company and its designs have garnered loads of international attention and won numerous accolades since Wynants first established Extremis (www.extremis.be) in the mid-90s.

A relative newcomer to the design world, this Belgian company believes that it doesn't just create furniture, but rather tools for togetherness. "All our products are really designed to bring people together," explains Wynants. His funky creations are also eye-catching, unique and fun. The latest buzz is over the cool new piece called the Be-five, which was introduced as a prototype a year ago and is going on the market in April.

The concept is based on a circular trampoline that is suspended above the floor. People can sit or lean on the cushion that runs along the sides or, with the opening in the middle of the fabric for leg room, they can sit upright at the center Corral table. The inspiration for the Be-five came from the atmosphere of Middle East tea houses, where people lounge around on large pillows, chat and share a water pipe. "It's fantastic," says Wynants, who tried it out in his garden. "The only problem is that you have to provide breakfast, because no one goes home."

Other products include the award-winning DoNut, an inflatable and transportable table that sits atop a giant inner tube. Extremis has also won honors for the sleek, modern-looking double-seater PicNik, ideal for small balconies, and the Arthur round table, equipped with a rotating Lazy Susan.



Arthur



DoNut

And the company grabbed second spot at the Design Management Europe Awards.

That's quite an accomplishment for a company located far from the design centers of Europe. Based in the Belgian province of West Flanders, Extremis got its start in 1994 with Wynant's dream of starting his own company and his first product, the Gargantua garden table. The son of a carpenter, Wynants grew up in the industry and later worked in the international distribution of design brands, where he learned the trade.



PicNik

Part of what makes Wynant's designs so unique is that he doesn't set out to design a new piece of furniture, but rather to find a solution to a problem. His idea for the Gargantua came after reading an article about families spending an average of just 15 minutes together per day. "The starting point has nothing to do with the form. It's a consequence of all the other steps," he says.

While the awards seemed to come easy, gaining market success for such novel products was a much harder slog, especially at the start. But from those modest beginnings more than a decade ago, Wynants has managed to turn Extremis into a company with international scope. Among others, his designs have been purchased by the Tate in London and will be in the new Standard hotel in New York.

Extremis is available at Obegi stores in Lebanon.

Kirsten Vance