



Designer Jason Burhop celebrates Kastella's « wood anniversary » with five anniversary pieces

Montreal – May 29th, 2008 Riddle me this: how does a high end hardwood furniture maker celebrate his company's fifth anniversary? By creating five unique pieces characterized by the values that inspired their creation. That was Jason Burhop's way of commemorating the « wood anniversary » of his atelier-boutique, Kastella.

“Five pieces: The Bed, The Dresser, The Buffet, The Dining Table and The Writing Desk, all perfectly illustrate the fundamental principles of our work: durability, quality and simplicity. For us, furniture is a long term investment that can be passed down from generation to generation.” explains Jason Burhop.

Family Spirit

This socially-conscious vision of furniture always intrigued the young Montreal designer, enthusiastic by his own admission about the quality of things done well, therefore inspired by a more traditional approach to the craft. He confesses: “My European roots and my father's passion for manual labor certainly had something to do with it”.

After an unexpected start in the furniture making business in 1998 and the opening of Reform Design Atelier in 2000, it was in 2003, with the start of Kastella, a new boutique at 5355 Saint-Laurent Boulevard, that Jason's woodworking project really took flight. “Kastella allowed us to grow from solely producing pieces for orders to producing a small collection while allowing us to feature and sell the pieces in-store ourselves.” Since Kastella's beginnings not long ago, the Kastella family has also grown: the workshop now boasts five woodworkers (Jason included) and the boutique boasts just as much in staff.

Passion has its reasons

Today, Kastella reflects an ethical design and aesthetic – a yoking of its main concerns: from selection of woods, to responsibly managing forests, to timeless designs and a lasting relationship between each piece of furniture and its user, these are the threads that bind our business. “Our operational structure, which rests in particular on a local network of subcontractors, is also an integral part of this choice.” Jason Burhop points out. “The purpose is to encourage the local economy and to support the job market, but also to reduce our ecological footprint by minimizing displacement. What's more, this particular way of operating allows us a great flexibility which enables us to offer our customers a more personalized approach as well as great quality at very competitive prices.”

For the better and for life

Kastella chooses to disconnect itself from today's fast paced era of excess consumption and seeks to re-instill the harmony between time and craftsmanship. One look at Kastella's showroom is sure to convince. Each of the 41 pieces of the collection, chairs, tables, beds,

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dressers and accessories can be reproduced and personalized according to each customer's needs. Nevertheless, Jason Burhop is quick to point out: "The variations in color, grain and patina make each piece of furniture a unique specimen. Each piece is different and alive."

The five pieces created by Jason to mark Kastella's fifth anniversary represent the extent of his profound appreciation for the noble material that is solid wood. The Bed, Dresser, Buffet, Dining Table and Writing Desk that make up the "wood anniversary" collection are designed to blend in harmoniously with all types of décors, while emphasizing the wood's natural beauty through simple and contemporary lines inspired by furniture of the mid 20th century. "A well designed piece of furniture can last years and years and, if need be, can be re-varnished or repaired." concludes Jason Burhop.

About Kastella

Established in May of 2003 upon the opening of the boutique that bears its name at 5355 Saint-Laurent boulevard in Montreal, Kastella is at the same time a boutique where Jason Burhop displays his creations in an environment that is deliberately centered on artistic dimension since it also showcases works of various local artists. "It's my way of constantly allowing the décor to evolve while still showcasing different artists without them having to pay art gallery commission fees."

An increase in demand helped the Kastella collection grow from its initial 17 pieces to today's 41 pieces, to which are added the five anniversary pieces especially created to mark its fifth anniversary. Kastella remains Quebec's sole distributor of its line in order to maintain its quality-price ratio, one of the brand's strong points. In the future, Jason Burhop foresees expanding his business to Ontario and Western Canada.

About Jason Burhop

With a degree in psychology from Queen's University and a Certificate in residential construction from Camosun College in Victoria, B.C., it was the result of a haphazard meeting that offered Jason Burhop his beginnings as a woodworker: "In 1998, I met a lawyer who owned a small furniture shop. No longer able to take care of his boutique, he gave me a crash course in woodworking and joinery and offered to put me in charge of the contracts that he wasn't able to honour. That's how it all began."

After the start of his first atelier, Reform Design in 2000, Jason started Kastella in May of 2003 when he opened a boutique at 5355 Saint-Laurent Boulevard in Montreal. This new company brought the young artist to a new stage in his life: he went from solely producing pieces for orders to producing a small collection and successfully showcasing it in his boutique. Without fanfare, Jason Burhop and Kastella soon became well known and respected names in the industry of woodworking and high end solid wood furniture.

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