

Ask the experts

Introducing KBDi's National Certified Designer of the Year, Darren James; and National Kitchen Designer of the Year, Lee Hardcastle

Darren James CKDAU — Interiors by Darren James

Darren's introduction to the industry was in his early school years when he realised his passion for manual arts. Following in the tradition of his grandfather, Darren became a cabinetmaker specialising in the manufacture and installation of timber joinery on luxury boats.

His reputation quickly grew and, in 2004, Interiors by Darren James was born. The company soon became known for its high-quality kitchens that were central to family life and incorporated the client's personality and style. Darren's commitment to fine workmanship and professionalism has become a trademark for the business.

"It wasn't until I went out on my own that I realised I could incorporate a different creative medium into my work," says Darren. "Now I love producing beautiful outcomes for my clients that incorporate intelligent and well-thought-out concepts."

Darren's recent accreditation as a Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD) was followed quickly by the KBDi National Certified Kitchen Designer of the Year award. His decision to undertake training in kitchen design and subsequently apply for accreditation as a CKD was driven not only by his strong belief in the accreditation process and ongoing professional development, but also the personal satisfaction and confidence that comes with such a high level of recognition.

"My decision to undergo training through the KBDi was all part and parcel of wanting to create an industry that promotes and delivers the highest standards," he explains. "Of equal value is the confidence it builds within clients and potential clients."

Darren's award-winning entry drew rave reviews from the judges who said, "the documentation was outstanding for this design" and added that the "galley-style kitchen [showed] an interesting combination of features and a strong, elegant colour palette that offsets the décor of the room perfectly".

The judging panel also felt that Darren "displayed a strong understanding of the principles of design, an appreciation of interior design and, in particular, a clever and consistent ability to successfully resolve the client brief".

Darren's background as a cabinetmaker provides him with a background in the technical aspects of design and he believes that this, coupled with his extensive design training, is what sets him and his business apart from any competitors. "I have a strong desire to grow the design side of my business and it's pretty much all

I do these days," he states.

Overseas trends are much discussed among the Australian design community but Darren feels that "we are up there with European design and this is reflected in our design community. We have a fantastic talent pool of kitchen and bathroom designers and our industry is growing at a rapid rate — I love being part of that".

Interiors by Darren James

Phone (07) 3801 2566

Email info@interiorsbydarrenjames.com.au

Website www.interiorsbydarrenjames.com.au

com.au



Lee Hardcastle — Enigma Interiors

Lee grew up in a family of artists, musicians and creative thinkers and he recalls, even as a young boy, drawing in three dimensions and rearranging his bedroom to maximise space. When he left school, his family suggested he try cabinetmaking and, a few years after completing his apprenticeship, Lee launched Enigma Interiors with his wife, Rebecca.

Lee's natural problem-solving abilities have served him in good stead in his business and he delights in working with clients to utilise space well and find practical solutions for their homes. "It's fun being imaginative when creating each design," he says. "I get a thrill when pulling colours and textures together, especially using products that have not been introduced before."

Having access to plenty of information has allowed Lee to formulate his own ideas about his perfect kitchen. "To me, a kitchen is all about cooking, lifestyle, family and entertaining, so my perfect kitchen would certainly need an enormous scullery with commercial ovens, a cold room, large welded-in gas cooktops and massive deep sinks," he dreams.

A self-taught designer, Lee feels that

training and professional development are essential, not only for newcomers to the industry but also for those who have been in the industry for a while. "Our industry is ever-changing, with new products, appliances, trends, marketing techniques etc," he says. "Today's client is more informed, more demanding and better catered for due to the professionalism of excellent individuals or companies who set higher standards."

Lee's award-winning entry was highly praised by the judges who felt that the kitchen was an "elegant, uncluttered and luxurious solution that fully met the clients' brief". They added that the space was "functional and well documented, with features seamlessly incorporated to please the fussiest of chefs".

Lee has been lucky to work on projects around the world in such locations as Fiji,

Vanuatu and New Zealand and says it is his goal to increase these opportunities to take on more international as well as Australia-wide projects. Being a self-confessed perfectionist, Lee's company manufactures and installs all his projects and all tradespeople have been personally trained by Lee. This allows Lee to control the quality of workmanship across all designs. "I'm not happy until every single detail is correct and balanced," he confesses.

Seeing a new opportunity in the market, Lee launched a new range of outdoor kitchen elements three years ago under the brand of Flint Outdoor Kitchens. These items are fully waterproof and modular, making them very popular; this is a side of the business that continues to flourish.

Enigma Interiors

Phone (07) 3390 3244

Website www.enigmainteriors.com.au



who, what, where

KITCHEN & BATHROOM DESIGNERS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

PO Box 3763, South Brisbane BC Qld 4101

Phone 1300 CKD CBD (253 223)

Email enquiries@kbdi.org.au

Website www.kbdi.org.au