



DESIGN PROFILE: Daniel Emma

Meet Daniel To and Emma Aiston, the Adelaide-based husband and wife who have just scooped up the top honour at the Bombay Sapphire Design Discovery Awards

WORDS VANESSA KEYS

They finish each other's sentences, share glances that convey entire conversations and have agreed to never release a product that doesn't represent them in equal parts, yet Daniel and Emma confess that a second-year uni project almost ended their partnership before it began. "We were teamed up to design, make and race a vehicle made completely out of recycled materials," says Daniel. "We had to use a tyre tube, some pink MDF and a hamster painting. We vowed never to work together again!" Five years on, far from feuding, the pair have tied the knot, started their own design studio and now earned themselves a place in the design hall of fame, winning the Bombay Sapphire judges' hearts with 'Basics', a beautifully curated collection of desk accessories made from honest materials with timeless simplicity.



Left: The magnetic tower (\$90) reflects the duo's refreshingly unpretentious style. "We strive to create simple objects that are nice to hold and use" explains Emma.

Right: The clear spheres of this quirky stationery container (\$125) lift away to reveal hidden recesses for storing bits and bobs.



The Bombay Sapphire Design Discovery Awards judges commended the duo for being "the complete package". Their winning 'Basics' collection includes a **pendant lamp**, \$600, the brass **paperweights set**, \$330, **magnetic tower**, \$90, 'Hex' **mirror**, \$220, all Daniel Emma.



"We hope PEOPLE SIMPLY ENJOY OUR WORK FOR WHAT IT IS AND THAT IT BRINGS SOME JOY"

no place like home

After graduating from the University of South Australia in 2007, London came calling. Internships with design heavyweights Marc Newson and Thorsten Van Elten gave the pair "a good overview of how the industry works and how we would like to build our studio," says Emma. "We never thought we'd end up being based in Adelaide. It's harder and easier in some ways: there aren't the big name producers that there are in Europe, but it's easier since there's less competition."

twice as nice

After their first disastrous design collaboration, the pair decided that in order to work together, they had to agree on everything. "We work a lot better now!" laughs Emma. "We have common goals, respect each other's opinions and most importantly, have the ability to tell each other honestly how we feel about an idea. For instance, I keep telling Daniel his idea of making a cushion that looks like a Chinese dumpling isn't very good, although he insists we could make millions."

solids, shapes and basics

Emma and Daniel have found their niche: taking everyday objects and finding unique ways to improve upon their aesthetics. First came 'Shapes', household wares based on two-dimensional forms; then 'Solids', a collection of resin desk objects which inspired the perfectly succinct 'Basics'. "There's a certain pleasure in designing a product that hasn't been over-embellished. It is what it is: a functional, attractive product that serves a straightforward purpose," says Daniel.

For more information and to shop online, visit daniel-emma.com.