



Family values

Furniture maker Orior puts Irish design on the map

There's something in the water on Orior Road, in Newry, Northern Ireland. The street, lined with pebbledashed terraced houses, might look pretty ordinary, but speak to any of the locals and they will proudly reel off stories on the doctors, teachers, scientists – and in this case, designers – who have all been residents of the BT35 postcode. 'Everyone on that road went on to do some amazing stuff,' confirms Ciaran McGuigan, the creative director of furniture brand Orior, which is named after the street.

ORIOR FOUNDERS BRIAN AND ROSIE MCGUIGAN WITH THEIR SON CIARAN, THE BRAND'S CURRENT CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT THE BRAND'S HQ IN NEWRY, NORTHERN IRELAND

McGuigan's vested interest in the area runs deep. Both his parents, Brian and Rosie McGuigan, come from the area; they met as teenagers at the local rugby club. Aged 17, they decided to leave behind a war-torn Northern Ireland and head for Copenhagen, where they immersed themselves in the design scene while working at a burger joint to pay the bills. 'They didn't have this desire to be a big brand, they just wanted to create beautiful things,' says McGuigan. In 1979, after a couple of years in Denmark, the pair returned home »

Design



PIECES FROM ORIOR'S UPCOMING COLLECTION, INCLUDE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, 'THE ARCTIC WARDROBE', IN OPEN-GRAIN ASH WITH BLACKENED STEEL DOORS; 'THE ISLA CHAIR', WITH A TIMBER FRAME AND LEATHER UPHOLSTERY; AND 'THE VERT CHAIR', WHICH CONTRASTS TEXTURED FABRIC WITH SMOOTH LEATHER

to found Orior. They have spent the last 40 years building the brand, giving it a quiet yet solid reputation for high-quality interiors and private commissions.

McGuigan took over as creative director in 2012, bringing with him ambitious plans for the future. He first made structural changes, splitting the company into two, so that one half could focus on contract projects (such as the London private club Annabel's, see W*226), and the other half on design-led collections. He then moved himself and a group of colleagues to the US permanently, opening up an office in Brooklyn, and, in May this year, a showroom in Tribeca.

Launched during this year's New York Design Week, the first new collection under McGuigan's direction is built around 1970s-inspired pieces alongside designs from his father's archives. 'Dad didn't realise that we'd brought back some of his designs,' McGuigan says. 'But seeing what happened in New York had made him want to start designing again, and that was a huge thing for me to see.' Now, McGuigan and his team are readying themselves to launch another collection this autumn, comprising dining chairs, a coffee table, a mirror and an armoire. Throughout, colours are rich, materials are luxurious and craftsmanship is evident.

Each piece in Orior's collection is made in Northern Ireland by a skilled team, many of whom have been with the brand from its early days and have seen McGuigan grow up. They recount stories of him on the factory floor sweeping up or waiting around for them to have a kickabout on lunch breaks. This intimacy and connection makes you realise why he decided to bring his closest friends into the company when he was made creative director. 'I am one of the luckiest guys in the world, to be at the helm of this brand with my family and friends,' McGuigan says. 'We're putting Ireland on the map for furniture design,' he says, with a tenacity that makes you believe every word. *

oriorfurniture.com; oriorcontract.com